

***THE ZIMBABWE WE WANT:***  
***“TOWARDS A NATIONAL VISION FOR ZIMBABWE”***

***A DISCUSSION DOCUMENT***

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## PREAMBLE

At the dawn of independence in 1980, a nation was born out of a protracted armed struggle and many years of pain, suffering and oppression. The ideals of the liberation war, of *one person one vote* and the yearning for freedom: freedom from oppression, freedom from racism, freedom from human indignity and violation, freedom from poverty and hunger, ignorance and disease coupled with the urgent and pressing need for the recovery and restoration of the land were the driving force behind the fight for liberation. Our new found national status amongst the family of nations created high hopes and expectations for a prosperous life. It was these ideals that fired our vision of a new Zimbabwe and unlocked the energies of people to work for a better Zimbabwe.

In the first fifteen years or so of post independence, Zimbabwe made tremendous strides in almost all spheres of life. It was a country full of promise and indeed the envy of most of the countries in Africa, South of the Sahara. We were able to build on the solid infrastructure which the colonial regime had managed to maintain despite the economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. Zimbabweans enjoyed a great sense of patriotism and earned a great deal of respect from their peers on the continent and the world at large.

Yet in 2005, Zimbabwe celebrated 25 years of independence facing a situation which was a far cry from the lofty ideals that gave birth to the Nation that 18<sup>th</sup> April 1980. The patriotic fervour, national pride and the once lofty and romantic ideals of independence were lost in the stark reality of a nation divided, traumatised and impoverished by a political, economic and social crisis whose solution does not seem to be anywhere in sight. Development indicators revealed that Zimbabwe had suffered a severe, downward spiral, an unrelenting economic melt-down characterised by the denudation of professionals and skilled personnel through massive brain drain, hyper-inflation (currently the highest in the world), shortages, decline in agricultural and manufacturing productivity, shortages of foreign currency, escalating corruption, drying up of foreign investments, and tourism dwindling to a trickle.

These negative indicators inflicted a heavy toll on the generality of the population. Health and education deteriorated. The quality of life generally has suffered immeasurably. We have seen the rapid growth of numbers of the rural and urban poor. In addition, the insidious HIV/AIDS is having a catastrophic effect on social and economic life. The turn of events has led to disillusionment.

It is well to remember that the liquidation of colonialism in Africa did not automatically deliver genuine participatory democracy. One of the consequences of Africa's flirting with the one party state whether *de facto* or *de jure* was to prevent or at least delay, democracy, both in theory and practice from taking root. In Zimbabwe the forging of unity between ZANU PF and PF ZAPU in 1987 created a *de facto* one party state, but this was progressively accompanied by the development of political and social intolerance. Throughout the post independence period the country has not been able to respond adequately to the fundamental challenges of mobilizing consensus on constitutional and governance arrangements and the forging of a shared national vision and values.

In all these years and through the pain and suffering of the liberation war and the challenges of independence, the Church has been part of the unfolding national landscape, many times unseen and unnoticed as it went about its core business of preaching the gospel to the poor, and as it contributed to national development through schools, hospitals, humanitarian programs and care for the orphans, widows and the disadvantaged. Even though many-a-time the Church or its components has appeared too slow and unresponsive to the ebb and sway of current affairs, particularly in the political arena (only because such issues are often emotive, controversial, sensationalised and potentially divisive) it has remained faithful to its mandate or has made great effort to take corrective action. The Church has always sought to enter the arena of current national affairs with caution, consideration and positive contribution towards the peaceful resolution of issues. Its diversity of creeds, denominations, tribes, races and constituencies demand a weighed and measured approach to national issues and as a result tended to be seen as laborious, tentative and diffuse.

In times past the Church's nation building initiatives were pursued from three different platforms – the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC). In recent times however, the common and continued suffering of the people of Zimbabwe, with no end in sight, has not left the Church untouched and now, in a common desire to bring an end to the daily suffering and pain of our people, the Church has come together to speak with one voice, one faith, one hope and one vision in order to bring about the Zimbabwe that we all want.

This document is an invitation to all Zimbabweans and all friends of Zimbabwe to dialogue with us so that we can together define a national vision of the Zimbabwe we want and agree on strategies on how to get there. The document holds no brief for any political party or pre-conceived political agenda. It reflects a vision of the three ecumenical bodies regarding the Zimbabwe that we want, distilled from over 10 years of armed struggle, 25 years of independence, national aspirations, pain, suffering and disappointment. It is inspired by our faith in a sovereign God who in Jesus Christ demonstrated His solidarity with suffering humanity and his power to transform our thinking and relationships through the power of the Gospel.

The document is not an exhaustive prescription for all our ills as a nation, but is merely our humble contribution to the search for a solution to the challenges faced by our nation. It is a call to a *kairos* moment of reflection, repentance and a new vision of a Zimbabwe that will be shared by all, owned by all, and loved by all its citizens regardless of religion, tribe, race, gender, or political affiliation. For it is only when we unite in our diversity, that we can build a nation where peace and prosperity will flourish. It is a call to do collective reflection on our dire national situation and the toll that it is having on our economy, our quality of life, our families and the future of our children and of our nation. It is an attempt to inspire ourselves to draw lessons and nation building principles from our past mistakes so that we can envision a better and greater Zimbabwe – the Zimbabwe we all want.

Where there is no vision the people perish (Prov.11:14). Zimbabwe needs a new national vision to restore our self-confidence, dignity, and hope. A people without a vision is like a ship without a rudder. To this end we the Church leaders of Zimbabwe commit ourselves and the Churches that we lead to do all within our power and faith, to inspire, encourage and facilitate national dialogue, debate and national reconstruction across the broad spectrum of national opinion, constituencies and stakeholders.

May God Almighty bless the nation of Zimbabwe and grant it the faith, the vision and the courage to build a Zimbabwe that is free, tolerant, peaceful, prosperous and God fearing.

## SECTION 1

### THE CURRENT SITUATION - WHERE DID WE AS A NATION GO WRONG?

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION : SO MUCH PROMISE

The first 15 years of an independent Zimbabwe showed so much promise and was highly esteemed on the continent and the world as the greatest promise of success yet in Sub-Saharan Africa. The economy as a whole made remarkable progress – in some respects, it was booming. Productivity in agriculture in both the rural and commercial farming sectors was so phenomenal that it earned the country recognition as the '*bread basket*' of the region, thus demonstrating the potential that Zimbabwe could achieve if the colonial land inequities were to be addressed in a comprehensive, orderly, peaceful and sustained way. Communications systems which had lagged behind since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965 were quickly modernized and brought the country into close contact with the rest of the world.

The expansion of education was unprecedented in all sub-Saharan Africa. The new Zimbabwean government facilitated for people who had lost educational opportunities to go back to school. Many primary and secondary schools were opened, especially in rural areas. Students, parents and teachers, in solidarity with one another, and working to achieve the common good, contributed to the building of the new schools. Universities and colleges were multiplied and expanded to allow for more Zimbabweans to be educated.

Expansion and quality of medical services was stupendous. Mission hospitals which provided the bulk of medical services, particularly in rural areas, received unprecedented support from the new government which was appreciative of the contribution of Churches and recognised their efficiency in running these institutions. Government not only paid salaries of all mission hospital staff but also provided funding for infrastructural developments in these institutions. The training for the medical and nursing staff was expanded to reduce the staff-patient ratio.

While the injustices of the colonial period and the inequities in the distribution of power and resources continued to exist, most Zimbabweans were confident that they would be overcome. The adoption of the policy of reconciliation at independence was a major step towards a rapprochement of the various components of the Zimbabwean society.

More successes were seen in the areas of social welfare and legislation to protect the workers and the marginalized. Special attention was paid to those who had been marginalized and impoverished by years of colonial rule. Zimbabwe had a good international image. The list of achievements could go on and on. These were the years of promise, the years of hope.

## 1.2 YET SO MUCH DISAPPOINTMENT: WHAT ARE THE SOURCES?

Despite the above gains, in 2005 Zimbabwe celebrated its Silver Jubilee in the grip of disappointment and depression. A number of things had either gone wrong or had not been put right within the first 25 years of our independence. Our nation is desperately in need of a physician, and that physician is none other than us the people of Zimbabwe. Treatment always begins with a correct diagnosis of a malady. We are not seeking to blame any one person, party or group. We are all as much a part of the problem, and must therefore all be a part of the solution. We must honestly face the sources of national disappointment so that we as a nation may have the determination to collectively seek appropriate remedies. We look back to the first 15 years of our independence with pride and thankfulness, but also admitting that it was not all rosy. But what went wrong until we got to where we are? The following are some of our weaknesses and failures which in our view have contributed significantly to our disappointment.

### 1.2.1 Lack of a Shared National Vision

Lack of a shared vision has been at the root of our political crises since 1890. During the colonial era Zimbabwe was monopolized by a few. Since then the country continued to be a fort, or laager protecting some against others – a minority against the majority or the majority against the minority. In this sense, Zimbabwe has never experienced the spirit of comprehensive social solidarity. As a nation we have never really experienced what it means to live in harmony and how to handle democratic processes in the political, social and economic spheres. The accommodation of different opinions and diversity of cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds continues to elude us.

1980 was the year Zimbabwe was supposed to be shared by all. Yet we have continued to think and act in our old ways, jealously protecting our old narrow turfs, privileges and keeping old enemies. Some of us are so used to the old enemies that we do not want to give them up. We do not know what to do without them. Where these enemies have withdrawn or disappeared, we continue to reinvent them. We are in a spiritual crisis because we have attempted to think and live in our old ways in a new world. Zimbabwe must embrace all who desire and deserve to live in it.

We needed to cultivate non-partisan State structures which would be accessible to and protective of all Zimbabweans. We needed to develop a political culture of tolerance and respect of all. Yet by the end of 2002 Zimbabwe was already disproportionately dominated by party-politics and political violence. It is now deeply polarised on party-political lines. These tensions and polarizations threaten the existence of any sense of national common good and nationhood that might have been hoped for in the early years of political independence. National State structures, institutions, and processes have been politicised along party-political lines to the extent of undermining their public and national character.

In a democracy that takes seriously the concept of the common good, political parties cannot replace structures of the state. As Zimbabweans, we have failed to recognize the fundamental institutional priority of a non-partisan public state that recognizes and protects all Zimbabweans. The importance of maintaining the distinctions between

party, government and state, their respective and balanced roles is now being demonstrated. Obfuscation of these distinctions in the imagination of our political leaders, our professionals, and in the imagination of the majority of the people of Zimbabwe has placed us into the lacuna we find ourselves in today. The idea of regarding the party as supreme to the government and the State has effectively helped to privatize the State and government, thereby making them virtually inaccessible to many Zimbabweans. This idea has helped encourage the tendency to narrow the meaning of our liberation struggle and to reduce it only to the armed struggle. Such a tendency has the unfortunate consequence of failing to recognize various contributions made by many Zimbabweans to their own liberation.

### **1.2.2 Political intolerance**

Political intolerance has unfortunately become a culture in Zimbabwe. This has mainly taken the form of intolerance of dissent and political plurality. The unwillingness to accommodate political differences is shown by the tendency to label anyone who criticises the dominant view as an enemy of the revolution. The trading of insults and hate speech has unfortunately been characteristic of inter- and intra-political parties.

Intolerance breeds hatred, and hatred breeds violence, and violence leads to destruction. This cycle became particularly visible before some elections in the past where intimidation of political opponents, violence, murder, extortion, and dispossession were commonly reported. The culture of violence, fear, suspicion and hate cannot build a nation.

### **1.2.3 Oppressive Laws**

Some repressive pieces of legislation exist in our statute books, with the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) being of particular concern. Legislation that inhibits peaceful assembly and the free flow and exchange of ideas seriously impairs the efficacy of participatory democracy and the accountability of those who govern. Government has itself acknowledged that at least some of the provisions of POSA and AIPPA need to be amended for consistency with the spirit and ethos of human rights as contained in our constitution.

### **1.2.4 Failure to produce a home grown democratic constitution.**

A people centred and people crafted constitution is the centrepiece of governance and development. The current Lancaster House constitution was not inspired by the collective consent and consensus of the people of Zimbabwe. The primary object of the Lancaster House conference was to facilitate and secure the irreversible transfer of political power from the colonial power and its surrogates to the indigenous majority. It was not concerned with the details of capturing and expressing the ideals and aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe. There is and there has remained a need to indigenize the constitutional order. The absence of a home-grown constitution remains a source of great dissatisfaction.

### **1.2.5 Economic mismanagement**

Upon attainment of independence the challenge was how to open up the economy for the greater participation of the majority of the population while keeping its viability intact. We needed to find ways of dismantling the apartheid-type structures of the colonial economy, while keeping and enhancing further the economic successes and the culture of honest, hard, creative self-reliance and resilience that had so far been attained. Such delicate manoeuvring demanded a wealth of skills in economic planning and development.

Unfortunately, however, our economy suffered from a number of factors which included corruption, under-performing para-statal which kept draining national resources, the inability to balance free market forces with a social welfare approach to economics and a host of other problems.

