APPROPRIATING JUDEAN POST-EXILIC LITERATURE IN A POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE - A CASE FOR ZIMBABWE

by

TEMBA RUGWIJI

Submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject

BIBLICAL STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PROMOTER: PROF E H SCHEFFLER

JUNE 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION   Student Number: **34879498**

I, Temba Rugwiji, declare that the thesis on the title: APPROPRIATING JUDEAN POSTEXILIC LITERATURE IN A POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE: A CASE FOR ZIMBABWE, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This thesis or part of it has never been published for a degree elsewhere.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE   DATE

(Rev Temba Rugwiji)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFCAST	African Forum for Catholic Social Teachings
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
Am	Amos (Biblical book)
ANC	African National Congress
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der romischen Welt* (Rise and decline of the Roman world)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BCE	Before the Christian Era
Cf	A term used in academic works for *compare/see*
Chr	Chronicles (Biblical book)
DH	Deuteronomistic History
Dn	Daniel (Biblical book)
Dt	Deuteronomy (Biblical book)
ed/s	editor/s
x	Exodus (Biblical book)
Ezk	Ezekiel (Biblical book)
Ezr	Ezra (Biblical book)
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
Gn	Genesis (Biblical book)
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS. A person becomes HIV positive

	when he/she comes into contact with blood in which there is the virus.
Hg	Haggai (Biblical book)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
Is	Isaiah (Biblical book)
Jn	John (Biblical book)
Jos	Joshua (Biblical book)
Jr	Jeremiah (Biblical book)
Ki	Kings (Biblical book)
LAP	Lambert Academic Publishing
Lk	Luke (Biblical book)
Lm	Lamentations (Biblical book)
Ltd	Limited
Lv	Leviticus (Biblical book)
MA	Master of Arts
MDC-T	Movement for Democratic Change-Morgan Tsvangirai faction
MDC-N	Movement for Democratic Change-Welshman Ncube faction
Ml	Malachi (Biblical book)
MP/s	Member/s of Parliament
Mt	Matthew (Biblical book)
Neh	Nehemiah (Biblical book)

OTANES	Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies
OTE	Old Testament Essays
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
Pr	Proverbs (Biblical book)
Ps	Psalm (Biblical book)
'O' level/s	Ordinary Level/s (Form Four)
OTSSA	Old Testament Society of South Africa
RDP	Reconstruction Development Programme. This is a housing-construction programme which was introduced by Nelson Mandela, first President of democratic South Africa. The programme was earmarked for the formerly marginalized poor people.
SA	South Africa
s a	sino anno (no date)
SAIIA	South African Institute of International Affairs
SASNES	South African Society of Near Eastern Studies
SJOT	Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament
s l	sino loco (no place name)
SPCK	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
s v	Sino Verbo (under the name of)
UN	United Nations

UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
USA	United States of America
YHWH	Yahweh (God)
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
Zch	Zechariah (Biblical book)

LIST OF (FOREIGN) TERMS

(Most of the acronyms are in Shona.[1] Terms in other languages are stated)

Belo	Hebrew term for "poll tax"
Chimbadzo	The informal practice of charging interest on loans
Dependence syndrome (English)	A habit of depending on someone for survival
Deutero-Isaiah (Biblical book)	Second Isaiah (Isaiah chapters 40-55)
Economi(-cides)	A coined term for causes of economic meltdown
Gehena harina moto	There is no fire in hell (book)
Halak	Hebrew term for "land tax"
Huku	Chickens
Hwayi	Sheep
Interesse	Medieval Latin term for *payment for damages arising to the creditor from default* or *delay in payment.* The English word *interest* evolved from the Latin term *interesse*
Karikoga gumiremiseve	The only one (book)
Kunyarara hakusi kutaura?	Silence does not mean one is not talking (book)
Kuraone	Grow up and see for yourself (book)
Madegree epasi pomuti	No genuine degrees from credible institutions of higher learning

---

[1] Shona is the main language spoken in Zimbabwe. The author speaks Shona. Examples of other languages are: Ndebele, Tonga, Venda, amongst others.

Marbit	Hebrew for *increase* used in unscrupulous manner
Mbudzi	Goat
Mhondoro spirit	The ancestral spirit believed to be of a lion
Midda	Aramaic for "tax"
Mombe	Cattle/cows
Mudzimu	Medium spirit
Museve wade nyama	When the "arrow" needs a beast (book)
Musikavanhu	God, creator of human beings
Mwari	God
Ndambakuudzwa akaonekwa nembonje	Experiencing consequences for one's actions
Ndiko kupindana kwamazuva	This is how time moves (book title)
Neshek	Hebrew term meaning "a bite." It conveys a heavy burden to the borrower which goes with overcharging interest as in "usury"
Nguruve	Pig
Pafunge	Think about it (book)
Persona non grata (Latin)	Phrase which means "unpopular"/ "not liked"
Pfumo reropa	A spear of blood (book)
Ribit	Hebrew meaning *gain on the creditor's side*
Rudo ibofu	Love is *blind* (book)
Rufu runobereka rufu	Death "gives birth" to death (book)
Sadza	Thick porridge which is staple food in Zimbabwe
Sarura wako	Choose one of your own (book)

sine qua non (Latin)	An essential condition or requirement.
Tambaoga mwanangu	Play alone my child (book)
Tarbit	Hebrew term meaning "increase"
Teruma	Hebrew term for "tax"
Tsuro	Hare (as well as *mbira* = rabbits)
Zvaida kushinga	It needed courage (book)
Zhingzhong	Term used in Zimbabwe for low quality Chinese products

DEDICATION

I dedicate this PhD Thesis to my parents: My late father Cephas (Kefasi) who died in Zvimba, Zimbabwe in 1982 and my widowed mother, Stebhesi. You were a very strong character, Dad. I will always appreciate your love, mum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I begin by thanking the Almighty God who has been gracious to me. The completion of this study could not have been possible without God's guidance and sustenance of life. I am grateful to the following people and institutions for their individual contributions to this study:

My promoter Prof Eben Scheffler of the department of Biblical and Ancient Studies (BAS) at the University of South Africa (UNISA) had become more than a supervisor and a Professor to me. Being an authority in the field of the Old Testament, I regard him with high respect. When I reflect on how I began my research and the result at hand, I feel it was indeed an honour for me to have studied and completed this thesis under your guidance. Thank you very much, Prof.

The contribution of Prof Willie Wessels at BAS (UNISA) *refuses* to escape my memory. During my studies for my Bachelor of Theology Honours degree with UNISA, in his comments (in an essay on the exodus motif), Prof Wessels motivated me to consider taking further studies on liberation, which I did. The present study is a follow-up and a conclusion of the previous study on the liberation motif. Thank you so much, Prof.

I wish to thank the Financial Aid Bureau (FAB) at UNISA for awarding me a bursary towards my study fees. Funding a postgraduate study is a mammoth task if payment of fees and for other research needs has to be done by a learner who happens to be a parent and a guardian at the same time. The bursary I received from FAB was used to pay for my registration fees as well as various research expenses. Your contribution to this thesis was significant.

The editor of my manuscript, Petra Dijkhuizen, is a language editor of a class of her own. Petra's language editing expertise has greatly contributed to both the readability and the final result of this thesis. Petra, you have done exceptionally well. Thank you so much.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all respondents to my questionnaires who provided invaluable responses to my questions for this study. Although the identities of my respondents remain anonymous and I have used their contributions pseudonymously, I found their individual ideas helpful for this research. Let me thank each one of you for the trouble you took to return a completed questionnaire.

In conclusion, I wish to thank my wife Judith for long hours, days and months of absence while I consistently focused on my doctorate thesis. Judith enlightened me with some ideas which I included in developing my discourse. In addition, although enduring her compromised health, she bore the brunt of aiding to our household financial needs from her meager earnings while I was away on study itinerary. Our children: Cephas, Kelvin, Vongai, Arnold Farai, and Terence Isheanesu, had learned to live with a busy and an absent father. At the time of completing this thesis in February 2013, Kelvin and Gracious were staying with me, while in their first year and second year at university, respectively. Let this hard-earned doctorate thesis serve as compensation for previous losses incurred by my family resulting from my "scarcity" due to study commitments.

SUMMARY

The narratives about the postexilic Judean community are an ancient biblical account of the socio-economic and political experiences of the Judeans when they were finally restored back to Judah from Babylonian captivity. Although the Judean restoration was celebrated when they were restored by King Cyrus' decree, real freedom did not prevail in the Persian province of Yehud; corruption, usury, greed, oppression, enslavement and loss of property impacted negatively on the poor. The leadership expropriated from poor citizens land, vineyards, and houses in exchange for food. In addition, the governors also charged heavy interest on money borrowed by poor members of society. Parents and their children were subjected to enslavement. In response to these corrupt practices, Nehemiah challenged the leadership to stop oppressing the poor. Nehemiah went further to provide food to the starving Judeans and other people from surrounding nations which served as a stimulus to strive towards alleviating poverty and starvation among communities.

By employing an approach known as *hermeneutics of appropriation*, this thesis appropriates the experience of the postexilic Judean community to the post-independence Zimbabwean context. Between the years 1999 and 2008 many people lost their lives due to unemployment and lack of income, shelter, nutrition, and access to health-care facilities because of the economic meltdown following the controversial fast-track land reform programme in Zimbabwe. The majority of people are still experiencing the negative impact of the land reform as people strive to make a living in the absence of jobs and income scarcity. Corruption by the leadership has continued to further exacerbate starvation among the poor until today.

This study attempts to employ the biblical Nehemiah's social justice reforms (Neh 5) to challenge the Zimbabwean leadership to focus on rebuilding the country which was ravaged by a decade of both political and socio-economic crises. Lessons drawn from Nehemiah would be used to stimulate the leadership in the Zimbabwean government and members of society at large, to strive towards helping the poor and alleviating poverty.

KEY TERMS

Babylonian exile, postexilic, Cyrus, Judean, Judah, Yehud, political and socio-economic, governors, Nehemiah, postcolonial, hermeneutics of appropriation, the leadership, oppression, the poor, starvation, communities, economic meltdown, Zimbabwe, land reform, unity government, economic development, Diaspora community, food.
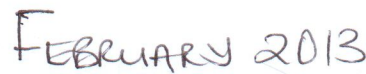
DECLARATION   Student Number: **34879498**

I, Temba Rugwiji, declare that the thesis on the title: APPROPRIATING JUDEAN POST-
EXILIC LITERATURE IN A POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE: A CASE FOR ZIMBABWE, is
my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and
acknowledged by means of complete references. This thesis or part of it has never been
published for a degree elsewhere.

FEBRUARY 2013

SIGNATURE   DATE

(Rev Temba Rugwiji)

CHAPTER 1   INTRODUCTION

1   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The story of the election of the Israelites as the *chosen tribe* or *chosen people,*[1] is a striking feature in the book of Deuteronomy (Dt 4:20; 7:6-10; 14:1-2; 26:18-19). Later when Yahweh "appointed" the Persian ruler Cyrus to liberate the Judeans from captivity in Babylonia, the phrase "chosen people" is also mentioned: "I appoint you to help my servant Israel, the people that I have chosen..." (Is 45:4). According to the biblical tradition, this chosen tribe originated with the ancestors (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, etc.) and stretches to the generations of Jewish descendants that followed.

The covenant made by Yahweh with the Israelite ancestors to occupy Canaan—a land situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River, described as "a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:8, 33:3; Dt 31:20)—has enhanced our understanding of a people on a pilgrimage in search of both religious and political freedom. Some scholars say that this vision of "a broad, free land, a land flowing with milk and honey," supported the people through the wilderness, through war, mortal danger and famine (cf Moltmann-Wendel 1986:1). But even after having settled in the promised land, the survival of the Israelites in the *land flowing with milk and honey*[2] was on numerous occasions threatened. Amidst failures and harsh experiences, the Israelite descendents still looked into the future with

---

[1] For a detailed account on the phrase "chosen people," see Clements (1968); Allegro (1971:42); and Leeming (2004:23).

[2] For further reading, see Duerksen (1988).

hope for change for the better in their lives as a people. They still imagined that Yahweh would lead them to some sovereignty in the unknown future, which Brueggemann (1985:2) refers to as "prophetic imagination." In concurrence with Brueggemann's sentiments, Serfontein (2012:17) admits that images and imaginations of the future inspired and gave the Israelites hope in spite of harsh realities.

The Babylonian exile (586–538 BCE), the Persian Empire (of which Judah[3] was a province), the export into Palestine of the Greek civilization by Alexander the Great during the Hellenistic period (333–63 BCE) as well as the invasion and the rule by the Romans (63 BCE–135 CE), diminished the hopes of the Jews of ever acquiring the status of citizenry, and becoming a sovereign nation and an independent state. With the loss of political sovereignty after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, the royalty was deprived of its status and influence in the community (Strauss 1995:38).

The Egyptian bondage[4] seemed to be relived. The story of the Jews and their survival was always taking a downward direction. Despite their belief in the all-powerful and universal Yahweh, the Jews seemed to be underachievers. The triumph of failure over success was evidenced by the repeated outcry of the Jews each time they fell into the hands of their enemies. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and the captivity itself by the Babylonians had their

---

[3] The term "Judah" carries the same meaning with "Yehud." They both refer to the same thing and they both will be used interchangeably in this study. Judah had become a province of Persia when Cyrus decreed the restoration of the Judeans back to the Persian-controlled province of Judah, which came to be known as "Yehud."

[4] The Egyptian bondage is constantly referred to by the exodus narrative. The stories around the exodus are highly debated by scholars. The fact that the Pharaoh of the oppression and the Pharaoh of the exodus are not named in the exodus narrative hampers the argument for historical authenticity. Egyptian bondage refers to the time when the Israelites were oppressed by Pharaoh in Egypt (cf Ex 1:1-12). For a detailed account of this period, arguing for its authenticity see Hoffmeier (1997).

own share of deadening effect upon the Judeans. Speaking of the deportation, Yahweh said to Ezekiel: "I have been a sanctuary to them for a little while (or in small measure) in the countries where they have gone" (Ezk 11:16).

The Judean deportees were released to return to Palestine when Cyrus became king of Persia in 539 BCE. Cyrus was referred to by the Jewish exiles as "God's anointed" (Is 45:1-7; cf Spangenberg 2006a:168). This surprising designation explains why critical questions are often raised about the level of consistency in the biblical tradition, to the extent that critical scholarship argues that the Bible is self-contradictory in many instances (Allegro 1971: preface). On the one hand, it seems Yahweh's jealousy is aroused towards Israel for associating with pagans and for copying the lifestyle of non-Jews (Dt 18:9-13). On the other hand, Yahweh elects and *anoints* Cyrus, a pagan king, to set the Israelites free (Is 45:1-7). By including a Persian in his agenda, Yahweh might have departed from his exclusive approach in order to make the Gentiles "repent of their sins," by means of which God showed that his concern is not only for the welfare of Israel but also for that of the Gentiles (Grabbe 2000:18).

However, not all Jews returned to Palestine after a decree was passed by Cyrus. The Jewish tradition does not mention any census to have been conducted to establish the Jewish population of exiles in Babylonia, except a list of returnees numbering a total of approximately 42 360 (Ezr 2:64-67). However, the number of returnees to Judah could have been much higher as many Babylonian Israelites are believed to have migrated "home" to Jerusalem where they eventually rebuilt the city walls and the temple (Leeming 2004:23). Due to uncertainty on the part of the Judeans about the idea of returning as well as their unwillingness to move out of Babylonia where they were involved in commercial activities and had established economic enterprises, a large number of Jews could also have chosen to stay in Babylonia where a Jewish

community flourished for several centuries (cf Leeming 2004:23). It is noted that the Jewish communities also persisted and flourished in Babylonia throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Neusner 1965:1).

Nevertheless, my introduction of both the Hellenistic and Roman periods at this stage does not imply that the two periods form part of the present study. It is not the focus of this study to provide a detailed analysis of the Hellenistic and Roman periods as this research has been streamlined around Judah. Mentioning the Hellenistic and the Roman periods simply serves to demonstrate other more powerful kingdoms under which the Judeans were subjected afterwards.

The overarching editorial discourse of Genesis—the promise of eventually possessing the land of Canaan—is issued by a deity to each new generation of the family. This means that the Israelites claimed the occupation of the land because the God of the Torah had made a covenant with their ancestors that counted as an inheritance for their generations to come. Thus at Shechem Yahweh had said to Abram: "To your offspring I will give this land" (Gn 12:4-9), which is reaffirmed in Genesis 13:14-18. The final invasion and possession of Canaan was believed to have been a "promise fulfilled." Hence, for Jews the fulfillment of the covenant was to be realised on the land to which the exiles would return and where they would once again join in "the dance of the merrymakers" and worship in Zion (Raitt 1977:402; Jr 31:4-6). The Judeans looked forward to a time in the unknown future when they would celebrate freedom after their experiences of distress, alienation and oppression in a foreign land. However, it is argued in this research that real freedom did not prevail in Yehud, until Nehemiah came onto the scene with his *social justice reforms*[5] (see Neh 5:6-18).

---

[5] Chapter 4 discusses in detail Nehemiah's social justice reforms and appropriates them for the postindependence Zimbabwean context.

2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

2.1 Introduction

A critical reading of the biblical text portrays the depiction that Judean returnees from the Babylonian exile did not finally attain freedom in Persian-controlled Yehud. Once back in Judah, one would expect the Judeans to embark on a massive reconstruction project to restore the pride of their nation whose infrastructure, particularly the temple and the wall of Jerusalem, had been demolished during the Babylonian invasion and destruction of Judah in 587–586 BCE (Grabbe 1998:1). They had not started rebuilding the temple and the wall of Jerusalem, yet. Both the books of Nehemiah and Haggai, among others, depict that drought, famine, suffering, oppression, and slavery prevailed among the Judeans (Neh 5:1-10). The drought "on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labour of your hands" was a result of neglecting Yahweh's house which lay in ruin (Hg 1:9-11). Postindependence Zimbabwe presents us with a similar predicament. Zimbabwe was called Rhodesia during colonial times, but gained its independence in April 1980. The postindependence Zimbabwe has largely been characterised by politically motivated crises such as genocide (Gukurahundi[6] insurgence), the demolition of people's shelters (*Operation murambatsvina*[7]), farm invasions, election violence and economic meltdown, amongst others.

---

[6] *Gukurahundi* is a Shona name which means "the rain that washes away the chaff from the last harvest before the spring rains." It was a code name for the genocide in Zimbabwe in the early 1980s.

[7] *Operation Murambatsvina* was the operation that sought to clean up the cities of dirt. It was a code name for the 2005 clean-up exercise in Zimbabwe. *Murambatsvina* literally means "somebody who does not like dirt."

One would want to see the return of those Zimbabweans, who fled as a result of the crises and now live in the diaspora, to start rebuilding the economic life of their country.

The researcher is aware that biblical texts are ancient and were written from a specific context by and for a particular people. However, in contrast to other views (cf Scheffler 2006a:17) this study's appropriation—which I deliberately describe as a "hermeneutics of appropriation"—of the Judean experience to the Zimbabwean postcolonial experience, forms the main agenda of this research. "Hermeneutics of appropriation" concerns societies and their practices of living and worldviews. Human beings borrow ideas and practices from other cultures; it happens everywhere, both ancient and modern. The resarcher is aware of the differences, pitfalls and dangers that emerge out of such an endeavour such as regarding the preferred biblical narrative and appropriating it as a historical reality to modern-day life experiences. This is particularly complex when one attempts to interpret the Bible in a diverse context where numerous views are critically opposed to regarding the ancient biblical text as a "road map" by which societies should live.

However, my appropriation of the ancient biblical text for today is paramount in this study, because both narratives deal with human beings and their relationships among themselves as well as their responses to themes such as politics, economy, trade, ethnic conflicts, drought, poverty, and many others, which are common both in the ancient past and in today's modern world. Some communication that derive from practices of the ancient biblical story may inform how modern people can conduct themselves and perhaps improve their lifestyle for the better. Out of these themes possible Old Testament perspectives are suggeted for modern-day problems. A synergy that literally emerges from the summation of these varying experiences within the two separate scenarios, as briefly explained above, constitutes the problem statement

of this research which engages into a critical debate to provoke the research questions outlined below.

2.2 Research questions

In its entirety, this study attempts to answer the following four research questions:

- What does *hermeneutics of appropriation* entail?
- Why does *hermeneutics of appropriation* "appropriates" themes within the Judean postexilic literature in a Zimbabwean context, as opposed to "comparing" the postexilic narratives to the Zimbabwean postindependence situation?
- Does the present investigation provide some evidence that the postexilic Judean community was not really independent when they returned to Persian-controlled Yehud?
- During which period of the Zimbabwean postcolonial era will be used to appropriate "themes" within the Judean postexilic literature?

3   AIM AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

3.1   Aim of the study

The aim of this research as a whole is to put into perspective the experience of the suffering communities of the ancient biblical world by comparing it with the suffering of Zimbabweans during Mugabe's rule in independent Zimbabwe, so as to elucidate how Zimbabweans can draw some motivation for emancipation in the midst of their own experience of pain perpetrated by

their own black government. Hence, making the experience of the ancient Judeans analogous to that of Zimbabweans today is intended to learn from the experiences and errors of others (cf Scheffler 2001:13). The Judean experiences fall within the category of the political, economic, and cultural activities of the "others" from whom Zimbabweans may need to learn.

This research further aims to explore the elusiveness and ambivalence that often characterise processes towards liberation and national independence. As much as people long for security and freedom in their places of abode, total sovereignty is never guaranteed. The Judeans yearned to return to Jerusalem and Judah. Deutero-Isaiah's oracles express concern for the suffering exiles in Babylonia where he says: "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God" (Is 40:1). However, when they finally arrived and settled in Judah, true nationhood and freedom were far from being established as notions of lack of commitment to rebuild the temple, starvation, oppression, and slavery are depicted in Nehemiah 5:1-10 and Haggai 1:3-4, respectively.

3.2   Motivation[8] of the study

There are cases where the ancient biblical text is interpreted in isolation from the occurrences and experiences of today's people. Moreover, matters of politics and economy are usually considered secular disciplines, fields of study and practice of the so-called *secular*, of which the

---

[8] Previous comments by Prof Willie Wessels (of BAS, UNISA) were "prophetic" and motivational to me. In his comments on my essay for an Honours Bachelor of Theology degree with UNISA (2004-2005), Prof Wessels encouraged me to consider taking further studies on the exodus motif. The present study is a follow-up to my previous studies on the exodus liberation motif. See my MA thesis. Rugwiji, T 2008. Reading the exodus tradition from a Zimbabwean perspective. MA thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

believing communities do not want to address. At the same time, much of biblical scholarship centres on historical-critical debate which raises complex questions on the authenticity and authorship of the biblical text. However, not much effort has been put so far on *appropriating* the biblical text for the benefit of modern societies. As a result, essential themes within the biblical text that would otherwise enrich human ways of dealing with life issues in the contemporary world are ignored and remain hidden. Having critically considered the above circumstances, my quest to appropriate the Judean postexilic experience for the postcolonial experience of Zimbabweans was aroused. This motivation was accelerated by the idea of reading the biblical text for the politically-grilled,[9] economically-informed[10] and culturally-entrenched[11] modern context.

Zimbabwe obtained independence from Rhodesia in 1980. In the last decade, I, among other citizens of Zimbabwe, witnessed a great deal of suffering due to the overbearing political dominance of the ZANU (PF) government. The political motive modeled by undemocratic philosophies, intricately buttressed by an ideology of a one-party state agenda in Zimbabwe, has

---

[9] One term or phrase can mean different things to different people. The Pocket Oxford Dictionary (=*POD*) defines *politics* as an art and science of government; it also refers to activities concerned with seeking power or status (see *POD* s v 'politics'). The latter definition seems to have a close connection with the phrase used in this research. On the other hand, the term *grill* means to subject or be subjected to severe questioning (see *POD* s v 'grill'). Therefore, the phrase *politically-grilled* refers to people who love politics so much that they cannot afford not to think or talk about it. In terms of the Judean-Persian story, political, economic, cultural, and other related issues should be accounted for.

[10] Economically-informed people have studied economics and they interpret economic activities in a society or country in terms of what really works as defined in the matrix of economic philosophy.

[11] Culturally-entrenched people are fond of referring to culture. The word "culture" is an inclusive term. It takes into account, linguistic, political, economic, social, psychological, religious, national, racial and still other differences. In modern society, as was the case in the past, culture plays a central role in the way people conduct their lives. For further reading, see Hesselgrave (1991).

negatively affected the socio-economic conditions of the entire country. Although some critics have argued that economic development of Zimbabwe has not been successful since the postcolonial state elite took power in 1980 (cf Maundeni 2004:189), this notion is debated by some who hold that the postcolonial Zimbabwean government had scored remarkable socio-economic successes a few years into independence. This argumentation will be explored further in this study.

The Judean postexilic story of the biblical text does not provide a "prescription" towards a solution to political or economic conflicts affecting people in today's world. On the contrary, we are warned "not to use the Bible as a power tool to control other people's lives with an attitude of 'the Bible says…'" (Scheffler 2006a:17). The biblical books were not written to address modern situations. These books were meant for people who lived in a *pre-industrial* and *pre-scientific* world (Boshoff et al 2006:9). Therefore, having considered the views by Boshoff and others, this study employs the comparative approach cautiously and responsibly, with the understanding that the Judean experience in ancient biblical times is unique, and so is the Zimbabwean experience. However, the former's experience presents paradigms and themes appropriate for contemporary contexts if read in a broader perspective. This study selectively employs the postexilic paradigms and themes of ancient Judah in an attempt to explore the Zimbabwean situation.

It is also noted and understood that every Bible reader "comes to the Bible" with *baggage*, whether for or against the biblical text. Such baggage influences the way one reads the Bible (cf Scheffler 2006a:11). Issues of politics and justice permeate across cultures, and religion without justice is counterfeit or false religion (Bryne 1988:8). Thus, the narratives of the biblical

text—which, to some extent, are described as "myths and legends"[12] (cf Scheffler 2010; Oosthuizen 2002:33)—may have "answers" to questions in relation to politics, democracy, economy, poverty and justice arising from and in terms of the contemporary worldview. Van Dyk (2000:94) also observes that although allusions to creation myths are scattered throughout the Old Testament (e g, the books of Psalms and Job), creation myths are only found in Genesis 1:1-24a and Genesis 2:4b-3:24. In my view, however, such "myths and legends" have lessons to teach today's people.

4   HYPOTHESIS

A hypothesis is a proposition that sets forth an explanation for the occurrence of a phenomenon. It is a provisional conjecture to guide further investigation which could be accepted as highly probable in the light of established facts. Research projects should always start with a hypothesis: what one assumes or concedes for the sake of argument. As rightly put into perspective by Borg and Shye (1995:95): "…assignments [projects] are made with a particular hypothesis in mind." Comprehensively defined, a hypothesis is thus a statement that explains or makes generalisations about certain facts or principles in an effort to form a basis to make the investigation possible. This study makes the following hypotheses, expressed in three arguments:

---

[12] Peet van Dyk refers to myths as "fictitious stories and not to be believed because they do not reflect past reality and they represent a 'primitive' and uncritical state of the human mind." See Van Dyk, P 1992. The truth in history and myth, in Wessels, W and Scheffler, E H (eds), *Old Testament science and reality*, 91-106. Pretoria: Verba Vitae.

4.1   Argument against the "myth" of freedom in Persian-controlled Yehud

The postexilic Judean community was superimposed in between two opprossive systems: on the one hand, the Persian Empire under which Judah had become a province, and on the other the Judean governors who exacerbated the suffering of the poor of society, from whom land, vineyards and houses were taken by the government.

The Bible presents the Persians as having been kind to the Judeans in the sense that it was Cyrus who allowed the Judeans to return to Judah in order to establish a community and a nation of their own (cf Is 45:1-7). Yet, in actual fact, the political realities of the Persian period served to undermine the Judeans.[13] The Persian Empire remained the administrative centre and law-enforcing authority across the province of Judea. The fact that they were required by law to pay tax to the Persian administration, depicts the notion of the Judeans having limited space of autonomy even though some of them were appointed as governors under the Persian Empire. Nehemiah 9:36-37, clearly states how the Judeans—among them Nehemiah himself—were subjected to slavery by the government. Although on the one hand, Ezra 9:8-9 praises the king of Persia for funding the rebuilding of both the temple and the wall of Jerusalem, on the other hand Ezra laments the "bondage" the Judeans were experiencing under the Persian Empire. This study argues against the "myth" of freedom in Persian-controlled Yehud. It explores that the Persians were as oppressive as the Babylonians although the levels of oppression varied.

---

[13] The Persian authorities, while allowing the re-establishment of the temple cult under the leadership of the high priest, granted only limited political autonomy to the returnees. For a detailed account on this, see Strauss (1995:38).

4.2   Suffering and poverty were exacerbated by the Judean governors

The postexilic Judean community struggled to establish an identity for itself, even though they had anticipated that a peaceful environment would prevail in Yehud. Drought had struck the region so much that communities suffered a famine (Neh 5:3). Added to that, the Judean governors who had been appointed by Persia to administer tax began to oppress the poor of society; the leadership exacerbated the plight of poor communities by mortgaging their land, houses and vineyards as people struggled to pay tax due to economic hardship, which in the end, subjected their sons and daughters to enslavement (5:5). This study shows that while it holds true that the Judean communities were oppressed by the Persians as explained above, to a large extent the Judeans became slaves to and were oppressed by their own *Jewish brothers* (5:6-8).

5   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section examines the methodological approaches and research methods of the study and illuminates the methods used to collect data and to provide an analysis of that data. I have consulted secondary sources (i e, books), internet sources, and articles from periodicals, theses and dissertations relevant for this investigation. In consulting these sources, I have attempted to analyse how such sources explore the subject matter under discussion, such as postcolonial criticism, the experiences of the Judeans during the Persian period, and the experiences of the Zimbabweans in postindependence Zimbabwe. Such literature consultation is then followed by my own evaluation, judgment, and final analysis.

5.1 Research methods

Research methods refers to the approaches used in the study to determine the direction the discussion will take. Frankel, Devers and Kelly (2000:5) have observed that the most useful guidelines for selecting a research method is based on the research questions one is asking and the extent to which the method will inform the research questions. The research methods used in this study which will inform the research questions (see section §2.2 above) comprise the literary-rhetorical approach, combined with a hermeneutics of appropriation,[14] as well as qualitative research in which interviews were conducted as one of the means of data collection.

5.1.1 Literary-rhetorical approach

This study employs a literary-rhetorical approach. Feldman, Sköldberg and Horner (2004:149) have observed that the terms *narrative* and *story* are often used interchangeably. In this thesis, the narrative or story about the postexilic Judean community in Yehud which we read about in the biblical books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah,[15] forms the basis of the entire thesis. Because it is generally believed that the job of the narrative researcher is to interpret the stories people tell (Riessman 1993), this thesis employs a literary-rhetorical approach to explore the biblical narrative of the Judean postexilic experiences in order to interpret it for and appropriate it in a Zimbabwean postcolonial situation. Thus, the literary-rhetorical approach implemented in this study encompasses a narrower approach known as *hermeneutics of appropriation*, which Richard Kearney chooses to call *hermeneutics of action* (1996:1). This hermeneutics is employed here to analyse the socio-economic and political

---

[14] The hermeutics of appropriation was already referred to in §5.1.3 below. It is explained in detail in chapter 3 (see §3.1).

[15] This study does not intend do undertake a complete exegesis of the relevant texts of these biblical books.

situation in postexilic Judah in order to critically appropriate it for the socio-economic and political realities in postindependence Zimbabwe.

I have deliberately avoided a historical-critical approach[16] of the postexilic narratives in preference for the *literary-rhetorical approach* because my original intention of discussing the postexilic narratives was streamlined along the literary theme. However, historical criticism is necessary in order to enlighten the reader that the ancient biblical world and biblical Israel were the context and the audience out of which the biblical narratives emerged. Historical criticism is often criticised for confronting the text to the extent that it no longer has a positive message for the present-day world (Scheffler 2007:772). Borrowing the terminology used by Spangenberg (2011), historical criticism should not be the dominant discourse, but one amongst others. The literary-rhetorical approach has been employed as the method to be used in this research. However, this method of investigation should not be confused with a *pastoral-hermeneutical* approach, which is not the focus of this research.