### **1.2.6 Corruption**

Lack of accountability and corruption, have gradually become endemic in the Zimbabwean society. They mostly involve self-benefiting conduct by people or entities in positions of public trust such as police, corporates, media, civil servants and others. In January 2006 the Reserve Bank Governor called corruption a cancer that is fast taking root in our midst. He advised that this problem was overtaking inflation to become the nation's number one enemy.

From 1987 Zimbabwe saw an exponential rise in cases of corruption, and by 2002 it was out of control. The rise in corruption was accompanied by the progressive disintegration of the national morale and a decline in our national economic well-being. The vast majority of corruption scandals involved high ranking politicians. The elites sought to gain and keep economic enrichment at the expense of the common good. Resources meant for the poor or for the common good have been converted to the use of individuals in positions of trust. These scandals have helped to derail our economic progress and produce social misery.

The press which for years crusaded against corruption has itself been sucked up in the same groove. Allegations have surfaced of bribes being demanded from business executives, politicians and musicians, in return for positive media coverage, or good ratings on the local music and business charts.

### **1.2.7 The Land Issue**

The struggle for liberation was primarily about our land which had been seized and allocated to colonial settlers. People were forcibly removed from their arable lands and resettled in crowded "reserves". Since the whole struggle was about the recovery of our land it was clear from the beginning of our independence that the struggle was not over until the land has been returned to its rightful owners. Regretfully the Lancaster House Constitution did not sufficiently recognise this fact and the entrenched clauses in the constitution did not allow for a speedy response to the people's cry for the land. The promised finances to speed up the process were not forthcoming as expected. The people who needed the land most became impatient and began to occupy some of the farms illegally, thus putting a great deal of pressure on government.

As Churches we have repeatedly expressed our full support for the redistribution of the land. While we understand the constraints on the part of government we believe the land redistribution should have been done much earlier in a systematic manner. Regretfully, the sudden, rushed and unplanned comprehensive seizure and redistribution politicised the land question and rendered the process most controversial and impacted negatively on the country.

By the year 2000 the national economy was already declining and the morale among the people was already low. In redistributing the land the government was at last doing the right thing which was long overdue, but regretfully it was done the wrong way, at a wrong time, and for the wrong reasons. It is therefore critical that corrective measures be taken immediately to inspire confidence, both nationally and internationally, and enable Zimbabwe to flourish once again. The economy of Zimbabwe and the wellbeing of its people are inseparably tied to the land. We will never be able to deliver the Zimbabwe we want unless the land issue is immediately laid to rest.

### **1.2.8 Loss of Friends and our Isolation**

During the years of our struggle for liberation against an oppressive colonial regime our political as well as our military structures enjoyed a great deal of encouragement and support from many groups, governments, as well as Christian organisations throughout the world. Our neighbours sacrificed the lives of their citizens for the liberation of Zimbabwe. We cultivated many friends throughout the world who celebrated our successes and indeed walked with us in the first years of our independence. These many friends of Zimbabwe today are disillusioned and pained by what they see happening in Zimbabwe. We have not been willing to take their advice regarding some of our approaches to issues that have resulted in so much conflict and pain among our people.

Regretfully, we suddenly perceived those of our friends who saw things differently from us to be our enemies as we began to pursue agendas that would bring personal benefit at the expense of the common good. We did not want to take advice from friends and those who genuinely cared about us. When friends told us the truth about our situation or told us what we did not want to hear they immediately became enemies and allies of our former colonial power. The result is that we became isolated and some nations began to apply targeted sanctions against some of our leadership as a way to influence changes in some of our policies. We all agree that Zimbabwe is a sovereign state and as Zimbabweans we must defend our sovereignty at all costs. But in a world that has become a global village it is no longer possible for any nation to exist in isolation. Doing otherwise can only inflict unnecessary pain and suffering on the people.

### **1.2.9 Inability of the Churches to Speak with One Voice on National Issues**

The question to be raised is: 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 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? Clearly we did not

do enough as Churches to defend these values and to raise an alarm at the appropriate time. We too have often tended to look inward rather than outward and also ignore the wisdom from our Christian sisters and brothers outside Zimbabwe. Maybe we used tinted same glasses used by secular authority to evaluate the advice given to us by other members of the body of Christ outside Zimbabwe. 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.

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. Issues of democracy, human rights and development were, by and large, viewed as out of the jurisdiction of Church activity. Some Church members fell into the pit of political appeasement at the expense of maintaining the integrity of the Church.

This traditional aloofness and metaphysical disengagement have made the Church an officious bystander caught in between the anguish of its constituents and the spiritual interpretation of its mandate. Divisions within the Church based on differences of political affiliation and/or sympathies have hindered the Church from providing a more coherent and unified voice of leadership to the nation. This division has been further exploited by some political leaders wanting to use the Church for their own purposes. The sum total of these factors has been 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 of its constituency and the nation as a whole. Church leaders have not always provided exemplary leadership.

Rather than being salt and light to the nation some of the church leaders have been accomplices in some of the evils that have brought our nation to this condition. Some have been sentenced to jail terms for rape and financial impropriety. This has cast some doubts on the credibility of the moral voice of the Church.

The Church in Zimbabwe is now, since about 2000, only beginning to wake up to its role in the social, political and economic affairs of Zimbabwe in a more comprehensive way. As opposed to non-engagement some Christians have chosen the path of aggressive engagement or confrontation with the government. The three umbrella bodies have, however, chosen the path of constructive engagement. In the short term, this involves engaging the government with the purpose of helping to end the present crisis and quickly returning the nation to some normalcy. In the long term, we intend to engage the nation as a whole in the development of guiding national vision and values as stipulated in this document.

## SECTION 2

### THE MANDATE OF THE CHURCH

The Church is a divine institution in the world comprising men and women called to serve God and humanity through the preaching of a liberating Gospel and service to alleviate human suffering in this world. We have heard it repeatedly stated within the context of our situation in Zimbabwe that the Church should stay out of politics. Without being defensive we need to explain why we as a Church are so concerned and why we have taken the course of constructive engagement described above. The question is: Are we now meddling in a sphere that does not properly belong to the Church? The Church must be concerned when the material and political conditions impinge on the spiritual wellbeing of people.

#### 2.1 THEOLOGICAL MANDATE

- The nature of the Gospel demands that we be involved in the transformation of the social, economic and political systems or environment within which God's people live. God affirms our humanity by bringing us salvation through Jesus Christ – the Second member of the Godhead in human form. God is therefore involved in every activity where human beings are involved. This is what the incarnation means. But God's incarnation did not end with Christ's ascendance to heaven. It continued with the Church as the sign of God on earth. While the Church has its human nature, it also has its divine mandate. The Church as *'the people of God'* incarnates the divine presence in the world. It continues the work started by Christ of transforming the world for the better, improving people's relationships with each other, challenging corrupt and unjust people and structures, supporting the poor and marginalized and healing the sick and troubled. Like Christ, the Church announces the Good News of salvation and denounces injustice.
- The God that we have come to know in Jesus Christ is a God of love, justice, peace, and reconciliation and He has made us ambassadors of these divine values. Our task is to manifest God's presence and activity in all spheres of life. Politics and economics are serious activities which affect people's lives and can therefore not be left to secular authority alone. We are therefore mandated by the nature of the Gospel to address all the issues that hinder the fulfilment of our hopes as proclaimed by God through Jesus Christ: "I came so that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).
- The Church's concern with issues of good governance, justice and peace, is demonstration of God's concern for humanity. For God created human beings not in order to suffer, but to have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10). To have abundant life is to grow and be fulfilled spiritually, physically, emotionally, intellectually, socially and culturally. Christ's approach to life is holistic and as Christ's disciples we have no option but to be holistic in our proclamation of the Gospel. Hence proclamation, worship, and service are integral to the life and mission of the Church. God wants us to be free and happy. This is part of the implication of Christ's Good News of salvation.

## 2.2 HISTORICAL MANDATE

The Church has a long history of dealing with social needs of the people of Zimbabwe and the world over. It has a proven record, which dates as far back as 2 000 years, of caring and supporting those that are in need. It has handled the challenges of refugees, war victims, poverty, education, health and other social issues. Informed by the Gospel and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Church has learnt to respond to the cry of the poor, the cry of the widow and the cry of the orphan. It has developed the tradition of becoming the true neighbour to those who fall among the robbers of this world. It does so by responding to emergencies and by working to transform social realities with the power of the Gospel. It is therefore natural for the Church to engage in public debates and show concern over how the world is organized, ruled, and developed. It legitimately engages the way wealth is owned, controlled and distributed.

In Zimbabwe, in particular, the Church has always been engaged in nation-building through the schools, hospitals, relief and development programs established throughout the country. In many ways the Church was also heavily involved in securing the liberation of Zimbabwe from the yoke of colonialism.

Where the Gospel of Christ has become rooted in the lives and culture of the people it can only lead to social transformation. Consequently, the Church's activities include a commitment to a social teaching ministry where it deals with general themes of public policy, the duties of citizenship and the relationship of personal and public virtue. At this level, however, the Church carries out its teaching ministry through a non-partisan and objective exposition of the biblical and ecclesiastical moral principles in a general way to enable its members to make informed choices on policies that directly affect their lives. There are times, however, when the Church needs to apply those principles in concrete policy debates or to take a clear position where there is clear violation of those moral principles, thus actively supporting specific policies and opposing others. A good example of this is the ZCBC pastoral letter on the 2005 Parliamentary elections and the joint pastoral letter of the ZCBC, ZCC, EFZ and HOCD of April 2005, *A Call to Conscience, Zimbabwe Silver Jubilee 1980-2005*. Such a prophetic-witness approach can mean actively advocating the dismantling of the structures that promote corruption and any other immoral behaviour that negates the values of love, justice, peace and reconciliation that are central to the Gospel of Christ.

## 2.3 THE CHURCH AS THE PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVE

As a religious organisation the Church embraces the vast majority of the people of Zimbabwe. It is closest to the people. They trust their religious leadership and we can claim to know their desires and aspirations better than any other organisation. Together we know every home and every family, including the non-Christians. We can therefore be their voice, and perhaps, the only credible voice they have.

## 2.4 THE CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE AS PART OF THE WORLD-WIDE BODY OF CHRIST.

We are members of a universal institution in which all its members are bound together in a family relationship through faith in Jesus Christ. When one member of the family suffers we all suffer (1 Cor.12, 26). During our struggle for liberation the entire Christian family throughout the world was in solidarity with us, either individually or through the World Council of Churches and other bodies. When God's people anywhere are groaning or are suffering, all the people of God feel the pain and hear the groans. This means that the Church in Zimbabwe has the potential to unleash global support and solidarity for a holistic reconstruction of Zimbabwe. The global family of Christians is feeling the pain with us; it wants to walk with us and to listen to our story just as Jesus walked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24, 13-35).

We believe that the solution to our current difficulties in Zimbabwe lies with the people of Zimbabwe. It has to be home grown. Our sisters and brothers throughout the world want to walk with us. We need to show them where we want to go and advise them on how together we can walk that journey. The Church in Zimbabwe, therefore, has the potential to assist with the building of bridges within Zimbabwe and help our nation to once again connect with the rest of the world. The Church can also help explain our situation or play an advocacy role outside Zimbabwe. We have that potential and we can make a positive contribution in this regard.

## 2.5 THE CHURCH AS A SIGN OF HOPE

In our message of love, forgiveness, peace, justice and reconciliation we have all that that is needed for the healing of the nation. We have God's promise: "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

We want to take seriously our task as the Church in Zimbabwe to work for the reconciliation of the people of Zimbabwe and to bring about national unity. Through this document we seek to make a positive contribution towards a national vision for the reconstruction of our nation. Thus the Church, as God's divine incarnation, has a moral duty to contribute to the creation of social, economic, political and cultural institutions, systems, structures, processes and personalities that facilitate the integral growth and fulfilment of every human person. Our hope is that through this document the people of Zimbabwe can reach a consensus regarding the ***Zimbabwe We Want*** and how to get there.

# SECTION 3

## VISION AND VALUES OF THE ZIMBABWE WE WANT

We are convinced beyond any reasonable doubt that as a way forward Zimbabwe needs to

clearly redefine a vision of the **Zimbabwe we want** and the core values upon which to build the nation. That vision and those values need to be owned by all and together we need to come up with strategies as to how this can happen. This section of the document is our humble contribution to the redefinition of a vision for the nation of Zimbabwe and its underlying values.

### 3.1 OUR VISION

Our vision is that of a sovereign and democratic nation characterized by good governance as reflected in all its structures and operations at all levels and in all our institutions; a nation united in its diversity, free, tolerant, peaceful, and prosperous; a nation that respects the rights of all its citizens regardless of creed, gender, age, race and ethnicity as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with a leadership that puts the interests of the people of Zimbabwe above all personal gains; and above all a nation that is God- fearing.

### 3.2 CORE VALUES FOR NATION BUILDING

The vision of the nation of Zimbabwe articulated above must be underpinned by certain values if it is to be a reality. A nation needs shared values in order to avoid destroying itself. It is the absence of shared core-values that is at the heart of the crisis we are witnessing in Zimbabwe today. We need to redefine our national values if we are to get to *the Zimbabwe we want*.

Values are fundamental convictions and standards by which particular actions are judged as good or desirable and which therefore act as general guides to behaviour. Values help us to decide how we as Zimbabweans should live and what we should treasure. Our values must include the following:

#### 3.2.1 Spirituality and Morality

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second one is like it: love your neighbour as yourself. All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commands” (Mt 22:37-40). These words by Jesus form the core of spirituality and morality that will assist us to build the **Zimbabwe we all want**.

There is a very real danger of secularism eroding our spirituality and our morality. If we define our personhood apart from the biblical concept that we are created in the image of God, we inevitably devalue one another leading to violence, permissive sex or political corruption. Morality must be built on spirituality.

Living moral lives includes preserving our bodies from sexual sins. Paul writes: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). If we were to heed this command much of the HIV/AIDS scourge that is devastating a significant part of our economy and contributing to our economic problems would be solved.

However, morality must not be limited to sexual matters. It includes honesty and sincerity in all our dealings. Honesty is held as a very important value throughout the Bible, and deception is prohibited. “Speak the truth to one another, and render true and sound judgement in our courts; do not plot evil against your neighbour, and do not swear falsely. I hate all this, declares the Lord” (Zech 8:16-17). Deception can be manifested through false statements, half-truths or innuendo. It is all too common in advertising, business dealings, politics and everyday life. This we must strongly resist. Sincerity goes along with honesty. It means practising what we preach; saying what we mean and meaning what we say. The opposite of this is hypocrisy, which Jesus could not stand (e.g. Mt 23, 1-11).

“Integrity makes a nation great, but sin is a disgrace to any people” (Prov 14:34). We cannot expect God to bless our nation, and individuals in it, unless integrity becomes a cherished core-value in our nation. The role of the Church, and other religious groups, in shaping the spiritual and moral fibre of the nation should continue to be encouraged in Zimbabwe.

### **3.2.2 Unity-in-diversity**

The principle of unity-in-diversity is at the core of our definition of a nation. A nation is the aggregation of individuals, families, communities and ethnicities bound together by a combination of history, birth, geography and a common system of governance. In general a nation cannot be an individual or a select group of individuals and communities that define history, birth-right, geographic space and political power to the exclusion of a significant portion of individuals, families, communities and ethnicities.

The Biblical analogy of the tribes of Israel, who were originally the children of Jacob, gives us an idea of the divine gravitation from singularity to diversity. This gravitation towards diversity is exemplified right through the Bible: from Adam, Noah, Jacob, the twelve disciples, the diversity of the four gospels, the unity in diversity of the early Jerusalem Church and the grand finale of the multitudinous throng of thousands upon thousands from every tongue and tribe before the throne of God (Revelation 7). Modern day Christianity is a plethora of diversity of doctrine, creed, belief and practice but all co-existing in tolerance and non-violence.

By its definition, therefore, a nation is a composite co-existence of diversity of families, tribes, ethnicities and opinions. The individuality and diversities of persons and communities must be recognized, protected, regulated, allowed expression and representation, harmonised and balanced for the greater good and progress of the nation. Any nation that does not acknowledge, affirm and protect the diversity of individual and collective rights and expressions of those rights will produce a trail of division, conflict, disintegration and retrogression. Many a country has been ravaged by incessant civil war and blood-shed that arose from a sense of exclusion by a radicalised minority section of the population.

Zimbabwe enjoys considerable variety among its people evidenced by racial, cultural and political diversities. These diversities can be mutually enriching provided we adopt the stance of accepting one another and tolerating those differences that may not be to our liking, such as political differences. Intolerance has made the

Zimbabwean society highly polarized. This has in turn bred a culture of violence in the home and different spheres of the public life. This we must detest and resist as we work together towards the **Zimbabwe we want**. It is normal that members of the same family will have different opinions on all aspects of life. Yet they must live together harmoniously and respect each other. This is possible where they exercise mutual tolerance.

Despite our diversities we must cherish peace and harmony. Such peace and harmony does not merely mean the absence of war and conflict. Peace in a community must not be confused with either stability or complacency. At the time of Christ there was a peace of sorts. It was known as the ***Pax Romana*** – the Roman peace – and was a ‘peace’ established and maintained by force. But this is not peace. To believe that peace can be established by force is an illusion, a scandal. Stability is not peace. Nor is peace complacency and it is a mistake for anyone to claim that peace exists where there is injustice. True peace requires justice and so no Christian can live complacently with injustice. There is a significant truth in the statement ‘if you want peace then work for justice’.

### 3.2.3 Respect for Human Life and Dignity

Since human beings are created in God’s image, human life is sacrosanct. Everything must be done to safeguard basic rights of every member of our society in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (1981) to both of which Zimbabwe is a signatory. It was largely to secure independence and freedom that the war of liberation was fought. Therefore, we ought to respect all human life. Deliberate and avoidable taking of human life should be regarded as immoral and against the will of God. In the Zimbabwe that we want, we as human beings, and our social, political, economic, cultural and military institutions, systems and processes should always respect human life.

### 3.2.4 Respect for Democratic Freedoms

There are certain freedoms that are universally recognised as inherent in any democratic society. They provide a conducive environment for good governance and democratic participation and ensure that the basic human rights are adhered to. Our struggle for liberation was for freedom and the **Zimbabwe we want** must allow every member of our society to enjoy those freedoms that contribute towards nation building. We therefore need to safeguard those rights, particularly the following:

- **Freedom of association:** Article 20 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* provides for everyone to have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association and that no one may be compelled to belong to an association. The fact that the law allows citizens to join any party of their choice is to be applauded. All segments of society must however respect the practical outworking of this freedom as enshrined in the law. Nobody should in any way be victimized by reason of their party belonging by being denied developmental or relief assistance, denied a job or promotion or by having his/her freedom of movement restricted. This freedom of association should also find expression in religious freedom.

- **Freedom of speech and expression:** Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human rights* says: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. This freedom – and its extension, freedom of the press – is so essential that its absence jeopardizes other freedoms and undermines the whole democratic process. It is essential for self-actualization, for assisting in the search for truth, and in promoting democracy by influencing government’s choice of policies. Therefore its restriction must only be allowed in very limited circumstances, such as the outlawing of hate-speech and the promotion of terrorism. Restrictions to free speech should be the exception and free expression the rule. It is in the light of these considerations that existing and proposed legislation such as POSA and AIPPA should be re-examined and either abolished or amended.

### 3.2.5 Respect for Other Persons

Every human being – regardless of race, tribe, gender, age, national origin, religion, economic status, intelligence, achievement or any other distinguishing characteristics is created in the image of God, and therefore is valuable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family.

To respect others is to take seriously and value what they think, their goals and desires in life, and to support them in overcoming their weaknesses, disabilities and inabilities. It is to create appropriate environments which allow them to grow naturally in their physical, spiritual, intellectual, social and cultural aspects. Thus the provision of educational, health, recreational facilities, information, food, shelter, security, and the recognition of freedom of thought, freedom of association, and freedom of religion are all ways of treating human persons with the respect they deserve.

Respect for others presupposes the need for humility. Humility involves being courteous and respectful of others. It is the opposite of aggressiveness, arrogance, boastfulness, and vanity. Acting with humility does not in any way deny our own self worth. Rather, it affirms the inherent worth of all persons.

### 3.2.6 Democracy and Good Governance

*The Zimbabwe we want* must be characterized by democracy and democratic participation, built on the premise that all its citizens, in their diversity and divergence with respect to the colour of their skins, ethnic backgrounds, social or economic status, gender, religious or political persuasions, are equal and must be given equal opportunity to participate in the definition of our collective destiny. Our diversity is a source of enrichment to the nation as it provides opportunity for us to look at issues from different perspectives in the light of our different experiences.

In a democratic system every citizen has a right to contribute to a shared and common destiny and must therefore be heard and protected as they exercise their democratic rights. It is through this dialogue of diversity that we construct a future where each one of us becomes a significant benefactor and beneficiary. The essence of democracy is the government by the highest consensus and the affirmation, recognition and

engagement of all, including minority groups, marginal sectors of our stakeholder communities, informal sector players, children, women, the poor, the disabled, the senior citizens, and the alien.

*The Zimbabwe we want* recognizes and affirms a collective, comprehensive and inclusive citizenship and national stakeholder base that does not exclude, repress or vilify any section of the community on account of gender, class, ethnicity, place of origin or political affiliation. Our view of democracy therefore seeks to include rather than exclude.

This requires the deliberate choice by leaders of different social, economic, political and religious persuasions to initiate and sustain a process of national reconciliation, reconstruction, peace building and nation building.

### 3.2.7 Participation and Subsidiarity

People have a right and a duty to participate in society in order to search, in collaboration with others, for the common good and well-being of everyone especially the poor and marginalized.

People grow physically, intellectually, socially and economically by participating in the activities of their communities and societies. To be shut out from participating is to be denied opportunities for growth and opportunities for contributing to the growth of others. As Martin Luther King (JR) said, “When an individual is no longer a true participant, when he no longer feels a sense of responsibility to his society, the content of democracy is emptied”.

- Particular attention must therefore be paid to those segments of our society whose participation at various levels of society has been restricted. There is need for mainstreaming gender and the needs of disadvantaged groups such as children, youths, people with disabilities, minority groups and others in all policy programmes.

Participation also assumes the principle of subsidiarity. This principle is meant to guide the complex social relationships by defining the responsibilities and limits of government, the essential roles of voluntary associations, civil society, families and individuals. It says it is wrong for higher levels of social organization or government to do for individuals and groups what they can do efficiently and effectively by their own initiative and hard work. Thus government should not do for people what they can do for themselves. This means that individuals and groups of individuals who are close to social issues should be allowed to deal with them before higher institutions and government itself take them over. This also insures that decisions are made as close as possible to their point of implementation. That is the kind of **Zimbabwe we want**.

### 3.2.8 Sovereignty

The **Zimbabwe that we want** is a sovereign state – autonomous, equal to other states and self-governing. Our sovereignty, however, needs to be balanced against a recognition of inter-dependence in the global family of nations. This implies mutual accountability as each nation seeks to uphold commonly agreed standards of

governance and human rights. International law and the treaties that bind nations together act as a check on our sovereignty.

### 3.2.9 Patriotism and Loyalty

“Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?” (Nehemiah 2:3). These are the words of a patriotic man called Nehemiah. Although he held a very good job in the office of the Persian Emperor, it was the welfare of his own country that became his driving force. He was like other exiled Jews who sat down and wept by the rivers of Babylon when they remembered Zion (Ps 137:1)

Patriotism is a love of one’s country and allegiance to its state institutions. This necessitates that we cultivate a sense of belonging which should override sectional, tribal, ethnic and other loyalties.

Some Zimbabweans have unfortunately become very unpatriotic in their thinking, words and behaviour. They refuse to see any good in their nation, or to work for the welfare of that nation. This may be in part because we have not taken the development of national values seriously.

In order to develop patriotism certain features of the nation must be regarded as a common heritage of all Zimbabweans. These must include our history, our heroes, the national constitution, flag, national anthem, defence forces, the civil service, national holidays etc. None of these must be seen as the preserve of one party or one sectional interest. A national approach to those institutions and national events would unite us as a nation in the Zimbabwe that belongs to all of us.

Patriotism does not mean that we develop uniformity in our thinking, culture or political party. Citizens should be able to constructively criticize their government without fearing that they will be accused of being unpatriotic. That is the **Zimbabwe we want**.

### 3.2.10 Gender Equity

By gender we mean “the expectations and norms within a society with regard to appropriate male and female behaviour and roles, which attribute to men and women different access to status and power, including resources and decision-making power”. Women experience systematic oppression. They are excluded, marginalised, and rendered invisible in language and public life. They are stereotyped as mindless, emotional and weak; and that stereotyping is then used to legitimize their subordination to men. UN statistics show that while forming one-half of the world’s population, women do three-fourths of the world’s work, receive one-tenth of the world’s salary, and own one-hundredth of the world’s land. Over three-fourths of starving people are women and their dependent children. Furthermore women are bodily and sexually exploited, used, battered, and raped. Thus sexism both oppresses and marginalizes women – hence negatively impacting on their sense of identity.

Furthermore, this power disparity between men and women makes the fight against HIV and AIDS very difficult. Women generally have fewer possibilities than their male partners to determine whether, and under what conditions sexual intercourse will occur. The fact that men are more likely than women to have multiple sexual partners while many women are not in a position to insist on safer sex makes women more vulnerable to the HIV infection.

The domestication and subservience of women in our society is not imposed by biological or other natural necessity. Above all, the social, economic and religious marginalization of women is not prescribed by God. We acknowledge that women and men are of equal value before God, both created in the image of the one God (Genesis 1:26). Therefore we stand by the principles of inclusiveness and interdependence between men and women. All limitations to the fullness of life envisaged in Christ must be completely uprooted, including homosexuality and lesbianism as stated in Leviticus 18, 22-25. We advocate gender equity, by which we mean that women must fully participate in decisions and operations that affect the Church, politics, economics and society as a whole. We assert that social roles of men and women can be reconstructed and transformed by society; since they are culturally constructed they can also be socially deconstructed.

### **3.2.11 Social Solidarity and the Promotion of the Family**

Human beings are social creatures by nature. They grow in communities. Human dignity can be recognized, developed and protected only in community with others. Since we are all created in God's image, each person is brother or sister to every other and can develop as a healthy human person only in a community of relationships rooted in love and justice.