5.1.2   Criteria of appropriating *themes* within postexilic literature in a Zimbabwean context

Academic research in Biblical Studies involves particular criteria (also known as tools) in writing an essay or in conducting a research project. These tools are important in undertaking a

---

[16] On the one hand, the *historical-critical approach* focuses on the history of the text, its author and original audience. On the other hand, the *rhetoric-narratogical approach* or *literary-rhetorical approach* focuses on the text and its underlying structure and meaning as attained in decoding the text; it focuses on the reader in interaction with the text, seeing the meaning of the text as emerging in the encounter between the reader and the text. For more information, see Upkong, S J 2000. Developments in biblical interpretation in Africa: A historical and hermeneutical perspective. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 108:17; West, G O 1995. *Biblical hermeneutics of liberation modes of reading the Bible in the South African context,* second edition. Pietermantzburg Cluster Publications, Maryknoll Orbis Books, 131.

literary study of the Bible or interpreting it. The tools generally used to interpret the biblical text include the following:

> •*Historical criticism*, which places literature in its original setting and seeks to understand original intention or meaning;
> •*Textual criticism*, which focuses on the original and exact wording of a text and attempts to understand what changes have happened to the text in its transmission through the years;
> •*Redaction criticism*,   which separates the work of editors from that of the original author;
> •*Form criticism*, which recreates the material in its original form, literary or oral, and
> •*Hermeneutics*, which attempts to explain the meaning of a text or to interpret the text.

Although the first four tools of interpreting the biblical text shown above are equally important, the present study has deliberately chosen to focus on *hermeneutics* as a criterion for interpreting the Judean postexilic literature. *Hermeneutics* can further be segmented into subdivisions such as: "Comparative study," "contextualization," "African theology," "feminist theology," "enculturation," or "hermeneutics of appropriation." Although some scholars (e g, Paul Ricoeur, Richard Kearney, R S Suazo, amongst others),[17] have succeeded in proposing the employment of *hermeneutics of appropriation* in interpreting ancient biblical *narratives*, this study deviates from such an approach.[18] Instead, the present research has adopted a "thematic" study of the biblical text while still maintaining ideas enshrined in *hermeneutics of appropriation*. The author undertakes this study from a reflection of a personal experience in Zimbabwe, in which political and socio-economic particularities (*themes* which we find in postexilic literature; e g, 1 and 2

---

[17] Various ideas on *hermeneutics of appropriation* have been advanced by the above scholars and many others. These ideas will be discussed in chapter 3 of this study (see section §3.1).

[18] This conclusion derives from the analysis that looks at the experiences of the ancient postexilic Judean community and the Zimbabwean context being complex and completely differently in terms of both time and audience if they two scenarios were to be compared. However, *themes* are always applicable to or "appropriated" in every situation.

Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, Zechariah, Haggai, Malachi, and others) have haunted the majority of the Zimbabwean population for a decade. Such "themes" about the postexilic Judean community have been motivating factors to this study in investigating the Zimbabwean context.

5.1.3 *Hermeneutics of appropriation* as an approach

Judean society should critically and conversely be analysed from the point of view of modern society, in which politics determines how the economic and religious activities, enterprises, and trade practices should be conducted, because a government is founded by and based on the premise of politics.[19] It is correct to surmise that the biblical narratives about Judah and her relations with her neighbours are of a religious nature. Although information about politics and the economy is scanty in the biblical narratives about the postexilic Judean community, this study will attempt to analyse their life in the context of both political and economic activities.

Whereas most African biblical scholars argue for the presence of an African within the biblical text (e g, Dada 2010:161; Adamo 1989:17-25; 2001:46-47), *hermeneutics of appropriation* differs from other approaches by way of discussing *themes* such as political and socio-economic situations of the postexilic Judean community and attempts to appropriate these *themes* for the political and economic contexts in postindependence Zimbabwe. The ancient biblical narratives about the Judeans, their relations with their neighbours, their response to the

---

[19] The Babylonian kingdom fell to the mighty Persians when Cyrus conquered Babylonia. For more information about Babylonian and Persian political and military engagements, see Gebbard (2007:276); Crawford (2007:81); Porter (1993).

politics of the time, their bilateral activities in terms of trade, and their economic engagement for survival have collectively been analysed in this study in view of the experiences of the postindependence Zimbabwean communities. This appropriation is intended to provide lessons for the Zimbabwean post-GNU leadership to always strive towards delivering justice, maintaining peace and order, practising democracy, and implementing social reforms and strategies meant to alleviate poverty so as to improve the living conditions of communities.

5.2   Data collecting instruments

Data collecting instruments refer to the tools used to collect data for research purposes. Research instruments are simply devices for obtaining information relevant to one's research project. There are many alternatives from which to choose (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:3). In this research, the following data collecting instruments were employed: MA thesis, secondary data (i.e., books and book chapters, articles, theses, and internet sources), and qualitative research (i e, interviewing).

5.2.1   MA thesis[20]

My MA thesis forms the background which "enriches" my present discourse. The MA thesis concentrated on the function of the exodus tradition during four specific periods, namely: the period of the Judges (1200–1020 BCE), the monarchic period (1000–587 BCE), the exilic period

---

[20] See Rugwiji, T 2008. Reading the exodus tradition from a Zimbabwean perspective. MA thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

(586–538 BCE) and the Persian period (539–333 BCE). Meanwhile, the current study picks up from the previous argument and develops it further by investigating the Judean experience during the Persian period, focusing on their postexilic experience.

5.3   Qualitative research

The term qualitative research refers to social research based on field observations analysed without statistics. It is called observation without numbers (Dooley 1995:259). Quantitative research, on the other hand, is defined as research that is based on measurement and quantification of data (Housier 1998:15). In quantitative research rigour is reflected in narrowness, conciseness and objectivity, leading to rigid adherence to research designs and precise statistical analyses. In this research, the qualitative method has been used to gather data, by means of interviews that were conducted. Qualitative research allows for data to be organised into categories formed on the basis of themes, concepts or similar features (Neuman 2006:460). This study postulates that themes, concepts and similar features such as politics, economy, reconstruction, subjection, poverty and oppression are common in both postexilic Judah and postindependence Zimbabwe. Still, both scenarios are unique. Yet the former's experience will inform the latter's. As rightly pointed out by Neuren (in Green and Nieman 2003:172) *themes* and *concepts*—rather than variables—serve as the analytical tools for qualitative studies. My preference for a qualitative research was influenced by both my context as well as my perspective.

5.3.1   Interviewing

Interviews involve a set of assumptions and understandings about a situation which are not normally associated with a casual conversation (Denscombe 1998:109). In this research, interviews have been conducted using questionnaires, particularly modelled for chapters 3, 4 and 5. Interpretation of the responses from questionnaires will focus on the above chapters.

5.3.1.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is the favoured tool of many of those engaged in research. It provides a cheap and effective way of collecting data in a structured and manageable form (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:7): they are inexpensive to administer; very little training is needed to develop them; and questionnaires can easily and quickly be analysed once completed (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:8).

Seventeen questions, classified into two categories ("A" and "B"), have been used in this study's questionnaire to draw responses from interviewees. Roberson and Sundstrom (1990:354-357) emphasise that a number of questions have to be directly relevant to the respondents' working lives (cf Appendix 2). The questions used for this research are relevant in that they all refer to the research problem under investigation. The types of questions employed for this study are closed, multiple-choice and open-ended questions, all three of which will be discussed below.

5.3.1.2 Closed questions

Most questionnaires consist of a collection of closed questions. These are questions to which all possible answers are provided (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:11). These questions mostly require a simple "yes" or "no." In this research, section "B" of the questionnaire requires "yes/no" responses.

5.3.1.3 Multiple-choice questions

In a multiple-choice question, a range of answers is given and respondents are required to insert a tick (✓ or X) in any one of the square boxes provided. In this research, multiple-choice questions are included under section "B" of the questionnaire.

5.3.1.4 Open-ended questions

Open-ended questions impose none of the restrictions of closed and multiple-choice questions. A typical open-ended question would be: "Tell us about the area you live in" (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:11). In this research, section "A" of the questionnaire consists of open-ended questions where spaces are provided for respondents to write their responses. An example of an open-ended question in this research's questionnaire is: "What mechanisms could be employed for the possibility of a democratically elected government in Zimbabwe?"

5.3.1.5 Anonymous interviewees/informants

Anonymous interviewees/informants were drawn from diverse contexts and nationalities, including academics and students at universities in South Africa and in Zimbabwe. Some interviewees were reputable authors scattered far and wide, to whom questionnaires were mailed and completed copies returned by post as well as online. However, not many Zimbabwean nationals were forthcoming to participate in the interviews. Although questionnaires were despatched to about 20 Zimbabweans, both in South Africa and in Zimbabwe, only 5 responded. The author took it that Zimbabwean people are still nurturing memories of brutality by the regime so much that they do not want to be known as being critical of the postindependence Zimbabwean government. This is understandable because the gravity of suffering by the Zimbabwean people had made them desert their homes and country to live in diaspora. However, individual responses received from academics and other interviewees who followed the political situation in Zimbabwe closely, provided invaluable qualitative information for this study.

6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this research, the issue of consent and questions of privacy and confidentiality have been taken into account in order to protect the respondents.

6.1   Informed consent

The process of informed consent is set firmly within the principles of respect for autonomy

(Holloway and Wheeler 1998:43). In this study, a letter requesting consent was issued to all respondents who participated in this research's interview, prior to sending the questionnaire to them. Thus, all the respondents who completed the questionnaire had indicated beforehand in writing that they would like to participate in this interview. For the sake of confidentiality, proper names of respondents have been reflected as pseudonyms. Using a fictitious name does not imply that contributions by respondents are insignificant. It is rather an attempt to keep their identities concealed and private for their own protection. Included in the letter of consent are my own particulars such as: the nature of the interview, my programme as a doctorate candidate (Doctor of Literature and Philosophy), my student number, the name of the institution (University of South Africa), the name of my promoter and my own name. A letter of consent will be attached as Appendix 1.

6.2   Privacy and confidentiality: Pseudonyms

In a cover letter to the respondents, consisting of a declaration by the researcher, it is declared that in the text of the thesis itself the respondents' real names will not be used and their identities will in no way be revealed, even though the respondents are required to submit such details to the researcher. Hence, in the text of the thesis contributions by respondents are reflected without jeopardising both the declaration in terms of privacy and confidentiality as well as the significance of these contributions. For the sake of privacy and confidentiality, contributions are referred to using pseudonyms as stated above. For example, pseudo Stewarding is referred to in

italitics, such as *Stewarding*[21] (2011): with a footnote, followed by the date.

7 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This research is not a "virgin" undertaking in the field of "contextualising" (or appropriating) biblical narratives for the postbiblical world. Themes such as oppression, political power, economy, justice, the exile, (or the diaspora), poverty, the environment and suffering which are prevalent in the biblical text, have been explored by researchers in the context of the experiences of such phenomena by the postbiblical world. The list of research projects which have attempted to contextualise (or appropriate) biblical narratives to the postbiblical context is inexhaustive. The uniqueness of the present study in which a "hermeneutics of appropriation" is employed, lies in appropriating the experiences of the Judean postexilic community to the experiences of the Zimbabwean postindependence community after 1980. Presently, no modern scholar has undertaken a similar study. However, complementary efforts by other research projects carried out in differing contexts previously are worthy noting. These have assisted the development of my present research.

The freedom and return of the Jewish deportees came as result of the defeat and collapse of the Babylonian kingdom by the Persian general Ugbaru and the ascension onto the throne of Cyrus, the Persian (Spangenberg 2006a:168). The Persians, an Indo-European people whose origins and centre of power lay in the territory north and east of the Fertile Crescent, quickly

---

[21] This is an example of how pseudonyms will be referred to in this study.

established the most comprehensive Near Eastern empire that existed until 539 BCE.[22] Under the Persian Empire, the Jews continued to strive towards maintaining their religious and national identity. For a while, the Judeans seemed to have settled.[23] However, their independence was once again threatened by Alexander the Great's conquering spirit over the world through a policy of Hellenisation,[24] which established the benefits of Greek civilisation to those considered as backward peoples (Whittaker 1984:3). To say the least, from the Judean perspective, there were no real *benefits* to write home about. The Maccabean resistance or revolt is interpreted by some to be a reaction against a "religious suppression" (Grabbe 1992:267-268). Still, among the Judeans themselves, there was also conflict of a religious, class and materialistic nature (Smith 1996:537-556). This multiplicity of crises as explained by both Grabbe and Smith, among others, portrays that freedom was far from being realised within the postexilic Judean community.

Berlin (2005:65) has expressed it clearly that "exile does not necessarily mean living outside of the former kingdom of Judah. People living in the land of Israel after 538 BCE also felt that they were in exile as long as the temple was not rebuilt and even afterwards, as long as they were under the rule of foreign power." Berlin further stated that exile is not only a

---

[22] For further reading on the history of the Persian Empire, see Miller and Hayes (1986:437-475).

[23] After the restoration as a result of the decree by Cyrus, king of Persia, the Judeans settled in Judea under the Persian Empire for about two hundred and six years (539–333 BCE). One would have thought that eventually the Judeans would be granted total freedom by the Persians. While this did not happen, Alexander the Great attacked and overpowered the Persian Empire and subdued the Judeans under Greek rule and culture commonly described as Hellenism was established, hence the Hellenistic period (333–63 BCE); see Spangenberg (2006b:199-236).

[24] Hellenisation is not discussed here in detail, because it does not constitute the focus of the current research. It is understood that biblical narratives on Israelite religiosity and sojourn can be categorised in "periods" and the Hellenistic period (333–63 BCE) is one of them. The other well-known periods are: the pre-monarchic period (1200–1020 BCE), also known as the period of the judges; the monarchic period (1000–587 BCE); the exilic period (586–539 BCE); the Persian period (539–333 BCE); the Hellenistic period (333–63 BCE) and the Roman period (63 BCE–135 CE). For more reading on these periods, see Scheffler (2001).

geographic place, it is a religious state of mind. I concur with Berlin's contestation above which is the argument in my present work that although the Judean exiles finally returned to Judah, they continued to experience an "exile" through oppression and enslavement exerted by their own Jewish leaders back at home which caused "men and their wives to raise a great outcry against their Jewish brothers" (Neh 5:1).

The Old Testament, particularly the postexilic literature (e g, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and others) portrays power play at work within the Judean community, just as power affects every spectrum of life among postbiblical societies today. The above circumstances emerging from the postexilic Judean community draw this study to investigate political and socio-economic challenges in the context of postbiblical world in which political power has taken precedence over the socio-economic well-being of the majority in Africa (including Zimbabwe) which is heavily mutilated by poverty.

An analysis by Strydom and Wessels (2000:11) has equally confirmed my assertion that we all live in societies where we are very aware of the important role power plays in the course of our daily lives. Power is daily exercised in governmental and all other social structures. Power has many faces, but to deny its existence is to deny the reality of life. The above statement by Strydom and Wessels parallels the contestations raised in this discourse that critical Old Testament scholarship should interrogate issues of politics, power, democracy, economy, poverty and suffering among societies. *Hermeneutics of appropriation* employed in this study, is an attempt to engage the ancient biblical narrative about the postexilic Judean community to investigate how the political leadership and societies addressed the above themes.

Old Testament scholarship has not been able to deal critically with contemporary issues affecting our modern societies today, such as political power, socio-economic situations, justice,

poverty, the environment, health, and others. The following assertion by Goldingay (2003:18) supports my argument: "In principle I am not interested in the Old Testament as a merely theoretical discipline. I am interested in it because I have found that the Old Testament has a capacity to speak with illumination and power to the lives of communities and individuals. Yet, I also believe it has been ignored and/or emasculated and I want to see it let loose in the world of theology, in the church and in the world." On the same note, Gottwald's words are also enriching on both the political and economic circumstances within the postexilic community in Yehud. Gottwald (1985:375) explains that the leaders of the Judean society were responsible for the deterioration of the old tribal order of communal equity. Both people and property were violated by these leaders in enriching themselves and strengthening their position of power. Shaw (1993:109) concurs with Gottwald's statement above by referring to the same practice as the "abuse of power." This abuse of power as Shaw opines, weighs heavily on the poor of society. To my mind, when Warmback (2008:166) argues for a theology that takes seriously the task of poverty eradication while at the same time respects the integrity of the natural environment, he appears to be responding to Gottwald's and Shaw's contestations. Warmback further affirms that he has a strong interest in theology and the environment and the church's role in society (2008:167). In my view, the main task of the biblical interpreter is an attempt to make the text "speak" clearer for the ordinary reader, that is, the environment as Warmback's correctly puts it. Upkong (2000) raises the same argument as Warmback's.

Upkong (2000:3) observes that since the 1990s a decidedly proactive stance is leading to the development of contextual Bible studies and enculturation approaches, which recognise the importance of the ordinary reader and make the African context the explicit subject of biblical interpretation. He further states that the importance of the ordinary reader will gradually come to

27

the fore, because academic reading of the Bible in Africa cannot continue to ignore the concerns and perspectives of the ordinary reader. Since African biblical scholarship focuses on the community that receives the text, any continued ignoring of the ordinary readers will lead to sterile scholarship (2000:18). Upkong concurs with a view chronicled earlier on by Tutu (1978: 336) who had noted that no longer then shall we have from the Bible answers to questions not asked by Africans. In the same vein, one can move on to analyse postcolonial criticism, which in my view, makes this study necessary when one embarks on the investigation of the events in retrospect.

Essays on postcolonial criticism or postcolonial biblical criticism have been written extensively. The "post" in *postcolonial* can imply an end, actual or imminent, to apartheid, partition or occupation. It hints to withdrawal, liberation and reunification (Moore-Gilbert et al 1997:2). On the other hand, Sugirtharajah (2002:2) explains that postcolonialism was used:

> …to term the former colonised countries of Asia and Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific as postcolonial as they become self-governing states. Recently there has been a development and shift in the meaning of the term. It has moved from a fairly common understanding as a linear chronological sequence to a much more catholic and more diverse sense, as an index of historical and cultural changes. Despite the formal withdrawal of European nations, the term "postcolonial" is thought to be an appropriate one because of the persistence of newer forms of economic and cultural colonialism which keep a number of newly independent states in check and constrain their freedom. The term as it is now used, whether referring to textual practices or psychological conditions, or historical processes, depends on *who* uses it and *what* purpose it serves.

In my opinion, postcolonial criticism is thus an attempt to critique or analyse the politics, economy, culture, and religion after the colonial period, so as to make sense of these in their time setting. But, as Sugirtharajah states above, the term's meaning depends on *who* uses it and *what*

purpose it serves. In this research, postcolonial criticism is employed in view of the political, economic, cultural, and religious experiences of the Judeans after the Babylonian exile. It denotes an end to colonialism and the subsequent existence of a different reality (White 1993:1). It is a reality that might well be characterised by new forms of economic and cultural colonialism. The Judeans were liberated and reunited with their fellow Jews who had remained in Judea. However, tension arose between the returnees and the remnants. This tension almost halted development in Judah. One wonders if such tensions ever resurfaced in postcolonial Zimbabwe. In my appropriation of postexilic Judah for the postindependence Zimbabwe, the same definitions will be utilised and brought into perspective. The experience of both political and socio-economic realities by modern societies should motivate the modern reader to read the biblical text with new lenses in an attempt to address challenges such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, abuse of power, amongst others. When Emmanuel Usue (cf discussed in chapter 3 below), among others, appropriates the Ezra-Nehemiah narrative in the contexts of the Nigerian and South African peoples today, he rightly examines the pitfalls associated with leadership and power.

Usue's appropriation of the Ezra-Nehemiah narrative for both the Nigerian and South African contexts is quite revealing. Usue (2007:831) observes that the paradox of restoration and desperation in Ezra and Nehemiah seems to echo or play out in Nigeria and South Africa as well. Usue further remarks that when African nations began to shelve away the shackles of colonialism, apartheid and military regimes, they turned to democracy hoping for a united, progressive and secured Africa, which, according to Usue, is not the case. Usue's argument is articulated more clearly in the following statement:

> The dreams of about what freedom and democracy would offer are becoming a wishful thinking, given the spate of crime, wars, military coups, corruption and bad political and economic policies adopted and practiced by these nations. As a result, the era of freedom and democracy has impoverished Africans in essence rather than enhance their living conditions (2007:831).

Usue's contention in appropriating the Judean postexilic narratives in Ezra-Nehemiah for the Nigerian and South African contexts is conceived and derives from the postcolonial and post-apartheid experiences in Nigeria and South Africa. On the one hand, tension between Muslims and Christians has weakened the "social cohesion" in Nigeria. On the other hand, "traces of insecurity/crime, poverty and corruption continue to haunt the South African society, as it was in the postexilic Jewish community" (Usue 2007:843). Usue's analysis correctly supports the present study on hermeneutics of appropriation in which the emphasis on *rebuilding* the Zimbabwean economy and its infrastructure after the formation of government of national unity (GNU)[25] should be the focus. This brings this research to engage the views of Charles Villa-Vicencio and Jesse Mugambi on the *theology of reconstruction*.

The idea of the *theology of reconstruction* which was propagated by scholars such as Charles Villa-Vicencio (1992) and Jesse Mugambi (1995) respectively, is paramount as we tackle the debate on rebuilding Zimbabwe. The Judeans had returned to Judah. The anxiety of being away from home in a freign land was in the past; the passion to determine their own future and their destiny was now unfolding. Now was the time to focus on developing their own lives and rebuilding their homes, and other infrastructure. When Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi read the above themes in the narratives about the postexilic Judean community, they proposed a theology of reconstruction for the modern postbiblical world. In the book, Villa-Vicencio explores the

---

[25] GNU in Zimbabwe was formed on 13 Mar 2009. Thereafter, the phrase "goverment of national unity" will be referred to as GNU.

perils intrinsic to the linking of theology and nation-building, particularly the tendency for theological thinking in times of nation-building to deteriorate into the theological legitimation of national ideology. In addition, Mugambi shifts from the liberation-inculturation paradigm which was mainly "reactive" to develop a "proactive" theology of reconstruction (1995:11-13). Mugambi has further explained that thinking about the "liberation phase" (e g, the exodus liberation motif/the Babylonian exile) was not necessary; what was necessary was rebuilding their land and restore their dignity as a people. Both Villa-Vicencio's and Mugambi's viewpoints have confirmed my own argument in this discourse that the postindependence Zimbabwe (or GNU) era should focus on rebuilding the country that has been devastated by over a decade of both political and economic meltdown. The man Nehemiah and his social justice reforms in the biblical book of Nehemiah[26] (cf discussed in chapter 4), will be used as an example for the post-GNU leadership in Zimbabwe towards rebuilding the country.

African countries emerging from decades of colonial subjugation or ethnic conflict, have rekindled a new wave of enslavement and oppression which has seen the exacerbation of poverty on the majority of ordinary people. Postindependence Zimbabwe is no exception. As rightly noted by Zimudzi (2012:508), the Zimbabwean crisis which became noticeable from the 2000 and whose hallmarks have included collapse, widespread human rights violations and disputed has continued to be the subject of numerous academic and non-academic publications. Zimudzi (2012:508) further laments that it is Mugabe policies of political survival, characterised by disregard for political rights and economic welfare of fellow Zimbabweans which predictably led to the economic and political ruin that the country has experienced since 2000. Zimudzi's

---

[26] Some chapters of of the book of Nehemiah, including other biblical books such as Chronicles, Ezra, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, will also be considered.

assertions portray the reality on the ground in that under the leadership of Robert Mugabe, postindependence Zimbabwe has witnessed numerous unjust practices and retaliatory reactions to the aggravating experiences of the colonial past, particularly against the so-called "beneficiaries" of colonialism. The other category of the "persecuted" from among African "sellouts" were simply accused for allegedly belonging to the group of colonial "beneficiaries."

Mugabe's revolutionary machinery was deployed to torture, subject, marginalise, oppress and exploit his own black people believed to be the enemies of the state, suspected to be having Western connections and/or allies. It was under these circumstances that white commercial farmers in Zimbabwe lost their farms through the infamous land invasions instigated by Mugabe's ZANU (PF) government. Kriger (2003:407) chronicled that the guerrilla veterans of the Zimbabwe liberation war played a prominent role in intimidating members of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and in spearheading the invasions that drove white farmers from the land and led to the chaotic "fast-track" land-distribution reform exercise, popularly known as the *Third Chimurenga*.[27]

This marked the beginning of almost a decade (2000–2008) of economic turmoil which devastated the people of Zimbabwe. Compagnon (2011) has equally argued that the current Zimbabwean crisis is a predictable and logical consequence of the character and policies of Robert Mugabe since independence. Compagnon's observation confirms my own argument that Mugabe's character was always violent and militant from the beginning, who had always believed in the war and armed struggle to bring freedom to the Zimbabwean people (Rugwiji

---

[27] The term *Chimurenga* in Shona means war/the struggle. *Third Chimurenga* literally refers to another phase of the struggle, the land. After political independence from Rhodesia was attained in 1980, the majority of Zimbabweans did not have land.

2008:137). As the war of liberation in Zimbabwe intensified, other nationalists such as Joshua Nkomo, among others, were willing to come to terms with Ian Smith. Mugabe was opposed to this ideology as he regarded the armed struggle as an essential part of the process of establishing a new society (Meredith 2008:2). In view of the above analyses, many people think that Mugabe's attitude and his practice of dictatorship and human rights violations were a "time bomb" waiting to explode.

Jacob Mapara's MA thesis entitled, *The Bible and literature: A case of biblical influence in some Shona novels* (2003) remains a remarkable example of appropriating the biblical text in the modern postbiblical world, with a special focus on Zimbabwe. According to Mapara (2003:20) among the Shona, folktales and songs were told and sung to teach people issues of high moral values. Mapara further explains that some Zimbabwean Shona novelists were able to adopt and adapt Bible stories and use them to teach moral issues to their people. These Bible stories include the story of Moses who had to leave Egypt for Median from where he received a message from Yahweh for the liberation of the Israelites from the Egytian bondage (Ex 2:15-25). Mapara likened Israel's bondage to colonial policies of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) which oppressed the majority black people.

It is also appropriate to note that this present study continues in light of research done previously in my MA thesis entitled: *Reading the exodus tradition from a Zimbabwean perspective* (2008). In that study, I explored how postbiblical societies such as United States of America, Latin America, South Africa and Zimbabwe have used the exodus motif. To allow for consistency, I have deliberately drawn some major themes from the MA thesis for the current study in order to avoid an abrupt ending to an ongoing discussion. It is therefore essential to bear in mind that the MA thesis laid an important foundation for the present study. However, this does

not imply that the previous research and the present are overlapping. Each is explicitly autonomous and stands out differently as a separate entity.

8   LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

This study has been limited by one comprehensive factor, that is: an unfriendly political environment in Zimbabwe.

8.1   Unfriendly political environment in Zimbabwe

During the timespan of the research, the Zimbabwean political environment was unfriendly and sensitive,[28] to the extent that one would venture into an interview project at one's own peril. It equally emerged that some individuals (especially Zimbabwean citizens both in diaspora and those who remained in the country) did not want to respond to questionnaires concerning the political situation in Zimbabwe for fear of victimisation.

---

[28] Some questionnaire questions were sensitive, especially questions on the political situation in Zimbabwe. It is assumed that such "sensitive" questions on the political situation in Zimbabwe made potential respondents withdraw for fear of victimisation. For further reading on sensitive questions, see Joliffe (1986:64).

9   STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS[29]

This thesis as a whole, This study is structured into five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 is the introduction. It introduces the agenda of the whole study, highlighting the following: background to the research problem, problem statement, aim and motivation, hypothesis, methodology, research method, ethical considerations, previous researches, limitations, and structure (outline) of the whole thesis.

Chapter 2 discusses the Judean postexilic experience during the Persian period (539–333 BCE). It analyses the postexilic experience of the Judeans as reflected in the biblical text. The Judean deportees were released to return to Palestine when Cyrus became king of Persia in 539 BCE. Despite their return and their religious autonomy, Judea remained a province of the Persian Empire which dictated the economic life and political administration of its subject peoples. The background story of the Judean captivity and return is discussed in order to appropriate it for the postcolonial period in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 3 carries the title:*Towards appropriating the Judean postexilic narrative in the context of postcolonial Zimbabwean context* (1980-2008). In this chapter, colonialism, postcoloniality, and postcolonialsm are defined, and their use in this discourse are explained. A method called *hermeneutics of appropriation* introduced under methodology above is reinforced and explained in detail in this chapter. The chapter focuses on the possibility of appropriating the

---

[29] This thesis as a whole follows the Harvard referencing system, for both reference of sources in the text and in the bibliography section as well as Bible references, a style which was traditionally adopted by the department of Biblical and Ancient Studies at UNISA. See Killian, J 1989. *Form and style in theological texts: A guide for the use of the Harvard referencing system*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

themes[30] within the Judean postexilic narratives in a Zimbabwean postindependence context when Robert Mugabe became Prime Minister (and later President) of independent Zimbabwe in 1980. Precisely, this chapter shows how the appropriation is done by discussing and exploring previous researches. A comprehensive *appropriation* is explored in chapter 4.

Chapter 4 explores the reconstruction and economic development in the post-2008 era in Zimbabwe in view of Nehemiah's social justice reforms. This chapter examines the reconstruction projects which were undertaken by the Judeans led by Nehemiah after the exile. Nehemiah's social justice reforms (Neh 5) will be discussed as examples for the Zimbabwean leadership to work towards alleviating poverty and starvation among members of the Zimbabwean society. In its entirety, this chapter focuses on the holistic development of Zimbabwe as a country.

Chapter 5 includes conclusions and recommendations.This concluding chapter is the collation and synthesis of the findings of the entire thesis. It constitutes the culmination of the whole research. This chapter will also give recommendations on the requisites and possibilities towards peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe to enhance its economic development.

---

[30] These *themes* include the following: politics and the political leadership, the economy, peace, reconciliation, trade, bilateral relations, drought, corruption, land, tax, and poverty alleviation, amongst others.

CHAPTER 2   JUDEAN POSTEXILIC EXPERIENCES DURING
                             THE PERSIAN PERIOD (539–333 BCE)

1   INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this thesis constituted the introduction to the whole thesis which prefaced the

sum total of all the discussions as they unfold in the four chapters that follow. *Chapter 2* explores

the postexilic experiences of the Judeans, both those who remained in Judah prior to the

deportation and the returnees from Babylonian captivity who were restored to the Persian

province of *Yehud*.[31] This chapter performs two main functions. *First*, it analyses the socio-

economic, political and the religious situations of the Judeans in Yehud after their restoration.

Second, the themes within the Judean postexilic literature will be appropriated in the

Zimbabwean postindependence and post-ZANU (PF) eras by an approach called *hermeneutics of*

appropriation which was introduced in chapter 1 (see §5.1.3, respectively). This appropriation–

defined and explained fully in chapter 3 (see §3.1)–is employed and discussed in detail in

chapter 4, and summerised in chapter 5.

The biblical text conveys that the Judean restoration from the Babylonian captivity

culminated into total freedom in Judah. The biblical texts of Deutero-Isaiah and Ezra portray that

the liberation of the Judeans came when the Persian king Cyrus conquered Babylonia in October

539 BCE (Is 45:1-17; Ezr 1:1-4). This victory by Cyrus over the Babylonians enabled him to

establish Medo-Persia as the major political power in the ancient Near East (cf Merrill 1991:478-

---

[31] *Yehud* is the Aramaic name of the province of Judea (see Ezr 1:2, 8); see also Schramm (1995).

480). According to the Book of Ezra, God chose Cyrus as an instrument through which Israel's restoration would take place. The proclamation made by King Cyrus in this regard is as follows:

> The Lord, the God of Heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Anyone of his people among you, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. In addition, the people of any place where survivors may now be living are to provide him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem (Ezr 1:1-2).

In contrast to the notion conveyed by the biblical text, this chapter argues that the Judeans were neither free in Yehud nor committed to rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. As will be elaborated below, recurrence of oppression and poverty within this restored community lends credibility to the argument that freedom and economic stability did not prevail in Yehud.

In numerous instances the Old Testament does not seem to explain responsibly some of the acts attributed to Yahweh on behalf of the Israelites. As we shall read when dealing with monotheism and exclusivism below, a jealous and monotheistic God is at some point associated with paganism by introducing king Cyrus of Persia into the programme of liberation of his "specially-elected" people.

The return from exile announced in Ezra 1 is described in terms that allude to the escape from Egypt (Davies 1999:10). When the Israelites left Egypt at the time of the exodus, Moses instructed them to ask for silver and gold from the Egyptians, which indeed they received (Ex 12:35-36). It is probable that even the Egyptian Pharaoh contributed to the social and economic welfare of the departing Israelites in this way, by ordering his subjects to provide gifts to hasten the exodus of the Israelites who were believed to be causing disharmony in the land (Ex 12:31-

33). However, such involvement by the Egyptian king is not made explicit in the text. With regard to King Cyrus, on the other hand, it is explicitly mentioned that he commanded his subjects to provide the Judean returnees with silver, gold, animals, and offerings to present in the temple in Jerusalem (Ezr 1:1-4). This depicts the *pagan* King Cyrus as a liberator, typifying Moses who liberated the Israelites from Egyptian bondage (Cardascia 1988).

Cyrus' decree for restoration of Judah was a welcome turn of events for the Judean exiles. Scheffler (2006c:144) states that Cyrus' decree "presaged the end of the Babylonian Empire and the liberation of the Judean exiles." The reference to "liberation" contradicts my viewpoint, namely that the Judeans were not "free" in Yehud, which is also supported by Walter Brueggemannn and Adele Berlin. Brueggemannn (1997:115) looks at the Judean restoration as "being in exile while living physically at home." Brueggemannn's observation appears sound, especially if one considers that when the Judeans were finally restored, there were incidents of corruption and oppression that exacerbated the poverty of the majority of the people in Yehud. Adele Berlin also critiques Judah's "liberation." Berlin (2005:65) argues that "exile is not only a geographical place; it is a religious state of mind." Indeed, if one realises that even in one's own country there is a tendency to be in a kind of "slavery" due to the treatment by one's own people (especially the ruling elite), Berlin's argument has validity.

In sum, Judean political and economic situations were not transformed by a geographical location. The Judeans continued to live as slaves while in Yehud. Despite the search for free, independent space, they could not find it. In my view, after "liberating" the the Judean exiles from Babylonian captivity, the Persians should have gone further to allow the Judeans to have their own government and run their own affairs, as opposed to Yehud being a province in the

larger Persian Empire. In the following section, an attempt is made to discuss the Judeans in their continued struggle for their own liberated space.

The Israelite returnees and the elders were led into a confession ceremony by Ezra (Ezr 10:11). However, Ezra 9:8 narrates the restoration from exile as temporary and brief, since he declares that: "But now, for a brief moment, the Lord our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage."

Prior to my discussion of the postexilic situation in Yehud, I find it informative to present as a background the situation of the exiles in Babylonia before their liberation by King Cyrus of Persia. This background is important because Persia replaced Babylonia in terms of political and military supremacy. The Judean exiles were subjected by both kingdoms. This background is necessary for establishing the population of the "exilic community": numbers of returnees, those who did not go to captivty in Babylonia, and the those who chose to remain behind in Babylonia after the exile. This analysis is significant in the context of the post-GNU era, precisely on the contribution of the diaspora community in economic development in Zimbabwe. The following section tackles the context of the Judeans during the Babylonian captivity.

2 THE BABYLONIAN INVASION OF JUDAH: THE EXILIC EXPERIENCE

2.1 The Babylonian invasion of Judah

Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah and carried into exile all the officers and fighting men, and all the artisans, including the "treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's

house" (2 Ki 24:13-16). According to Scheffler (2001:131), about 3000 to 5000 Jews were deported in 597 BCE. This is a conservative figure. Later on, in 586 BCE, Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile those who remained in the city along with the rest of the populace and those who had gone over to the king of Babylonia (2 Ki 25:11-12). Scheffler (2001:132) estimates that the number of deportees at this time was around 5000. Hence, according to Scheffler, the total number of Judean exiles could have been at most 10000, which agrees with number in 2 Kings 24:14; in verse 16, eight thousand more were deported. In both 2 Kings 24:14 and 2 Kings 25:12, it is mentioned that "only the poorest were left behind." Albright (1965:87) estimates that the population that remained in Judea was less than 20000 people. I think that more than that figure could have remained in Judea at the time of the deportation. This argument is substantiated below.

The impression readers get from reading the narrative about the Babylonian invasion is the total collapse of the entire land of Judah. John Bright (1972:344) expresses this view by presenting the notion that the population of Judah was drained away. Bright's idea suggests that the exercise was an "uprooting" of the entire population of Judah (cf Ackroyd 1968:30). Cataldo (2009:71), on the other hand, argues that the deportation of the Judeans might have been narrated to portray the exiles as a "covenant" people, and this prompts the hypothesis that the narrative was written from the diasporic elite perspective.

I subscribe to Martin Noth's contention, namely that the groups who were not exiled to Babylonia but remained behind in Judah "continued to be the centre of Israelite history and Israelite life" (Noth 1960:292). This puts into perspective Farisani's argument who proposes that, "if Ezra-Nehemiah is to be used in a theology of reconstruction, it should not be read as representing the voice of only one group (i e, that of the returned exiles). The suppressed voices

of the *am haaretz*[32] have to be heard as well" (Farisani 2002:633). Added to Farisani's view is Torrey's sentiment, who argues that "the Babylonian exile of the Judeans was in reality a small and relatively insignificant affair…" (Torrey 1910:285-287). I share the views of the last three scholars and assume that the population of Judah that was left behind was much more than what Bright and Ackroyd suggest. My argument for the majority still living in Judah is supported by the depiction that the group which survived the deportation had to make claims to land rights (Ezk 33:23-29), and that this group together with the priests were "fasting" and "mourning" in the fifth and seventh months throughout the exile (Zch 7:1-7). Archaeological evidence also confirms that all of the villages of northern Judah and Benjamin were in existence during the exile (Stern 1982:229); they were not totally "uprooted" by the Babylonians; the majority of Jews were left behind. As much as both the biblical text and extra-biblical sources on the exile (see Coogan 2011; Sire 2005; Zenger 1996) seem to pay particular attention to the life of the exiles, a rereading of the biblical text informs us that the fate of the remnants could have been worse. The above notion will be developed further in chapter 4 when exploring the socio-economic challenges among those who remained in Zimbabwe when the economy of the country had collapsed between 2000 and 2008. A section in chapter 4 (see par §14) will discuss the

---

[32] *Am haaretz* is Hebrew term for *people of the land*. It has traditionally been used in Jewish scriptures to refer to common citizens defined as "common people." These "common citizens" were the majority poor of society. The people of Nehemiah's time were typical of this category. Every society has got common people who could be described as *am haaretz.* In Zimbabwe, the exacerbation of poverty by the elite due to corruption, greed, controversial land reform, and injustice, amongst many other evils, which collectively caused the economic meltdown in the country, has exposed the majority of Zimbabweans to severe poverty. These majority poor in Zimbabwe are typical of the *am haaretz* in ancient Israel.

contribution of the diaspora community towards economic development in Zimbabwe. Below, I focus my attention on the experiences of the Judeans in Persian-controlled Yehud.

3 THE JUDEAN EXPERIENCES IN PERSIAN-CONTROLLED YEHUD

Grabbe (1998:17) explains that after the overthrow of Babylonia by the Persians, Cyrus instituted a major shift in religious policy. In 537 BCE he decreed that the priests who had been forced into exile by his predecessors were to lead the Judeans in their return to Judah. Following the return to Judah, one would expect to read about a nation that is now living in abundance, in justice, and running its own affairs in terms of our modern view of government and governance. Jewish return to Judah would therefore mean embarking on a massive rebuilding exercise of the capital city. Given the fairly large number of those who chose to return to Judah, as provided in Ezra 2:64-67, rebuilding projects would be completed within a short period, particularly taking cognisance of the fact that the Judeans were overzealous about homecoming and passionate about being masters of their own destiny. Ezra 2:64-65 states that the whole company of returnees was 42360, besides 7337 male and female slaves and 200 singers. Scheffler (2001:143) doubts the correctness of this figure. According to his estimates, only about 10000 Judeans were exiled. He considers it unlikely that the Judean population in Babylonia would have quadrupled in fifty years. However, the returnees became part of the larger community of Judeans in the Persian province of Yehud.

3.1 Yehud as province of the Persian Empire

The Persian Empire, in whih Yehud was a province, lasted about 206 years, from 539 to 333 BCE. Persia had appointed Jewish governors to oversee the local administration of the province of Judah, examples being: Nehemiah (Neh 5:14); Sheshbazzar (Ezr 5:14); Zerubbabel (Hg 1:1, 2:2); and Persian officials (Ezr 5:3, 6:6, 8:36; Neh 2:7, 3:7). On account of the Persian administration in Yehud, the following tabular illustration by Scheffler (2001:139) will enlighten the reader on the political situation under which the Judeans were subjected after the exile.

KINGS OF PERSIA DURING THE OCCUPATION OF JUDAH			
KINGS OF PERSIA		RULERS OF JUDAH	
Cyrus	539–530 BCE	Sheshbazzar	539–525 BCE
Cambyses II	530–522	Zerubbabel	525–516
Darius I	522–486		
Xerxes I	486–465		
Artaxerxes I	465–424	Ezra	458–428
Xerxes II	424	Nehemiah	445–425
Darius II	424–404		
Artaxerxes II	404–359		
Artaxerxes III	359–338		
Arses	338–336		
Darius III	336–331		

The table indicates the periods of service rendered by both Persian kings and Jewish rulers: Sheshbazzar (during the reign of Cyrus), Zerubbabel (during the reigns of Cambyses II and Darius I), Ezra (during the reign of Artaxerxes I) and Nehemiah (during the reigns of Artaxerxes I and Xerxes II). According to the books of Nehemiah and Chronicles, Zerubbabel was governor under Darius I (522–486 BCE), and Nehemiah under King Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE; Neh 2:1). Zerubbabel was sent to Judah in 520 BCE to take charge there, during which time Darius reigned as king. Both Zechariah 1:1 and Haggai 1:1 mention "…the second year of King Darius's reign…." Referring to a Persian king in the context of the Jews implies that it was Darius (522–486 BCE) who was in control in Judah. If Judah had been an independent entity, it would have been inappropriate for any prophet like Haggai and or Zechariah to make mention of such a ruler over the Jews. During the reign of Artaxerxes I (465–424 BCE), Judah is referred to as a *province* (Neh 1:3). Nehemiah is said to have begun his service under Artaxerxes' reign (Neh 2:1). News from Jerusalem was that the walls of the temple city were still in ruins (Neh 1:3). Nehemiah pleaded with Artaxerxes for materials to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 2:7-8). Artaxerxes consented, and sent with him letters for the governors of the region, authorising the rebuilding project.

Persian imperial politics thus ordered and shaped the community of Yehud and her religiosity. The greatest influences on restructuring Yehud around Torah and temple were external, not internal (Balentine 1996:130). This means that Persia influenced both the political and religious existence of Yehud. Perhaps this explains Persia's interests in getting involved in the reconstruction of the temple and Jerusalem. No nation would invest huge amounts of both human and financial resources in a project in which it does not have a stake or vested interests. On the other hand, if it can be accepted that "religion represents the highest stage of a person's

self-identity, hence also of a people's self-identity" (Buhlmann 1982:181), then—if applied to the Judeans—a rebuilt temple and city could not but positively impact on Judah's sense of national self.

Smith (1989:38-41) stresses that the Jews were *slaves* in Babylonia. The Judeans were equally treated as *slaves* by the Persian authorities[33] (Neh 9:36-37; Ezr 9:7-9) and by their Jewish brothers (Neh 5:1-8). At this stage Judea was actually in both categories: it was granted *limited* independence, that is, its own governor administered its general affairs; at the same time it was part of the Persian Empire (Williamson 1988:59); the Persian Empire administered the overall socio-political and economic affairs of the entire empire, including provinces subjected to its lordship, such as Yehud. Given this Persian control of Yehud, Berquist (1995:131-137) remarks that the local administrators had to maintain political and economic loyalty to the Persian Empire, and they had to sustain sufficient political stability and internal social control so as not to present a threat to their overlords. "Persian imperial politics in Yehud," writes Balentine (1996:138), "were designed to create a colony that would cooperate with the empire's goals." Hoglund (1992) adds that the Persian system utilised a number of mechanisms for social control and political maintenance in order to induce and sustain a mutually beneficial relationship between the state and its subject citizens. Consequently, when Zerubbabel was suspected of plotting an uprising against the Persian administration, he was removed from office (Williamson 1988:62). Zerubbabel's "rebellion" was probably inclined towards liberating the Judeans from Persian oppression.

---

[33] The Persian Empire remained the administrative authority in the province of Yehud. Although the Judeans were subjected to the oppression of both the Babylonian and the Persian authorities, the latter appears to have been lenient towards the Judeans as evidenced by the absence of "bad word" by the postexilic literature against Persia.

Berquist (1995:147-159) goes on to say that the codification of the native law, and the construction and maintenance of regional temples were most important mechanisms on the Persian agenda to control its colonies. No wonder the temple-building project in Judah was sponsored and financed by the Persian government, intended to "stretch out its arm" of control over the Judeans. The "king's law," which Artaxerxes commissioned Ezra to administer in Yehud (Ezr 7:26) is likely associated with the Pentateuch, the canonised form of which was worked out in several stages during the Persian period (see Blum 1990:409-421; Blenkinsopp 1992:239-242). On the other hand, Lemche (1993:163-193) proposes that the Bible is a "Hellenistic book." In almost the same line of thought as Lemche's viewpoint, Grabbe (2008:247) observes that the majority of the books that make up the present Hebrew canon were regarded as having religious authority by the end of the Persian period, thus arguing that the Bible is a Persian book. Given the fact that Grabbe does not include a time frame or precise date in his argument, both Lemche and Grabbe could in my view be correct in terms of continuous interpretation.

Taking the argument further, now that the returnees were in Judah, it is surprising that they deviated from their religious consciousness by their reluctance to rebuild both the temple and walls of Jerusalem (Hg 1:3-4; Neh 1:3). Nehemiah is mentioned in the book of Ezra as one of the leaders of the returnees. Other leaders mentioned are: Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum and Baanah (Ezr 2:2). There is a view that Sheshbazzar was a second name for Zerubabel, used in all transactions with the ruling power (cf other re-namings, e g, 2 Ki 24:17; Dn 1:7; cf Kidner 1979:35). The Nehemiah in Ezra's list of leaders leads the group during the reign of Cyrus in Persia (Ezr 1:1). The Judeans were assisted by "their neighbours with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable

gifts, in addition to all freewill offerings" (Ezr 1:6). The rebuilding exercise of the temple in Jerusalem would be conducted at Persian expense (Scheffler 2001:139). Thus, the temple in Jerusalem was built from the resources provided by the Persian government. The fact that Isaiah 45:1-4 and Ezra 1:1 speak highly of Cyrus—about whom Yahweh is thought to have said: "He is my shepherd, and he shall carry out my purpose" (Is 44:28)—serves to explain that the Persian Empire had successfully managed the provinces it controlled under Yahweh's "command."

It is important to note that Cyrus was neither a Jew, nor an adherent of Yahwehism. Yahweh used a non-Jew for the liberation of the Judeans (Is 45:1-5). This notion can be interpreted in terms of international relations; a nation exists because of the support and bilateral relations with the international community.

Having explored the political situation in the Persian province of Yehud, the next section below takes this discussion to the next level, that of the socio-economic situation in Yehud.

4   THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN YEHUD

Economic survival is an overriding agenda of alienated and uprooted peoples who find themselves strangers and exiles in the land in which they live. Economic exploitation was at the heart of the experience of Judah in the Babylonian exile. Vanderhooft (2000:6) explains that the Babylonian Empire focused upon "the domination and exploitation of non-Babylonian populations for the benefit of the ruling elite." The above themes are portrayed in the book of Lamentations, including aspects such as templelessness and landlessness (Lm 2:3-7; 4:9; 5:6). The exiles looked at themselves as "dry bones" (Ezk 4:14; 18:37). Smith (1989:38-41) in line with Vanderhooft maintains that exploitation of the Judean exiles for their labour made them

virtual *slaves* of the empire. The biblical text narrates that part of the ideology of subjugating the Judeans in Babylonia included some kind of "cheap labour" provision as well as possibilities of other kinds of ill-treatment (Is 52:5; Jr 51:6-7; Lm 3:1-9; Ps 137). The postexilic Judean community could have experienced the same treatment of oppression under the Persians (Neh 9:36-37).

Information based on biblical sources about the reign of Cyrus and Judah as a province of the Persian Empire is scanty. Biblical books that present a postexilic flavour (Haggai, Malachi, Trito-Isaiah [Is 56-66], Zechariah, etc), seldom mention Cyrus' rule in straightforward terms. Ezra and Nehemiah focus much on rebuilding the temple and the walls; nothing is said about politics in the Persian Empire or the economic situation in the province of Judah. Haggai and Malachi concentrate more on the demands of the law, obedience to Yahweh and temple matters.

In an attempt to get some glimpses of the economic situation in postexilic Yehud, an analysis of the book of Zechariah will shed more light. Zechariah, like Trito-Isaiah (56-66), envisions restoration and "good life," which was not yet realised, but which would definitely come (e g, Zch 8:4-5, 12, 19; 9:15-17). Zechariah prophesied that the restored "old" Judeans and their children would walk the streets of the city of Jerusalem. This would be a time of peace for Judah. People would live until they were very old. Their children would be happy as they played (Zch 8:4-5). Their land would produce *grapes* from which they would make wine, and the *dew* would provide water for sustenance (8:12). People's fasts of the 4th, 5th, 7th and 10th months would be full of joy and happiness, and they would conduct happy festivals with love, truth and peace (8:19). Yahweh would protect the Judeans and destroy their enemies. People would overcome enemy attack, and they would drink and make a noise like drunkards. They would be full like a bowl at the corners of the altar (9:15). Yahweh would make his people safe, and they

would shine in *Yehud* like jewels in a crown (9:16). They would be attractive and beautiful, and the produce of the land (grain) would make the young men grow well, while new wine (from the *grapes*) would make the young women grow well too (9:17).

Miller (2010:5) contests that "the economic situation in fifth-century Yehud is imperfectly known; therefore, the evidence must be viewed with caution." Unlike the Babylonian period in which certain socio-economic and political trajectories could be examined, reliable information on the Persian period is problematic and in numerous circumstances has become a subject of various interpretations (Scheffler 2001:142). Purvis (1999:178) states that "the Persians had demanded only political loyalty and the payment of taxes." Like many others, Purvis does not refer to any biblical source in support of such a view. Schaper (1995:528) refers to biblical sources when he writes that "few passages exist in postexilic biblical texts which give us an insight into the Jerusalem temple as an instrument of the Persian administration." In my view, although biblical depiction on the economy of Yehud is scanty, available biblical sources provide some insight on the Persian policy of tax-collection. Both biblical evidence and extra-biblical materials exist which imply that tax-collection was practised in the Persian province of Yehud.

Archaeological discoveries of coins provide evidence that these were used as mode of trade and for commercial transactions. These coins were probably used for every day business activities as well as for bilateral economic exchange across the Persian Empire and beyond. Baruch Kanael (1963:39) comments that "coined money rapidly became common throughout the ancient world…. The Persians also started to issue gold and silver coins." Kanael further asserts that the first coins mentioned in the Bible were Persian ones, citing Ezra 2:69, which says: "According to their ability they gave to the treasury of the work sixty-one thousand darics of gold…" It is further chronicled that "in Judea, Persian coins, on which the effigy of the Persian

king appeared, were current" (Kanael 1963:40). Neo-Babylonian kings seemed to have demanded temple-tax from the Judeans, and when the Persian Empire took control of Judah as one of its provinces, a requirement for temple-tax remained in force. Schaper (1995:528) states that "the main income of the Babylonian temples was generated by the tithe, which was payable either in precious metals or in kind." Dandamaev and Lukonin (1989:361-362) confirm this: "The tithe was paid in the majority of cases in barley, and dates, but also frequent in silver, emmer, sesame, wool, clothing, small livestock, cattle, poultry, fish, etc. The tithe corresponded to a tenth of the incomes of tax-payers..."

The book of Zechariah also throws light on the practice of temple-tax in Jerusalem. Zechariah 11:13 reads: "Then the Lord said to me, 'Throw it into the treasury—this lordly price at which I was valued by them. So I took the thirty shekels of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord, to the potter.'" Torrey (1936:258) translates the term *yoser* ("potter"; Zch 11:13) as "caster" or "founder," which he says "denotes a *minor official of the temple* whose task was to melt down silver." In addition, Ezekiel's annunciation that: "As silver is melted in a smelter, so you shall be melted in it, and you shall know that I, the Lord, have poured out my wrath upon you" (Ezk 22:22), might have been an expression of what was common in ancient Israel. Torrey (1936:247) further explores that "one of the features of Zerubbabel's temple was a foundry, in which the precious metal given to the treasury was melted down." If "melting down silver" was practised in Yehud, it depicts that technology was at an advanced stage in Judah, and probably existed before the exile. According to Schaper (1995:532) "there had been a foundry at the Jerusalem temple even before the exile," but was reintroduced and capitalised by the imperial administration for the purpose of exploiting the local natural resources for its upkeep. Torrey (1943:298) explains how precious metals were stored in the temple chambers:

In the centuries before 300 BCE, while coin money was little known or scarce in Palestine, and also decreasing extent in the later time, the precious metal which was brought to the temple, as regular revenue or votive offering, came in the form of lumps, fragments, utensils, and trinkets of every description and shape.

Torrey's description is indicative of the practice of temple-tax collection prevailing within the Persian Empire, and illustrates that the temple functioned as a storehouse for the safekeeping of treasures such as gold and silver. In addition, Nehemiah 13:16, shows that Tyre had established a trade in Jersalem to conduct busiess in fish and other merchandise (Blenkinsopp 1988: 359-360; Myers 1965: 213; Williamson 1985:395). The last part of verse 16 says: "all kinds of merchandise," suggests trade in various products existed between Tyre and Judah. Together with tax-collection in Persian-controlled Yehud, commercial activities sustained the economic life of the Empire.

Grabbe (2000:33) concurs that the Persians may well have used existing structures, including temples, to collect taxes. This is confirmed by Schaper (1995:528) who mentions that "the Achaemenids took over from the neo-Babylonian kings the concept of a mandatory temple-tax or tithe." The book of Nehemiah also confirms that the temple functioned as a storehouse where it stipulates that:

For the people of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of grain, wine, and oil to the storerooms where the vessels of the sanctuary are, and where the priests that minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers are. We will not neglect the house of our God (Neh 10:39).

This requirement mentioned by Nehemiah above was a kind of tax known as *teruma* in Hebrew (also known as *midda* in Aramaic), which was stored in the temple treasury (Schaper 1995:536). In the same vein, Ephʿal (1988:158-159) notes that *midda* or *minda* was a "tribute tax" paid to the king personally, while *belo* was a "poll tax" and the *halak* was a "land tax," respectively. The above passage in Nehemiah explains further that besides providing storage of precious metals such as silver and gold, the temple also served as a storehouse of food reserves needed either for future use, for helping the needy or for the care of temple employees such as priests. Still, the key role played by the temple was administering taxes for the Persian Empire. In the Persian province of Yehud the Jerusalem temple was responsible for collecting taxes according to the targets set by the central government (Schaper 1995:535). The book of Ezra provides evidence of a tax described as *tribute* paid by the Judeans to Persia where it reads that: "Jerusalem has had mighty kings who ruled over the whole province *Beyond the River*, to whom tribute, custom, and toll were paid" (Ezr 4:20; 7:24). The same notion is also clearly depicted in the book of Nehemiah when people complained to Nehemiah about payment of tax, where it says: "And there were those who said, 'We are having to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay the king's tax'" (Neh 5:4).

The explorations alluded to above might further be augmented by our knowledge of and reconstruction from the modern context in which contemporary governments survive and draw the bulk of their revenue for economic sustenance from taxes. Below, I will examine the religious situation in Yehud and the function of the deities in the economic stability and prosperity of a nation/s in the ancient near eastern world. This is necessary because in the ancient near eastern world, a nation's economic prosperity or lack of it was attributed to God or "gods" (e g, Yahweh; see Ezr 9:5-9; Hg 1:1-11).

5   THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN YEHUD

Postexilic experiences of the Judeans are examined in view of their role in the temple-reconstruction project, which relates them strongly to Yahweh. Haggai expresses the view that the Judeans can only be said to have truly resettled, if the temple of Yahweh is rebuilt (Hg 1:1-15; Kessler 2002:243). When the Judean community was restored back to Judah, it provided the opportunity to restore the Judean religious activities linked with the temple, such as sacrifices. Cyrus also offered to fund the rebuilding of the temple. The city and the temple that Nebuchadnezzar's army had destroyed were rebuilt through the general support of the Persian government (Holmgren 1987:13). Below I will discuss the function of the deities regarding the economic stability of Judah.

5.1   The function of the deities in the economic stability of Judah[34]

In the ancient near eastern world, the "erection of a shrine" and the establishment of a "cult for the *Divine*" was a motivation for a *blessing* and a national economic boom initiated by a Supreme Being. The economic stability of a nation was explained in terms of people's relations with the cult. Neglect of these would result in "curses." The cult was believed to be attached to the land and sometimes to the moon. The Supreme Being who gave land to the people to inhabit would provide the rains from the "moon" god for the people to reap harvest. In that sense, if the cult was dishonoured, the result would be famine in the land because the gods had been angered

---

[34] The plural "deities" is used to refer to a number of "gods" revered in the ancient near east, such as Babylonian Marduk and Jewish Yahweh. They both could be "angered" if their followers disobeyed them.

and had therefore brought curses (e g, famine, sickness, exile, oppression, etc) instead of blessings. As for the Jews, Yahweh would inflict curses if they sinned or deviated from him. Their misfortune was punishment for their sins (Spangenberg 1992:305). The following examples will shed more light. Job 4:7 portrays that the upright and the innocent do not suffer, suggesting that Yahweh was punishing Job for sinning; Haggai 1:9-11, depicts that the Judeans suffered famine as a result of drought because they had neglected building the temple for Yahweh; Malachi 3:1 states that the Judeans remained cursed and would not prosper as long as they despised paying *tithes* into the temple treasury; Yahweh had *scattered* the Israelites among the nations for being unfaithful (Neh 1:8-9); according to Ezra 9:5-9, the Babylonian captivity occurred because the sins of the Judeans were "higher than our heads and our guilt has reached the heavens" (9:6). These concepts will be explored further below.

The book of Ezra portrays Cyrus as a one who believed in Yahweh, which the Jewish author expresses in the following passage: "Thus says King Cyrus of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah'" (Ezr 1:2). This portrayal is contradicted by Isaiah 45:4-5 which says: "For the sake of my servant Jacob, and Israel my chosen, I call you by your name; I surname you, though you do not know me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; besides me there is no god. I arm you, though you do not know me."

Based on these verses, a number of scholars suggest that Cyrus—like many other kings in the ancient Near East—believed in many gods (Yamauchi 1980:200). Others suppose that Cyrus was an adherent of Zoroastrian teachings; yet Zoroastrianism was monotheistic in character. Presuming Cyrus to be a polytheist (see Yamauchi above), he might have been a reader of Hebraic biblical teachings, after which he concluded that Isaiah 45 referred to him, even though

he did not particularly believe in Yahwehism. Cyrus' belief in *other gods* (and not Yahweh) is substantiated by both James Pritchard and Amelie Kuhrt who provide detailed accounts of the clay cylinder (called the *Cyrus Cylinder*) on which Cyrus gave credit to the local god Marduk for enabling him to capture Babylonia (Pritchard 1954:206-208; Kuhrt 1983:83-97). In addition, Cyrus encouraged his subjects to worship other gods such as Bel and Nebo (Pritchard 1954:208).

On the other hand, the Jews themselves might also have believed that, although Yahweh was their God, other gods existed also, to whom they would turn for *divine* intervention. The book of Jeremiah narrates that when Jeremiah "preached" to the Judeans who lived in Egypt to return to Yahweh who was punishing them for their deviation (Jr 44:13), they protested that they were not going to listen to Jeremiah (44:16). Instead, they responded that:

> We will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the queen of heaven and pour out libations to her, just as we and our ancestors, our kings and our officials, used to do in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. We used to have plenty of food, and prospered, and saw no misfortune (44:17).

The above passage portrays the view that Judean ancestors were used to worshipping the *queen of heaven*, and not Yahweh, who referred to himself as: "I am who I am" (Ex 3:14), when he first introduced himself to Moses at Mount Sinai. The Judeans in Egypt believed that *the queen of heaven* was angered because they had neglected honouring her, hence their suffering and exile.

The returned Judeans in Yehud might have carried this notion when they regarded the prevalence of drought in the land as a result of punishment by Yahweh for disobeying him (Hg 1:4-11). In addition, Israel might have regarded Yahweh as having a specific place of abode.

This is also made clear by what we read in the last part of Ezra 1:3, which reads: "…the God who is in Jerusalem." As already shown, Cyrus believed in other gods, but the Judeans would give reverence to "the one in Jerusalem." Regardless of Cyrus not recognising Yahweh which many Judeans did, Yahweh chose Cyrus (a "pagan") to liberate the Judeans from captivity in Babylonia. The message dominant in Haggai's oracles is the consequence for neglecting to rebuild the "Lord's house" (Hg 1:2), and these consequences included economic decline, invasion, and plagues, among others. Hanson (1987:495) points out that the admonition in Haggai to "build the house" carries a twin mandate: (1) give proper glory to God and (2) restore the economic system of the land.

It follows that from the beginning of Israel's sojourn, the success, development, protection, liberty, sovereignty, sustenance and peace in the land among the Judeans, depended largely on their continued interaction and obedience to the law and the demands of Yahweh (Ezr 9:5-9). In the book of Haggai, we read about people having built for themselves "panelled houses" (Hg 1:4), an indication that to some extent, Judah was experiencing some form of "economic reform." Haggai's description suggests that these were no ordinary houses; they were "panelled," perhaps showing some "beauty" and that much time and resources were spent in erecting such structures. Haggai is implicit to describe people's attitude as simply an act of neglect. After all, this "building of panelled houses" was being done against the backdrop of negligence to rebuild the temple, Yahweh's dwelling place. Haggai 1:4-11 conveys the idea that this neglect resulted in Yahweh inflicting them with curses such as little harvest, having insufficient food and drink, and lack of warm clothes. Even if they earned wages, it would not sustain them as if to say they were not paid. The exile, enslavement, famine that hit the land and

57

poverty that affected people, were all believed to be consequences of neglecting the "house of God" (2 Chr 36:10-21; Neh 1:4-10, 5:1-5; 9:3-37; Ezr 9:5-9).

According to Ezra 5:16, the earliest attempt towards rebuilding the temple was begun by Sheshbazzar who first laid its foundation (539–525 BCE). Ezra 1:8 mentions Sheshbazzar as the prince of Judah, to whom the articles of the temple—which had been seized by Nebuchadnezzar from the temple—were handed by Mithredath the treasurer. Scheffler (2001:143) explains that although Sheshbazzar and Shenazzar seem to be two different names in terms of spellings, Seshbazzar is believed to be the same as Shenazzar. Sheshbazzar is the head of delegation that returned to Jerusalem to restore the articles and rebuild the temple (Ezr 1:7).

King Cyrus brought out the articles belonging to the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his god (Ezr 1:7). When the temple-reconstruction project was completed, the articles were placed back into the Jerusalem temple. The next section discusses identity markers. Identity markers could be activities (e g, keeping the Sabbath), institutions (e g, the temple), or religious practice (e g, monotheism), which help to distinguish some people to make them unique and instil a sense of nationhood and pride. During ancient biblical times (as well as today), the Jews were recognised by identity markers.

6 IDENTITY MARKERS

Identity markers are the characteristics by which certain things or people are known. A known culture or tradition of a people remains their identity marker[35] (see Ratheiser 2007:460). This section will explore the following identity markers: the temple, the ark, the synagogue, the Sabbath, the law, monotheism or the exclusivism, circumcision, and prohibition against intermarriage. Examining identity markers at this stage is an attempt to establish their significance among the Judeans during the postexilic period.