We all belong to one human family. As such, we have mutual obligations to promote the rights and development of all people across communities, nations and the world. To be in solidarity with others is to recognize that all other humans have the same humanity as us. They have their needs, desires, life plans and goals just like we do. Thus to be in solidarity with others is to be moved by other people's suffering and to be uplifted by their happiness. To be unmoved by other people's suffering is to show moral and spiritual underdevelopment.

Human beings achieve their fulfilment in solidarity with others – in families, communities, and other social institutions that foster growth, protect dignity and promote the common good.

In the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-28), Jesus made the point that we should extend our Christian love to all people, regardless of race, religion, nationality or any other artificial distinction. We must practise that love even toward our enemies!

The first and most basic community for every person is the immediate family. Family stability must therefore always be protected and never be undermined. This calls for:

- The protection and support of marriages.
- Promotion of family life through pensions, inheritance laws and policies that enhance family togetherness.

- Support for child headed households.

### 3.2.12 Stewardship of Creation

We acknowledge that God created the universe and made humankind the stewards of that part of it called the earth and its atmosphere. As stewards we are accountable to God for our management of the earth and its resources (Gen 1:26-28). Our role is to be living reminders of the Creator. The kingdom of God not only offers salvation to us but also points to the future renewal of all creation (Romans 8:18-23). As stewards, therefore, we will participate in this salvific future of God's creation by protecting, sustaining, and restoring it and addressing the links between human poverty and environmental degradation. Therefore our vision of the sustainability of the Zimbabwe we want incorporates both social justice and ecological restoration.

The command for us to exercise dominion over the earth does not therefore mean we must destroy it, but work it and take care of it (Gen 2, 15). Dominion requires responsible stewardship. Such stewardship must uphold the common good of humanity, while also respecting the end for which each creature was intended, and the means necessary to achieve that end. If we exercise dominion in a way that ultimately destroys nature's creative potential or denies the human family the fruits of creation, such action constitutes an offence against God's original plan for creation. Rather we must exercise care and responsibility for God's domain particularly in the interest of those who are poor and marginalized.

As stewards we recognize that human beings form the apex of God's creation. Our stewardship can never therefore be merely environmental; it also addresses the links between human poverty and environmental degradation. We cannot exploit the environment for selfish reasons without causing human beings to suffer sooner or later. Hence, our vision of sustainability incorporates both social justice and ecological restoration.

The imperative for human work to meet human needs and restore our fallen world, which is implied by the process of development, appears throughout Scripture. The Church therefore places greater value on human labour as perhaps no other religion in history. Work and discovery are essential to God's plan for human fulfilment. To the greatest extent, the value of human labour finds its fulfilment in the discovery of those ways in which nature can be most responsibly and effectively placed at the service of the human family. This is the most authentic definition of human progress.

Throughout the world where Zimbabweans are scattered, we are known to be resourceful and hardworking people. Being industrious and resourceful has made Zimbabweans survivors, even under harsh economic conditions. This is a value we must continue to cherish in the Zimbabwe we want.

Our resourcefulness must lead us both to produce raw materials, and also to turn those raw materials into finished products. Our economy is currently suffering in part because we export raw materials at the price determined by the industrialized nations, and then import finished products at a very high cost, also determined by those same nations which are enriching themselves on the basis of our raw materials. A true spirit of industry must make us like the ant that Solomon talked about. Like Jesus we need to glorify God by completing the work he has given us to do for the benefit of our nation and its future.

Our stewardship therefore embraces the following imperatives:

- We care for creation as a God-given responsibility, but the love of neighbour as a being with an eternal destiny, is a still higher demand. We should protect the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, taking all possible steps to see that each person's basic needs are met.
- As wise stewards, we must refine our knowledge of God's world through the natural sciences, environmental ethics, and a vision of sustainability.
- Ecology and economics must go hand in hand. Sound environmental stewardship is the link between the two. Greater prosperity generally correlates with greater concern for dealing with environmental questions.
- Legislation and resources must be provided for the protection of our environment against evils like unregulated gold panning, deforestation, atmospheric pollution, soil erosion, uncontrolled wild fires, siltation of rivers, poaching of wild animals and other environmental concerns.

### **3.2.13 Justice and the rule of law**

"He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God". These resounding words from Micah 6:8 show that justice is high up on God's agenda for his people. They were addressed to the people of Judah, where greed (3:1-4), dishonesty (6:10-11) and corruption (7:2-4) were the order of the day. It was a situation where the poor ended up being exploited by the rich and the powerful. So God demands that justice should be done. It is a demand echoed by all pre-exilic prophets – Amos in particular.

But what does justice mean? The justice that the prophets demanded is not abstract; it is very practical, down-to-earth actions which take place to ensure that the weak are protected from abuse, that the poor have what they need, and that the socially disadvantaged are cared for. It means giving to everyone what God has intended for them regardless of gender, status or any other distinction.

In this regard the history of Zimbabwe has been characterized by injustice. Colonialism involved land being taken from our forefathers, and Zimbabweans being made third class citizens in the land of their birth. Until recently there has been a great imbalance in land ownership and utilization, the majority of Zimbabweans being crowded in poor "reserves" while the tiny white population (never greater than 5% at any point in our history) occupied the greater part of the best land. That was great injustice. Under UDI, certain jobs, schools, hospitals and residential areas were reserved for whites. That was great injustice. The majority of blacks had no voting rights and the few whites ruled over the majority blacks by reason of their skin colour. That was great injustice. The effort to overcome these great injustices eventually led to the liberation war.

But sadly, new forms of injustice emerged or were perpetuated after independence. The fact that many voters remain unrepresented in Parliament because of the first past the post system is an injustice. The fact that 30 seats in parliament are not contested but are directly or indirectly the result of presidential appointment gives a very unfair advantage to the ruling party. The fact that only the ruling party has the right to

nominate heroes, while using the national fiscus for the burial of such heroes is wrong. This is not the Zimbabwe we want.

But injustice is also experienced in the private sphere. Within commerce and industry labourers are underpaid while the management enriches itself. In the home, continued gender preference for the boy-child against the girl-child is injustice. These are but a few examples of injustices, which Zimbabweans must detest and correct. Without justice there can be no peace and harmony.

#### **3.2.14 Service and Accountability**

Service, as opposed to self-centredness, is a practical way of promoting unity and harmony among our people. The call to serve one another in love stands in stark contrast to the normal human desire for position and self-preference. The spirit of service also seeks to add value to others. It acknowledges that meaning is found in meeting the needs of others rather than in self-centredness. No better example of service exists than Jesus' willingness to give up his life in order that others might be saved. As he said of himself, he 'did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mt 20:28). Following Jesus' example, selfless service and a concern for the weak and the powerless became the distinguishing mark of the early Christian community.

#### **3.2.15 Promotion of the common good**

The goods of this earth are meant for the benefit of everyone. Thus all created things and those produced by humans should be shared justly. The right to private property is good in so far as it facilitates the realization of the common good. When private property ceases to serve the common good, it also ceases to be morally justified.

The common good is the sum total of all those conditions of social living – i.e. economic, political, social, cultural and technological, which make it possible for all women, men, and children to fully achieve their natural potential by growing physically, emotionally, psychologically, intellectually and socially. The role of the Church is to contribute to the common good and must be understood in this way. The Church has sometimes allowed itself to be intimidated and persuaded to withdraw from this role. Or if it is allowed or encouraged to take up this role, it has been given instructions on how to do it. For example, it has been told to participate in health and education but not in politics or economics.

The conditions which encourage the full growth of human capacities presuppose respect for the human person, the social wellbeing and development of the group, and the maintenance by public authority of peace and security.

At the national level, promoting the common good requires creating employment for all, making sure that everyone has access to healthcare, education, recreation and cultural development. It requires caring for the impoverished, the marginalized, and the vulnerable. It also requires providing for the future. That is the Zimbabwe we want.

Today, in an age of global interdependence, the principle of the common good points to the need for international structures and organizations that can promote development of a just human family across regional and national lines.

### **3.2.16 Option for the impoverished and marginalized**

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other” (Zechariah 7:9 -10).

Both Old and New Testaments exhort God’s people to pay special attention to vulnerable members of society like widows, orphans, aliens and the poor. The hunger that occurred in Jerusalem triggered a significant relief effort spearheaded by the Apostle Paul. Indeed God says: “I desire mercy not (ceremonial) sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6). These exhortations are very relevant for our situation where the majority of our people are very poor while a few are very rich. We cannot meaningfully talk of love and harmony when there are so many uncared for orphans and widows due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and where so many unemployed people can only live through stealing or begging.

The principle of the Common Good requires that all social, political, economic and cultural structures, systems and processes be accessible to all. However, in reality, some people are marginalized, impoverished and made vulnerable by the institutions we create. The preferential option for those in poverty is a conscious effort to correct the moral mistakes, failings and shortcomings of our social institutions, cultures and systems. The impoverished, marginalized and forgotten, need special care and attention. The Church and all the people of good will must choose to be on their side. The option for the impoverished is an option that is inspired by the Jubilee vision laid out in the Book of Leviticus through the proclamations of the Hebrew prophets and Jesus’ identification of his vocation as “bringing good news to the poor ... and proclaiming the year of God’s Jubilee” (Luke 4:16-19).

### **3.2.17 Excellence**

After Jesus healed a deaf man, people “were completely amazed and said again and again, ‘Everything he does is wonderful. He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who cannot speak’” (Mark 7:37). What people saw in the actions of Jesus was that quality we call excellence. He excelled in whatever he did.

To excel is to go beyond average. Leadership expert John Maxwell writes: “Excellence can be attained if you care more than others think is wise; if you risk more than others think is safe; if you dream more than others think is practical; if you expect more than others think is possible; and if you work more than others think is necessary”<sup>1</sup>. Excellence means exceeding expectations, going the second mile when you have only been asked to go one.

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<sup>1</sup> *Million Leaders Mandate* published by Equip, 2004

As Zimbabweans we need to foster excellence in all aspects of the nation's affairs. We need to avoid the current speculative tendency which opts for short-term gains at the expense of long-term development. We must both demand the best and give of our best in all spheres of national life.

### 3.3 OUTCOMES

Our Vision of the **Zimbabwe we want** will inform and have a direct bearing and long term impact on the kind of political, economic, social and developmental strategies, structures, competencies and resources that are needed to make a desirable, profitable and attainable national destiny. The implementation of our core-values will ensure that Zimbabwe becomes a nation that will:

- Guarantee personal and environmental security where there is no embedded systematic and systemic threat to the exercise of ordinarily accepted norms of individual and collective expression.
- Safe-guard the personal worth and dignity of all.
- Guarantee personal and economic progress, maximisation and actualisation regardless of race, tribe, gender and political affiliation.
- Facilitate the creation of an atmosphere conducive to individual, family, community and social tolerance, acceptance, integration and participation.
- Create and defend a democratic, just and responsible system of governance, that upholds the constitution as the bedrock of national democracy and individual freedom and security through the rule of law and the impartiality and verity of the judiciary and civil service.

### 3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The core-values articulated above need to be inculcated into the national consciousness in several ways:

- 3.4.1 Some of them, like justice, must be reflected in our constitution, particularly when it comes to levelling out the electoral playing field.
- 3.4.2 The values must be exemplified in the operation of all the three organs of state: the legislature, the executive and the judiciary.
- 3.4.3 Every social unit must practice these values, starting from the family level and going into Churches, schools, commerce, industry and every government department.
- 3.4.4 Values education must be introduced in our schools and tertiary institutions. In some nations this is already being done and we could learn a lot from their example which is committed to making values a core part of schooling. This is in recognition of the fact that education is as much about building character as it is about equipping students with specific skills.

## SECTION 4

### TOWARDS A HOME GROWN CONSTITUTION

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Zimbabwe is made up of a multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-lingual society. It is characterized by unity-in-diversity. This is not a weakness but strength. The bond that binds us together is that we are Zimbabweans. Our failures in life harm us all in some way and our successes ought to benefit us in some way. Any efforts aimed at arriving at a national consensus must be predicated on the existence of the social reality of political, social, religious and cultural pluralism.

We pride ourselves in our sovereignty but that sovereignty does not reside in one individual or one group. It resides in the people of Zimbabwe as a collective. The authority to govern is derived from the people. Those who govern, regardless whatever political opinions they may have, must be accountable to the people. Failure to observe this principle will result in a fractured and dysfunctional society.

Success in the management of a country's affairs depends in large measure on the consensus in shared values and a system of governance which provides space for democratic participation of the people. Consensus gives the people a sense of ownership of their institutions. Governance by consent and consensus is the key to peace, stability, social and economic development. A people centred and people crafted constitution is the centrepiece of governance and development.

#### 4.2 THE LANCASTER CONSTITUTION

We have already stated that the current Lancaster House constitution was not inspired by the collective consent and consensus of the people of Zimbabwe. It does not reflect the **Zimbabwe we want**. The fact that our constitution has been amended 17 times during 25 years is clearly indicative of the sorry state of our constitution. The piecemeal amendment of the Constitution is highly unsatisfactory and shows the need for constitutional review. The piecemeal approach destroys the coherence which ought to characterize a constitution.