6.1 The temple

Before its destruction in 587 BCE, the temple (which was identity marker in terms of space and Yahweh's place of abode) had been an important place for Jewish religious life and their sacrificial activities (Ackroyd 1968:25). According to the book of Exodus, when the Israelites left Egypt, Yahweh had commanded his chosen people to worship him at Mount Horeb (Ex 3:12). The fact that Yahweh commanded the Israelites to gather and worship him at a particular place, complements the view that, as the Israelites settled into nationhood, worshipping Yahweh at a localised shrine had become popular. In 1 Chronicles 17:1-2 we read that David planned to

---

[35] For example: religious groupings or church denominations are identified by the garments the parishioners put on or the manner in which they conduct religious ceremonies or practice their faiths. The garments (shoes or clothes) manufactured by a company known by a brand name of *NIKE* are identified by the tick (√) on their products. The Zimbabwean currency is known by the Great Zimbabwe ruins symbol (which is also visible on the national regalia). During the postexilic period, Judeans were identified for temple worship, the ark, the Law, keeping the Sabbath, and circumcision, among others. These became their identity markers; see also Bosman (2009).

build a temple for the Ark of the Covenant. God's refusal towards David to build a temple sounds contradictory, since Yahweh had earlier instructed that the Israelites needed to gather and locate themselves at a particular place to worship him (e g, Ex 3:12; Dt 12:11-12, 14:23-25). However, we learn that God would not allow David to build the "house of the Lord," but rather his son Solomon (1 Chr 17:11-12), because David had shed much blood (1 Chr 22:7-8).

Clements (1965:18) observes that the fact that the Israelite traditions located a number of incidents involving Yahweh and the people in the vicinity of the temple, points to its importance as the first home of the covenant people of Yahweh. In certain psalms, the temple is presented as a place of refuge or asylum; the temple is a shelter against enemies and anyone dwells there in safety (De Vaux 1965:161; Ps 27:2-5); there one is covered by the wings of Yahweh (Ps 61:4-5), but the wicked are not allowed in (Ps 5:5). The temple is specifically associated with sedentary life (Gray 1964:69).

The destruction of the temple and the termination of the Davidic dynasty had a profound influence on the people's thinking, because they had expected the continuity of the Davidic dynasty (2 Sm 7:4-17). It is probable that the Jews, who had remained when others were taken to captivity, still gathered in some place—perhaps at the destroyed temple area—to worship Yahweh. Scheffler (2001:136) remarks that, "although the temple was in ruins and not rebuilt during the exilic period, it must be assumed that the worship of Yahweh continued, and that sacrifices were made (probably on the temple site; see Jr 41:4-6)."

Meanwhile the negative situation in which the exiles found themselves does not mean the end of worship, but an emphasis of a different aspect of worship (Maré 2010:121). The voice of faith now became the voice of prayer with tears (Mays 1994:422). Tears are a result of inward emotional feeling of inadequacy, distress, anger, fear, crying, and appealing for help. Sometimes

crying empties the victim of the stress and the condition of misery resulting in tears. On the other hand, as Pleins (1993:41) concludes, even the anger of the refugee or the exile can become an act of prayerful worship.

Israel's view of the "house of the Lord" appears to have been very strong during and after the exile. The emphasis on Jerusalem as a city which should not be forgotten depicts its significance because of the temple that was located there (Ps 137). Schader (2010:147) observes that the temple was regarded as the chief place of God's presence on earth and as an earthly representation of his heavenly abode, and most likely, the place to where he would ascend. It is significant that in the psalms Israel's possession of land is related to Yahweh's abode on Mount Zion (Clements 1965:52). It was to these ends especially that the temple cult was directed, and the presence of Yahweh on his holy mountain was thought to be a firm assurance that his goodness and kindness would continue to be with Israel (Clements 1965:76). The temple was further attributed with the function of being a place where Yahweh would unite people together, as Ringgren (1963:23) points out: "the temple…especially in its most elaborate expression in the Jerusalem, served as a unifying influence within the nation, creating a sense of nationhood and oneness, which, without it, would have been lacking." However, this "nationhood" and "oneness" was viewed by Ezra as of "little sustenance" (Ezr 9:8), implying that Ezra was not certain whether they would be really free in Yehud.

The concept of the "house of the Lord" may have received an extended interpretation as indicative of "the household of faith",[36] that is, the company of all loyal worshippers of the Lord as God (Johnson 1970:255-271).. This servitude is cemented by a language of praise, as depicted

---

[36] Trito-Isaiah 56: 7; 60:7 and Haggai 2:7 protray this notion.

by most of the psalms. To the Jews, these praises reinforced the truth about Yahweh. Yet they clung to God and his promises, from whom they would look for *deliverance*.

After the exile the Jewish community had to face many setbacks and disappointments before they could rehabilitate the temple worship, and establish a stable social life (Clements 1965:123). The rebuilt temple played a considerable part in postexilic Jewish life, but it stood as a witness to a promise that had not yet been fulfilled. The Jews who had suffered the exile, and who played so vital a part in the postexilic religious life of Judea and the formation of Judaism, could not return to Jerusalem with the same attitude and beliefs with which the exiles had gone forth. Not even their enthusiasm could restore the conditions that had pertained before Jerusalem was destroyed. They could rebuild the temple, but they could not restore the prestige and significance it had previously enjoyed (Clements 1965:129-130). The temple was no longer realisable in this world, and so, the promise of the divine dwelling was not felt to be fulfilled on earth. The true Jerusalem existed somewhere else, with the true temple and the ark (Clements 1965:126).

6.2   The ark

Adherents to the Torah or the Law composed the majority of the pilgrims who converged to the temple at any given time and year to worship Yahweh. This institutionalising of the temple was the reason why most Israelites were unable to fulfil the requirements of the Torah away from home, because Yahweh was believed to avail himself and be accessed in the temple in Jerusalem. God who revealed himself as Yahweh, was still known as a tribal God, who exclusively demanded only Israel to worship him (see §6.6 below). However, before the

establishment of a central shrine (i e, the temple) in Jerusalem, Israel literally "moved" along with God in the ark (Ex 25:10-14). The idea of the ark, also known as the "ark narrative" (Dt 10:5; 1 Sm 4:11; 7:2; 2 Sm 6:17; 1 Ki 8:9; 1 Chr 13:9; 2 Chr 35:3), might have been invented in the desert because we do not read about it before crossing the Sea of Reeds (or the Red Sea) in the exodus from Egypt. This view has also been advanced by Le Roux (2003:136) who articulated that apart from the established sanctuaries in Canaan, the exodus group probably also brought a portable sanctuary into the land, which stemmed from their "wilderness journey..."

The so-called ark narrative reads as an artiful piece of propaganda of relio-political inportance (Ahlström 1984:141). Ahlström further observed that this ark narrative may be a product of a pan-Israelite doctrine which viewed the people of Israel-Judah as a unity prior to the emergence of the monarchy. Its purpose is to show the emergence of Yahweh as an "empire god" (1984"141). Ahlström's hypothesis of the ark could also be read alongside the popular hypothesis of the Deuteronomistic History which depicts Yahweh as establishing "his kingdom in Israel," and that earthly kings (e g, David) were part of this programme. This notion is also strengthened by the mentioning of the ark about eight times in the book of Deuteronomy (10:1-9; 31:9-13; 24-29). Clements 1965:300-312) also subscribes to this view.. However, when the ark was captured by the Philistines (1 Sm 4), this Yahweh who is "presented as the god of a small hill country people," it meant that this deity was taken prisoner by the Philistines (Davies 1975:83). If both Ahlström's and Davies' views could be analysed further alongside the depiction that we get from the biblical text about the capture of the ark by the Philistines, it could be concluded that this ark-god could be manipulated and overpowered by people (Philistines) who proved to be stronger or by a more powerful deity than Israel's portrayal of Yahweh.

However, in these ark narratives, we are presented with Yahweh who becomes the "ultimate warrior" and "winner" of battles for his people, the Israelites.

This Yahweh who dwelt in the ark, was the source of power—so they believed—which gave the Israelites victory over nature, such as: the Israelites crossing the river Jordan while the priests were carrying the ark (Josh 4); to win battles over their enemies (1 Sm 4:3). In 1 Samuel 4:7, we read that the Philistines—who were facing a battle against the Isrealites—remarked that "a god has come into the camp," when they learned that the Israelites had brought the ark along. Israel was identified as a people who carried their god in an ark. When the ark was captured, Israel began to experience casualties because their source of power had gone, which caused the death of the priest Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas (1 Sm 4:11; Campbell 1979:36). Clements (1965:40) acknowledges this view where he says:

> Both the ark and the tent of meeting played a prominent part in the religious development of early Israel. Together they possessed a significance, which exceeded that of any other cult-object or shrine, and the sanctuary where they were located became inevitably the foremost sanctuary of the Yahweh, and the centre of Israelite federation.

However, during the exilic (586–539 BCE) period and the postexilic (539–333 BCE) period, the motif of the ark might have lost prominence because it does not feature in the exilic and postexilic books. Although on the one hand, we read about the ark in the book of Chronicles (1 Chr 13:9; 2 Chr 35:3), on the other hand, the postexilic books of Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah or Malachi do not make reference to it. The ark "motif" of God winning battles for Israel does not feature in the invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar (587–586 BCE) and taking the Judeans to captivity in Babylonia, as what happened previously during the pre-monarchic

period (1200–1020 BCE) when the ark was captured by the Philistines (1 Sm 4:11). One would conclude that the insignificance or absence of the motif of the ark within the returned Judean community is portrayed by not mentioning or emphasising it within the postexilic literature. The ark "motif"—by which Israel was identified during military encounters with her enemies during the pre-monarchic period—might have been replaced by the ideology of the temple before the exile and the synagogue during the exilic period and after the exile.

6.3   The synagogue

This section may commence by posing the following questions: What is a synagogue? What function did the synagogue perform during ancient biblical times? The Greek word *sunagōgē* is translated by the English word "synagogue" (or other modern language equivalents). This word may mean a gathering of all the adult Jewish males of a community, or a smaller gathering of the more respected of their number; or, it may mean a building in which such a gathering met (McKay 1998:105).

McKay (1998:103) further affirms that almost every Bible reader knows that synagogues were the Jewish "houses" of worship. Some archaeological discoveries have been known to throw some light on the existence of ancient Jewish synagogue. For example, archaeological findings by scholars such as Levine (1996) and Atkinson (1997) were believed to be buildings which functioned as Jewish centres of worship. However, although archaeological discoveries by Levine and Atkinson, amongst others might have thrown some light on the use of synagogues in ancient Israel, no one has ever identified the precise location where the local groups of Jews might have been meeting for worship (Kraabel 1987; Kee 1990). At least for now, there seems to

be some consensus amongst scholars about the existence and function of synagogues as Jewish worship gatherings. This agreement amongst scholars is envisaged by lack of disagreement on the existence of these institutions in ancient Israel. If at all the disagreement emerged, it was basically on the question of the exact location of these synagogues as worship centres.

With reference to the function of synagogues as worship centres in exile, Scheffler (2001:137) explains that the temple having been lost, the exile probably saw the development of the first synagogues.[37] The synagogue—although not to be considered in detail in this study—was established with still the same purpose of unifying people together to worship Yahweh. Several scholars assume that the synagogue as the meeting place for "worship" or sanctuary away from Jerusalem was first established in exile in Babylonia as a *substitute* for the temple (Purvis 1999:159). Others, among them Ackroyd, argue that "there is no specific evidence for this assumption and the question has been debated with no clear resolution" (Ackroyd 1968:32–35). Levine (1989:197) makes it explicit that, although the synagogue was characterised by a number of religious functions, it would not challenge the supremacy of the temple.

However, taking the argument further, there is some indication that the synagogue might have originated during the pre-exilic period, but was practised throughout the exilic period and the postexilic period—during the Second Temple period, when the Hasmonean revolution brought the emergence of the synagogue (Hachlili 1997:34). Deuteronomy 31:11-13 mentions the "reading of the Law," "appear before the Lord," "assemble the people," etc, a depiction that the Israelites used to form a gathering to revere Yahweh. This practice might have been systematically carried even after the temple was built, because it is stated that "they burned *every*

---

[37] The synagogue was an identity marker in terms of space.

place where God was worshiped in the land" (Psalms 74:8). The phrase *they burned* might refer to Nebuchadnezzar and his army when he invaded Judah (2 Ki 25:9; 36:19; Jer 21:10). The idea of gathering might have increased during the exile after the destruction of the city and the temple. The demolition of sanctuaries across the land created a new need for worship patterns away from Jerusalem. The fact that there is no mention of "synagogue" in Ezra, Nehemiah and other postexilic literature, does not suggest that this "gathering" had ceased to exist because we read that even during the Roman period—the New Testament time—Jewish believers used to gather for worship in a synagogue. During his early ministry, Jesus also read the scroll in the synagogue (Lk 4:16). Paul also taught in the synagogue in Thessalonica on three Sabbath days (Acts 17:1-2). This serves to explain that the Jews—since ancient biblical times—identified themselves by gathering in synagogues in the absence of the temple.

6.4   The Sabbath

The law and the prophets called upon all Israel to keep the Sabbath (Ex 20:8-11; 31:14; 34:21; Lv 25:2; Dt 5:12-15; Am 8:5; Jr 17:21; Ezk 20:12-24). While the temple and the synagogue were identity markers in terms of space, the Sabbath was an identity marker in terms of time. The keeping of the Sabbath was an essential requirement of worship during and after the exile, as expressed by the prophet Trito-Isaiah (Is 56:2, 6; 58:13). The exiles came together on the Sabbath at certain localities where they worshipped together, read the law, discussed and organised various aspects of community life. Thus, on the Sabbath people would gather together, *unified.* Ezra and Nehemiah were likewise concerned about Sabbath observance (Neh 10:31). It was disregard for the Sabbath that brought upon Israel the judgment of the exile (Holmgren

1987:152). God's wrath would come upon the restored community if it continued to allow the buying and selling of goods on the Sabbath day (Jr 17:27; Ezk 20:23-24). In his show of adherence to this prohibition, Nehemiah made arrangements that kept all traders well away from Jerusalem on the Sabbath (Ashton 1992:164). Nehemiah used Levites to guard the gates on the Sabbath to prevent any repetition of the problem: "Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy" (Neh 13:22). The Sabbath was set aside "unto the Lord thy God" (Ex 20:10), and proclaimed the coming era of rest.

Browne (1951:86) advances the view that Babylonian strangers who came to Judaea would be accepted into all the privileges of Judaism, provided they kept the law of the Sabbath. I also see Yahweh's relationship to the people he incorporated to be part of the Jewish community and their continued sustenance, as bonded by their adherence to his demands of keeping the law and the Sabbath.

Honouring the Sabbath carried with it social responsibilities and good relations among people. Holmgren (1987:153) posits the view that refusal to honour God through the Sabbath meant that such people would have little concern for God's teaching about how one should relate to other people. Holmgren's opinion of Jewish "relating to other people" in terms of the Sabbath-keeping, suggests that Yahweh had instructed the keeping of the Sabbath in order to "unite" the people he had elected as his own. This "relationship," it was believed, would distinctively identify the Jews as Yahweh's "special" people (Lv 20:26).

6.5 The law

The question of the Law or the Torah remains an "unfinished" business among modern scholars, and its composition is sometimes confusing (Dozeman and Schmid 2006:34). Römer (2008:2) admits that since the majority of scholars abandoned the traditional documentary hypothesis, no new consensus about the formation of the Bible's first five books has emerged. However, Römer further states that there is a widespread agreement that the first publication of the Pentateuch (or Proto-Pentateuch) took place in the middle of the Persian period. He goes on to say that the agreement echoes a traditional Jewish view, which makes Ezra the author or editor of the Torah (2008:2). One of the scholars holding the same view is Eckart Otto. According to Otto (2006:21) the law refers to the Pentateuch which was written during the postexilic period. Otto observes that it was the product of the priestly authors during the postexilic period.

However, in the modern sense, the term "law" refers to statues or regulations which society has set and agreed to abide by in order for that society to live morally, ethically, religiously, politically, legally and socially. In the Old Testament, the Decalogue contained the laws of divine institution and establishment, including the moral law. In the Exodus, the Ten Commandments warn against the worship of other gods:

> You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generation of those who love me and keep my commandments (Ex 20:3-6).

The first five books of the Old Testament are the law books (i e, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy); the keeping of the law is emphasised in these books (Lv 24:22; Nm 6:13; Dt 1:5, 6:25, 31:26; Josh 1:8; 2 Ki 22:8; 2 Chr 6:16, 17:9; Ezr 7:6; Neh 8:2, 8:8; Ps 1:2, 19:7; Pr 29:18; Is 2:3, 8:20, 42:21; Jr 8:8, 31:33; Mi 4:2; Hab 1:7; Zch 7:12; Mt 5:17, 7:12). For this discussion, I will employ the phrase "The Law," which also encompasses the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. These are presented in the descriptions of the Tabernacle, the Holy Days, the Levitical Offerings, and the daily activities of the priesthood. There are various actions and ceremonious practices that the Law allowed on the one hand, and also forbade on the other hand. The following were the demands of the law of judgment in postexilic Judah: King Artaxerxes—acknowledging the Jewish law according to their tradition—advises Ezra to effect punishment as follows: "Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment" (Ezr 7:26, 10:8). In addition, punishment for altering an edict was as follows: "a beam shall be pulled out of the house of the perpetrator, who then shall be impaled on it. The house shall be made a dunghill" (Ezr 6:11). The laws made sure that the Jews remained "pure" in their daily lives. Ezra nourishes the people with the book of the Law of Moses, which Yahweh had given to Israel.

6.6   Monotheism or exclusivism of Yahwism

Monotheism—a popular belief in one God which stepped onto the world stage with the appearance of Israel (Smith 2001:4)—identifies Israel as a specially chosen race. The boundary marker (described here as *identity marker*) that divides the people of God from pagans is

monotheism, and Abraham is put forward as the prototypical monotheist. Moltmann (1985:50) notes that monotheism has a very long history with regard to religion in general. Moltmann's observation suggests that the idea of monotheism did not have its beginning in Judaism; it did not originate specifically from Jewish belief. Smith's proposition in this regard is also worthy noting. He argues that the monotheism of ancient Israel has been regarded as a revolution against the religious thought of its neighbours (Smith 2001:4).

The biblical text conveys the idea that there existed several other gods. Moses' question to God implicates that he knew other names that referred to a supreme being during his time. At Mount Horeb, Moses asked God: "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" (Ex 3:13-14). Again, when Moses and the people asked: "Who is like you among the gods, O Yahweh?" (Ex 15:11), it implies the existence of other gods. The first commandment in the book of Exodus does not deny the existence of other gods, but only demands that Yahweh be acknowledged as their superior (Stark 2001:27). Thus, Exodus 20:3 says: "thou shalt not have *other gods* before me." Lang (1985:41) explains that biblical scholars usually agree that monotheism was first set forth not with Abraham or Moses, but under Josiah. He further argues that in 622 BCE, a scroll was brought to the Judean king Josiah (641–609 BCE) and read to him. The book (allegedly discovered during the restoration of the Jerusalem temple) contained a cultic code which no one until then had followed and which overthrew all previous codes. It is further argued that the code demanded the abolition of the cults of all divinities other than Yahweh, the only one to be worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem.

But what did exclusivism look like in actual practice? It is clear that the Jewish law allowed a stranger sojourning among the Jews to keep the Passover with the congregation of

Israel (Ezr 6:21). Exodus 12:49 expresses the same requirement, where it says: "One law shall be to him that is home born, and unto the stranger who sojourns among you." Leviticus 19:34 explicitly says: "The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the home-born among you, and thy shall love him as thyself." Many psalms express the idea that Yahweh would accommodate everyone who comes to him (Ps 22:27-28; 65:2; 86:9; 47:8-9). Zechariah 9:1-10, written about the time of Alexander the Great, speaks to Aram, Hamath and Sidon as belonging to Yahweh, and looks forward to half-castes of Jewish and Philistine origin being converted from their heathen practices and being accepted as a clan of Judah.

On the other hand, some kind of discrimination can be inferred in respect of the foreign women who initially were taken along from Babylonia to Judah and who were part of the human resources needed for the rebuilding exercise. My supposition is that these foreign women were excluded from being part of the joy associated with the results of the development initiatives and transformation, which took place as a result of their involvement in such programmes previously.

In addition, the following statement by Nehemiah portrays both political and exclusivist connotations: "Then I replied to them, 'The God of heaven is the one who will give us success, and we his servants are going to start building; but you have no share or claim or historic right in Jerusalem'" (Neh 2:20).

In the *first* instance, the first part of the above passage, "…the God of heaven is the one who will give us success and we his servants are going to start building …," expresses the view that God's "servants," who are "powerless" to stand against the enemies (detractors) on their own, would appeal to the "supernatural" for sustenance and provision of energy and valour to complete the wall-building work. God, who was "pleased" with the work of building the wall—meant to provide an enclosure to the temple—would like Nehemiah and his colleagues to

accomplish the building project that was being undertaken on Yahweh's behalf. So, Yahweh would "fight" the detractors who were bent on destabilising the building of the walls. This appeal to the supernatural for intervention in times of catastrophe is the belief that was common among the Judeans.

Second, the last part of Nehemiah's statement which reads: "…but you have no share or claim or historic right in Jerusalem" (2:20) is a portrayal of an exclusion of other members of society rendered "ethnic" or of foreign descent, such as the Moabites who were forbidden to "enter the assembly of God" (Neh 13:1-3). Sanballat, who was a Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arab (Neh 2:19), were all foreigners who did not have rights of ownership or shares in Jerusalem. In other words, taking Nehemiah's statements in their rightful context, even though these three foreigners owned anything in Jerusalem, it was not theirs as foreigners. In other words, Nehemiah and other natives of Jerusalem could expropriate them if they so wished.

In light of the above, I conclude that both inclusive and exclusive tendencies can be detected in the Hebrew Bible during the postexilic period. Having said this, it would be naïve not to take into account the fact that the inclusiveness was mainly portrayed and advanced by people of non-Jewish identities, who, by virtue of them having adopted the Jewish culture and religious ideologies in the sense of both reading, orientation and contemporary interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, regarded themselves as "included." The religio-cultural tenets of these *people of non-Jewish identities* might have crept into what later became known as the Jewish Bible.

Reading Amos 9:7-8 depicts Yahweh acknowledging his acceptance of non-Jews—the Cushites from Egypt; the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir—and reminding the Israelites that they were no different from these other tribes. Whether this depiction changed

over time when the postexilic Judeans read the "law" after the exile, is everyone's guess. This could be one of the reasons why when modern critical readers of the biblical text "find" these contradictions and inconsistencies, they "hear" different voices other than Yahweh as it is portrayed in the Bible. During the postexilic era, non-Jews were excluded from the company of the Jewish returnees in order to maintain their Jewish identities.

6.7   Circumcision

Circumcision refers to the operation of removing part or the entire foreskin which covers the glans of the penis. Circumcision cuts off the foreskin, the sexually sensitive sleeve of tissue that normally covers and protects the head of the penis.   Male circumcision in the Bible was commanded to Abraham as a sign of keeping the covenant with Yahweh (Gn 12:10-14). The rite of circumcision was a sign of a covenant between Abraham's descendants and Yahweh (Gn 17:9-11). Goldingay (2000:4) also affirms that it was men who emphasised the rite of circumcision as the symbol of "a covenant presupposed as existing between men and God."
 The Israelite men were distinguished from other people by the fact that they were circumcised (Jdg 14:3; 15:18; 1 Sm 14:6; 17:26, 36; 31:4; 2 Sm 1:20; 1 Chr 10:4).

We have seen above that the rite of circumcision was a sign of a covenant with God (Gn 17:9-11).The Bible makes it clear that circumcision only applied to Jews, to their slaves and to converts to Judaism (Gn 17:10-14; Ex 12:48). According to Raphael Patai among several localities in the Middle East, circumcision was a part or a preliminary of the marriage ceremony (1960:181). Whatever the origins of the rite, it is clear that in the postexilic period, and

particularly from the second century BCE, circumcision became a key concept in defining the Jewish religious community (Lieu 1994:360).

Archer (1990) observes that the rite of circumcision in the Bible was conducted on both men and women. Although her analysis is informative, the biblical text is silent about circumcision of a *girl child* during ancient biblical times; but explicitly states that "every male among you shall be circumcised" (Gn 12:10). Cohen's definition of circumcision enlightens readers more clearly. In response to the question "Why were Jewish women not circumcised?" Cohen (2005:xi) defines circumcision as "the surgical removal of the foreskin from the penis, and a woman does not have a penis." In tandem with Cohen's assessment, I am motivated to add that the male patriachal nature of the Jewish tradition[38] could be one of the reasons why only males were circumcised. Goldingay (2000:4) also echoes the above notion where he says circumcision was a "covenant to which women were a party only in a secondary way through their relationship with fathers and husbands." Both my view and Cohen's, and the absence of evidence from the biblical text conflict with Archer's observation that the rite of circumcision was performed on both boys and girls. The rite of circumcision was performed on Jewish males only as an initiation into "manhood" as well as to confirm inclusion in a devout Jewish society.

The Israelite patriarchal society would not allow women to be circumcised. According to Plaskow (1991:82-84) women represented Israel's "redeemed" flesh. According to this view, men regarded women as being outside God's plan for the "salvation" of the world. Circumcision

---

[38] The biblical text as a whole portrays to have been written from a male perspective. This view has been articulated by various biblical commentators. For more information on male chauvinism, see Mathieu (2004:190-200), amongst others. Because this is a broad subject on its own, this study will not go deeper into this debate. However, it is significant to note that there was no initiation for daughters into Judaism, and having that idea in mind, only boys were considered for initiation, hence their circumcision.

was a rite of masculine status bestowal in which man, the father, initiates a man-to-be, his son, into the covenant with God (Hoffman 1996:2). However, Archer's argument for women being circumcised in ancient Israel is supported by other scholars elsewhere. For example, Lieu (1994:361) subscribes to this notion, where she writes that "we should not forget that women were involved in cicumcision in the Maccabean literature, as some women had faced death for circumcising their sons" (1 Macc 1:60; 2 Macc 6:10). In spite of the male chauvinism regarding circumcision in ancient Israel, women played a role in this rite. For example, the biblical text shows that God was about to kill Moses (Ex 4:24). The reason for God to kill Moses remains a mystery. It probably could have been due to disobedience on the part of Moses for neglecting to circumcise his son. This view is supported by the depiction we get from the Bible that Moses' wife Zipporah saved Moses' life by circumcising their son and then "touched" Moses' feet (some versions refer to "feet" as "Moses' genitals") with the foreskin from his son's penis (Ex 4:25-26). This act "healed" Moses.

The term *uncircumcised* is sometimes used to refer to Gentiles (Is 52:1); David described Goliath as "…Who is this *uncircumcised* Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Sm 17:26), and "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God" (v 36). When Ezekiel predicted death for the ruler of Tyre and the Pharaoh of Egypt, he said they would die the death of the *uncircumcised* and be buried among the *uncircumcised* (Ezk 28:10; 31:18).

Isaiah predicted a time when only circumcised people would be allowed to enter the new city of Zion (Is 52:1-2). Similarly, Ezekiel criticised those who permitted *uncircumcised* people into the temple (Ezk 44:7). The Jews from exile could have had cultural exchange activities with the people of the region, that is, with non-Jews (Gentiles), but Gentiles were not allowed into the

temple, even though they were eager to assist in the work of rebuilding. When the temple was completed, Gentiles could only go as far as the outer court, which was known as the court of Gentiles.

In contrast, in the NewTestament, the concept of "salvation" is given priority ahead of circumcision. The New Testament does not stress the rite of circumcision on the virgin Marry, through whom Jesus Christ, the "saviour" of humankind would be born (Lk 1:26-38). It appears the Old Testament concept of "circumcision of the heart" (Dt 10:16; 30:6) was also emphaised in the New Testament (see Php 3:3; Col 2:11). Paul further emphasises "faith" in God as an important act for both the Jew (the "circumcised") and the Gentile (the "uncircumcised"). Paul says Abraham became "righteous" before he was circumcised (Rm 4:9-10). It was not necssary for new converts to Christianity to be circumcised in order for them to become Christians or "called" as Paul puts it (1 Cor 7:18-19), because "circumcised" or "uncircumcised" is not important (1 Cor 7:19). Circumcision or uncircumcision has no value; but "faith" expressed through "love" is much more important (Gl 5:6).

This discussion on the practice of circumcision cannot be explored further in the postcolonial Zimbabwean context, because circumcision is not emphasised and not many people are prepared to undertake circumcision although the practice is recommended by health practitioners,[39] and not for religious purity. For example, sub-Saharan Africa has become a special case on the recommendation of circumcision. The World health Organisation (2007) had recommended circumcision as part of a comprehensive programme for preventing HIV transimission in areas with high endemic rates of HIV. Jacobs, Grady and Bolnick (2012:3-8)

---

[39] It has been discovered through scientific research that a circumcised male sexual organ has got 60% chance of not contacting HIV virus which causes AIDS.

have also agreed with the above observation where they noted that the finding that circumcision significantly reduces female-to-male HIV transmission, has promoted medical organisations serving the affected communities to promote circumcision as additional method of controlling the spread of HIV. Discussing circumcision in this study is just an attempt to show it as one of the identity markers among ancient Jewish communities. The same is held true about "mixed" marriages explored below. Zimbabweans do not segregate on the basis of "foreignness" especially in terms of matrimonial unions.

6.8   Prohibition against "mixed" marriages

The question of mixed marriages was not finally settled by Ezra (458–428 BCE), as it had to be taken up by Nehemiah (445–425 BCE). The return of the Jews from exile was marked by violence and ill treatment of each other at an early stage. The book of Ezra, among others, instructs the Judeans not to be polluted or corrupted by the people and cultures of foreign lands. This was a condition intended to uphold the covenant and the upkeep of Israel's relationship with Yahweh. Ezra 9:12 says:

> Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time that you may be strong, eat the good things of the land, and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance.

Ezra's stance against "mixed" marriage reflects a Deuteronomic theology (Myers 1965:76). According to the book of Deuteronomy, Yahweh commanded Israel to be wary of the customs of the peoples in whose land they were prepared to enter: the Hittites, Girgashites,

Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and the Jebusites (Dt 7:1-3). This command of prohibition to intermarry is also given in Joshua 23:12-13, and in the book of First Kings in connection with Solomon's marriages to foreign women (I Ki 11:1-2). Ezra chapter 10 consists largely of the discourses of marrying foreign women and how they and their children should be treated. Verse 10 says: "…You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women, adding to Israel's insult."

When the task of rebuilding the temple was complete, Ezra was "…confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God…" (Ezr 10:1). Ezra accepted the advice of Shecaniah son of Jehiel that all foreign wives and their children should be returned to their native homeland (Ezr 10:44). The text is not explicit whether the children born of foreign wives returned with their mothers.

Ezra 10:18-44 provides a list of men who married foreign women. Although figures have not been provided of these foreign women and their children, it appears there were many of them. One could imagine the feeling on the part of these foreign women and their children who had assisted their "husbands" and their "fathers" on the restoration, relocation and rebuilding of the city walls, the temple and possibly homes in Judah, but were subsequently "excluded" from being part of that community. On leaving Babylonia together with their "husbands," in the returning group, these women had assumed they would form part of a "liberated" society in Yehud at the end of the exile. However, the opposite view held that Judeans should not keep foreigners in their land, as it appeared to be a kind of captivity. It meant that foreigners needed to return to their home country. A foreigner is an alien, a non-citizen.

By way of examples, I may slightly digress my discussion of "mixed" marriage, to reintroduce the narrative about Abraham and his marriage to "foreign women" to establish how

marriage to foreigners was condoned and followed in the Old Testament (particularly in the book of Genesis), and see whether Ezra's condemnation of marriage to "foreigners" among Jewish returnees from exile combined well with the application of the law then ("pre-exilic times") and afterwards ("postexilic times").

In the biblical book of Genesis, Abraham sends away a slave woman together with the baby he had begotten with her because God had said to him: "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your maidservant. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned" (Gn 21:9-13).

The narrative of Isaac's marriage is interesting. Abraham sends his servant to Aram Naharaim where Abraham was born to find a bride for Isaac. Abraham said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had:

> Put your hand under my thigh. I want you to answer by the Lord, the God of heaven and the earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but you will go to my country and my relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac (Gn 24:2–4).

However, on the other hand one observes a contradiction between Abraham's behaviour to Hagar and his son Ishmael and what is stipulated by the law in Deuteronomy, especially on the rights of the firstborn child, which reads: "But he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the firstborn" (Dt 21:17).