A scrutiny of the proposed Constitutional drafts by the Government Constitutional Commission, the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and other groups reveals that there are no fundamental or ideological differences that are irreconcilable or non-negotiable. A constitutional accommodation is achievable provided there is commitment on the part of all major players to put the interests of the country first. Any resolution of the polarization which exists now in Zimbabwe demands an inclusive approach to issues of constitution making and governance.

The overriding interests in any constitutional reform process should be to create an enabling and conducive framework for good, peaceful and stable governance. There is

no need to re-invent the wheel. There is sufficient comprehensive constitutional material to enable a reasonably sized and representative commission or team to draft a constitution which can be put to a national referendum. What is of paramount importance is to agree on the composition of such a commission or team.

## **4.3 MAIN AREAS OF DIVERGENCE, CONTENTION AND CONVERGENCE**

### **4.3.1 The Executive Authority**

There is broad agreement that the powers enjoyed by the President under the current constitution need to be circumscribed. The main differences are in the manner and extent of the circumscription. This was expressed in different formulae in the different constitutional drafts. For example the question is whether the office of the Prime Minister should be recreated with the executive powers being shared between the President as Head of State and the Prime Minister as head of government

### **4.3.2 Legislature**

- The Constitutional Amendment 17 re-established a bi-cameral legislature by creating the Senate and House of Assembly. The critical issue in respect of the Legislature relate to the composition and system of elections of members of both Houses. In respect of composition the contentious issue is that the President has patronage of directly appointing a total of 18 members of Parliament (12 members of the House of Assembly and 6 Senators) out of a total of 216 (150 members of the House of Assembly and 66 Senators) and this compromises the democratic character of the Legislature.

- **Electoral System**

The electoral system is one of the pillars of the parliamentary democratic representative process. Elections and their management have become one of the key criterion for evaluating the extent to which a country has adopted the ethos and practice of democracy. It is so fundamental that it should be provided for in the constitution, which is not the case in Zimbabwe. It is currently regulated by an Act of Parliament; which means it can be modified by a simple majority and not by Constitutional Amendment which is more accountable.

The first-past-the-post winner-takes all electoral system can produce grossly distorted and inequitable results which can lead to the alienation of significant portions of the population. The Lesotho crisis of 1996/7 is a poignant and painful example of this. The party that won 79 of the 80 Parliamentary seats garnered 60% of the votes while 40% of the voters had no representation (one of the candidates died before the election). Most SADC countries have wisely adopted proportionate representation or a mixed system.

- **Electoral Process and Institutions**

The electoral process provides an opportunity for the choice, installation and change of governments and the transfer of power in peaceful circumstances. In other words electoral systems are the vehicle that gives expression to the will of the people.

One of the most important electoral bodies is the Election Commission. It is vital that the Election Commission inspires confidence and protects the integrity of the process in the delivery of elections which can be regarded and seen to be free and fair. The body must be impartial and not seen as amenable to political or other pressure. Such a body must be the main custodian of the electoral process-the election campaign, access to media and media coverage. Because of its fundamental role the composition, mandate and status of the commission should be provided for in the Constitution and thus put it beyond the power of any majoritarian parliamentary alteration.

#### **4.3.3 The Judiciary**

The doctrine of the separation of powers and checks and balances are very fundamental when it comes to the role of the judiciary. The appointment of the judiciary must inspire confidence and safeguard it from being beholden to the executive or other influence. Secondly the exercise of its powers in pronouncing on legislation vis-à-vis the constitution and the role it plays in upholding the rule of law and defending individual democratic rights needs constitutional and structural protection.

#### **4.3.4 Bill of Rights**

- The constitution of Zimbabwe sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual in the Declaration of Rights, Chapter III. But the constitution is riddled with exceptions which seriously impair the efficacy of the Bill Of Rights. The exception clauses have been used to justify the constitutionality of the enactment of such repressive legislation as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), and The Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). It is clear that the exception clauses in the constitution provide loopholes that can be used to curtail the full and unfettered enjoyment of the Bill of Rights.

- **Social, Economic and Cultural Rights**

The provisions of the constitution focus completely on justiable rights i.e. political and civil rights and make no reference at all to social, economic and cultural rights which are currently non-justiable. This is a weakness.

- **Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission**

Constitutional amendment 18 is now on its way to create the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission. While the broad concept is good, a great opportunity may be lost to mobilize consensus, inspire confidence and bring healing and relief to many who have suffered needlessly in the past.

## SECTION 5

### NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

#### 5.1 THE ECONOMIC POLICIES AND PERFORMANCE

At independence, the economy was war ravaged and the newly elected government was faced with serious challenges: the need for reconstruction and rehabilitation, the need to fight the economic war which would usher in a balanced ownership of the economy against a two thirds foreign ownership of invested capital, and the need to open up social services which were previously accessed by the minority regime.

The extremely high expectations from the general population did not afford the newly elected government the time for the necessary adjustments commensurate with the expected demand for goods and services. Inherent in the opening up of existing social services without corresponding economic expansion is the stretching of such services beyond their hitherto intended capacity, and their consequent inevitable deterioration. The high expectations following the liberation war were so visible that even before the new government was sworn in, the nation was engulfed in nation-wide strikes, a situation which demanded some form of fire fighting both in the social and economic front. There was need for a radical, rather leftist approach to the transformation of the economy in order to meet the high expectations. However, government was cautious in order to maintain international lines of credit, hence it remained practically right wing though rhetorically left.

However, as a result of the opening up of the economy to the international world, renewed access to international aid and borrowing from abroad, favourable terms of trade, good weather conditions, excess capacity and increased aggregate demand arising from agricultural and wage incomes, the economy experienced a major boom during the first two years of independence. Real Gross Domestic Product (**GDP**) grew by 11% in 1980, and 10% in 1981 (ZCTU, 2003). This economic boom resulted in the introduction of liberal policies on foreign exchange allocation, remittance of dividends and profits, and an expansionary incomes policy that contributed to macroeconomic instability.

Various economic policies and programmes were tried since independence, as Government continually tried to redress the dualism in both the social and the economic sectors which was characterized by a relatively well-developed modern sector and a largely poor rural sector. The programmes included:

- *Growth with Equity* policy of 1981
- *Zimbabwe Transitional National Development Plan (1982-1985)*
- *Zimbabwe first five-year National Development Plan (1986-90).*
- *Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP)* from 1991
- *Zimbabwe Programme for Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST)* launched in April 1998
- *Millennium Economic Recovery Programme (MERP)* launched in 2001

- *National Economic Revival Programme (NERP): Measures to Address the Current Challenges, 2003*

The multiplicity of development programmes, particularly within the second decade of the country's independence, is indicative of the failure to reverse the deterioration of the economic situation since the 1990s. The failure to transform the economic systems at the onset of independence, largely because Government's hands were tied by the Lancaster Agreement, made economic liberation a distant reality and a nagging problem for Zimbabwe.

## 5.2 THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

The Zimbabwean economy is currently in an unprecedented crisis characterised by:

- High levels of inflation, currently estimated around four digit figures;
- High levels of national debt and the consequent disruption of international lines of trade;
- High levels of poverty with the rural and women folk suffering the brunt of such poverty;
- Food insecurity resulting from periodic droughts and the disruption of production within the programme of equi-distribution of land;
- High levels of unemployment as companies reduce production. This necessitates once again the phenomenon of split families, which was characteristic of the dual colonial economy, as people emigrate in search for jobs;
- Shortages of critical basic commodities on the formal market. Where such commodities are available, they are neither accessible nor affordable to the majority of the poor.
- A thriving parallel market for basic commodities. The beneficiaries of the price controls are therefore the speculators and dealers who are capitalizing on the shortages by importing the needed goods which they sell at exorbitant prices.
- A thriving foreign currency parallel market which determines the prices of imported goods;
- The production of lower quality products, as producers are, forced to reduce inputs in order to maintain profit margins against a backdrop of rising input costs.
- The criminalization of the average Zimbabwean, as people are, scrambling for survival. There is mass stress, tension and bitterness as people fail to meet their daily needs.
- The consequent politicization and militarization of the economy where government is now a major player instead of being a neutral facilitator.

## 5.3 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

We believe that the current state of the economy in Zimbabwe is not what God intended any part of this world to be. The first Biblical account of creation is concluded with the words "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). As stated earlier, God wants us to be happy and to live fulfilling lives. When God created the world he gave to human beings everything that they needed to live well. The earth was endowed with all the means needed to live a life of happiness. Human beings were endowed with the brains to be co-creators with

God as testified in advances in all areas of human development. The earth itself was created with a great deal of wealth, minerals, plants, animals, birds of the air, fish of the sea, etc. All these were entrusted to human beings to sustain their lives so that they can live happily for ever. The intervention of sin in Genesis 2 brought all the misery and greed that has impoverished other human beings while others became very rich.

In the New Testament Jesus testified that he came not to kill or destroy but that God's people "may have life and have it in its fullness" (John 10:10). His was a holistic approach to life. Our social and economic life was equally a major concern to him, and not just the spiritual life, hence the preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged. Where there is poverty or any form of suffering there is no fullness of life.

The same holistic approach continued in the early Church. The early Christians cared for one another. They even went to the extent of selling their lands and houses and shared the proceeds to ensure that the needs of the entire community are met (Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35). Special collections in congregations were made for the poor in order to improve the quality of their lives as well. The prophets in the Old Testament were not afraid to denounce any socio-economic injustices. The message of love which is central to the Gospel of Christ negates any unjust economic system and demands prudent economic policies that ensure an equitable sharing of the resources available to sustain life. It demands equal opportunity and access to the means of production, to jobs, to health and education facilities, the absence of which negates the individual's participation in life in its fullness.

From a theological perspective this is what we see as the challenge faced by our nation: How do we create a socio economic environment that will enable every individual to look forward to a new day with every hope for a fulfilling life with food to eat and ability to send ones your child to school and be able to provide for one's other physical and spiritual needs? As we search for a solution to our economic hardships, let us do it in humility and in the spirit of God's love for us and for one another, and in the light of the core values that we have identified in order to build *the Zimbabwe we want*.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.4.1 Targeted Relief**

Having to deal with a membership which is groaning in poverty with people failing to meet their daily needs such as food, housing and clothing, the Church recommends the provision of targeted relief assistance to distressed households, as present intervention methods are not adequately addressing these needs . An audit which will identify distressed households is necessary. Such relief must be de-politicized.

#### **5.4.2 Policy Formulation**

There is need for a broad-based formulation, implementation and monitoring of an economic policy which is owned by people. Such a policy must be inclusive, gender sensitive and responsive to the interests of all marginalized groups. It is time that the Zimbabwean people openly share a vision of their economy; a shared vision will enhance the success of a policy if the views of other consulted stakeholders are taken into account. If there is any good that might emanate from this economic depression if well managed, it is a shared vision and approach to economic management. There is need for consensus building, a springboard for development.

#### **5.4.3 Economic stabilization**

There is need for economic stabilization through the adoption of appropriate monetary and fiscal policies. There is need to reduce inflation to manageable figures, while achieving positive interest rates that will facilitate investment, hence development. It is necessary to normalize relationships with development partners for this will enhance the inflow of foreign currency, aid and investment.

#### **5.4.4 Good governance and the creation of a facilitative environment for development**

As highlighted by the ZIMPREST, fiscal discipline on the part of government is needed, and so is good governance and the elimination of corruption. Accountability is an indispensable ingredient for economic recovery. The use of the code of conduct such as the one used before is necessary.

#### **5.4.5 Mainstreaming the informal sector**

It is necessary to mainstream the informal sector dominated by the marginalized groups such as women, children and the poor in general, into the formal economy. Government must endeavour to strengthen people where they are currently eking a living, and not to be inhibitive and punitive. There is need to build bridges between people and government.

#### **5.4.6 Sustained economic development**

There is need for the eradication of poverty through sustained economic development which can be achieved by the involvement of the majority. To achieve this, it is necessary to empower people through skills training and resource redistribution to cater for those with entrepreneurial capacity and for the employment of those without the requisite skills. Zimbabwe can learn from its experience in the mid 1980s where the new farmers were provided with skills and resources; this culminated into resounding agricultural production. The involvement of all Zimbabweans will destroy the deeply entrenched enclavity while producing an integrated internally driven economy where growth is people centred and equitably shared. Participation of the stakeholders must be institutionalized.

#### **5.4.7 Building bridges with the international community**

As a Church we commit ourselves to utilize our global Church network throughout the world, particularly those related to our development partners to lobby their governments and other institutions to support Zimbabwe in the reconstruction efforts through the cancellation of our international debt and making generous grants towards

the reconstruction of our economy. This will only be possible if as Zimbabweans we can speak with one voice, hence this initiative by the Church to bring about reconciliation and unite our nation.

## SECTION 6

### THE LAND QUESTION AS PART OF THE ECONOMY

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The land question remains the single most emotive subject in our nation and its resolution will have far reaching benefits for the nation. This is so because agriculture has always been the mainstay of our country's economy. Between 1980 and 1999, it contributed over 40% of national exports and 18% of Gross Domestic Product (**GDP**), employed 30% of the formal labour force and 70% of the population. Close to 50% of **GDP** growth depended directly or indirectly on agriculture and agro-industry<sup>2</sup>.