In some other examples, intermarriage with foreigners seems to have been validated, such as Esther becoming Queen to King Xerxes (Es 2:15-18) and Ruth's (a Moabitess') marriage to

Boaz—a Jew (Ruth 4:9-15). Some scholars have pointed out that the book of Ruth was written to counteract the narrow nationalism that showed itself in the prohibition of mixed marriages in the days of Nehemiah and Ezra (e g, Browne 1951:86). However, there is no consensus among scholars on the above view. Ruth herself—a member of the hated Moabite race—who was not required to "enter the assembly of God" (Neh 13:1-3), was accepted as an Israelite and adopted the faith of Yahweh. In the New Testament, both Boaz and Ruth are traced to the ancestry of David and mentioned in the geneaology of Jesus Christ (Mt 1:5-6). Such contradictions have raised some criticism among biblical scholars. The different voices that we read about could be one of the reasons why on numerous occasions "devout" Bible readers perceive this "sacred" book as being "under attack" in terms of critical scholarship, because of the above inconsistencies.

Moses' flight to Midian from Egypt led him to marry a foreigner, a Midianite woman (Ex 2:21). The name given to Moses' first child confirms this marriage to a foreigner. Exodus 2:22 reads: "Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom, saying, 'I have become an alien in a foreign land.'" It is also reported that at Hazeroth, Moses married a Cushhite woman (Nm 12:1). All these are worthwhile examples to reflect on when pondering on issues of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews, because certain prominent biblical figures were not innocent from "mixed marriages," as recorded in the biblical text. It appears—regardless of the inconsistencies—that the biblical text portrays to the reader that the Jews regarded themselves as distinct in upkeeping their identity.

In Zimbabwe, there are no hard and fast requirements about whom one chooses to marry. Many people are married to foreign spouses, and people hardly take offence or find excuses to discriminate against spouses whose identities are perceived as "foreign." For example, many

people are married to Malawian, Zambian, Mozambican, South African, European or Ghanaian men or women. President Robert Mugabe's late wife, Sally, was Ghanaian.[40] The section that follows explores the internal conflicts in Yehud.

7   INTERNAL CONFLICT IN YEHUD

The longing for peace and land by the Judeans did not produce the desired outcome. In spite of the painful experiences of the exile in Babylonia, there were incidents of internal strife in Yehud, such as: mixed marriages, detractors to the building projects, and starvation as a result of usury. There were segregations based on race, greediness and oppression[41] on the part of the leadership in Judah (Neh 5:1). One could obviously notice the delay to the rebuilding exercise because of some detractors who were determined to stop the project for a while (Ezr 4:1-16, 5:1; Neh 4:1, 6:1-14). These tensions are discussed in this section as some of the crises among communities returning from exile, thereby threatening their unity of purpose, peace and development together as a people.

7.1   Rebuilding the temple

 The material resources for rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem were supplied by the Persian King Cyrus (Ezr 1), whom the Bible portrays to have been appointed by Yahweh to "build a temple

---

[40] Sally Hayfron (also known as Sarah Francesca) married Robert Mugabe in April 1961 in Salisbury (now Harare, capital city of Zimbabwe). Sally and Robert met at Takoradi Teacher Training College in Ghana, where they were both teaching. See Nyarota (2006:101-102).

[41] One would describe it as the conflict between the rich and the poor.

for him at Jerusalem in Judah" (Ezr 1:2). Only the returnees from exile were allowed to participate in the actual rebuilding of the temple (Ezr 1:3). Offers of assistance from people who did not belong to this group were refused (Ezr 4:1-3). Those who had been deported probably perceived themselves as the "true remnant" of Judah, while they considered those who had remained in the land of little or no significance (Holmgren 1987:18). In any major endeavour, there happens to be people who want to show generosity by coming up with offers to assist in the project. Those who were denied to participate in the temple-building exercise were angry, but the project had to go ahead without them (Holmgren 1987:18). The rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem and wall were perceived as "rebellious" (Ezr 4:12).

Kings come and kings go. Earlier on, Cyrus had decreed the liberation and the return of the Judeans to their homeland in Judah. The Judeans also enjoyed other favours that Cyrus granted, which included provision of personnel, material and financial resources in order to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. However, when Artaxerxes (465–424 BCE) became king he did not allow the Judeans to complete the rebuilding of the temple, even though Cyrus had previously given permission to do so (Ezr 1:1-4). Therefore, the second phase of reconstruction only began when Darius II (424–404 BCE) became king. Ezra 4:24 says: "Thus the work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to a standstill until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia." Haggai and Zechariah—known as postexilic prophets—came onto the scene, and encouraged the Judeans to start rebuilding the temple. Zerubbabel and Jeshua led the people in the rebuilding exercise during the reign of King Darius. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah assisted them (Ezr 5:1-2). However, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, Shethar-Bozenai and their associates quizzed the Jews for embarking on the rebuilding programe (verses 3-4). When news reached king Darius he produced a record of a decree left by his predecessor king Cyrus

who had ordered the Jerusalem temple to be rebuilt and had even supplied materials to that effect (Ezr 6:1-7).

With less than a week to go before a full seventy years had passed since that mournful day of the temple's destruction, the reconstructed temple was completed "on the third day of the month Adar, which was the sixth year of Darius the king" (Ezr 6:15). Thus, the second temple was dedicated approximately between 521 and 517 BCE. This second temple was not, by all standards, equal to the initial building known as Solomon's temple, built by Solomon and aided by Hiram. Likewise, the later temple, described in some sections as the third temple built by Herod the Great (20 or 19 BCE), was much larger to cater for numerous pilgrims to the shrine. The fact that, to a large extent, *kings* and *foreign aid* played a crucial role in the establishment of the sacred institution, explains the importance and significance of the temple in both the political and socio-economic spheres of both the "recipient" and the "helping" nation. This idea brings into perspective a reconstruction of an ideology of "international relations" among nations in the understanding of contemporary contexts.

7.2   Rebuilding the wall

In the biblical text, Sanballat and Tobiah appear to be detractors to Nehemiah's building project (Neh 4:1-23). These two men were among the officials Nehemiah met in Samaria, men of other nations[42] who had probably gained their political power by the "judicious use of force" (Asthon 1992:135). Ashton's observation implies that Sanballat and Tobiah had received support and

---

[42] This probably refers to Samaria because Sanballat was governor of Samaria. Sanballat was a Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshem the Arab (Neh 2:19).

backing from the ruling elite (especially some of the priests, such as Eliashib who was related to Tobiah). According to Nehemiah 4:1-3, Sanballat and Tobiah tried to weaken the Jewish builders by throwing insults in order to stop the project. This action might have been motivated by jealousy because they constituted part of the community who had neglected rebuilding the wall of the city. When Nehemiah refused them to take part in the rebuilding project, they were irritated. According to Ezra 4:9-11, during the reign of King Artaxerxes (465–424 BCE), Rehum, the commanding officer, Shimshai the secretary, and the rest of their associates living in Samaria wrote a letter to the king advising him to stop the Jews from rebuilding the walls. The new king returned a reply ordering that the rebuilding be stopped immediately (Ezr 4:21). They did so because it was alleged that if the city of Jerusalem and the walls were rebuilt, "no more taxes, tribute or duty would be paid, and the royal revenues would suffer" (Ezr 4:13). It was probably thought that all resources would be channelled towards reconstruction. Jealousy could have motivated Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem whom Nehemiah had refused to take part in rebuilding the wall (Neh 2:20). They were "very much disturbed that Nehemiah had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites" (Neh 2:10). It is known from the Elephantine papyri that, when Nehemiah came to Jerusalem, his arch-foe Sanballat was governor of Samaria (Crowley 1923:29). Nehemiah 4:7-8 reads that Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod came in full force to "fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it."

However, the builders prayed to "our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat" (Neh 4:9). It seems the rebuilding of the walls was successfully completed as evidenced by the fact that the priest Eliashib—who is reported to have been related to Tobiah through marriage—had given Tobiah room in the same temple of which Tobiah had fought hard to destabilise the rebuilding programme earlier on. In response to this action on the part of the

priest, Holmgren (1987:151) observes that Nehemiah angrily "cleansed" the temple space and "restored" the room to its sacred service.[43] It is not explicit in the biblical tradition whether the Jesus' story of "cleansing the temple of traders" was shaped by Nehemiah's revolution of "temple-cleansing," opposing the arrangement made by the priest Eliashib to allow Tobiah to occupy a room in the temple.

Although Sanballat and Tobiah fought tirelessly to destabilise the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, the building work progressed regardless, and the wall was soon completed. In Nehemiah 12:27-30, we read about the dedication of the wall:

> At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps…And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall.

The wall was completed on the twenty-fifty of Elul, in fifty-two days (Neh 6:15). It was meant to protect the city and its inhabitants, the temple, and the temple treasures received from Babylonia (Neh 7:1; Ezr 1:5-11). It formed a strong and secure fortification for the city (Ashton 1992:137). However, one cannot conclusively and dogmatically say that the temple and its treasures were secure at the completion of rebuilding the temple walls. We know that despite such a tight security system, at the advent of political shifts on the international scene Judah became a target once more. Alexander the Great invaded and conquered Judah with his Greek

---

[43] We read of the same temperament on the part of Jesus when he entered the temple in Jerusalem and found people using the sacred shrine for exchanging goods and trading in different wares (cf Mt 21:12-13; Lk 19:45-46; Jn 2:14-18).

culture known as Hellenism (332 BCE),[44] subsequently forcing Jewish integration into his new world order.

8 THE ESCALATION OF POVERTY AMONG THE JUDEANS

After their restoration in Judah, the exilic returnees had expected to be part of a society that would begin to take part in the developmental initiatives for their common good in the land, which would serve as compensation for the previous loss and life of pain, misery, and discrimination. Although this could be true with regard to the few elite, the majority of the people were poor and needy. The book of Nehemiah will help readers shed more light on this phenomenon. Nehemiah 5 forms part of the "Nehemiah memoirs."[45]

Previously, we read that the people who were building the wall were faced by two main challenges: loss of strength as well as war-threats by enemies who were against the rebuilding project (Neh 4:10-12). Coupled with lack of food, the wall-building programme was under threat. Nehemiah 5:1-2 provides a glimpse of this physical and emotional condition where it says: "The men and their wives raised a great outcry against their Jewish brothers. Some of were saying, we and our sons and daughters are numerous, in order for us to live and stay alive, we must get grain." These circumstances prompted the wailing of the women in loud voices so that

---

[44] This study does not include a detailed account of the Hellenistic period. The study has been streamlined to conclude with the Persian period and to highlight the experiences of the Judeans during this particular period. For more information about Alexander the Great, see Levine (1989:177-204; Hamilton 1973; Stoneman 1997).

[45] The context of the memoirs is Nehemiah's first term as governor of Yehud, that occurred in about 445 to 433 BCE (see Williamson 1985:235; Clines 1984:170; Kidner 1979:98; Usue 2010).

it could be heard from a distance (Clines 1984:167). Nehemiah 5:3-5, relates that people sold everything they had to the state, and finally offered themselves as slaves for the rest of their lives (Usue 2007:843). These crises raised many questions about Yahweh's deliverance of *his people* and about the *promised* freedom in Judah. Previously, during the exodus from Egypt, the escaping Israelites experienced almost similar conditions in which the Israelites cried to God concerning among other things: the Red Sea floods and the pursuing Egyptian army (Ex 14:10-12); the scarcity of food (Ex 16:3) and lack of water in the desert (Ex 17:3).

In contrast to the situation of being in need, the last part of the book of Isaiah (Is 56-66) known as Trito-Isaiah (Smit 1995), prophecies concerning the reversal of the time of mourning and need. According to Achtemeier (1982:82) it is this future that Trito-Isaiah expects, a time of "blessings" that would finally motivate Judah to be faithful—a future that is actually a picture of the coming of the kingdom of God. In my view, this *kingdom of God* as Achtemeier puts it, is a reality in terms of peace, tranquility, and abundant food, as opposed to conditions of lack, pain, oppression, hunger, sickness, and anguish.

8.1   Slavery and usury: Nehemiah's response

The term "slavery" refers to a state of being a slave; to be bonded or to be a servant to someone else. In the context of postexilic Yehud, the Judeans had become debt-slaves in their own land by their own rulers and the elite. Nehemiah had to intervene to address the plight of the starving people in Judah, who were being oppressed and had been turned into slaves as a result of usury. Nehemiah 5:6–8 comprises an expression of Nehemiah's anger against the practice on the part of the rich and the elite towards the poor and the hungry.

The Hebrew word for "usury" is literally *neshek*, meaning literally "a bite," conveying its painfulness to the debtor. However, in Leviticus 25:36-37 and in Ezekiel 22:12 the term actually means "increase," a rendering of the Hebrew *marbit* or *tarbit*, which denotes the gain on the creditor's side. In later Hebrew, it became known as *ribbit*.[46] Lending on *usury* or increase is classified by the biblical text among the worst of sins (Ezk 18:12-13; Ps 15:5). Thomas Moser's definition is also informative. Acoording to Moser (1997:2) the term "usury" stems from the Latin term *usura*, which in Roman Law denoted the payment for the use of a loan of any non-specific good. The modern term "interest" evolved from the Medieval Latin word *interesse*, a payment for damages arising to a creditor from default or delay in repayment.

Both *slavery* and *usury* refer to a condition of being under the control of someone who exercises both economic and capitalistic power. The English term *usury* (Neh 5:7) should be read in its rightful context, especially in view of what the law says about the practice. Biblical books such as Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy forbid the practice of "usury." Moser (1997:1) articulates that biblical prohibition against lending at interest was formulated by the "Deuteronomic School" as part of an ideal law, for a new postexilic "Israel." Moser adds that it was the Utopian response to the ethical demands of the prophetic thematisation of practice after Israel's economy had entered the stage of early capitalism. According to him, three legal codes were enacted, namely: (1) the "Code of the Covenant" (Ex 20:22-23:33, (2) the "Law of Holiness" (Lv 17-26), and (3) the "Deuteronomic Code" (Dt 12-26). Each of the codes contains a law prohibiting interest-taking (Moser 1997:2). Exodus 22:25 reads: "If you lend money to one of my people among you who are needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no

---

[46] See Jewish Encyclopaedia, s v 'usury.' Online:
http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14615-usury. Accessed 1 Feb 2013.

interest…" Leviticus 25:36-37 concurs: "Do not take interest of any kind from him, but fear your God, so that your countrymen may continue to live among you. You must not lend him money at interest or sell him food at a profit…" Due to greed, the elite among the Judeans did not seem to adhere to the demands of the law on the treatment of the poor as evidenced by practising the very "evils" that the Torah prohibited. According to Deuteronomy 23:20, Yahweh "allows" the Israelites to exact usury from the foreigner, but not from each other. Nehemiah's condemnation of the practice was probably because this *usury* was exerted on fellow Judeans (Buckley 2000:1). Nehemiah 5:7 reinforces the idea that the practice was common among Jewish descendants; hence, what took place in postexilic Yehud was a replica of the system which was prevalent earlier on in the Jewish tradition. Each time the poor among the Israelites reflected on what the law says about the condition, they probably would become hostile and rebellious, being aware of the stipulations of the law, for they would interpret themselves as being owned by someone else. The fact that they had been "purchased" (Neh 5:5) meant that they were as good as chattel-slaves or debt-slaves. With reference to Egyptian bondage, Daube (1963:48) has noted that the time when Pharaoh used the Israelite women and children as hostages to guarantee that the Israelite men would not escape (Ex 10:9-10) it is parallel to any so-called attempt by a lord to keep his slave in his service by keeping his wife and children.

Many dependents in society who are incapacitated to make it on their own by employing methods of survival and self-reliance, become victims of perpetual impoverishment. Nehemiah, his brothers and his servants had committed themselves to lending money and grain to the needy people without charging interest (Neh 5:10). Nehemiah proceeded to challenge the leadership to give back to the poor people their fields, vineyards, olive orchards, and their houses, as well as reimburse the interest they had charged on money, grain, wine, and oil (5:11).

It appears Judean governors used to receive food allowances from the Persian Empire. As a show of exemplary and morally upright governance, Nehemiah—being one of the governors (Nehemiah served as governor under King Artaxerxes for twelve years)—could not keep the governor's food allowance for himself and his brothers (5:14). While the previous governors were very corrupt in that they laid heavy burdens on the people, took food, wine, and forty shekels of silver from them (5:15), Nehemiah did the opposite by standing with the poor; he led by example by engaging himself in the work of building the wall. When the servants saw the exemplary attitude displayed by Nehemiah, they also followed suit to do the work of building the wall (5:16). Instead of getting food supplies from the people, Nehemiah opted to give food to the people. Nehemiah invited "one hundred and fifty people, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations around us," to eat with him at the table (5:17). Due to the heavy burden of labour upon the people, Nehemiah did not want to further oppress the people by getting supplies from them. Instead, he prepared food for the people to eat, which included one ox, six choice sheep, fowls, and wine (5:18).

The situation in postcolonial Zimbabwe portrays almost a similar scenario as alluded to above. If the Zimbabwean leadership would follow Nehemiah's example—giving away its own resources to the poor and the starving—Zimbabwean communities would find it extremely difficult to accept any politics seeking to convince them that Mugabe is wrong. However, to the contrary, Mugabe's government has betrayed the majority of Zimbabweans who have shifted the camp to join the opposition. Any future government that seeks to win the support of the majority of its citizens should demonstrate that people come first; the leaders in government must deliver service to the people who elected them on high echelons of leadership.

9   CONCLUSION

This chapter provided glimpses into the experiences of the Judeans after the exile in the Persian province of Yehud. The socio-economic and political conditions of the Judeans, both of those who remained in Judah prior to the deportation and of the returnees from captivity in Babylonia, were explored. The exile meant that the Jews had become social outcasts. The probable context of Psalm 137, in which the exiled Judeans longed to return home, was illumined. The exile meant many physical and socio-economic problems for the exiled Judeans.

The impression readers get from reading the narrative about the Babylonian invasion is the total collapse of the entire land of Judah. As was shown, some scholars seem to hold fast onto this view. However, it was argued in this chapter that the deportation of the Judeans might have been on a smaller scale than the above scholars assume, and that a significant portion of the population was left behind who attempted to maintain Jewish life. It was demonstrated that a considerable number of the Judeans chose to stay in Babylonia after the restoration by Cyrus. It is fascinating to realise that the biblical tradition expresses the view that from the beginning of the Israelite history through Abraham to the restoration from exile through Cyrus, the chosen people have not been at peace with each other as well as with the surrounding peoples. With regard to the postexilic Persian province of Yehud, its economy appeared topsy-turvy: the Judeans had become debt-slaves in their own land by their own rulers and the elite. Nehemiah had to intervene to address the plight of the starving people in Judah, who were being oppressed and had been turned into slaves because of usury.

Nehemiah 5:6-8 depicts an expression of Nehemiah's anger against the practice on the part of the rich and the elite towards the poor and the hungry, to whom they charged heavy

interest for lending money or food. In Ezra 10:18-44 we read of men who had married foreign women. Those who had married foreign women were commanded to divorce those wives (Ezr 10:11, 17). On the other hand, we read in the biblical account of people whose marriages to foreign women or men were not condemned (e g, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Solomon, Boaz, Esther, etc.). For example, the book of Ruth—which emerges as being critical of Ezra-Nehemiah—becomes part of the debate on mixed marriage. Ruth—from Moab—was married to Boaz, a Jew (Ruth 4:10). Both Ruth and Boaz are traced to the ancestry of David and the lineage of Jesus (Mt 1:5-6).

It was explored that the temple in Jerusalem was eventually rebuilt. From our safe distance, we may view the temple as a mixed blessing. The temple was considered the footstool of God (Lm 2:1), Yahweh's dwelling place (1 Ki 8:13; Ezk 43:7), His resting place (Ps 132:14), or place where His face was to be seen (Is 1:12). As central place of worship in Judah, the temple was a very important institution, and so was the Law and the keeping of the Sabbath (Is 56:1-2; 58:13-14). All these cultural and religious aspects or *identity markers,* as explained in this chapter, were meant to establish an identity and sovereignty on the part of the Judeans after the exile.

However, while it is worthwhile listening to the scholarly "critical voices" concerning the accounts in the biblical text and paying particular attention to the "warning" against using the text literally, lessons drawn from reading such narratives constitute the "hypothesis" for appropriating the biblical text for modern societies. "Good" things could be applied, while "bad" things should be avoided.

In the final analysis, concepts discussed in this chapter will be appropriated and developed in chapters three and four when examining postindependence Zimbabwe since 1980

as well as the post-ZANU (PF) era when the unity government was formed in 2009. After a decade of a new black government headed by Prime Minister Robert Mugabe, political and socio-economic crises began to emerge, particularly due to the seizure of land belonging to white commercial farmers, forcing an acute decline in Zimbabwe's economic life. These economic crises became the push factors for an exodus of millions of Zimbabweans to live in the Diaspora between 2000 and 2008. It is believed that there is still a large number of Zimbabweans who are reluctant to return after the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) as negative perceptions about real change in the new setup persist and haunt many.

Nehemiah's reaction to the poverty and starvation of the Judeans as a result of usury is typical of what Zimbabwean communities in general should do against the practices of the ruling elite for failing to deliver justice and for corrupt deeds. The Zimbabwean people should speak strongly against the practices of the leadership for deviating from its mandate. The Zimbabwean leadership should learn from the example of Nehemiah. While the previous Judean governors were corrupt, Nehemiah resolved to *plowing* back to the community the food which was meant for the governor. For the common good of the generality of its citizens, the Zimbabwean leadership should condemn corruption and reprimand culprits in this regard.

The above themes will be discussed in detail in chapter 4. The following chapter 3 shows how appropriating the Judean postexilic narratives in a postcolonial Zimbabwean context is possible.

TOWARDS APPROPRIATING THE JUDEAN POSTEXILIC NARRATIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF POSTCOLONIAL ZIMBABWE (1980–2008)

1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I explored how the Judeans were taken to captivity in Babylonia (2 Ki 25:1-21; 2 Chr 36:1-21; Jr 39; 52). The biblical text equally depicts the notion that the Judean restoration from Babylonian captivity culminated in total freedom in Judah (Ps 126; 137; Ezr 1; Neh 2). The impression is given that the Judeans were free in Yehud. Scholars such as Kaufmann (1970:5) and Pfeiffer (1962:102-3) concur with the biblical text that the liberation of the Judeans came when the Persian king Cyrus conquered Babylonia in October 539 BCE and that the Judean restoration from Babylonian captivity culminated in total freedom in Judah (Ezr 1:1-4; Is 44:28). However, in contrast to both Kaufmann's and Pfeiffer's observations, the previous chapter argued that the Judeans were neither free in Yehud nor inclined towards rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem.

The present chapter is a theoretical reflection of *hermeneutics of appropriation* and how the approach can be used in appropriating the experiences of the Judeans in postexilic Yehud for the postindependence Zimbabwean situation. It is argued that the postindependence Zimbabwean government has not lived up to its manifesto of the liberation struggle for a free and just society. Instead, it continues practising colonial ideologies that previously discriminated against the black people. As shall be discussed in detail in chapter 4, freedom in Zimbabwe after the end of colonial rule in Rhodesia was not realised, and in recent years is still far from being realised. About four years have gone by since the formation of the GNU in Zimbabwe; however,

meaningful reconstruction and infrastructural developments are still virtually non-existent. A few examples will help shed some light: school buildings are still dilapidated; the standard of education itself has deteriorated, accompanied by the exodus of teachers; agricultural produce has deteriorated following farm invasions and seizure of land from commercial farmers; employment has been lost due to company closures. Although indigenous new farmers strive to produce for themselves and the nation, due to lack of modern farming equipment they are not able to build up the necessary food reserves to turn to during years of drought.

The present chapter employs a *hermeneutics of appropriation* (see §3.1 below). Having analysed the socio-economic and political conditions in postexilic Judah in chapter 2, this chapter endeavours to appropriate these themes for the socio-economic and political realities in postindependence Zimbabwe. The post-ZANU (PF) era will also be discussed under this category. Many biblical commentators have explored the above methodology, but have not mentioned it explicitly. Nor have they appropriated the biblical data for the Zimbabwean context. This hermeneutical approach was chosen, because the Bible is used as a political instrument in which Yahweh is depicted as being conscious about politics. According to the Bible, God used Moses (Ex 3:7-10) and Cyrus (Is 45:1-7), among others, to liberate Israel from oppression.

The following aspects seem to be common to both the Judean postexilic situation and the Zimbabwean postindependence period: (1) politics, (2) poverty, (3) corruption, (4) economic meltdown, (5) Diaspora, (6) starvation, and (7) reconstruction. These aspects derive from reading the Judean postexilic narrative as well as the Zimbabwean postcolonial situation.

David Janzen describes postexilic *Yehud* as "community members who lived outside of *Yehud* as well as inside of it, something made possible by political discontinuity" (Janzen 2002:491). Following Janzen's analysis of "political discontinuity," it seems the Judeans as a

people were unable to determine a political course of action because their autonomy had been "swallowed" by the Persian Empire in which *Yehud* was a province. This is evidenced by reading the book of Chronicles that "in fact shows an effect of Persian colonialism of those inhabiting the province of Yehud" (Snyman 2011a:242). It follows, therefore, that Persian political continuity had resulted in Judean political discontinuity.

With reference to the Zimbabwean context, the political situation from 1999 up to 2008 reflects almost the same pattern as the Judean political life: just as the Judeans were under Persian administration, so ZANU (PF) as the ruling party that had "liberated" the majority of Zimbabweans from colonial oppression, had turned into a regime that denied the Zimbabwean citizens their democratic rights in terms of supporting party politics. The ZANU (PF) government was and still is opposed to opposition politics, after realising that the majority of people who traditionally supported ZANU (PF) were now supporting the newly formed opposition party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which was formed in September 1999 (Rugwiji 2008:157; Chipangura 2005:1, 6, 12). From that time on politics shifted to focus on how to downplay MDC, which was beginning to gain momentum and political mileage ahead of ZANU (PF). When political intolerance heightened on the part of the ruling party, it resulted in "political discontinuity" which in the end aggravated "economic discontinuity" in Zimbabwe. The economic meltdown in Zimbabwe that saw the escalation of poverty and starvation for about a decade was a result of politics; the political factor looms large in this crisis.

The African continent in general and the Zimbabwean society in particular have for over a decade been commonly challenged by leadership crises, vehemently articulated by Van Rensburg in his book entitled: *The leadership challenge in Africa* (2007). In the name of

"patriotism with a fellow brother,"[47] the general view depicted in the African political context is that of further idolising as heroes and standing in solidarity with other African leaders who ravaged their respective economies in their deliberate campaigns of addressing the so-called colonial imbalances. The following are examples of African leaders who, due to hunger for power, have perpetuated political and economic crises in their respective countries (see Rugwiji 2008:229):

> President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt (1981–2011),
> President Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea (1979–2012),
> President Omar Bongo of Gabon (1967–2009),
> President Lansana Conte of Guinea (1984–2008),
> Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi (1969–2011), and
> President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan (1986–2012).

In addition to the above list, Salem[48] (2011) has also provided other dictators, namely: Idi Amin of Uganda, Charles Taylor of Liberia and of course Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. In an effort to shroud their own failures and to defend the status quo in their country, the Zimbabwean leadership has always shifted the blame to western imperialism, especially former colonial masters, the British. Although Britain cannot be exonerated from recent political and economic crises in postindependence Zimbabwe, the blame cannot exclusively be levelled against them and previous Rhodesian imperialism. Within the framework of *postcolonial* discourse, it is argued in this chapter that the postcolonial Zimbabwean government has equally contributed

---

[47] "Patriotism with a fellow brother" is a phrase which is intentionally used here to refer to a negative attitude towards other people because they belong to a certain category of people who do not conform to a specific political movement to be called "fellow brother." For example, if one is not an ex-combatant, one has no role in a ZANU (PF) government.

[48] I agree with my pseudonymous informant Salem who observes that "it seems true that a tyrant is not easily removed in African states, once he/she has cemented his/her position."

negatively to the present state of economic meltdown in Zimbabwe. The next section attempts to define the term "postcolonial" or "postcoloniality" as well as explore its function in the on-going discussion.

2   "POSTCOLONIAL" OR "POSTCOLONIALITY"

According to Hall (1996:242-260), the *postcolonial* era is the time "after" colonialism. Hall further defines colonialism in terms of the binary division between the colonisers and colonised. Frankenberg and Mani (1993:301) define "postcolonial" as different ways of staging the encounters between the colonising societies and their *other*, "though not always in the same way or to the same degree." Castle (2001:508) states that *postcolonialism* refers both to an era after colonialism and to a set of critical attitudes taken toward colonialism. Hadjor (1992:150-152) describes postcolonial formation as a state thought to be at least institutionally free of foreign control, and one now possessing a greater measure of political autonomy than it did under colonialism. Slemon (2001:102) elaborates further that after sustained anti-colonial struggle, a national or "flag independence" is finally brought about in colonial locations, and through a process of decolonisation a new kind of state formation called *postcolonial state* comes into being. However, the achievement is only one of "flag independence," because at the level of real politics in the "postcolonial" nation nothing really changes.

Putting the Zimbabwean situation into perspective, I concur with Slemon that a "politics of domination" which largely marked the Rhodesian minority government has not changed for the better in postcolonial Zimbabwe in which citizens are being harassed and oppressed by the leadership of their majority government. Hence, borrowing from the above definitions, the point

I want to make is to apply postcolonial criticism in the Zimbabwean context—which is the core of the entire thesis—as a critique of the "goings-on" in both the political and economic developments in Zimbabwe as a new nation formed after colonialism. As such, the accusation against former colonial masters for the perpetuation of poverty on the natives in formally colonised nations is no longer tenable. When exploring the postcolonial or postindependence Zimbabwean situation, I am carefully investigating the political and economic trajectories after Zimbabwe's independence from the Rhodesian colonial rule in which ZANU (PF) has been the ruling party of the majority government since 1980.

In relation to postexilic Judah and postcolonial Zimbabwe, I would say that while the postexilic period refers to the Judean experience after the Babylonian exile, the postcolonial era in Zimbabwe refers to the new dispensation after colonialism when Zimbabwe was born as a sovereign state following the demise of Rhodesia. Following up the observation by either Hall (1996:242-260) or Frankenberg and Mani (1993:301), it can be deduced that postcolonial discourse is a critical reflection of the past in the present era. For example, in the South African context this is summarised by Snyman (2002:63-88) who describes "postcolonial" as a "condition where serious questions are asked about the continuing effect of the former colonial and apartheid ideological structures." Although Snyman speaks about the South African context, the debate on postcoloniality is an on-going process and it cuts across cultures.[49] In recent years, much of the debate on *postcoloniality* or *postcolonial* criticism has been explored in retrospect, and not so much introspectively, that is, blaming the postindependence economic crisis on the

---

[49] South Africa and Zimbabwe share almost the same political history, even though the two countries obtained independence at different stages (i e, Zimbabwe in 1980 and South Africa in 1994). When one embarks on a postcolonial discourse, the experiences of a people of any country emerging from colonial rule or internal civil conflict, come onto the fore.

former colonial masters who have since withdrawn from (or have been driven out of) the politics of the newly-formed postcolonial government. So when I talk of one looking at the economic crisis in Zimbabwe in retrospect, I am actually referring to the Zimbabwean government accusing Britain for the political disturbances in postindependence Zimbabwe, such as the statement by President Mugabe: "Blair, keep your England and I will keep my Zimbabwe"[50] (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:1139).

This *retrospection* is retrogressive in itself because it does not take responsibility for the deprivation that the oppressed Zimbabweans strived hard to eradicate, but is now being perpetrated by the postcolonial Zimbabwean government. It is argued that our reading of the biblical text should account for the political, economic and cultural environments of ancient biblical peoples and how they make sense for today's societies. Having that biblical reflection of political, economic and cultural environments in mind when one is faced with "troubling human experiences," as Dobson (1993:27) remarks, such a reading presents a challenge in view of the situation at hand.

In view of our reading of the Judean postexilic narratives, we see that the suffering of the people that caused them to cry out (Neh 5:1), was a result of the oppression and corruption by their Jewish governors, and not precisely by the Persian authorities. Judah had become a province of the Persian Empire. The Persian administration—like any other government in the modern world—required the payment of tax from its subject peoples for its sustenance and administration of the empire. However, collection and local administration of tax in Yehud were the tasks of the Judean governors appointed by Persia. Nehemiah was one such governor.

---

[50] Mugabe: 'Let me keep my Zimbabwe.' s n 2002. *The Telegraph* 2 Sept. Online: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1406028/Mugabe-Let-me-keep-my-Zimbabwe.html. Accessed 8 Jan 2013.

Zimbabwe, on the other hand, had ceased to be a colony of Britain in 1964 when Ian Smith's Rhodesia declared his Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). When Zimbabwe obtained independence from Rhodesia in 1980, in which Robert Mugabe amassed majority votes in the elections, the country became an autonomous and sovereign state, running its own affairs. Neither Britain nor Ian Smith was in control anymore. The success stories of the Zimbabwean economy during the first ten years into independence were a result of the support and aid received from the international community, including Britain towards Zimbabwe's economic and infrastructural development (see Rugwiji 2012).

The Zimbabwean government from 1980 to 2008 comprised largely of the elite from the ruling party ZANU (PF).[51] Most of them were the "freedom fighters" who were either directly involved in the struggle for liberation or supported it in one way or another. These "freedom fighters" have criticised MDC, particularly Morgan Tsvangirai, whom they accuse of being a puppet of the West because MDC is believed to have been formed and funded by former colonial beneficiaries most of whom were commercial farmers. A few years after MDC was formed in September 1999, a footage about the formation of MDC, showing Morgan Tsvangirai surrounded by "whites" was shown several times on national television in Zimbabwe. The footage was probably used by ZANU (PF) to portray to viewers and the international community that MDC was formed to "reverse the gains" of independence, particularly the land. The land invasions[52] were a response to the formation of MDC. "Freedom fighters" in ZANU (PF)

---

[51] The ZANU (PF) government was not corrupt from the beginning. Since independence in 1980, the government was on the right track towards socio-economic development: schools, hospitals, roads, etc, were constructed. Problems began at the beginning of the 1990s when the economy began to cramble due to a numbers of factors such as corruption, followed by land invasions during 1999 which continued up to the early 2000s.

[52] For a background of land invasions in Zimbabwe, see §8.4.1, 8.4.2, 8.4.3, and 9.2.3 below.

purportedly exercised vengeance for the painful experiences of the colonial past, and violence surrounding the land emerged as a retaliation for the painful experiences of the war. It is clear, the ruling party, the ZANU (PF), has not been able to deal with revolutionary ideologies rampant among its ranks (Rugwiji 2012:210). The freedom fighters have dwelt on colonialism of the past and its negative impact which they thought was resurfacing through the formation of MDC.

However, the above ideologies propagated by ZANU (PF) and its freedom fighters, in my view, depict a denial that the postcolonial Zimbabwean government was responsible for the economic failures that have occurred in the country in recent years. This depiction of denial is the core of my contention in this thesis on postcolonial criticism, namely that the postcolonial Zimbabwean government should be held accountable for the oppression, economic meltdown and the social ills that have bedeviled citizens, and not always plead for sympathy by accusing colonialism for the postcolonial government's own failures.

As shall be explained in detail when appropriating the Judean postexilic experiences to those of postcolonial Zimbabwe in chapter 4, the outcry of men, women and their children who went onto the streets was due to the oppression by their "own" Jewish brothers, the Jewish governors (Neh 5:1). A *hermeneutics of appropriation* is an attempt to appropriate the Judean postexilic context for the Zimbabwean postcolonial situation. In the Zimbabwean context, the formation of MDC was actually an expression of the "outcry" by the Zimbabwean population for the oppression, exploitation and corruption in government. So, the discourse on postcolonial Zimbabwe is an attempt to underscore both the political and economic conditions of Zimbabwe since it had become an independent and sovereign state. Having explained what postcolonialism or postcoloniality entails, the following section defines the hermeneutics of appropriation, followed by some examples where it has been used in scholarship.

3   TOWARDS DEFINING A HERMENEUTICS OF APPROPTIATION

3.1   Various definitions of *hermeneutics of appropriation*

"Hermeneutics of appropriation"—also called a "hermeneutics of action" (Kearney 1996:1)—is an intentional method of interpretation aimed at unmasking the underlying meanings within the text for modern readers which traditional methods such as historical criticism, redaction criticism, amongst other "criticisms," would not account for. A hermeneutics of appropriation is an effort to convey the "other" possible meaning within the biblical text, a methodology referred to by Dada (2010:160-174) as "contextual biblical hermeneutics," which he further describes as a "deliberate attempt to introduce African situational concepts and ideas into reading the biblical text." Dada's definition explains the method of biblical *interpretation* largely pursued by many African scholars.

Interpretation, according to Paul Ricoeur, is the "work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning" (1974:60). With Ricoeur's definition in mind, this chapter explores some aspects in the narrative about postexilic Judah, and applies these to the Zimbabwean postcolonial situation. A hermeneutics of appropriation could also be described as the "hermeneutic phenomenological approach," which, as Suazo (2006) explains, can be used to check critically one's experience within society. It urges a deliberate suspension of judgments and allows experience to unfold and show its relevance. I disagree with Suazo, though, where he talks of "suspension of judgments," which is not always tenable. Although it is correct to analyse

a different context phenomenologically, this does not mean that one cannot make judgments about a particular context. One can always make judgments, positively or negatively. Although Suazo appropriates the method to the context of the Philippines, it can also serve as the *modus operandi* in postcolonial Zimbabwe, which subsequently brings the Zimbabwean context into perspective.

Although biased in some way, a hermeneutics of appropriation can be employed responsibly, bearing in mind the "warning statement" by Scheffler who says "…those who study history for the sake of wisdom should also guard against interpreting it in terms of the 'lessons' they want to learn" (2001:13). Talking of appropriating the biblical text "responsibly," refers to avoiding using the Bible to endorse the doing of "evil," such as greed, corruption, hypocrisy, oppressing the poor, etcetera (Neh 5:5). Where "bad" things in the biblical text are discussed, they serve to remind society to avoid them. However, one would emulate something good that the Bible teaches, such as challenging the leadership for wrongdoing, hospitality, alleviating poverty, practising justice, and giving food to starving communities, like Nehemiah's example (Neh 5:6-11, 17-18).

Various authors have employed a hermeneutics of appropriation in articulating their arguments in their respective discourses, although different terminologies have been used to describe the method, such as: contextualisation, inculturation, and feminism, among others. Others prefer to call the method *comparative study/comparative hermeneutics* (see Launderville 1989; Farnen 1994, etc). However, for this study, the attempt is to "appropriate" the Judean postexilic context for the Zimbabwean postindependence situation. The following are a few examples of hermeneutics of appropriation particularly employed in African scholarship.

3.2   Theoretical examples of hermeneutics of appropriation

This section commences by analysing Elelwani Farisani's contribution in hermeneutics. Farisani (2010:507) advances the view that apartheid ideology systematically oppressed and dehumanised the Black people. In response, Black theology used the Bible as a weapon in the struggle of Black people against apartheid ideology. Although Farisani refers to a South African political environment, the parallel of the apartheid rule in South Africa to the colonial era in Rhodesia is evident, because both situations are about marginalisation and exploitation of African people (Blacks). It was the Bible that was used[53] to colonise Africa in general, and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in particular. It is therefore the same tool that can be used to decolonise Africa in order to reclaim her identity. Farisani deliberates that "the church should not only look at the question of the relationship between God and the poor but also at the relationship of the God of the poor (the God of life) with the *economic, political and social particularities* of concretely oppressed people" (Farisani 2011:61-72). Farisani's statement implies that as much as the church preaches about "going to heaven," it must also deal with "bread and butter" issues, such as politics and the economy of our modern day. These are issues that the Judean postexilic community wrestled with. In yet another piece of work, Farisani exhibits an inclination towards a hermeneutics of appropriation, although he tends to critique some proponents of theologies of reconstruction deriving from their reading of Ezra-Nehemiah, such as Villa-Vicencio, among

---

[53] European priests were involved in the expropriation of land and other resources from the Africans in Rhodesia. On 11 Feb 1888 in the company of a priest named Rev C D Helm, Moffat obtained Lobengula's signature to what has come to be known as the Moffat Treaty; for more information, see Blake (1977:43) and Snyder (1962:211). Citing Farisani's South African context here and other examples which follow serves to illustrate that almost similar approaches were used by scholars in other contexts.

others, whose approach Farisani describes as "biased"[54] (2002:628-646). However, in his critique of the method/s employed by other scholars to interpret the biblical text, Farisani continuously prefers to maintain what he describes as "ideological."

Another scholar of repute in the "African" hermeneutics (comparative studies) is Knut Holter, who maintains that the African context and the biblical text should interpret each other. Holter (2002:88-89) states that comparative studies facilitate a parallel interpretation so that the two illuminate each other. Holter further explains that in African biblical hermeneutics, the biblical text is approached from a perspective where African comparative material is the major dialogue partner and traditional exegetical methodology is subordinated to this perspective (2002:88). Thus, Holter's view complements the ideas within the framework of the *hermeneutics of appropriation* as articulated in this discourse.

West (1997:32-342), who acknowledges Holter's position, says if the Bible and biblical scholarship have been instruments of colonising cultures in the past, there is no reason why, in the present they cannot serve as instruments of liberation. Although in this case West is hesitant to mention that he is a proponent of a hermeneutics of appropriation, his articulation above seems to support it. I concur with West's observation above where he says that a hermeneutics of appropriation is intended to demystify the colonial mentality among both the perpetrator and the victim of the imperial yoke and its various forms of manifestation.

Madipoane Masenya (2004:3) also adds her voice to this debate when she refers to "theologies aimed at addressing the real needs of African people." She might as well have

---

[54] By "biased" Farisani might have been contesting the idea of using the Ezra-Nehemiah narrative for contemporary situations. However, if that is what Farisani means, one would argue that it contradicts with his statement that the church should deal with "economic, political and social particularities of concretely oppressed peoples" (Farisani 2011:61-72).

referred to the Bible being relevant to the politics, economy, family issues, liberation, etcetera, among modern African societies. Masenya (2010:728-751) draws an analogy[55] from the family structures and units of Judah during the pre-exilic, exilic and postexilic periods respectively, to the family structures and their economic survival in South Africa during and after apartheid. Masenya further observes that in both the (pre-exilic Israelite) postexilic Jewish community contexts as well as the African/Northern Sotho context, there was an expectation that parents, both in nuclear and extended families, would offer education to their children (including those who were not their blood children).

Maré's argument that "the experience of exile is not confined to the pages of the Bible dealing with the Babylonian exile" and that "exile happens in our midst" (Maré 2010:116-128), also points to my argument for a hermeneutics of appropriation. Maré (2010:117) further remarks that the loss of the reliable and known world results in many people living in a strange and unfamiliar situation (for example, most Zimbabweans live in squatter camps in South Africa[56]) that does not seem like home, but creates a deep sense of being in exile.

To further widen the scope of this discussion is Emmanuel Usue's contribution referred to earlier. Usue (2010) compares the political and economic conditions in ancient postexilic Judah to Africa's political and economic situation. As I read it, the struggle of the ordinary people for survival and the lack of accountability and the scramble for power by African leaders come onto the fore in Usue's contribution.

---

[55] Masenya compares parent-child relationship in Proverbs1:8-9; 6:20 to the Northern Sotho South African context, which, in her view, "share a similar content even as they reflect some points of resemblance with regard to the worldview which they display on parental instruction," see Masenya (2010:749).

[56] This insertion in brackets given as an example is mine.

Another scholar, Adamo, proves that he is also a proponent of the hermeneutical appropriation of the biblical text in our modern postbiblical world. According to Adamo (2010:15) the forceful removal of Africans from their continent to various foreign countries in the west and their accompanied suffering can be compared with that of the exile of 597/98 and 586/7. Adamo (2010:22) also explains the similarities that exist between Yahweh punishing Israel for sinning by allowing the invasion, and loss of the land by Africans to foreigners because they sinned against the gods. Although Adamo refers particularly to the Nigerian context, such belief systems are also common in other African cultures, such as in Zimbabwe where the gods through "vadzimu" (spirit mediums) can inflict calamities such as loss of land if people profane the sacred.

Justin S. Ukpong's *Towards a renewed approach to enculturation theology* (1994), in which he talks of enculturation hermeneutics, is very informative for my present study. In this work, Ukpong (1994:3-15) proposes to adopting a *holistic approach to culture* whereby both the secular and religious aspects of culture are seen to be interconnected and as having implications one for the other, and the Bible is read within the religious as well as the economic, social and political contexts of Africa. Ukpong argues that the Bible must be read within a given culture and for people who experience life in that culture. In yet another work, Ukpong (2000:18) follows up on his previous attempt by noting that since African biblical scholarship focuses on the community that receives the text, any continued ignoring of the ordinary readers will lead to sterile scholarship. In other words, Ukpong suggests that postcolonial scholarship should interpret the biblical text in view of the readership as its client.

Viewed from a Southern African perspective is Mavinga's appropriation of the leadership crisis in Judah for the African leadership situation, with particular orientation to the Democratic

Republic of Congo (DRC). Mavinga's appropriation seeks to "provide the African (Congolese) leadership and people with the right vision and commitment to manage public affairs in the community" (2011:119). Although Mavinga appropriates the postexilic Judean situation for the political crisis in the DRC, by asserting that "the story of the Judean leadership's experience resembles of the leadership in Africa" (2011:134), his particular appropriation seems to apply to the Zimbabwean context as well.

By way of more examples, in his thesis (*The Bible and literature: A case of biblical influence in some Shona novels*, 2003), Mapara (2003:1) notes that the following Shona novelists seem to be saying that religion can best be understood and accepted if it fits with the people's circumstances: *Ndiko kupindana kwamazuva* (1975) and *Kunyarara hakusi kutaura*? (1983) both by Charles Mungoshi; *Rufu runobereka rufu* (1976) by M Mahanya; *Ndambakuudzwa akaonekwa nembonje* (1979) by J Mabugu; *Gehena harina moto* (1963) and *Tambaoga mwanangu* (1965) both by Giles Kuimba; *Sarura wako* (1971) and *Zvaida kushinga* (1985/92) both by C Makari; *Kuraone* (1976) and *Museve wade nyama* (1983) both by I M Zvarevashe; *Pafunge* (1972) by T K Tsodzo; *Karikoga gumiremiseve* (1959), *Pfumo reropa* (1961), and *Rudo ibofu* (1966) all by Patrick Chakaipa. For Mapara, the exodus tradition of the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites is likened to the crossing of the Munyati River by Karikoga and Marunjeya in *Karikoga gumiremiseve* (Chakaipa 1959:73-4). Mapara further comments that in *Zvaida kushinga*, Makari (1985) uses the Bible to preach about reconciliation among warring parties. It is believed that the above novels constantly draw lessons from the biblical stories to teach moral issues to the modern postbiblical societies in Zimbabwe.

In the final analysis, the application of a hermeneutics of appropriation is neither an attempt to discredit other methods of interpreting the biblical text, such as what Paul Ricoeur

describes as *conflict of interpretation* (Ricoeur 1997:60), nor is it an endeavour to obliterate the contribution of other critical methods in scholarship. It is rather complementary.

Other scholars have also appropriated the Ezra-Nehemiah's "reconstruction theology" to our modern day post-conflict reconstruction. These include: Jesse Mugambi, Charles Villa-Vicencio, and Tinyiko Maluleke, to name but just a few. In the following section, I will discuss the above scholars in the context of a theology of reconstruction, as an appropriation of Ezra-Nehemiah's rebuilding initiatives in postexilic Judah for postcolonial conflict in Africa.

3.3   Theology of reconstruction: Mugambi, Villa-Vicencio and Maluleke

A theology of reconstruction in some way could be defined as a *theology of rebuilding* in contrast to *liberation theology* or *theology of liberation*, to which Mwaura (2010:131) refers as a process of post-conflict reconstruction. By "theology of rebuilding" Mwaura suggests that after "liberation" has been achieved, what follows is the task of dealing with societal issues beyond the conflict. It is an exercise towards development that govervment and local communities begin to embark on at the end of a conlfict. The concept of post-conflict refers to the period following the end of a conflict in a given country (Nkurunziza 2008:4). It could also be referred to as a "post-conflict reconstruction." Theology of liberation is the initial phase of a long process of self-emancipation from oppression; it attempts to fight for justice from colonial or imperial forces. However, the liberation motif of the exodus is not enough. A *liberated society* needs to refocus attention on rebuilding the nation that has been ravaged by political conflict. Quite often, the nation-rebuilding programme entails integrating and working together with those who were

previously fighting each other.[57] In concurrence with both Mwaura and Nkurunziza, Waskow (1990:518) has also remarked that "in the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, there is no reconciliation." In view of Waskow's observation, one would conclude that liberation theology of the exodus remains the initial phase of an unfinished business, a *work in progress*.

The restoration of the Judeans from Babylonia back to Judah was one grand achievement. However, patterns of every day life in *Yehud* and the sustenance of peace and order for economic transformation to prevail was another task which needed to be reworked. It is for this reason that Jesse Mugambi and others have proposed a *theology of reconstruction* which focuses on *rebuilding* as well as reconciliation in the postindependence era after "freedom" has been achieved. The above view is also echoed by Gathogo (2009:100) who has reaffirmed what Mugambi (1995:160-180) proposed that the figure of Nehemiah, unlike that of Moses, gives us the mirror through which we are enabled to spot out our mission to remake Africa out of all sorts of ruins that continue to bedevil it.

After his *A theology of reconstruction*: *nation-building and human rights* (1992), in his other work entitled: *From liberation to reconstruction*, Mugambi (1995:18) asserts that the New World Order[58] poses a challenge inviting us to be very creative and innovative. This new world order, in my view, is the era of change. Heyns (1992) subscribes to this notion of change by affirming that change brings an awarenes of the passage of time of a world that does not remain the same. Heyns further notes that change leads us to face the reality of time, the reality of

---

[57] This shall be discussed in detail in chapter 4 on reconstruction and economic development in the post-2008 era in Zimbabwe, in which Nehemiah's initiatives will be discussed as examples.

[58] See Heyns (1992:257-276).

unknown and unpredictable future. In other words, Mugambi suggests that Africa should redefine and reconstruct her own future.

Mugambi proposes that the Africa of the 21st century will have to pre-occupy itself with the agenda of reconstruction as the new priority for Africa, in which the text of Ezra-Nehemiah,[59] unlike that of the Exodus, has to be the main text in the explication of African theological discourses in the 21st century. This text will motivate the people of Africa to rebuild their continent from all sorts of ruins. Reconstruction is the new priority for African nations in the 1990s (and beyond).

Mugambi (1991:36) states that the churches and their theologians will need to respond to this new priority in relevant fashion, in order to facilitate this process of reconstruction. The process will require considerable efforts of reconciliation and confidence-building. In sum, Mugambi advocates for a theology of reconstruction based on the process of social reconstruction which invites every member of society to participate in establishing a new social order more aligned with God's intention for humanity (Mugambi 2010:139). Mugambi's appropriation of Ezra-Nehemiah's reconstruction theology to the modern postcolonial crisis in Africa is also echoed by Charles Villa-Vicencio's contribution.

Charles Villa-Vicencio's works include: *A theology of reconstruction: Nation-building and human rights* (1992). Villa-Vicencio holds that a *theology of reconstruction* is one way of *social renewal*. With particular reference to Villa-Vicencio book (1992), Sarah Stephens (1994) speaks highly of Villa-Vicencio whom she describes as: "… long been respected as one of the incisive theological voices of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa." Villa-Vicencio urges

---

[59] Although Mugambi mentions Ezra-Nehemiah, he does not precisely refer to a particular text. See my criticism of Villa-Vicencio, Mugambi and Maluleke in section 3.4 below.

the church "keep alive a social vision in support of economic initiatives which shape, bend and redirect the world economic order as well as individual national economies towards the benefit of those who suffer most in society…" (Stephens 1994). Villa-Vicencio propounds for a shift from liberation theology to the theology of reconstruction as a movement from the past to the present; from one phase of the struggle to another. This last phase hinges on economic emancipation, that is, provision of food. In this sense, Villa-Vicencio could not be far from understanding the society of Nehemiah's time which cried out: "…We and our sons and daughters are numerous, in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain" (Neh 5:2). From Villa-Vicencio, I focus my attention on Tinyiko Maluleke's contribution and how he appropriates the postexilic Judean context for the modern postcolonial/apartheid situation.

Maluleke (1997:22) comments that Villa-Vicencio appeals for a post cold-war (African) theology to engage in serious dialogue with democracy, human rights, law-making, nation-building, and economics in order to ensure that these do indeed improve the quality of human lives.

Although Maluleke is well-known as one of the faithful champions of Black Theology[60] (Farisani 2010:508; Maluleke 1996:3-19), his recent line of thought has been a reflection of his previous discourses in dialogue with the recently-introduced "theology of reconstruction" and how his traditional "trademark" has been influenced by both Villa-Vicencio's and Mugambi's theologies of reconstruction. On the one hand, Maluleke attempts to harmonise his Black Theology with reconstruction theology. In his support of Mugambi, Maluleke (1996:473) spoke

---

[60] For other champions of Black Theology, see Mitchem 2000:177-184; Cone 2000:731-747; De Gruchy, J W and Villa-Vicencio, C 1994. *Doing theology in context: South African perspective*. Cape Town: D. Philip; Hopkins, D N 1999. *Introducing black theology of liberation*. Maryknoll: Orbis.

highly of him whom he described as "a passionate and committed African Churchman, theologian and continental patriot of our times." At this point, Maluleke does not depart from both Mugambi's and Villa-Vicencio's views where he acknowledges that "reconstruction, development, and democracy are fast becoming as integral to South African political language as the notions of the struggle, revolution and liberation used to be" (1994:245).

On the other hand, Maluleke (1997:23) has been critical of both Mugambi and Villa-Vicencio in their assumption that the end of the "cold war" has immediate significance for ordinary Africans and that the so-called "New World Order" is truly "new" and truly "orderly" for Africans. Maluleke further argues that the *New World Order* is not only likely to relegate Africa into a "fourth world" but it will also impose its own prescriptions on African countries. In addition, Maluleke criticises both Mugambi and Villa-Vicencio for what he describes as "minimising the value of previous African theologies of inculturation and liberation," electing to maintain what he calls a "liberation paradigm" (Maluleke 1996:473). Why Maluleke chooses to differentiate theologies of "inculturation and liberation" from "reconstruction theology" instead of "marrying" the two, appears to me, some reluctance to accept that a new world order has come and so change is inevitable.

A practical examples of theology of reconstruction will shed some light. When South Africa moved away from the apartheid regime in 1994, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in order to remove mistrust and bring together black people and white people towards rebuilding a democratic and a better South Africa. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was composed of religious leaders such as Archibishop Desmond Tutu (Chairperson), and Dr Alex Boraine (Deputy Chairperson).

115

Nelson Mandela—who had spent twenty seven years in the apartheid prison—was the architect in calling for national reconciliation. Theology of reconstruction also includes acts of charity towards the poor of society who were marginalised during the apartheid era. It is reported that when Mandela became President in 1994, he undertook to donate one-third of his salary (i e, R150 000) to the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund which was established to address the needs of the marginalised youth.[61] Some home owners also confirm that RDP[62] houses (e g, in Atteridgeville, Lotus Gardens, Mamelodi, in Pretoria, and many other places) were constructed by funds socilited by Mandela to cater for the formerly marginalised and poverty-stricken members of society who did not have shelter. Such acts of charity are expected in Zimbabwe, particularly on the part of the leadership when the country is trying to rebuild its economy and infrustructure such as schools, hospitals, roads, etc. The theology of reconstruction is an attempt to inculturate an ideology of focussing towards rebuilding the country and the livelihoods of society in the postcolonial period in which former warring parties no longer need to reflect on the past. In fact—if anything—the composition of different groups of people who previously fought each other should be regarded as a grand opportunity to rebuild the country together.

Having discussed theologies of reconstruction by Villa-Vicencio, Mugambi and Maluleke, their views have thrown a "dice" for debate in which I find myself critical of the three theologians' viewpoints, which I explore under the following heading: *Criticism of Villa-Vicencio, Mugambi and Maluleke*.

---

[61] President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. s n 1998. *Office of the President,* Aug. Online: chttp://virtualology.com/worldleaders/NELSONRMANDELA.NET/. Accssed 25 Jan 2013.

[62] *RDP* stands for Reconstruction Development Programme. See Perspectives on exclusion and inequalities: A move towards democracy. s n 2007. *Joernaal Eietydse Geskiedenis* 1 Dec, 1.

3.4   Criticism of Villa-vicencio, Mugambi and Maluleke

I want to commend both Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi for their discussion on the process from "theology of liberation to a theology of reconstruction, from exodus to postexilic theology." However, they both do not maximally utilize the biblical source to which they refer, that is, the book of Nehemiah (Mugambi 1995; Villa-Vicencio 1992). Farisani (2010:514) has raised the same objection. Their respective opinions thus differ from my own position in that I explore a *theology of reconstruction* by way of appropriating Nehemiah to modern leaders—church or secular—who can stand up to challenge the political leadership of our postindependence states in Africa to deliver justice and to alleviate poverty among societies. If modern biblical readers view Nehemiah of the ancient postexilic period as a real person of his time, the typology of Nehemiah's character and the appropriation of the biblical narrative to post-conflict environments of our time (e g, the post-2008 era in Zimbabwe) become inevitable.

I stand to differ with Maluleke's viewpoint above by arguing that theologies of "inculturation/liberation" and reconstruction theology are the same things in a libration process: one is the beginning and the other is the end, considered as the "basic concepts for innovative African Christian theology" (Mugambi 1995:2). At some point, it appears Maluleke has found solidarity with Dube and Farisani in critiquing both Villa-Vicencio and Mugambi. It does not come as a surprise that when Dube (2002:1-16), Farisani[63] (2010) and Maluleke (1994) tend to critique Villa-vicencio's and Mugambi's respective assertions on the latter's shifts from

---

[63] Farisani's recent discourse appears to be a follow-up to his previous research in which he had criticised both Mugambi's and Villa-Vicencio's uses of Ezra-Nehemiah in advocating for a theology of reconstruction. See Farisani, E B 2003. The use of Ezra-Nehemiah in a quest for an African theology of reconstruction. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 116, 27-50.

"liberation theology to reconstruction theology," they equally challenge my own position. However, I have supported both Villa-Vicencio's and Mugambi's theologies of reconstruction as appropriate for the Zimbabwean situation. This is so because after obtaining independence from colonial masters, Africa's focus should no more be a *blame game* to rehash the past in order to accuse beneficiaries of colonialism/apartheid. Borrowing a proposal by Omar (1998), there should be a commitment to break from the past, to heal the wounds of the past, to forgive but not to forget and to build a future based on respect for human rights. In concurrence with Omar's view, African leaders should focus on reconstructing Africa's political image and to develop their respective economies which have been devastated by many years of civil wars, genocides, infanticides, homicides, and perhaps, *economicides.*[64]

In the above section, I have defined the *hermeneutics of appropriation* and have given various examples in which it has been used. In section 4 below, I focus on the socio-economic situation in postexilic Judah as the "humanitarian crisis" perpetrated by the Jewish leadership (Neh 5:1-3). However, a more detailed account of the "appropriation" for the Zimbabwean context will be explored in chapter 4 that follows. Stating it here at this stage is to provide a background to the social ills in Yehud to which the Zimbabwean situation will be appropriated. The next section examines the Judean struggle for survival in Yehud.

---

[64] *Economicides* is a term I have deliberately coined to refer to a reflection of economic instabilities in Africa which left millions of people starving to death.

The struggle for survival and self-identity on the part of the Judeans continued in Yehud. Following their restoration in Judah, the exilic returnees had expected to be part of a society that would launch developmental initiatives for their common good in the homeland, which would serve as compensation for the previous loss. The project of rebuilding the temple had been neglected because communities had committed themselves to finding means of survival in their homes (Hg 1:4). However, when they were finally restored in Yehud, the reconstruction project did not begin until Haggai complained about it in the second year of King Darius (521-486 BCE) (Ezr 5:1-2; Hg 1:1-4). They were busy rebuilding their own houses, "Is it time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this *house* remains in ruins?" (Hg 1:4).

Yehud had become a province of the Persian Empire, and they were demanded by the Persian administration to pay tax (Ezr 4:13, 20; 7:24; Neh 5:4). In addition to paying tax, the Judean governors—*their Jewish brothers* (Neh 5:1) and "our countrymen" (5:5), had subjected them to slavery (Neh 5:5) by practising *usury* (5:7), in addition to mortgaging their fields, vineyards and homes (5:3). This was the reason why "men and their wives raised a great outcry" (Neh 5:1) and opted to demonstrate against their Jewish leaders in demand for grain (Neh 5:2). Those who oppressed the poor were Jewish governors appointed by Persia, diasporic "elite" who came along with some poor people from exile (cf Holmgren 1987). It can further be argued that the returnees did not all come at once; they came in batches.[65] Those who had arrived first might

---

[65] The first group (batch) returned through Seshbazzar (539 BCE) and Zerubbabel (in the 520s). The second contingent of returnees was led by Ezra (458 BCE), and Nehemiah brought the third and last group in the late 5th century. When we read about the oppression and poverty, it probably refers to Nehemiah's time when all other

have assumed positions of seniority ahead of others such that they treated those who followed later as "late comers." It is not likely that the remnants proper would oppress the arriving exilic "elite"—which Kessler (2007:142) prefers to call "the geographically transplanted elite"—as these were backed by the Persian king who had offered the returnees financial and material resources for the reconstruction of the walls and the temple. Moreover, it was from among the returning elite that the Persian Empire appointed governors in its provinces such as in Yehud. Those who occupied positions of influence would make decisions that would affect those at lower ranks including the generality of the populace. Janzen (2002:490) subscribes to this view where he observes that this community bore some strong similarities to the temple communities of Mesopotamia and as such was a politically and economically influential group.

It is speculated that it was mainly the peasants and the disadvantaged people who bore the brunt of exploitation through payment of taxes (Scheffler 2001:142). Cataldo (2009:172) expresses the view that poverty was exacerbated by oppression from the priests and the Judean governors who served as "rulers" for the Persian provincial administration. It is further noted that the second group of returnees came during the period when Darius I was emperor (522–486 BCE), and he divided the kingdom into twenty provinces in order to implement an effective *taxation system* (Spangenberg 2006a:169).

Clines (1984:167) remarks that these circumstances of oppression and poverty prompted the wailing of the women in loud voices so that it could be heard from a distance. Clines' mention of "heard from a distance" serves to shed some light on the plight of the hungry and the poor. The shorter passage in Nehemiah 5:3-5, though not exact, reads like the one in Genesis

---

returnees had settled in Yehud. The poor might have derived from the three groups including the remnants. For further reading, see Stern (2002:39) and Bakon (2003).

47:13-25: in both cases, due to famine, people sold everything they had to the state, and finally offered themselves as slaves for the rest of their lives. These realities, as correctly put by Blenkinsopp (1988:36), were also a result of drought which "created economic distress for the Jewish community and added to their social problems." The Phoenicians' common practice of establishing mercantile settlements in foreign cities is consistent with the existence of a trade colony in Jerusalem during the time of Nehemiah (Noonan 2011:287).

The analysis of the socio-economic situation in postexilic Judah motivates this study to examine the socio-political situation in postindependence Zimbabwe. We are reminded of what happened to our own context in Zimbabwe where people have expressed the same plight, forcing numerous fellow countrymen and women to cross the borders to live in the Diaspora.

5   THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN POSTINDEPENDENCE ZIMBABWE (1980– 2008)

The rise of Cyrus the Great and the restoration of the Judeans ushered in a new era of liberation for the Judeans and bolstered their sense of national identity. However, Kuhrt (1983:83) states that Cyrus who founded one of the most extensive and powerful empires of the ancient world has traditionally enjoyed a very good press. By "enjoyed very good press" Kuhrt seems to suggest that the biblical text speaks highly of Cyrus (Ezr 1; 3:7; 4:3; 5:13-15; 6:3-5; Is 44:28; 45:1-8; 48:14-15). Isaiah 45:1-7 expresses this view in support of Cyrus' rise to power, where it describes the Persian king as "God's anointed." Furthermore, Spangenberg (2006a:168) also supports this view by commenting that not one Old Testament prophet had a bad word to say about the Persians. To the contrary, this study argues that the Persian Empire was just as oppressive as the Babylonian Empire. The Judeans were not free in Yehud.