However, the agrarian structure before independence was highly inequitable, largely along racial lines. This situation continued late into the 90s. In 1999, the large-scale commercial farming (**LSCF**) sector comprised 4,000 white families owning about 9,000 farms, and about 20 large agro-industrial estates. By 2000 about 400 blacks held **LSCF** farms while another 400 held middle sized state leasehold-to-buy farms. By contrast, over 1.2 million smallholder producer families held an average of 3 hectares each of marginal arable land with limited infrastructure, while approximately 300 000 households were landless or land short<sup>3</sup>. The **LSCF** sector comprised 75% of the most fertile land, 90% of the irrigation and agricultural electricity resources and the bulk of various rural public infrastructural resources. Sooner or later there was bound to be some unrest resulting from the glaring inequitable distribution of land. This situation was morally indefensible and certainly needed to be corrected.

However, the process of correcting this situation has been fraught with controversy and was accompanied by a lot of pain, leaving our society highly polarized. Since 2000, the Government has been implementing the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (**FTLRP**) to re-distribute land to the landless. This was mainly a result of the moral obligation to redress the injustices of the past, and partly in response to the social pressures that were building as a result of the slow land reform process between 1980 and 1999. Under the **FTLRP**, 11 million hectares of land have been acquired and are in the process of being re-distributed. By mid 2003, 135 000 smallholder households and small to medium commercial farmers had benefited from the programme<sup>4</sup>.

Between 2000 and 2003 the land redistribution process gave rise to numerous social and political conflicts on the farms and elsewhere. Some standing crops, livestock,

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<sup>2</sup> Matshe, I. (2003) "Impacts of the Fast Track Land Reforms on the Zimbabwe Economy" AIAS Research Paper, Harare: Mimeo

<sup>3</sup> Moyo, S. (2000) Land Reform Under Structural Adjustment: Land Use Change in the Mashonaland Provinces, Stockholm: Nordiska Africa Institutet.

<sup>4</sup> PLRC (2003) Presidential Land Review Committee Report, Chaired by Dr. C. Utete, Government of Zimbabwe, Harare: Government Printers.

equipment and other property were lost or affected through theft and grabbing by some opportunists. In general, the land reform process has been mired in various implementation irregularities and the misapplication of policy in some aspects<sup>5</sup>. This situation, coupled with the frequent droughts during the implementation period, inadequate capacity and resource constraints of the new farmers and other external factors, contributed to a decline in agricultural production that impacted significantly on the overall economy.

However, between 1980 and 1999 Zimbabwe's agricultural sector grew steadily, albeit slowly. The country was generally self sufficient in food production, although there were some imports, especially during drought periods. During the 1990s agriculture was increasingly liberalised, with agricultural pricing and marketing being decontrolled. Greater incentives led to the growth of diversified traditional and non-traditional commodities.

The cry for land continued. Land reforms of a gradual type were initiated from 1980 up to 1996. Government was unable to meet its targets for the land to be acquired for distribution due to the weaknesses of the Lancaster Constitution, escalating land prices, inadequate external funding of the programme, and poor cooperation from the former large scale commercial farmers. This resulted in sporadic "illegal" land occupations which sought to redress the land imbalances.

## 6.2 BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Our point of departure in any discussion about the land is the recognition that land is a gift from God. Human existence is inextricably bound to the land, which means that without land there can be no human existence. Every people must have a piece of land that they can call their own if they should exist at all. It is that means that God created and gave to human beings together with everything that is in it to sustain all life (Gen. 1:25 – 30). It is a gift to everybody irrespective of their ethnic background, political or religious affiliation, gender or race. This means that everybody by virtue of their being a child of God is entitled to a piece of land for shelter and as a means of livelihood. We are dealing with a fundamental human rights issue. The use of race, gender, religious or political affiliation as criteria to deprive another person or group of their right to land is contrary to the will of God, and is a clear manifestation of human alienation from God and from one another as a result of sin.

Secondly, because of sin and human greed, the Bible is full of examples where the rich and powerful grabbed other peoples' lands, thus disempowering them and leaving them homeless, without food and other means of livelihood. With their land taken many of them became slaves of the powerful. They became economically disempowered and relegated to a life of poverty, hunger and starvation, and were completely at the mercy of the rich and powerful. A very good example is found in Nehemiah where a situation had arisen where the poor were oppressed not by an external power but by their own kindred to the extent that they had to mortgage their fields with its vineyards and homes in order to survive. The oppression was by their own kindred, hence they complained to Nehemiah: "Our flesh is the same as that of our kindred; our children are the same as their children; and yet we are forcing our

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<sup>5</sup> PLRC. (2003) op cit.

sons and daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been ravished; we are powerless, our fields and vineyards now belong to others” (Nehemiah 5:5). This very much sounds like our experience in Zimbabwe today where a few people have amassed land and other properties at the expense of the poor, rendering the poor even poorer.

In the biblical tradition the only way to redeem the situation was through the Jubilee whereby on every 50<sup>th</sup> year those who had grabbed or used their monitory power to take other peoples land were required to return that land to its rightful owners. Jesus began his ministry by proclaiming the Jubilee year – “the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18-19). In His teaching the Good News is clearly linked to the liberation of the poor, the oppressed, and those suffering in many ways the restitution of their lands. In Biblical terms land restitution is seen as an integral part of freedom. The freedom of those who have been oppressed is manifest in the repossession of their land. Until the land is redeemed the people will continue to groan and to be restless; the land will continue to groan. According to Paul’s letter to the Romans the redemption of God’s people also means the redemption of all of God’s creation (Rom. 8), which in our understanding means the restoration of the land to its rightful owners.

What we are saying is that land restitution must follow the liberation of a people. It is a process that God in His love ordered in the Jubilee year for the empowerment of the poor and dispossessed. Since our God is a God of order and not chaos, that process must be done in an orderly fashion and should never be intended to make the powerful more powerful or the rich richer. There must be a deliberate preferential option for the poor in any redistribution of the land as this is in line with the divinely instituted Jubilee concept. It must not take away even that little that the poor may still possess as is often experienced. Any land redistribution must be intended to sustain life and not to destroy life and not increase the misery of the poor.

The cry for the redistribution of land is indeed a cry for justice. Our situation in Zimbabwe poses many challenges and as a nation we can benefit significantly if we respond to these challenges in the light of the Biblical understanding of land and under the guidance of our core values as articulated above.

### **6.3 CHALLENGES**

The fast track land reform programme (FTLRP) redistributed over 80 percent of former large scale commercial farming (LSCF) farmland, and the racial distribution of access to land has been radically improved, thus redressing a key social and political problem. This process was accompanied in the immediate term by significant losses in production and of capital stock. The outcome has also entailed uneven distribution of land and infrastructure, insecurity of tenure, and the displacement of some ex-farm workers. Government increased its interventions in input, output, financial and foreign exchange markets, alongside increasing inflation and, inputs and forex shortages, resulting in reduced farm profitability of key commodities. The combination of the severe problems resulting from the land distribution program, declining profitability, poor weather, financing and inputs supply constraints and declining external aid, led to reduced cropped area, yields and outputs, and overall

agricultural production decline. Agricultural production declined by about 26% between 2000 and 2004. There are two exceptions to these adverse trends: the communal areas, where despite the adverse conditions, production levels have been surprisingly resilient, declining by less than 2.5% in non-drought years and the plantation and export sectors where production has fluctuated at plus or minus 7.0%.

The Utete Report and this review show that the implementation of the **FTLRP** has left much to be desired, and the losses in production, capital stock, and employment have been substantial. Moreover, many intended beneficiary groups have benefited far too little from the land allocation, and decongestion of communal areas is insufficient. Perhaps the most serious problem is that former farm workers have not only been largely left out of the benefits of the land reform, but many have lost their employment, become homeless and destitute.

Most agricultural markets and institutions have been seriously weakened as a result of the changes implemented during the **FTLRP** period. Although new marketing institutions and processes have emerged, their effectiveness has been constrained by policies, resource gaps and weak capacities of some of the farmers. Given the differential capabilities of farmers and the fact that markets are thin in general, the weakest actors have had the least access to the limited agricultural resources and markets. These are mainly people in communal and resettlement areas, and those belonging to vulnerable social groups (HIV and AIDS) affected, women, farm workers, etc). The range of the vulnerable and poor has expanded and food insecurity has been exacerbated by drought and the land transfers. Likewise, agricultural production trends were severely reduced in former **LSCF** areas because of the land transfers, as well as the effects of government policy, resource gaps and drought, which led to dramatic output and yield declines.

Our assessment, however, is that there is considerable room, and a range of existing farmer and agency capabilities and potentials, to reverse these declining production trends, and that agricultural recovery can feasibly be instituted in the medium term. This will require appropriate land, agricultural productivity and economic policy reforms, various corrective measures in land reform implementation, and these will need to be accompanied by a sound social protection program.

Emerging from this review are a number of challenges that need addressing both in the short and the medium to long-term. These challenges can broadly be put into three categories. The first category is policy related, the second relates to agricultural productivity while the third category relates to the need for social protection for marginal and vulnerable members of our society.

### 6.3.1 Land Reform and Policy

There can be no doubting the need to bring finality to the land question so as to allow agricultural recovery. For this to happen, the following policy challenges need to be seriously addressed:

### **Completing the Legal Transfer of Land**

The delay in completing land acquisition is causing anxiety and instability in the agricultural sector (for resettled, displaced and remaining large-scale commercial farmers) with detrimental effects on productive land use. Chief among the challenges are issues of securing legally agreed land transfers and compensation for farm investments on acquired farms, as well as finalization of the acquisition process. A related issue souring negotiation of land transfers has been the broadening of farm acquisition to include moveable property such as tractors and other equipment.

### **Tenure Security**

This is perhaps the biggest determinant of agricultural recovery in the country. There is currently a lack of clarity on the legal status of the newly created farms and this, needs to be addressed if new farmers are to invest in farming. Land rights on estates and conservancies also need to be clarified. Related to this as well is the lack of clarity in the treatment of plantations, export processing zones, specialized enterprises such as dairy, seed production operations and protected areas (forest and wildlife areas). Equally important is the question of farms that are under Bilateral Investment Protection Agreements (**BIPAs**). Ambivalence on the question of **BIPAs** has negatively impacted on the credibility of the country regarding its preparedness to honour its international obligations.

### **Land Acquisition and Settlement on Special Enterprises**

Related to the tenure security issue is the problem of lack of clarity in the treatment of plantation, export processing zone agro-industrial concerns, farms under government to government agreements, and specialised enterprises such as dairy, seed production operations and forestry enterprises (timber and wildlife).

### **Improving Equity in the Allocation of Land**

Another challenge that needs to be addressed is the need to rationalise land allocations to accommodate a broad range of interest groups a number of which have hitherto been marginalized in the reform programme. Among these are the interests of women, war veterans, former farm workers and some displaced farmers who are willing to continue farming under the new dispensation. Most worrying is the seemingly unfair advantage captured by highly placed officials and those connected to them in land and water allocation over poor communal farmers and other disadvantaged groups.

### **Comprehensive Land Policy and Administrative Institutions Review**

Finally, the wide-ranging land and agriculture sector transformation demands a comprehensive review of policies and institutional structures governing land for its effective administration and use.

## **6.3.2 Agricultural Productivity**

There is a broad range of challenges that need to be addressed if the agriculture sector is to recover. Most agricultural markets and institutions have been seriously weakened as a result of the changes implemented during the FTLRP. There is, however, considerable room, and a range of existing farmer and agency capabilities and potentials to reverse the declining production trends and recovery can feasibly be

instituted in the medium term. The following challenges, however, need to be addressed:

### **Profitability Constraints**

A combination of exchange rate controls, output price controls, marketing and trade restrictions, as well as conditions that have limited the capacity utilisation of input industries, have combined to make inputs largely unaffordable and output prices too low, negatively affecting farm viability. As discussed in the next section, restoring agricultural profitability is key to the resumption of production and investment in agriculture and to the recovery of the sector.

### **Water**

Unclear water use partitioning following land reform, lack of financial resources to exploit available water and a lack of effective co-management arrangements for water in the resettlement areas have combined to reduce areas under irrigation with detrimental effects on yields.

### **Accessibility of Inputs**

Agricultural inputs have largely been unavailable and expensive to all classes of farmers. Adverse macroeconomic and sectoral conditions, including high interest rates, lack of foreign currency for raw material imports, government instituted non-viable prices, electrical power cuts and limited rail capacity, all contributed to low capacity utilisation of input producing firms, leading to shortages. Input shortages, coupled with defective parastatal input allocative processes, resulted in leakage of inputs to parallel markets where prices have been unaffordable to poorly resourced farmers. The supply of seeds has been limited by acquisition of seed producing farms which has largely not been balanced by development of new capacity from within the newly resettled sector. In addition, newly resettled areas are generally under-served by private input dealerships, having to incur huge transaction costs to acquire inputs.

### **Limitations in agricultural machinery**

The majority of land reform beneficiaries lack adequate machinery and draught power and do not have sufficient resources to acquire these in the short-term. Public equipment and draught hire services are under capitalised to fill the gap while private hire services have been slow in developing, due to a lack of technical and financial resources.