In Zimbabwe, the unity government facilitated by the Southern African Development Community (SADC)—under the mediation of Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa—established political stability in the country. Mbeki and South Africa came under heavy criticism for the so-called quiet diplomacy and for exercising lenience over the Zimbabwean situation. However, the prevailing peaceful atmosphere in Zimbabwe should be credited to the interventions by SADC which established[66] a new order of an inclusive government in Zimbabwe. This arrangement was a defining moment for Zimbabwe's socio-political development. If the unity government would work successfully, it would function as a rebranding of the country. The fact that some Zimbabweans are trickling back to their country and that food is available, demonstrates that the arrangement, for now, has worked relatively well. Although the SADC cannot be described as "God's anointed," its role in promoting Zimbabwean political stability cannot be viewed as insignificant. However, as uncertainty over the political situation in Zimbabwe continues, targeted sanctions that cripple both peace-loving Zimbabweans and the international community remain in force. This is because possible indications of a recurrence of the political crisis keep on threatening the unity government.

However, it should be noted that many postcolonial governments in Africa have struggled to maintain the socio-economic welfare of both their individual countries and their respective peoples. This is due to greed, corruption and a lack of agenda. As correctly stated by Ackroyd (1968:30) in any community there are people who do not take important business seriously. The biblical text reflects the same. Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, and Joshua the high priest failed to consider rebuilding the temple as priorities that needed immediate and urgent

---

[66] GNU was established in Sept 2008, but only became fully operational in Mar 2009.

response. The Judeans were busy working on their personal properties. They had chosen to rebuild and stay in their houses, while "this house remains in ruins" (Hg 1:4). By "this house remains in ruins" Haggai probably referred to the temple which the Judeans had neglected to rebuild.

In my view, rebuilding Zimbabwe will take a gradual approach, as the country does not have sufficient funds towards reconstruction. This is worsened by lack of readiness on the part of the international community to provide assistance to rebuild Zimbabwe, as political tension is still prevalent in the country. Mwalubunju and Otitodun report that "external and aid loans which crumbled in the wake of sanctions imposed by the IMF, the World Bank, and other western donors in 2000 have not been revived" (2011:9). This lack of financial and material aid has slackened infrastructural development in Zimbabwe. Perhaps it will remain so until political tension subsides. At the time of writing, almost four years after the formation of GNU on 13 March 2009, infrastructure, such as roads, schools, clinics, hospitals and government offices are still in a bad state.

According to Van Rensburg (2011:7) the economy of Zimbabwe has expanded by 8,1 per cent during 2010 and was further projected to grow by 9,3 per cent in 2011. However, there is need to improve the political environment to attract foreign investment. In addition, Dube, Chifera and Rusere (2011) have noted that on 25 November 2010, Zimbabwe's Finance Minister Tendai Biti was reported unveiling a 2011 Budget, which anchored economic growth to political stability. Biti had indicated that the nation's economic growth would be dependent on political stability, performance of the mining sector, high agricultural productivity and various macro-economic fundamentals. Mavinga's argument for "a loyal leadership capable of restoring social justice in the community" (2011:118-141), is also appropriate for the unity

government to rebuild Zimbabwe by fostering democracy and justice for transformation to prevail.

6 CONCLUSION: ASPECTS OF THE APPROPRIATING PROCESS

Fundamentally, the aim of this chapter was to articulate that although the Judeans in exile were ostensibly happy about returning to Zion to rebuild the temple and enjoy their own independence, real freedom did not prevail in Yehud. Although the Persian Empire was the governing authority over the Judeans, it was the Jewish governors, "their Jewish brothers" (Neh 5:1), and their "countrymen" (5:5) who were subjugating their fellow Jews. Postexilic narratives do not describe an atmosphere of peace, tranquility and sufficiency amongst the Judeans. Our reading of the postexilic literature of Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai and Malachi portrays prevalence of drought, corruption among priests, reconstruction disputes, delay in rebuilding the temple, and enslavement described as "usury" by the Judean governors. In addition, the economic conditions had not improved.

The Babylonian kingdom that had previously exiled the Judeans was overpowered and conquered by the Persian King Cyrus who allowed the Judeans to return to Judah. Worthy noting is that although Zimbabwe was neither invaded nor its people taken to captivity by any superpower, the political instability that prevailed in the country and the starvation that followed as a result of the economic meltdown resultantly became "push-factors" that forced Zimbabweans into diaspora.

Much of the discussion on the deportation of the Judeans focused on the depiction of the exiled elite and their experiences in Babylonia, and not so much on the poorer remnants. I have highlighted that this depiction is biased because the author(/s) of the narrative probably perceived this group as insignificant. This chapter further explored that the "remnants" in the Zimbabwean crisis suffered worse than those who escaped to the diaspora. During colonial Rhodesia, the Zimbabwean society had looked forward to a democratic black government because the Rhodesian white government was oppressive. However, as was shown, the black government turned, to my mind, to be even more oppressive. The genocide, farm invasions, and the demolition of shacks in which people dwelt, became evidence of a government that denied its citizens justice, democracy and freedom.[67]

As a response to the problem stated in this chapter the aim was to interpret the Judean postexilic narratives in a Zimbabwean context. The experience of the Judeans in Judah after the exile was analysed in order to appropriate the narratives in the Zimbabwean context. The chapter uniquely argued that the biblical text should account for the political, economic and cultural environments today, in order for the Bible to make sense for the modern Zimbabwean society. By way of examples, Rev Canaan Banana—though being a minister of religion and a

---

[67] In the early 1980s, President Robert Mugabe's army ransacked the Midlands and Matebeleland province in Zimbabwe where over twenty thousands civilians were massacred. This operation was code-named *Gukurahundi* (the first rains that washes away the chaff before spring rain comes). Most of the victims were the Ndebele people whom Mugabe accused of being dissidents. In yet another ordeal, in 2005, Mugabe's government demolition shacks and homes in the cities in the clean up operation code-named *Operation Murambatsvina* (Murambatsvina means somebody who does not like dirt). Thousands lost their homes and property; thousands others died. Towards the end of the 1999 and the beginning of 2000, Mugabe's war veterans embarked on the land invasions, after the formation of the opposition MDC in Sept 1999. Widespread land resettlement and farm invasions motivated violence and deaths. Some white commercial farmers and their farm workers died, others were brutally assaulted. As a result, farming and the economy were crippled because Zimbabwe is an agro-economy.

"preacher"—became the President[68] of Zimbabwe in 1980. In 1987, Banana brokered the unity accord and influenced reconciliation between Mugabe's ZANU (PF) and Joshua Nkomo's PF-ZAPU (Rugwiji 2008:139). Also, Martin Luther King, Jr, was a Baptist minister who fought against the oppression of the African Americans in the United States of America through his Civil Rights Movement (cf Hopkins 1989:9). The above two examples—amongst many others— serve to elucidate that Bible readers (and even religious leaders) have explored (and continue to do so) the biblical *themes* in the context of the contemporary worldview of those themes.

When we read the narrative about the "restored" Judean community, we should not be misled by the rhetoric of freedom and justice in *Yehud* because it did not exist. However, the following similarities and differences exist between the experiences of the Judean community after the restoration in 539 BCE and the Zimbabwean society after independence in 1980.

The *first* similarity is the appeal to the divine for solution to socio-economic crises.[69] The Judeans were a religious people who believed Yahweh had given them Judah as a possession and an inheritance, and Yahweh chose Cyrus to restore the Judeans to Judah. Zimbabweans are religious people too, who believe in the divine intervention for sanity and order to prevail. On the one hand, those "immersed" in necromancy hold that the spirit medium of Nehanda and Kaguvi mhondoro spirit (Beach 1979:399) had resisted white rule and supremacy and had foretold that the land of Zimbabwe, which had been colonised by British invaders, would be restored to them. The spirit medium (*mudzimu* in Shona) is believed to be the link between "Musikavanhu" (God)

---

[68] Robert Mugabe became "Prime Minister" of independent Zimbabwe in April 1980. His title changed to "President" in 1987.

[69] The Judeans believed that they would be in the wrong for calamity such as drought, captivity,or dreadful disease to strike. If they stood upright and faithful to Yahweh, he would remove these calamities from among them (see Ezr 9:7). How this worked, no one knows. It probably was in their minds to believe it as such.

and the people. Mapara (2003:149) acknowledges that "mudzimu" in Shona traditional religion is the intermediary between God and humankind. This medium influences the lives of people and how they should live: if the people continue to appease their dead ancestors and the spirit mediums by brewing traditional beer and conducting traditional galas, peace and food abundance will prevail. If they abandon their ancestors and spirit mediums, drought, famine, pestilence and war will devastate the nation. In *Zvaida kushinga*, Makari (1992) pictures Moses Mberikwazvo as the biblical Moses who led the Israelites out of the Egyptian bondage, with Mudzimu Mountain replacing Mount Sinai. Makari draws on the biblical stories to provide lessons about peace and reconciliation. Makari (1992:78) employs the image of "hyena and a goat staying together" as parallel to the biblical story recounting that "the wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox" (Is 11:6-7).

On the other hand, the Christian faithful in Zimbabwe who believe in pacifism have always turned to prayer as a means to appeal to the divine to change the hearts of the political leadership in the country for justice, peace and change to occur. Church conferences, proclamations for congregational or national fasting/national days of prayer for the country, have been some of the efforts by the church to evoke God's intervention in the economic and political crises. An involvement of a human agent—for example the mediation by both Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma towards the unity government—is still believed to be a divine inspiration for peace and tranquility to prevail in Zimbabwe as the impasse between the ruling party and opposition tended to worsen the economic situation in the country. So, while the Judeans appealed to Yahweh for divine intervention in the situation of deprivation and exploitation, Zimbabweans

too believe that God (*Mwari* in Shona) always provides solutions to their individual or national socio-economic predicaments.

A *second* feature of similarity is the oppression of the returned Judeans by both the Persian authorities and the elite group of the Judean governors who were appointed by Persia. They both exploited and impoverished the already over-burdened communities; the Judean governors—their own Jewish brothers (Neh 5:1)—subjected the poor communities to oppression. The above biblical depiction provides some parallel to the socio-economic and political predicament during the Zimbabwean postindependence period. The starvation and poverty that bedeviled the Zimbabwean society during the period 1990 to 2008, was a result of the ZANU (PF)'s political intolerance. Even after the formation of the unity government on 13 March 2009 (Chimhanda 2009:105), oppressive tendencies still exist as ZANU (PF) (which is largely composed of former freedom fighters) continues to influence and dictate how the country should be governed. ZANU (PF) regards the opposition parties in the unity government (MDC-T and MDC-N) as puppet groupings formed to reverse the gains of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle (i e, the land reform). The opposition leadership (for example, Morgan Tsvangirai) is perceived to constitute people who do not have the credentials of the liberation struggle.

Third, just as the returned Judeans were assisted by the Persian government with financial and material resources to rebuild the temple and the walls of Jerusalem, so the Zimbabwean government has been assisted by the international community, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), individual countries, among others, to rebuild a country that had been ravaged by 16 years of conflict. Regional organs also played a key role in restoring peace and tranquility in Zimbabwe following a decade (1999 to 2008) of political instability in the country. For example, SADC, under the chair of South Africa, was influential in facilitating

the establishment of the unity government between the ruling party ZANU (PF) and the opposition parties MDC-T and MDC-N. Even after the formation of the unity government, the international community stands in solidarity with peace initiatives in Zimbabwe. However, full participation of the international community and individual countries in the Zimbabwean situation is being derailed by uncertainties about the political situation prior to or after the planned elections in the country.[70] Ndlovu (2012c:6) confirms that SADC rejected Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's plans to hold elections this year (2012).

Fourth, just as the Jewish governors had mortgaged and seized from poor communities fields (land), vineyards and "houses to get grain during the famine" (Neh 5:3), so the ZANU (PF) government has impoverished the larger population of the Zimbabwean society in the farming sector by confiscating farms belonging to white commercial farmers who produced food for the nation, exposing poor communities to starvation, most of whom lived and survived on providing farm labour in return for wages. Furthermore, although it was promised that commercial farms were seized to resettle landless people in Zimbabwe, many landless people have either been resettled on unproductive pieces of land or did not obtain land at all, while the ruling elite in ZANU (PF) shared among themselves many hectares of fertile land.

The clean up exercise code-named *Operation Murambatsvina* left many people without shelter during winter, rainfall and in the cold weather. Between May and July 2005 (Vambe and Chari 2007:9), people lost their houses when government embarked on *Operation Murambatsvina* which demolished shelters in the cities and rural areas. It was alleged that the

---

[70] ZANU (PF) has insisted that elections should be held this year (2013). However, SADC is not in favour of this proposal, since the Zimbabwean political environment is not yet conducive to conducting elections; see Fabricius (2012:8).

government embarked on the operation to clean up the cities. However, some critics have argued that the exercise was political as the ZANU (PF) went on a rampage to disperse the opposition support base the majority of whom was believed to be living in cities. The ZANU (PF) government promised to rebuild houses for affected residents, but this did not happen. The few who benefited from the rebuilding exercise were either the elite or those connected to the officials in government. While poor residents lost the only roofs they had above their heads, government officials (for example Minister Ignatius Chombo[71]) allocated themselves with more than one residential stand and/or house.

Although similarities between the postexilic Judean community and postindependence Zimbabwe exist, there are also differences between the two scenarios.

First, whereas the Judeans were oppressed by their "Jewish brothers" appointed as governors by Persia, the Zimbabwean society was being oppressed by officials within the ruling party of a democratically elected government.

Second, the Judean governors were "exacting usury from your countrymen" (Neh 5:7), and where usury could not be exacted, sons and daughters of a household were turned into slaves (5:5). In contrast, usury is not practised in Zimbabwe, although interest is charged by banks on money borrowed by well-to-do people. However, the poor will not be allowed to borrow money from banks which require collateral (such as houses and other desirable luxuries) as security which most poor people do not have. However, the elite in government abuse public facilities

---

[71] It was revealed that the Minister of Local Government Ignatius Chombo has interests in several farms, mines, hunting safari lodges in Chiredzi, Hwange, Magunje and Chirundu, as well as properties in South Africa. Local properties included 75 residential and commercial stands, 14 houses, 5 flats, and 15 vehicles. See Tsvangirai declares personal assets. s n 2012. s l 21 July. Online:

http://nehandaradio.com/2012/07/21/tsvangirai-declares-his-personal-assets/. Accessed 7 Aug 2012.

such as cars, fuel, and buildings, which were purchased using the tax-payer's money. This money could be put to better use by working towards assisting poverty-stricken communities and alleviating poverty among citizens.

However, it should not be accepted as a foregone conclusion that the formation of a government of national unity in Zimbabwe will culminate in peacefulness and successes in economic development. If the power-sharing government's efforts do not succeed, a resurgence of crisis will come about in Zimbabwe, and the cycle of poverty will recur. Citizens of Zimbabwe would not want to continue experiencing the cycle of economic fiasco that plummeted Zimbabwe's economy for over a decade of political denial. These concepts—and the need and suggestions for reconstruction—will be explored in detail in chapter 4.

6.1 Success of a *hermeneutics of appropriation* in this study

In my view, *hermeneutics of appropriation* has successfully been defined and explained in this chapter. In addition, an attempt was made to discuss a few examples of hermeneutics of appropriation. It was shown how various scholars have used similar methods to interpret the biblical text for both the African context and the modern postbiblical reader. It was demonstrated how hermeneutics of appropriation differs from other approaches of biblical interpretation already used in that hermeneutics of appropriation has used *themes* from the Judean postexilic narratives in order to appropriate these themes in the Zimbabwean postcolonial situation. While other approaches sought to "contextualise," "compare," or "Africanise" the biblical literature and its characters to the modern postbiblical world, *hermeneutics of appropriation* differed from such approaches and elected to appropriate *themes* (i e, politics, power, economy, land, starvation,

drought, charity, trade, bilateral relations, oppression, poverty, etc) in the Zimbabwean postcolonial situation in which such themes are also prevalent. The investigation was done in the realisation that the ancient biblical text was written for a particular audience and in a different context from the modern postbiblical world.

It was argued that the postexilic narratives depict the notion that the Judean restoration from Babylonian captivity culminated into total freedom in Judah. Yet, to the contrary, it was concluded that the Judeans were actually not free, as Yehud still remained a province of the Persian Empire. The Judean governors who were appointed by Persia were charged with keeping order and seeing that tribute was paid to the Persian authorities. Turning to the contemporary comparandum, Zimbabwe, it was critiqued that the postindependence Zimbabwean government has not lived up to its manifesto of the liberation struggle for a free and just society, as it has continued practising colonial ideologies that previously discriminated against the black people. It was discussed that the Zimbabwean oppression of its own people—coupled with starvation and political intolerance—forced a cross section of the population to live into extreme poverty and forced millions of others to flee into exile.

Chapter 4 below, employs *hermeneutics of appropriation* in the post-2008 in Zimbabwe. *Themes* within the Judean postexilic literature (e g, oppression, political power, economy, trade, starvation, drought, poverty, corruption, land, agriculture, food security, etc) constitute the bases for such an appropriation.

CHAPTER 4 RECONSTRUCTION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE POST-2008 ERA IN ZIMBABWE: NEHEMIAH'S INITIATIVES AS EXAMPLES FOR APPROPRIATION

1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 was an attempt to explain and discuss an approach called *hermeneutics of appropriation* employed in this discourse. Various theoretical examples were drawn and discussed in relation to *hermeneutics of appropriation*. The difference between hermeneutics of appropriation and other approaches has been noted. It was also shown how hermeneutics of appropriation can be articulated in appropriating *themes* within the Judean postexilic literature in a Zimbabwean postcolonial context.

The present chapter 4 picks up the discussion and explores it further by bringing together two "return narratives": (1) the Judean returnees from Babylonian exile who were led by Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, and (2) the Zimbabwean returnees from the diaspora after the formation of the government of national unity, who are now back in their home country that is busy trying to rebuild what was devastated by over a decade of economic meltdown.

First, we read of Nehemiah as an architect, in which he leads the Judean community in rebuilding the city and the walls (Neh 2). This chapter will appropriate Nehemiah's rebuilding projects as *theology of reconstruction* in the Zimbabwean context. Zimbabwe's economy and infrastructure crumbled as a result of the economic meltdown which lasted for almost a decade (1999–2008).

Second, in Nehemiah chapter 5:1-19, Nehemiah's initiatives—also described here as *social justice reforms*[72]—of challenging the Jewish governors to respond to the needs of the people and the provisions of their own resources to help the poor, will be used as examples to challenge the Zimbabwean leadership not to use its political position for personal gratification; instead they should strive towards alleviating poverty amongst communities. This *appropriation* is intended to chart the way forward towards Zimbabwe's economic development.

This chapter as a whole is "built-up" around the above themes. Borrowing the words of Blair (2008:15), this chapter attempts to explore how Zimbabwe after Mugabe should be rebuilt. In contrast to Blair's description of the present period after GNU as "after Mugabe," I choose to refer to this period as the "post-2008 era." In this study, "the post-2008 era," or "the government of national unity" will constantly be referred to.

It is important to note that *themes* that have been identified in the experiences of the postexilic Judean community as depicted by the postexlic literature have been discussed in detail in chapter 2. Although these themes will be highlighted in this chapter 4, particularly introduced at the beginning of every section, they serve as links when appropriating them in the Zimbabwean postindependence era (or post-GNU era). The following section will discuss themes that can be identified in the Zimbabwean recent history or postindependence era.

---

[72] For *social justice reform*, see North (1969:402-438). Nehemiah's social justice reforms shall be discussed in this chapter under "Nehemiah's social justice reforms." See section §9 below.

2 "THEMES" THAT CAN BE IDENTIFIED IN THE ZIMBABWEAN RECENT HISTORY

Zimbabwe attained political independence from Rhodesia in April 1980 amid equal measures of celebration for the triumph over the Rhodesian colonialism and expectation of the challenges that lay ahead (Saunders 2011:123). However, the postindependence Zimbabwean government did not live up to the expctations—as chronicled by Saunders above—of its formerly marginalised majority which it continued to oppress for almost a decade. Various *themes* emerge in the Zimbabwean postindependence discourses as both causes to and consequences of the political and socio-economic crises in Zimbabwe. Although these crises began to resurface towards the end of the 1990s, the socio-economic situation in Zimbabwe became unbearably worse in 2008. Collectively, these crises have become to be known as *Zimbabwean crisis*, a conspicuous experience that manifested in the late 1990s (Maposa, Sibanda and Makahamadze 2011:250). Maposa, Sibanda and Makahamadze's views are supported by Francisca Chimhanda and Aletha Dube who affirmed that during 2008, the people of Zimbabwe experienced unprecedented postelection violence exacerbated by socio-economic and political meltdown, along with experiences of gross violations of fundemental human rights (2011:268). In addition, Togarasei and Chitando (2011:210) have also thrown some light on the recent crises in Zimbabwe where they noted that "the recent Zimbabwean crisis, leading to the formation of a government of national unity in 2009, has had a deep impact on the society." Togarasei and Chitando further revealed that Zimbabwe was born from the barrel of the gun (2011:211). Togarasei and Chitando's observation can be augmented by the fact that the rhetoric which was popularised by the postcolonial government in order to sensitise the majority of Zimbabweans was that

thousands of Zimbabweans perished as a result of the war of liberation both within the country and in exile, and those who share in the running of the affairs of the postcolonial government should have credentials of the liberation struggle. It is strongly politicised that Zimbabwe was born out of "blood." This ideology has sunk deep in the minds of the so-called war veterans or excombatants, so much that opposition politics has somehow been excluded in contributing towards rebuilding a new Zimbabwe. In their exploration of "strife in the promised land,"[73] Togarasei and Chitando have discussed themes such as: political violence, racial tensions, Gukurahundi atrocities, electoral fraud, land crisis, Operation Murambatsvina and drought as causes of crises in Zimbabwe. The land question, for instance, was at the centre of controversy that influenced the decline of the economic stability in Zimbabwe. Moyo (2011:257) agrees with the above notion where he notes that at a time when foreign land grabbing was escalating in Africa, Zimbabwe had in 2000 embarked on the Fast Track Land Reform Programme. Equally informative is Wilbert Sadomba's contribution on the land question who observes that although land occupations in Zimbabwe have a long history dating to the last decade of the nineteenth century—when the country was colonised by the British—the most significant occupations were started in 1998 by veterans of the 1970s liberation war (2009:436).

When politics of a country is unstable, it negatively affects the socio-economic strata of human life. If that happens, all social amenities and businesses will collapse. These include: industry, commerce, informal business, education, health, road and railway networks, and tourism, amongst others. Talking of the collapse of education, Wermter (2009:1) concurs that the collapse of our schools brings with it a generation who lacks the capacity to work and who will

---

[73] Togarasei, Lovemore and Chitando, Ezra. "Be therefore reconciled to one another": the Church's role in justice, healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. Missionalia 39/3 (2011), 210-227.

remain depedent on hand-outs. The collapse of the key sectors in Zimbabwe has caused the exacerbation of poverty in the lives of communities. The collapse of the economy of Zimbabwe exposed communities to severe poverty and forced millions of others to live in diaspora. Poverty alleviation should be one of the main focuses by the political leadership of any democratically-elected government. As a result of the above crises, there was high unemployment, sky-rocketing prices of basic goods and critical shortages of food (Maposa, Sibanda and Makahamadze 2011:250). In response to this situation, Togarasei and Chitando have proposed peace, justice, reconciliation, the role of the church in national healing,[74] prosperity and equality as solutions to these crises (2011:211-214). The above themes constitute the bases of arguments explored in the entire theis.

It was shown in chapter 2 of this study how similar themes have dominated postexilic dscourses. Hence, this study appropriates *themes* within the Judean postexilic literature in a Zimbabwean context. In an attempt to appropriate Nehemiah's rebuilding projects and his social justice reforms in the Zimbabwean context, the following main *themes* will be explored: (1) The rebuilding project: Nehemiah and the community, (2) The role of the international community in rebuilding Zimbabwe, (3) Industry and commerce, (4) The informal business sector, (5) Political leadership, (6) Education and training, (7) Nehemiah's social justice reforms, (8) Towards poverty alleviation in Zimbabwe, (9) Health, (10) Roads and railway networks, (11) The constitution, (12) Tourism, (13) The diaspora community, (14) Reconciliation, and (15) The role of the church.

---

[74] The populace is agreed on the fact that national healing is a prerequisite in the restoration of economic and political sanity in Zimbabwe. for this view, see Manyonganise, M and Chirimuuta, C . "Christians' participation in politics in Zimbabwe: A privilege or right?" *Missionalia* 39/3 (2011), 300.

In discussing the above themes, this chapter will adopt a two-pronged approach. *First*, themes within the postexilic Judean literature are reintroduced at the beginning of every section heading. Here, the chapter is not introducing new ideas. The chapter brings into perspective biblical themes explored previously in chapter two,[75] in order to emphasise these themes for the reader's comprehension. *Second*, a brief discussion of these themes within the postexilic literaure is then followed by a detailed "appropriation" in the postindependence Zimbabwean context. It is from this chapter that the thesis earned its title[76] as it explores to the fullest the function of *hermeneutics of appropriation* in the entire discourse. In the next section, this chapter commences by discussing rebuilding projects by Nehemiah and the community in Yehud.

3   THE REBUILDING PROJECT: NEHEMIAH AND THE COMMUNITY IN YEHUD

In Nehemiah 2, we read about Nehemiah, the architect of the project of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, a project that commences in Nehemiah 3. Archaeologists such as Israel Finkelstein have accepted the description of the reconstruction of the wall as historical. Scholars are divided only about the reason for the fortifications (Finkelstein 2008:507). The biblical account relates that Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple, while Nehemiah committed himself to rebuilding the walls (cf Stern 2001:434). Nehemiah viewed the significance of the walls in surrounding the "holy city" and the temple to lie particularly in their *cultural value* which made

---

[75] Chapter 2 as a whole, as we have seen, was a discussion of the experiences of the postexilic Judean community as depicted in the postexilic literature. Under "concluding remarks" of chapter 2, some aspects of the appropriation process are explained.

[76] See the title of this thesis: *Appropriating Judean postexilic literature in a postcolonial discourse: A case for Zimbabwe*.

Nehemiah's face look so sad (Neh 2:2). We are reminded that Nehemiah's *fathers* (forefathers) were buried in the city (Neh 2:3, 5).

King Artaxerxes (465-424 BCE), on the other hand, saw the walls as a true fortification (1 Macc 13:52) and the authorisation of its rebuilding as a genuine "rearmament" (North 1969:434). Even though Artaxerxes' authorisation and aid in rebuilding the walls could have been political, he appears to have been a benevolent and compassionate person towards Nehemiah, as the biblical text depicts him, since he expresses Nehemiah's condition as "...This can be nothing but *sadness of heart*" (2:2). Nehemiah's duties at the palace could have been affected by his *sad* thoughts about the graves of his fathers which were unprotected as the walls lay in ruins. This passion to secure the bones of his fathers motivated Nehemiah to undertake a bigger programme of securing the entire city of Jerusalem, which the biblical text portrays as a reflection of pious religious conviction on the part of Nehemiah. In addition, when Nehemiah considered to rebuild the walls, he also thought of building his own house from the proceeds and building materials provided by the Persian king, and permission was granted (Neh 2:8). The king's aid such as timber to make beams for the gate and for the city wall, the citadel and Nehemiah's own residence (2:8) was an overwhelming support towards "infrastructural development" in Jerusalem.

Edelman (2005:206) reckons that the aid which Artaxerxes provided to Nehemiah towards the reconstruction of the walls had political connotations, as the walls were perceived to provide "protection for the civilian population and government officials who would man the fort and carry out the administration of the province." In addition, tax was expected from subject people. Whatever the case, with a prevailing sense of hope and high expectation, the Judeans felt a collective ownership of the city, as the walls protected the enclosure including the survivors

against their enemies (Ezr 9:9; cf Usue 2007:837). Engaging in rebuilding the walls (and the city) was a responsibility that the Judeans felt they had, both towards Yahweh and Jerusalem. Nehemiah's individual contributions need to be noted.

First, he negotiated with king Artaxerxes for building materials that were needed to rebuild the walls. Nehemiah, as a Jewish individual in a foreign land, was committed to plead with Artaxerxes I for materials and resources to reconstruct the city of Jerusalem and the walls and to help his people back home. It is possible that Nehemiah left for Judah to mobilise resources from among the Judeans back home. However, realising that poverty had the people in its grip, Nehemiah probably decided not to overburden the people who were already plagued by economic crises. His campaigns would not have succeeded if he had tried. But at least he managed to persuade them to contribute with their labour (Neh 2:18).

Second, Nehemiah was not just a spectator or a supervisor while others were doing the work. Leading by example, Nehemiah also joined hands and participated alongside the members of the community in the reconstruction project as depicted in the following passage:

> Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace."...They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work (Neh 2:17, 18).

Considering Zimbabze the man Nehemiah in the book of Nehemiah 2:17-18 might be a good example of what the principals in the joint government in Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean society at large—both those who remained in the land and the diaspora community—should do to reconstruct and develop their country which has been ruined by over a decade of economic

crises. The next section examines the role of the international community in rebuilding Zimbabwe.

4   THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN REBUILDING ZIMBABWE

When the Judeans were finally restored back to *Yehud* by Cyrus, the rebuilding exercise of the temple and walls began through Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, respectively. The biblical text explicitly mentions that both the temple and the walls of Jerusalem were built by aid and material support from the Persians (Ezr 1; Neh 2:8). In other words, *donor aid* by the international community contributed immensely towards rebuilding both the walls and the temple. In addition, we also read in the book of Isaiah that the rebuilding of the walls was done by people from outside, as it reads: "The sons of strangers shall build up thy walls and their kings shall minister unto thee" (Is 60:10). In Isaiah 60:6-7 and 13, the success of Judah is mentioned in connection with countries such as: Midian, Ephah, Sheba, Kedar, Nebajoth, and Lebanon, in which they bring to Judah camels, dromedaries, silver, gold, incense, rams, and more. Fir trees and pine trees from Lebanon would "beautify the place of my sanctuary" (Is 60:13). In other words, the infrastructural and economic developments in Judah largely derived from the surrounding nations, including her neighbours.

In an attempt to rebuild Zimbabwe, the unity government should re-examine the country's political and economic circumstances within the larger global village. Our modern postbiblical world is changing. Gills and Gray (2012:208) have expressed this view in clear terms by asserting that one world order is passing away, imploding, declining, while another, yet

inchoate, is inexorably emerging, making its forces felt across the social landscape of the world. This assertion might be referring to any context, yet, when other countries are facing up to new changes, Zimbabwe as an intricate part of the *new world order* needs to change also, because everyone is somehow influenced by the global change. Nations emerging from many years of economic crises, like Zimbabwe, may develop their economies in various ways, one of which is aid from the international community, more specifically from bodies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, and the Commonwealth, or those in the regional sphere, such as the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, or individual countries.

Previous political rhetoric such as: "Zimbabwe's solution must be *homegrown*" (Merafhe 2007) or Robert Mugabe's popular speech containing the famous phrase: "So Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe,"[77] implying that Zimbabwe has the capacity to resolve its own crises, should be forgotten and buried, if Zimbabwe's need to attract external investment is taken seriously. If such ideologies are nurtured and perpetuated, they have the potential of hampering economic development. While it could be true, to some extent, that a country may sustain itself through domestic and local productivity such as farming, it can be argued that a country also needs international interaction in terms of trade and bilateral relations. Moreover, not all *conflicts* are amenable to "insider-partial" mediation (Olson and Pearson 2002:421-446). External/or international intervention is needed in situations of civil unrest.

Unfortunately, internal conflicting statements among the principals in the unity government impacts on the delivery of justice and portrays a continued political crisis in

---

[77] 'Hands off Zimbabwe,' Mugabe tells Blair. s n 2002. *Staff and agencies* 2 Sept. Online: http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2002/sep/02/greenpolitics.Zimbabwenews. Accessed 7 June 2012.