### **Output Marketing**

A number of output marketing constraints severely limit the recovery of the agricultural sector. Grain marketing controls, and government fixed prices combined with late payment by the GMB in a highly inflationary environment, have severely reduced realisations by grain producers. Exportable crop producers also experienced low returns as a result of indirect taxing of products through exchange rate overvaluation, as well as from export bans on oilseeds which cut off the positive influence of international prices. Poor commercialisation of the communal cattle herd severely limits market opportunities at a time when the commercial beef cattle herd has gone down due to farm acquisitions. The situation is compounded by a generally slow development of output market outlets closer to the newly resettled farms.

### **Technology Generation and Transfer**

The state of agricultural advisory services is currently limiting in its support of the transformed agricultural sector. A significant number of reform beneficiaries do not have adequate farming skills. The reforms have created an expansion of the grower base not matched by expansion of extension support. This has led, in some cases, to diversion of extension personnel from communal areas, where the need is great, to newly resettled areas. Currently, the scope for self-provisioning of knowledge services, as practiced by the large-scale commercial farmers in the past, is rather limited. In addition, the changed scales of production necessitated by farm subdivisions have made some production processes uneconomic, necessitating moving to more intensive production processes, the skills which are underdeveloped in the public agricultural knowledge services.

### **Farm Finance**

Over the past fifteen years, smallholder farmers have experienced difficulties in accessing finance. The expansion of this farming sub-sector in the Fast Track Reform period has increased the extent of areas not covered by financial services. In the A2 schemes, unclear tenure and lack of track record in farming have been barriers to private sector provision of credit. In addition, prevailing hyperinflation has made credit financing uneconomic. Thus the bulk of available farm finance has been from government sources which have been rather limited due to fiscal constraints and been largely inaccessible to smallholder farmers due to capture by elites.

### **Limited Farmer Capacity**

The state of agricultural advisory services is currently limiting in its support of the transformed agricultural sector. A significant number of reform beneficiaries do not have adequate farming skills.

### **Food Security**

Droughts and land transfers have led to significant food production shortages and depleted food reserves. The general lack of foreign currency has limited the country's ability to import food. In addition, the effects of droughts and HIV/AIDS have led to asset disposal by the chronically food insecure, further increasing their vulnerability. In urban areas, controls on maize movements have reduced access to grain from rural areas, forcing households to depend on expensive industrially milled grain.

### **Foreign Currency Earnings**

Historically, the agricultural sector has been a major contributor to foreign currency earnings for Zimbabwe. Land transfers have, however, led to drastic reductions in tobacco, horticulture and soya bean production with detrimental effects on foreign currency earnings at a time of great national need.

## **6.3.3 Social Protection**

Very few former farm workers were resettled in the reform program and the newly resettled farmers have, as yet, not employed significant numbers of former farm workers. Thus within the rural areas there are large numbers of former farm workers without stable means of livelihood. In all smallholder areas there is, also a large proportion of chronically vulnerable groups of households, including the old, resource poor and those affected by HIV/AIDS, whose situation is particularly precarious due to the effects of the recent droughts. The situation of these vulnerable groups is even

worse in the newly resettled areas which lack essential social infrastructure including roads, health facilities, schools, retail outlets and other small non-farming industries offering social services and alternative income generating opportunities. Development of viable communities following the reforms will be difficult if such groups are not catered for. The loss of urban employment opportunities, due to closure and / or downsizing of some major industrial and commercial operations, is also a serious issue, strengthening the case for a strong social protection program.

## **6.4 WAY FORWARD: TOWARDS FINALIZING THE LAND QUESTION**

As indicated earlier, the land question has been the most emotive national question that has left our nation highly polarised. Now is the time to galvanize all our energies to bring finality to this vexatious issue in a manner that heals the wounds of the past six years. Now also is the time for the Government to show magnanimity by extending its hand in reaching out to all its citizens, regardless of political affiliation, race, gender or ethnicity to seek consensus on the way forward.

As a start, there is general recognition that the current reforms are irreversible but what is required is developing a national consensus on how best to address the outstanding issues and correct the imperfections in the land redistribution process to the benefit of all citizens who want to build their future on the land as well as to the benefit of our national economy. Our vision ought to be guided by the principle that there should be no winners and losers but rather we should all come out of this experience as winners.

The following are considered critical priorities to finalization of the land reform programme:

### **6.4.1 Increase Tenure Security and Complete Land Reform Programme**

The first priority here is the need to stabilize the farming sector by bringing finality to land acquisitions so that both the new and old farmers may feel secure on their pieces of land. A major imperative is the need to complete the legal basis of land transfer (i.e. procedures that, following agreed compensation, lead to surrender of title deeds). It is noted that the Government intends to adopt a 99 year transferable lease system as the legal foundation of land tenure in the A2 farming areas while adopting a permit tenure system as a variant of the communal land tenure system for the A1 resettlements. It is important that these issues be finalized as soon as possible. It is also observed that land acquisition and compensation remain incomplete, and existing and future allocations of land remain in dispute on many acquired farms. Land tenure security will thus hold back investment and production unless these issues are addressed as quickly as possible. Tenure security will obtain when land allocations are firmly offered to all farmers, new and old and when such farmers are accorded legal protection of such land rights.

Land tenure security is critical in this process and will require participative consultation and/or negotiation processes involving all stakeholders. It is pleasing to note that a number of consultative processes are already underway, e.g. national and provincial dialogues on land and agrarian reform, and stakeholder consultations on wildlife conservancies, forest plantations and on indigenous forest reserves. In many

areas consensus could emerge quickly. Well-planned participatory processes can be carried out in a limited period of time and participation and consensus building are therefore not an insurmountable constraint to speedy action.

The currently proposed land tenure policy which differentiates the land tenure forms for A1 and A2 resettlement lands should be publicised and continue to guide administration in the mid term, during a transitional period over the next three to five years. The tenure policy for A1 farms is based on unifying their conditions of tenure with that of the communal areas, i.e. providing a form of 'customary' tenure for residential and arable land to individuals and group tenure for common grazing lands. But, where new self-contained A1 plots are in demand, a program to facilitate conversion should be implemented. The policy on the forms of land tenure in communal and resettlement areas needs to be thought through more deeply, along the lines of a decentralised customary tenure administration system as previously proposed by the Rukuni Commission<sup>6</sup>.

#### **6.4.2 Allocation of Remaining and Additional Land.**

In the short term, the Government should seriously consider implementing the following recommendations adopted from the Utete Report, particularly those that enhance equity and allow for the allocation of some larger land sizes in selected specialist land uses and enterprises in A2 and the remaining LSCF. We are concerned that the needy stakeholder groups, such as the former farm workers, women, inhabitants of selected congested communal areas, and the unemployed urban/peri-urban, have not benefited sufficiently from the land reform, while urban and other well-off and well-connected groups have benefited disproportionately in terms of quantity, quality, location, and irrigation of the land they were allocated. It is urgent that the land which remains unallocated, and additional land which will become available in the future as a consequence of downsizing of plantations, estates, conservancies, remaining LSC Farms, and oversized new A2 and A1 farms is used to correct these serious blemishes on the land reform program. A decision to reserve all the remaining and additional land to these underserved or left out categories of farmers would be a first step, followed by the design of the respective targeting rule and transparent implementation mechanisms.

We very much regret that very few former farm workers were resettled in the reform program, and many of them are now destitute. They also constitute a valuable resource in agricultural production. In the short term, to help keep this resource within the farming community, Government should excise pieces of newly resettled lands, especially those with farm compounds and social services, and develop these as local authority satellite service centres to cater for the residential and social service needs of former farm workers, new workers, retired workers and non-farm artisans. These would provide for residential plots that include small garden areas, and social services as required per capita in new resettlement schemes and should be the focus for providing common utilities such as schools, clinics and business centres for the entire resettlement population.

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<sup>6</sup> Rukuni Land Commission, 1994. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into appropriate agricultural land tenure systems. Vol. One: Main report and Vol. Two: Technical reports. Under the Chairmanship of Professor Mandivamba Rukuni. For his Excellency The President of the Republic of Zimbabwe. October 1994. Government printer, Harare.

In the medium term, there will be a need for Government to support, for a period of about three years, the completion of the rehabilitation of displaced farm workers. Government assistance will be required (e.g. through public works programs) in housing development, Government-farm worker collaboration in developing infrastructure in the new farm worker communities (schools, roads, clinics and other amenities) as well as in developing the capacity to protect their employment condition. Government, (NGOs and donors) also need to assist in meeting the food and health needs of the very vulnerable among the farm workers.

The resettlement process created conflicts between settlers and former farm workers which need to be healed if harmony is to be restored. In the medium term, the coexistence of former farm workers and new settlers should be promoted, through counselling and mediation, to enhance unified local community structures, including social committees and development associations which encourage the integration of former farm workers and ensure that they continue to provide a valuable service to the farming communities.

#### **6.4.3 Handling of Special Enterprise Farms.**

A number of farm enterprises are critical to the country's industrial base and export potential. As such Government should strive to retain former farmers in special enterprises (e.g. horticulture, seed, agro-industrial complexes, and those under BIPAs) on right sized plots. In this regard, two issues need to be addressed simultaneously: the allocations of right sized plots to remaining white farmers, and the completion of the repossession or surrender of multiple owned plots by indigenous and white farmers.

#### **6.4.4 Compensation.**

It is important to note that real security of tenure on acquired farms may not be realised until the former owners have been fully compensated for farm infrastructure. It is also a known fact that some of the former owners actually bought their farms after independence and as such, there is a moral obligation to consider some form of compensation beyond just the infrastructure. Towards that end, constructive dialogue with the international community, especially the British Government, is critical to assist such farmers who have become innocent victims of the political impasse currently prevailing with the British Government.

#### **6.4.5 Dispute Resolution relating to Disputed Land and Infrastructure Acquisition**

There still remain considerable uncertainties in land policy and its implementation procedure resulting in disputes on many acquired farms. The complexities of settling such disputes, is very high, as each of the farms has its unique characteristics and history. Initial allocation decisions are specific to each farm, as are the real or perceived claims of those inadequately served or left out altogether. This stems both from the incompleteness of the laws, regulations and implementation mechanisms, as well as a lack of information and knowledge about these among those charged with implementation throughout the country, as well as among the population at large. It is thus imperative to get clarity on all these issues as a basis for resolving these disputes.

It is important to adopt a comprehensive and inclusive approach in addressing all the outstanding issues around the land reforms so as to begin a process of recovery for the agricultural sector and the economy as a whole. A comprehensive programme thus needs to be developed, with the participation of all stakeholders, to address all these outstanding issues. There is need to harness all available technical expertise. As stakeholders in this process, it is important that we start talking to each other, rather than to ourselves, in considering these issues. Government leadership and magnanimity in reaching out to all stakeholders is vital. In such a sensitive issue, a broadly consultative approach is more likely to yield desired results than a prescriptive approach.

## **SECTION 7**

### **NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND FORGIVENESS**

#### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The message of reconciliation through faith in Jesus Christ is at the core of the life and ministry of the Church. The incarnation is all about God who had been wronged and seriously wounded by the human rebellion against him in Adam and Eve taking the first step to bring about reconciliation between himself and humanity. In our human understanding it is the guilty party that must take the first step and seek forgiveness from the person who has been wronged. What transpired in Jesus Christ defies all human imagination and understanding of what reconciliation is all about. The Church as the bearer of that message is the instrument through which God continues to reconcile humanity and the entire creation to himself, and to reconcile people with one another regardless of race, colour of skin, or religious affiliation. The message of reconciliation is therefore at the heart of the Church and constitutes its core business.

However, reconciliation is not something that must just be proclaimed, but must be lived out, and in that way bring about social transformation as people begin to live in harmony with one another, with God, and with the entire creation. Reconciliation is about restoring broken relationships through forgiveness; it is about healing the spiritual and the physical wounds. The result can only be a peaceful environment in which people love and care for one another, live in true fellowship with God and one another, and seek nothing but the common good and the wellbeing of one another. Zimbabwe is yearning for peace and justice. At the root of that yearning is a cry for reconciliation and forgiveness.

#### **7.2 THE CRY FOR RECONCILIATION IN ZIMBABWE TODAY**

Several historical developments in our nation demand that a process towards national reconciliation be initiated so that we can begin to move in the same direction, share the same vision of the Zimbabwe we want, and begin to reconstruct our broken economy and national pride, and heal the wounds. Several issues have left the nation torn apart and must be attended to in order to reconcile the nation and to achieve consensus on the fundamental developmental issues that concern our nation. At the moment national reconciliation is indeed the key to nation building and development in Zimbabwe. What are some of the issues that have led to so much alienation of the people of Zimbabwe from one another and from the rest of the world? The following are but some of the critical ones.

### **7.2.1 The Land Question**

The land issue must be resolved once and for all. For decades the African people of Zimbabwe were very bitter about their land which had been violently taken by the colonial settlers. Twenty years after independence they continued to watch a white minority enjoy the fat of their land while many of them became more and more impoverished. On the other hand the white Zimbabwean community failed to see that their occupation of the bulk of the Zimbabwean soil could not be allowed to continue for too long because it was grossly unjust. They invested a great deal in those farms and for some of them it was their entire life savings. When the government moved to repossess the land and redistribute it to others, the white community was shattered, remained angry and is as we speak today very much hurting.

The whole land issue regrettably has resulted in the emergence of a culture of racial hatred and in the alienation of the people of Zimbabwe in the first place along racial lines. The fast track land redistribution programme created new forms of alienation because of its retributive, chaotic and racial overtones. Let us admit that many of those white people were born and bred in Zimbabwe and know no other country than Zimbabwe as their homeland. We have to live together and the only way for this to happen is through confession, reconciliation, forgiveness, and a fair redistribution of the land and all its wealth to all the people of Zimbabwe regardless of race, creed or political affiliation. For reconciliation to take place there must be consensus on how this land must be distributed as well as resolving the question of compensation.

### **7.2.2 The National Constitution**

The constitution of this country has been a source of conflict because of its genesis and original objectives. The Lancaster House Constitution is considered to be a document designed to transfer power from a minority white regime to majority rule. It was never presented to the people in a referendum when it was crafted because the country was in a war situation. The people of Zimbabwe accepted what was negotiated by their leaders in good faith as an interim measure. Unless Zimbabweans find an alternative constitutional document where their values are well articulated, the current constitution remains one of the areas that generate serious conflict.

### **7.2.3 Party-politics and the vision of the state/ nation**

Ever since the split of ZANU from ZAPU in 1963, the people of this country have never been spared from the ugly face of political rivalry. To date politics in this country is governed by hatred and inter-party violence and killings. The coming of independence and the arms cache issue brought back the hostilities people thought had died out in the late 1960's. The dissident element followed by the Gukurahundi response, reflect the deep-seated feelings that characterize our political landscape and this too is calling for healing. Gukurahundi is part of the politics of intolerance, which kills the desire to share political space with persons of the opposite party. Gukurahundi has left the people of Matebeleland and part of the Midlands hurting and very angry. This reflects a nation that is torn apart and this time not along racial lines but along ethnic lines. No matter how much we pretend reconciliation was achieved with the merger of ZANU PF and ZAPU in 1987, deep down the people in Matebeleland are hurting and need to know the truth about their relatives who were

victims of Gukurahundi. Genuine reconciliation is possible only when the truth has been told, confession made, and forgiveness received.

#### **7.2.4 Murambatsvina.**

In May 2005, and for some months thereafter, an urban clean-up operation code-named Murambatsvina (drive out filth) took place. According to official explanations this operation was aimed at ridding our cities of filth, illegal housing and illegal businesses. These objectives are noble. However, the methods and timing of this operation have left many scars of bitterness calling for healing. The destruction of poor people's shelters and their means of livelihood before any alternatives were provided caused great suffering. Hundreds of thousands of people, including women and children found themselves with no shelter in the middle of winter and later the onset of the rain season. Some victims of this operation failed to access social services such as education, health, water and sanitary facilities.

#### **7.2.5 State Media**

Last but not least, in our catalogue of causes of our current conflict situation is the media. Our state-controlled media promotes a situation of violence by narrowing space for a meaningful reconciliation process to take place, so that it has created more confusion than solutions to the process of nation building. Like the colonial media which sought to divide Africans along ethnic, party and geographical lines, the current media is perpetuating the same, regrettably, in an independent Zimbabwe.

### **7.3 MOTIVATION FOR RECONCILIATION**

Reconciliation implies that the parties concerned both move ritually and physically from previous entrenched positions of advantage, comfort and defence to positions of discomfort, vulnerability and compromise. Generally, people fear to enter into the process of reconciliation because it leaves both parties with no claim for advantage. But there are strong motives for Zimbabwe as a nation to move to a position of reconciliation.

#### **7.3.1 Disharmony is Destructive and Disruptive**

Disharmony disrupts the mind, spirit and body so that society lapses into an abnormal state of being that affects the body-politick the same way an illness does. Society loses a sense of its values and integrity and drifts into a state of chaos. The strength of reconciliation is clearly seen and demonstrated when humanity forgives each other and live as brothers and sisters (Ps 133:1).

#### **7.3.2 Harmony Promotes Prosperity**

The vision of the nation that we have portrayed in this document is not attainable without reconciliation. Both social well-being and economic prosperity presuppose harmony, tolerance of diversity and mutual acceptance.

## 7.4 RECONCILIATION AND RENEWAL.

In his inaugural address on Independence day in 1980 the then Prime Minister Robert Gabriel Mugabe stunned the world by declaring reconciliation as the corner stone of his government's policy in the new Zimbabwe. The events in Zimbabwe today show that reconciliation was not achieved. We were as a nation never taken through a process where the truth was told about the pain experienced during the years of the struggle for liberation and our oppression by the colonial regime. The nation needed to end the years of conflict in a formal way by the ritual of truth telling and forgiveness. Even in our African cultures conflict was never resolved by simply believing people will forget and everything will be back to normal. It involved some ritual ceremonies that would reconcile the warring families or factions through forgiveness.

Equally important was for us to recognise from the beginning that as part of the process towards reconciliation, it was crucial for the nation to set in motion a process to address the socio-economic imbalances inherited from the past, which were a major source of the conflict. At Independence there were very high expectations for the renewal or restructuring of the socio-economic life of the nation. It could not be allowed to be business as usual. The people wanted to see change in their lives for the better and not to see the gap between rich and poor widening, with most of the wealth in the hands of the whites and a few black Zimbabweans. Reconciliation goes hand in hand with renewal of the socio-economic and political structures.

What we are saying here is that the movement towards reconciliation presupposes an equally important movement toward the creation of a just society. There can be no reconciliation without an effort to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. A new social order has to be created. This even brings in the issue of reparations which is a biblical ethic in which those who have acquired wealth through cheating or exploitation of fellow human beings were required to return that wealth plus the interest.

The story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-9) is a very classic example of what reconciliation with God demands on the part of those who want to be reconciled with God and fellow human beings. Face to face with Jesus he could not help but to be converted to a new way of looking at things and relating to others. His whole life changed and he immediately took concrete and visible action to reconcile himself not only with God but with fellow human beings and committed himself to returning whatever he had taken from others through unjust means: "Here and now I give my possessions to the poor, and if I have ever cheated anybody of anything, I will pay back four times the amount" (Luke 19:8). Only after taking that gigantic step did Jesus say to him "Today salvation has come into this house" (Lk19:9).

The same ethic is articulated in the Book of Nehemiah chapter 5. Nehemiah demanded that those among the Jewish community who had acquired their wealth

through exploitation and impoverishment of their kindred should immediately take action “restore to them, this very day, their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, their houses, and the interest on money, wine, grain, and oil you have been exacting from them” (Nehemiah 5:11). To this challenge from Nehemiah the rich responded by saying “We will restore everything and demand nothing more from them” (Vs. 11). A deliberate action on the part of those in our society who have benefited from the exploitation of the poor by voluntarily contributing to the creation of a just society is what the Gospel of Christ demands.

This therefore is the challenge not only to our white Zimbabweans who benefited from the unjust colonial system, but to black Zimbabweans who have taken advantage of the present economic crisis to defraud, cheat, and enrich themselves through corrupt means. Setting in motion a credible process towards the renewal of our society and addressing the economic imbalances is a step in the direction of national reconciliation and forgiveness. The rich in our communities must voluntarily contribute towards that end.

As Churches in Zimbabwe we would like to identify ourselves with the position taken by the authors of the *Kairos Document* in South Africa in the days of the struggle against apartheid and declare that also in our situation we would regard it “to be totally unchristian to plead for reconciliation and peace before the present injustices have been removed” since any “such plea only plays into the hands of oppressors by trying to persuade those who are oppressed to try to accept (their) oppression and to become reconciled to the intolerable crimes committed against (them). This is not Christian reconciliation, it is sin. No reconciliation is possible without justice.”<sup>7</sup> We therefore sincerely appeal to our government and our former colonial masters and others who have participated in injustices to seriously consider the issue of reparations as a means to build a just society in Zimbabwe in the process towards genuine reconciliation.

## 7.5 WAYS THE CHURCH CAN ENGAGE IN NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

Since reconciliation is at the core of the Gospel that we proclaim, we are obliged by virtue of our calling as Christians to participate actively in bringing about national reconciliation in Zimbabwe. In this regard we commit ourselves in the process towards reconciling the diverse groups in this country. The Church has been spectating for a long time fearing to get dirty if it engages in ‘politics’. It is acknowledged that the process will be painful, because it is a moment of truth, when the community of Zimbabwe is being offered the opportunity to open themselves and pour out. There will be moments of anxiety, denial, and even surprises, and yet that is what it should be. Ultimately, what is important are the benefits to be derived from this. The nation is invited to enter into dialogue with humility, honesty and sincerity, but without arrogance and pomp.

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<sup>7</sup> Cited by John W. de Gruchy, “the Dialectic of Reconciliation: Church and Transition to Democracy in South Africa,” in *The Reconciliation of Peoples: Challenge to the Churches* (WCC Publications, 1997) p. 17.

Some of the ways the Church wishes to promote national reconciliation include the following:

#### **7.5.1 Church to Church Activity**

We want to begin by building bridges between ourselves. We too are suffering from the effects of the conflicts and the partisan and ethnic approaches to the critical issues that divide our nation as articulated in this document. This strategy will involve inter-church programs and exchange visits which would bring people together through already existing facilities or structures such as ministers fraternal meetings. Through such structures, teaching and discussions, we will seek to reconcile people at grass roots levels as we create space for people to share their experiences in a spontaneous and friendly setting. When we are reconciled we can indeed become the salt of the earth in the communities in which we live and others can say “See how they love one another” and begin to emulate our example.

#### **7.5.2 Use of Formal Ecumenical Organisations**

EFZ, ZCBC and ZCC organs and others will work together or individually on programmes and resources that promote peace. People will even be encouraged to compose songs that share the message of reconciliation and peace. Ecumenical public events will continue to be utilized for peace-building. These will include prayer breakfast gatherings, national days of prayer, street marches and other open meetings. The objective of these activities is to bring visibility to the national reconciliation process, and to invite support from the public who may not be aware of the initiative. Joint declarations of commitment to reconciliation initiatives will be made from time to time. The joint declarations may take the form of confessions where the people repent of past negative attitudes, words and actions that have fostered hatred and divisions within and among our traditions.

#### **7.5.3 Use of Printed Material**

The church will not ignore the power of the pen and visual aids. Fliers, pamphlets, notices billboards and programmes on radio and Television will be utilized to promote peace and reconciliation. .

#### **7.5.4 Truth and Justice Commission**

The truth must be told in order to heal the wounds. Many people are hurting and are raising questions and need to know what happened to their loved ones. They need to know why and who performed brutal actions against their communities or their sons and daughters. In this regard we believe that as part of the healing process the nation should explore the possibility of setting up a Truth and Justice Commission in collaboration with the Church and civil society as a whole to monitor the process and receive testimonies from the public. Coming to terms with the truth can be a painful experience, but as a nation we have to go through it as a process towards the Zimbabwe we want.

## SECTION 8

### CONCLUSION: WAY FORWARD

In conclusion we would like to draw attention to all the recommendations that follow each of the sections. Some of these are short term while others are long term. We however would like to single out some that we believe need immediate and urgent attention to initiate the process towards building the Zimbabwe we all want. We therefore recommend the following:

1. Since in our analysis of the different Constitution drafts produced by government and civil society there are no fundamental or ideological differences that are irreconcilable or non-negotiable, it is urgent that a Commission comprising representatives of all stakeholders be appointed immediately to come up with a democratic, home-grown Constitution utilising the information already gathered by government and civil society and submit the draft to a referendum by mid-2007. The challenge is to produce a constitution around which there is national consensus and this is only possible when everybody is brought on board in the drafting of the new constitution.
2. We believe there can never be a substitute for national dialogue process around critical issues such as land, micro-economic policies, constitutional debate, electoral framework, human rights, governance and national reconciliation. We wish to urge government to accept an inclusive consultative process on these issues. These are issues that have negatively impacted on the image of the country in the eyes of the international community. In most of these issues government tends to talk to itself rather than to its people.
3. It is critical that a credible independent Land Commission or authority be established to ensure transparent, equitable and fair land distribution. It is important that all stakeholders recognise that the on going land re-distribution process is irreversible and interested parties should buy into the process. A mechanism should be put in place to resolve all land acquisition disputes and for the reconciliation of all parties through mediation and reparation.
4. Government should immediately initiate a process in parliament to repeal or amend POSA and AIPPA in order to create an environment that is conducive to free dialogue and public debate on all issues of concern in order to bring about the healing and reconciliation as well as a rapid national economic recovery.
5. Once constitutional reforms are underway, steps must be taken to build bridges with the international community but particularly with those development partners who have significantly contributed to our development in the past. The country needs a lot of support: Balance of Payment, Trade and Investment, Technology Transfer, etc. This is only possible if government shows willingness for reforms, and there is a national consensus regarding the nature and process towards the Zimbabwe we want.

6. As Churches we pledge to use our local and global networks to help build bridges among Zimbabweans and between Zimbabwe and the international community, and mobilise spiritual and material support for the **Zimbabwe We Want**.

**To God be the glory**