Zimbabwe. For example, when the UN Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay visited Zimbabwe recently to assess the political atmosphere in the country, ZANU (PF) conveyed the impression that the political environment was stable. In contrast, *The Star* (2012:4) revealed that Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai was reported to have told Pillay that political violence was continuing despite denials by perpetrators who continue to target opposition supporters. Such a deception impacts on infrastructural and economic developments, if the UN envoy conveys it as such to the international forum on the current political environment in Zimbabwe. Following the same line of thought, one Simukai[78] (2011) has remarked that there has to be regional and international pressure on the regime in Zimbabwe towards peace and transformation. While I agree with Simukai's assessment above, I disagree with his second proposal for economic sanctions, because it will exacerbate poverty and starvation among ordinary people. *Kundai*[79] (2011) concurs that targeted sanctions have previously had a negative impact on the economy of Zimbabwe. *Kundai*, has further noted that factors like a stable economy, employment, investor friendliness, respect for the constitution, good governance and fostering tolerance are requisites for development in Zimbabwe.

In addition, sometimes there is need for the use of force for peace to prevail in a crisis-torn nation. Walzer (2002:27) suggests that humanitarian intervention should involve the use of force. Mills agrees that force is crucial, if success is to be achieved, especially in situations where massacres and ethnic cleansing are rampant. Tragically, some parts of Africa have indeed become *killing fields* (Mills 2002:3). Walzer (2002:19) further observes that these human disasters are caused by human beings, and so humans should be called upon to stop it. The

---

[78] My anonymous informant.

international community can similarly use force if the Zimbabwean government continues to perpetrate human rights violations. This could be a workable solution considering that the use of force[80] has worked in other humanitarian crises (e g, Iraq and Libya,[81] to name a few examples). In addition, leaders who perpetuate human rights violations should be tried at an international court of justice. This proposition comes out of clear conscience of avoiding to legitimise tyranny and dictatorship in our society. By so doing this will send a warning signal to government leaders–who themselves are not immune to the rule of law–so that they avoid committing human rights crimes, knowing that they are accountable to the people who elected them into positions of power as well as to the international communty. If Zimbabwe is to survive economically in the long run, there is need for a change of leadership, its policies and its political structure. Next, I discuss donor aid and its bearing on economic development in Zimbabwe.

4.1   Donor aid

It was highlighted above how the Judeans—through Ezra and Nehemiah—benefited from the resources donated by the Persian authorities (Ezr 1:1-4; Neh 2:1-8). Nehemiah also received timber from the "governors of the Trans-Euphrates with which to make beams for the gates..."

---

[80] By "force" this study is not inclined towards war as an option for liberation; however, the international community can use that force on any government that violates the dignity and human rights of citizens.

[81] My anonymous informants have confided with me on the "good" things that the late Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi was doing for his people. However, it is also highly contested by some that he was extremely sectarian and dictatorial for many Libyans. Democracy means that elections are held *freely* when they are due. Such should be the case with Zimbabwe. For Libyan polls, see Poll frees Libya from grip of Gaddafi's dictatorship. s n 2012. *The Star* 9 July, p4.

(Neh 2:7-8). This explains that even in our modern postbiblical societies—with special attention on Zimbabwe—aid and development are inextricable.

Like everywhere else, the plight of the poor in Zimbabwe is exacerbated by the fact that those in positions of leadership do little or nothing about the circumstances of poverty-stricken communities. For Zimbabwe to regain its economic stability, donor aid or humanitarian assistance cannot be excluded, and Zimbabwe's international relations must become a consideration, as Zimbabwe's interaction with other countries is of vital importance (Rugwiji 2012:148). However, Simpleman (2011) does not favour an emphasis on foreign aid, what he calls "Northern aid as part of the problem."[82] In my view, the unity government in Zimbabwe seriously needs bilateral interaction with the international community to develop its economy in rebuilding its infrastructure, such as roads, schools, hospitals, as well as through the creation of employment and the alleviation of poverty.

Putting into perspective the (South) African concept of *ubuntu*, which Desmond Tutu describes as: "A person is a person through other people" (Tutu 1999:35), Zimbabwe cannot survive as an island without interacting with other countries in the global village. Aid in a country emerging from both political and economic crises is crucial in view of rebuilding and developing the country's economy. This idea is supported by Lancaster (2007:12-18) who explains that *development* is clearly only one among various purposes of aid. However, it could be argued that in some instances donor aid is abused by the political leadership by being chanelled into political programmes other than the project for which it was designated, especially

---

[82] Unfortunately, anonymous informant does not go further to elaborate where the real problem is. However, it appears he was probably referring to how government decisions on donor aid are made, as well as donor beneficiaries becoming too "donor dependent."

if that aid has been received through a government department. To prevent such scenarios, it is necessary to set priorities. Where donor aid is earmarked for poor communities, a proper periodic accounting system should be put in place and statistics for beneficiaries of aid should be provided. In addition, as opposed to active political engagement, Menocal (2011:1732) has suggested that donors can also prove influential in helping to shape or alter the incentives for domestic leaders and elites in order to promote peace and more accountable state institutions.

Following up on the development aid initiatives is an examination of Zimbabwe's industry and trade within the broader structures of industry and commerce, which is discussed under the next heading.

5   INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE

From the biblical perspective, information about trade and commerce in postexilic Judah is scanty. Betlyon (1986:633) concludes that the history of Judea and Samaria in the late Persian Period is still largely unknown. How then did the postexilic community conduct trade and commercial activities on a daily basis? Although Betlyon's statement could be true to some extent, some inferences from the Bible itself as well as from archaeological discovery of coinage throw some light on trade and commercial activities during the postexilic period. We can also trace how communities conducted business during the pre-monarchic period (1200-1020 BCE) in which *gold* and *silver* were used as payments in business transactions. A few examples are worthy noting. In Genesis 23:15 we read that Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah from Ephron, the Hittite, to whom payment of 400 shekels was made. Secondly, in 1 Samuel 9:8 we read that when Saul went to look for his father's asses, his servant had "the fourth part of a

shekel of silver with him, which suggests that some payment was going to be made (cf Kanael 1963:39).

Coinage was the mode of exchange in business dealings in the Persian Empire. Since Judea formed part of the Persian Empire in the fifth century BCE, the first coins mentioned in the Bible are Persian ones, as recounted in Ezra 2:69: "According to their ability they gave to the treasury for this work sixty-one thousand darics of gold..." Coins bore the legend *Yehud*, the Aramaic name of the Province of Judea (Ezr 5:1, 8). Kanael (1963:41) claims that the inscription was formerly read "yahu" and taken as the name of the Lord. Sukenik (1934:178-184) was the first to suggest the reading *Yehud.*

We know that the biblical text constantly refers to the Trans-Euphrates (Ezr 4:10, 16; 5:6; 7:25; Neh 2:7, 9). This could have been one of the provinces that fell under the administration of the Persian Empire, governed by both Persian and Judean governors. *Yehud* benefited from these interactions as well, as it formed a part of the Fifth Satrapy, "The Satrapy Across-the-River, where 'the River' is the Euphrates" (Kanael 1963:40). The Persian Empire was perhaps the mightiest kingdom of the ancient world which spanned two centuries and stretched from the Indus Valley in the east to Egypt and parts of Greece in the west (Betlyon 2005:4). The governor of the Trans-Euphrates was Tattenai (Ezr 7:13). We also read in Nehemiah 13:16 that: "Men from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in *fish* and *all kinds of merchandise* and *selling* them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah." It is also narrated that when the rebuilding of the temple was about to begin, the elders of the Judeans "gave *money* to the masons and carpenters, and gave food and drink and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, that they would bring *cedar logs* by sea from Lebanon to Joppa, as authorised by Cyrus king of Persia" (Ezr 3:7). These are indications that there was a cross-cultural exchange of goods and services between

147

Judah and her neighbours. We can therefore infer that the bilateral interaction between and among these provinces under the administration of the Persian Empire advanced the economic stability of all the provinces within the empire. *Yehud* was one such province. We can compare *Yehud* as a province of the Persian Empire with Zimbabwe within the global village.

Zimbabwe and South Africa have always shared cultural, political and economic histories. The Zimbabwean economy depends on South Africa, not only for a substantial percentage of its trade, but more significantly as a conduit (Schwartz 2001:80). On the other hand, despite Zimbabwe's perilous economic situation, Zimbabwe is still considered an attractive foreign market for South African firms, due to the similarities in social and business cultures in South Africa and Zimbabwe, the close proximity of the Zimbabwean market to South African firms, and the central location of Zimbabwe in the Southern African region (Games 2006:83-84). Despite the economic challenges that have bedevilled the Zimbabwean economy from 2000-2008, Zimbabwe has remained one of the largest African markets for South African goods (Isa 2007). Some economic analysts, among them, Hazvina et al (2010:83) have expressed optimism that because Zimbabwe has been dubbed South Africa's most important trading partner in Africa, the strong economic ties between the two countries are poised to continue into the future. If indeed these strong economic ties continue to exist, it will work to the advantage of both economies, particularly Zimbabwe's economic development, given the fact that the country is emerging from ten years of economic meltdown. Mutambara (2010:30) reports that the volume of trade between the two countries has increased tremendously over the last decade due to severe pressure on Zimbabwe's industries, as economic and political instabilities persist in the country.

However, some have argued that South Africa's urgency to create inroads into the Zimbabwean market was motivated by South Africa's observation of a "ready market" for

148

economic exploitation before Westerners and potential investors would begin trekking into the Zimbabwean markets ahead of South Africa. This could be the backdrop of the argument by South Africa that Western countries should not determine the future of an African country (Hazvina et al 2010:94). This argument for *Africa determining its own future*, is not genuine (as we shall see when discussing the land issue below in which Zimbabwe was betrayed by some African leaders who pretended to be in solidarity with the land resettlement programme in Zimbabwe), because the same countries that advocate for this approach are busy doing serious exports and imports with the Western world. My assessment is supported by *Farai*[83] (2011) who argues that Zimbabwe's foreign policy is expedient and anti-West; its foreign trade is unbalanced as no exports take place. The same view is echoed by *Riveridge*[84] (2011) who opines that the people of Zimbabwe need to rally for support from the international community the same way as for example South Africa has done.

The above notion appears more economical than political, in contrast to Thabo Mbeki's statement that "African problems must be solved by Africans and South Africa's sensitivity to black opinion makes Zimbabwe depend on South Africa for political support" (Mbeki 2002). Mbeki's opinion was countered by Soko and Balchin (2009) who argued that due to the growing influence of the South African business sector in Zimbabwe, there is clear evidence to suggest that South African businesses have benefited from the commercial opportunities that have emerged from the political and economic crises in Zimbabwe. While it is correct to suppose that Zimbabwe needs South Africa in terms of trade, a reconsideration of Mills Shoko and Neil

---

[83] In addition, Farai argues for a stable government, the return of the diaspora community/economic migrants and foreign investment as requisites towards development in Zimbabwe.

[84] Pseudo Riveridge's mentioning of South Africa in the context of a discussion on Zimbabwe simply serves to indicate that any country engages in bilateral relations with countries of the world, whether in Africa or in Europe.

Balchin's position reflects a "holy alliance" between South Africa and Zimbabwe as presenting "a master and slave" scenario, in which the latter's political crisis is manipulated in order to underscore an economic agenda. Due to the political fiasco and the impact of targeted sanctions in Zimbabwe, South Africa has exploited the Zimbabwean retail industry, which has largely depended on South Africa for its survival owing to the scarcity of commodities in Zimbabwe (Hazvina et al 2010:95).

In my view, for business between South Africa and Zimbabwe to benefit both countries, there is need for seriousness on the part of the Zimbabwean leadership to create a politically enabling environment for an economic stability to prevail, which will support and sustain the industrial *life* of Zimbabwe. As long as the Zimbabwean indutsrial life remains crippled, without new companies willing to invest in the country, unemployment continues to soar, thereby further lowering income levels. This situation makes Zimbabweans vulnerable to poverty and potentially dependent on neighbours such as South Africa for survival.

Talking of industry, a few examples of the economic relationship between South Africa and Zimbabwe are worthy noting. It has been established that most shops in Zimbabwe obtain their goods from the South African market leading to a regular rush to Musina, the border town in the South African province of Limpopo (Mafu 2007). Mafu's observation can further be authenticated by the fact that most civil servants in Zimbabwe who for now are allowed a "free" visa to get into South Africa, the influx into Musina for goods makes it convenient because of its location near the border with Zimbabwe. The rush usually occurs during pay days; some travelers can traverse the two borders to and fro, back and forth, during weekends.

However, Mutambara (2010:45) believes that because Zimbabwe has a well diversified industrial base, the country could develop these industries further to overcome supply-sided

constraints and experience dynamic comparative advantages, *provided* the economic and political situation in Zimbabwe returns to normal, with improvements in infrastructure effected. Mutambara's analysis and expectations for improvement of Zimbabwe's industries depending on both *economic* and *political* conditions in Zimbabwe could be hampered by the very factors he has mentioned. These factors present the impediments that will negatively impact on economic developments in Zimbabwe. Some of these factors are highlighted below.

First, it has been revealed that the Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono was once noted saying: "Zimbabwe has an *unfavourable and difficult business environment* that hampers economic development" (Gono 2008:65). It is not certain whether by *unfavourable and difficult business environment* Gono referred to the ugly political situation perpetrated by the ZANU (PF) regime. It is unlikely that Gono would demonise the regime that he previously sustained to stay in power. One would reread Gono's sentiments as referring to his compatriots in the Ministry of Finance, especially the opposition MDC's Tendai Biti. An anonymous source has revealed that there are still unresolved issues between the two regarding Gono's reappointment as governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe which was highly contested by the MDC. It is reported that Gono, like Johannes Tomana—the Attorney General Chief appointed by President Mugabe despite opposition protest[85]—was also appointed as Reserve Bank Governor by ZANU (PF) in defiance of consultation with the other principals in the unity government.

Second, it was reported that mining Minister Obert Mpofu has blocked about R6 billion mining investment in Zimbabwe at a time when the country attempts to maneuver towards economic development. Thornycroft (2012b:8) has noted that Mpofu has put a rescue package

---

[85] Sibanda, T 2008. Zimbabwe: MDC decries appointment of Johannes Tomana as the Attorney-General. Online: http://allafrica.com/stories/200812180879.html. Accessed 30 June 2012.

for Zimbabwe's bankrupt iron and steel on the brink of collapse by refusing to hand over iron ore claims to Indian steel giant Essar. In the same vein, following up on Peta Thornycroft's analysis, Ndaba (2011:3) has revealed that the leading diamond company De Beers ceased operations in Zimbabwe chiefly because, among other speculations, the government had created an environment of uncertainty. This development takes place in the wake of the rising speculation that ZANU (PF)'s rhetoric is in support of the takeover of foreign-owned companies, which is already rattling the country's business community (Ndlovu 2011:17). The above assertion follows one of the usual "songs" by Saviour Kasukuwere, the Minister of Indigenisation, that licences for foreign-based chains will not be renewed to facilitate localisation of the business sector (Mdluli 2012:1). Similar waves of threatening rhetoric have also seen Impala Platinum being "forced" to surrender its shareholding in Mimosa, as it was alleged that the company should not have two investments in the country (Karombo 2012:16).

Third, one Ray Ndlovu has remarked that the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA), the power utility company in Zimbabwe, is said to be in a situation of serious debt. Government ministers are believed to be owing ZESA huge sums of money of unpaid debt. It is reported that Mozambique has threatened to stop power exports to Zimbabwe until a $90 million (about R700 million) debt is settled (Ndlovu 2012a:4). Ndlovu further reports that Edward Chindori-Chiniga, the chairperson of a parliamentary portfolio committee on mines and energy development, was critical of ZESA "disconnecting electricity from ordinary people who owe little money and can genuinely not afford to pay up, and leave the influential people" (2012a:4). Chindori-Chiniga's expression of discontent demonstrates that the Zimbabwean leadership has not reformed to face up to the challenges of economic development in the country.

Finally, it has also been revealed that the Post and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (Potraz) has been reluctant to award a licence to launch BlackBerry services in Zimbabwe (Ndlovu 2012b:2). All these inconsistencies occur when international investors are focusing on Zimbabwe for business ventures, such as the recent visit by institutional and private investors from Hong Kong, the USA, South Africa and Mauritius who gathered in Harare to hear about the developments and expectations in corporate Zimbabwe (Weavind 2012:5). These "contrasts" occur against the backdrop of attracting investment into the country.

Meanwhile, as long as the principals in the unity government continue their "in-house" squabbles in their quest to subdue one another so as to lobby for political solidarity and partisan support, economic development will not get off the ground in the country. If industry and trade are to improve in Zimbabwe, shrewd revolutionary behaviour has to end. Following below is a discussion on the informal business sector and its contribution to economic development in Zimbabwe.

6 THE INFORMAL BUSINESS SECTOR[86]

The biblical text depicts that the Jews were generally agrarian[87]; they survived on subsistence farming. Cartwright (2004:88) provides significant information about the excavation findings on the agricultural production practised in the ancient biblical lands. She says that Abu Hureyra,

---

[86] This sector is also known as *micro- and small-scale enterprise (MSE) sector*. See Daniels (2003:675).

[87] The *agrarian* sector or farming as a form of survival strategy will be discussed in detail under "Nehemiah's Social Justice Reforms" (see §9 below).

located in the valley of the Euphrates river, was founded by a group of hunter-gatherers whose descendants went on to develop farming around 11,000 years ago. Cartwright further observes that the site was excavated in 1972-73 by a multi-national team of archaeologists. It was discovered that two successive villages were uncovered. The inhabitants of the village hunted local animals, notably the Persian gazelle, and foraged vegetation. A more complex method of food production was practised by the people of the second village. They cultivated grain crops and kept cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs (Cartwright 2004:89). So, the Judeans would grow all kinds of crops, such as grain, fruit and vegetables, both for family or household consumption and for sale on their pieces of land. They also kept animals such as: cattle, goats, sheep, and pigs. Hence, the *outcry* by people of Nehemiah's time for losing their fields and vineyards from which they would get *grain* and *grapes* (Neh 5:3), for both family survival and selling to the market.

Zimbabweans are traditionally known for subsistence farming; crops of all kinds, grown on the basis of subsistence farming, or many households thrive and survive. Some of the surplus produce is at the same time sold to the market in order to purchase other household goods. Besides farming, other informal entrepreneurial activities include: selling second-hand clothes, shoe-repairing, hairdressing, breeding chickens, and cross-border trade. Despite the informal sector's contribution to the economy as a whole, the sector was critically faced with a sharp decline in recent years, following the clean-up exercise dubbed *Operation Murambatsvina* by the ZANU (PF) regime in 2005.

Informal sector businesses contribute immensely to national economic development, particularly in the African, Asian and Latin American continents (Meagher 1995:259). Therefore, commitment from the unity government is needed to reconsider investing in the informal sector. In developing countries, self-employed or informal sector workers work in

agriculture or in the urban informal sector (Jesse 1999:3). This suggests that *Operation Murambatsvina* which targeted particularly those in the urban informal sector might have intended to force people to continue their businesses in the agricultural sector. Most of the people in Zimbabwe sustain their lives from subsistence farming in any case.

Reasons for engaging in informal sector businesses vary, the major reason being unemployment and the need for economic survival. Daniels (2003:675) explains that limited opportunities in the formal sector and high unemployment rates in many African countries have led to the increased attention to the micro- and small-scale enterprise (MSE) sector. Daniels (1994) further notes that the MSE sector employs 22 percent on average of the adult population in five Southern African countries[88] compared to only 15 percent in the formal sector. This state of affairs places the informal enterprise sector in the driver's seat whereas governments and parastatals are battling to cope with economic challenges, especially in Zimbabwe.

For example, selling of second-hand clothes has become a significant trade for some, whereas for others it has become the means of acquiring clothing. Not many have economic power to buy clothes from established clothing shops such as Woolworths, Edgars, Harrisons, or Metro Trading, to name a few. Clothes sold by individuals on the streets or by vendors at informal markets have become the "wears" for the majority of Zimbabweans. Evidence from recent studies shows that small-scale enterprises contribute significantly to household incomes (Zuwarimwe and Kirsten 2010:18; cf McDade and Spring 2005:17-42).

At the height of the economic meltdown in 2008, food and other products were imported by individuals from neighbouring countries, such as South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique. Even after the formation of the unity government, the informal sector has remained the cog-

---

[88] The five Southern African countries include: Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

wheel to sustain economic developments in Zimbabwe, as individuals have continued to do everything in their power to *buy* and *sell* in order to provide for their families.

On the other hand, the ZANU (PF) government has adopted the "Look-East" policy, which seeks to embark on bilateral relations with countries such China and Malaysia, among others. This move followed the targeted sanctions by the West and the European Union on Mugabe and his cronies in ZANU (PF) for instigating both land invasions and political violence in Zimbabwe. The "Look-East" policy saw the increase in Chinese trade with Zimbabwe. Volumes of low-quality Chinese products, which Zimbabweans have termed *Zhingzhong* (Mambondiyani 2011)—also dubbed *Fonkong* in South Africa—have infiltrated the informal market, including flea markets. It is reported that Chinese investment in Africa, Zimbabwe in particular, is profit-driven. The Chinese have capitalised on both the liberalisation of the economy and the prevalence of poverty to exploit the locals by amassing the informal sector with poor products that the Chinese will not export to developed countries such as those in Europe. As a result, the local industrial production of the same goods and services has been impacted negatively as the market has been split between the majority poor and the minority elite. Low-quality Chinese products generally target the poor section of our population. However, despite all these developments involving various trade players in Zimbabwe, consumers are at liberty to purchase from diverse product sources, depending on their financial statuses. The above observations support my argument for the unity government to seriously reconsider the informal sector as an equally important and competitive economic player to steer the nation towards development. Having discussed the phenomenon of informal sector businesses in detail, I now turn to explore the role of the political leadership in rebuilding Zimbabwe.

7   POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Postexilic Judah was one of the provinces that fell under the Persian administration. This was made visible through, among other things, road networks that were built for easier travel, control and communication purposes. Persian roads and bridges linked every part of this vast empire and enabled communication (Briant 2002:357-87). Furthermore, Persian power was projected from wherever the Achaemenid king stationed troops and officials to gather taxes, administer infrastructure, and manage regional agricultural production (Betlyon 2005:9). Even so, the postexilic Judean community was directly "governed" by Judean governors, most of whom exploited them. Nehemiah 5:1 that reads: "Now men and their wives raised a great outcry against their Jewish brothers," was a result of this exploitation. For this reason, Yahweh had vowed that: "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth" (Is 60:1). The situation in *Yehud* resembles the Zimbabwean context in many respects.

Political instability has been the core of economic instability in Zimbabwe. However, *Riveridge*[89] (2011) has articulated that politics by its very nature is not a bad thing; what spoils the broth is "politics of the belly," that is, family and friends only. This *politics of the belly* as Riveridge puts it, has caused the "outcry" of the Zimbabwean society for over a decade. Zimbabweans yearn for economic and political liberties. Some necessary political reforms need to be implemented which should include the resignation of Robert Mugabe as state president, who for now has become the world's oldest leader (Godwin 2011:281). Robert Mugabe was born

---

[89] *Riveridge's* "politics of the belly" is a reality. If this "*politics of the belly*" is not addressed by those in positions of power, people who are suffering opt to go on the streets in demonstration against the leadership.

on 21 February 1924. In February 2012, he celebrated his 87th birthday. In my view, the *outcries* of the Zimbabwean people will not end any time soon as there is every indication that Mugabe "is not in a hurry to exit the centre stage of Zimbabwean politics" (*The Times* 22 Feb 2012).

In Africa, once a president, always a president – at least this is the intention and wish rife among political leaders. For example, President Mugabe of Zimbabwe has held office of the President for 32 years (i e, 1980–2012). The current Zimbabwe Constitution was adopted from the Lancaster Constitution, which was revised in 1987 when Robert Mugabe gave himself the title of "President." The Constitution of Zimbabwe provides the framework for the country's laws, which also states that the President can hold office for six years; it does not stipulate how many of these six-year terms can a President hold office. After the formation of the unity government in 2009, a process of crafting a new constitution was begun. The current draft constitution (Chapter 6, Section 6.8) stipulates that the President will hold office for only one term of five years. If this law is complied with, elections in Zimbabwe will be held every five years. However, in the past election rigging has been a major concern in Zimbabwe.

Moghalu (2008:32) has concurred with this state of affairs where he lamented that the electoral crises that gripped Kenya and Zimbabwe in 2008, fuelled by allegations of rigged elections and marked by ethnic and political violence, are symbols of the problems that confront democracy in Africa. These political crises, as Kingsley Moghalu describes them, *pushed* SADC leaders to opt for a power-sharing deal in Zimbabwe. However, it has been argued that the thought of someone as power-crazy as Mugabe sharing power with anyone else is laughable (*The Herald* 23 Dec 2008). This view suggests that Mugabe has the potential of defying the Global Political Agreement in order to stay on as president until he dies.

Governance is at stake here. I concur with Ile (2008:125) who declares that the *cry* for good governance among members of the Zimbabwean society during the tenure of office of the ZANU (PF) regime has not yielded any meaningful results yet. The quests for good governance and observance of human rights have been contentious issues over the last decade in Zimbabwe and civil society has certainly made an effort to engage government in order to demand these rights. However, despite their quests for good governance and observance of human rights, as Ile expresses it, the Zimbabwean society has not been successful in confronting the ruling elite to demand justice, because Robert Mugabe has instilled – through previous practices of torture[90] – a great amount of fear in order to scare people away from revolting against the government's corrupt policies and violations of human rights.

Meanwhile, although every citizen should play his/her part in developing Zimbabwe, the larger brunt of such a responsibility lies with the government. At the launch of the unity government in 2009, it was hoped that political and economic stability would prevail in Zimbabwe as the country got herself "ready to walk into the future" (Pienaar et al 2008:3). It cannot be disputed that the economy of Zimbabwe at independence in 1980 was competitive and could stand its ground in the region. Reconstruction and development initiatives were rapidly implemented.

During the early 1980s, the ZANU (PF) government had scored remarkable achievements in various sectors including education and training, which is discussed below.

---

[90] ZANU (PF) hawks darken the sky ahead of runoff. s n 2008. *Business Day* 7 Apr, p7.

8   EDUCATION AND TRAINING[91]

Education and training remains the most powerful tool that can emancipate societies and have the potential of changing lifestyles and livelihoods of people for the better. The biblical text portrays the study of the Torah as the means to enlightenment. Jewish education is thus focused upon the study and observance of the Torah (Drazin 1940:11). It is said that the study of the Torah has curative power (Freedman and Abrams 1999:4), as it inspires and guides through the power of words and letters. In affirming the importance of education in the biblical tradition, Brueggemannn (1982:13) refers to education as the cat and mouse game of discovering and finding it hidden (cf Pr 25:2-3).

In Exodus 35:35 we read that the Lord chose Bezalel son of Uri and Oholiab son of Ahisamach whom He filled "with *skill* to do all kinds of work as craftsmen, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers – all of them master craftsmen and designers." Interestingly, most artists find themselves teaching (Veith 1983:26). For example, Elisha had a school of prophets that he taught (2 Ki 2:5; 6:1-2); This is in agreement with Proverbs 22:6 that reads: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it," which stresses this further with the exhortation to: "Pay attention and listen to the *sayings of the wise*; apply your heart to what I *teach...*" (Pr 22:17). We read in Second Chronicles 17:7-9 that the Jewish elders "taught throughout Judah, taking with them the Book of the Law of the Lord; they went around to all the towns of Judah and taught the people." On the same note, we read that "Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Jerusalem" (Ezr 7:10).

---

[91] For this phrase, see Kanyenze et al (2011:296).

Some skills such as in architecture and building might have been learnt by the Judeans while in captivity in Babylonia. Drazin (1940:5) explains that because there was not enough land for the exiles to all get involved in farming, some had to seek other means of livelihood. Because of this many new industries came into existence giving rise to a group of specialised artisans and craftsmen.

According to the World Bank (2006; 2009) people's skills and capabilities, and investment in education and training, are critical for growth and development. Skills and training stimulate economic competitiveness, raise productivity and incomes, and play an important role in poverty reduction (Grubb and Ryan 1999). The education system in Zimbabwe used to be the envy of many and the pride of Africa. Richard Bourne acknowledges that "at independence in 1980, new schools were opened at the rate of almost eight a week and the rates of literacy rose sharply" (Bourne 2011:111). Fay Chung confirms this and reports that during this decade the number of primary schools rose from 1 800 to over 4 500, and the number of secondary schools increased from fewer than 200 to over 1 500 (Chung 2006:279). At least at that time the Zimbabwean leadership was on the right path towards recovery and sustenance of the hard-won independence. The same point was echoed by the *BBC* (22 June 2008) who declared that Zimbabwe has managed a literacy rate of about 90%, the highest in Africa.

Although many people still hold that Zimbabweans are rated among the highly educated people in the world, politics in Zimbabwe has undoubtedly plunged the education system into a ditch in the last decade, as confirmed by Levison[92] (2011). To date, the education system in Zimbabwe has deteriorated greatly, following the exodus of teachers as a result of both

---

[92] Pseudo Levison argues that several sectors, namely: education, employment, health and housing have not improved in Zimbabwe.

Mugabe's adverse political ideologies and the hyperinflationary economic climate in Zimbabwe. The Catholic Archbishop, Pius Ncube has decried the educational situation in the country, declaring, among other scathing indictments on Mugabe: "We had the best education in Africa and now our schools are closing" (Lamb 2007). The ugly political situation has hampered education development in Zimbabwe, as it compelled teachers and other professionals to relocate in the diaspora. It is against this background that organisations such as the Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) have had successes in campaigning for the right to free and affordable tertiary education (Ile 2008:125). In opposition to the above proposal, may I suggest that free education for now may not be sustainable, given the country's huge economic challenges, including debts such as what ZESA (which shall be discussed later on in this chapter) owes Mozambique. If Mozambique withdraws its supply of electricity power, the whole country may experience a blackout, ultimately affecting industry, commerce and education.

Unfortunately, many teachers have not returned from the diaspora even after the formation of the GNU. This is due to three factors: (1) the political environment is still unpredictable and volatile, (2) remuneration for civil servants, including teachers, is still unsustainable as compared to other countries, and (3) the condition of school buildings and classes is extremely bad, as these are in a dilapidated state. Coupled with this is the unavailability of apparatus, study and teaching materials. All these factors have contributed to the deterioration of the standard of education in Zimbabwe. This state of affairs has grossly affected the learners, who in addition to other impediments as explained above, are battling to pay school, college or university fees which have become unaffordable for many citizens, forcing a considerable number of learners to drop out of school due to economic challenges.

It is therefore imperative for the unity government to begin re-establishing favourable political conditions that will lure professionals and teachers back to the country to resume their teaching professions, so that learners are not deprived of their right to education. It is the right of every citizen to have access to education. The unity government needs to readjust salary scales so that teachers are remunerated sustainably. The Ministry of Education and Culture should embark on a rebuilding campaign towards repairing school buildings and classrooms. The donor community, especially the church, has been extremely helpful in this regard, given that most schools in Zimbabwe are mission-oriented, having been established by the church.

9   NEHEMIAH'S SOCIAL JUSTICE REFORMS

The book of Nehemiah posits that Judean men and their wives raised a great outcry against their Jewish brothers (Neh 5:1). Thus, the story in Nehemiah 5 reveals an internal crisis within the returned community itself (cf Usue 2007:841). The Bible expresses the view that the word of the oppressed is the "cry," and that Yahweh always responded when the *cry* of his people reached him (Ex 3:7-10; 6:5). The difference between the cry by this postexilic community and that of their ancestors in Egypt is that the Judeans protested by going to the streets to express their grievances against their Jewish leaders. As in Psalm 137 that depicts the exiles' "cry" for vengeance, the outcry in Nehemiah 5:1 is a protest for *justice* (Strawn 2009:348). The Judean postexilic community of "men and women and their children" (Neh 5:1) was exposed to extreme poverty due to various circumstances, especially that of lending money and charging interest, referred to by Nehemiah as *usury*. Nehemiah 5:1 expresses the view that the suffering did not spare the male folk, hence their "outcry" together with women as a result of the oppression.

However, the wives were involved in the protest against the Jewish leadership for the household economy and the welfare of their children (North 1969:436). What worsened the feelings of frustration and anger of this community is that their plight was exacerbated by their own Jewish governors, their own Jewish brothers (Neh 5:1).

Previously, the Judeans were under captivity in Babylonia and they were now restored back to Judah. But their situation had worsened. Apart from their own Judean governors who treated them ruthlessly, they were also required by the Persian authorities to pay taxes to the government. Was Isaiah not prophesying Yahweh's oracles of peace and justice after the exile (Is 14:7; 55:12; 57:19)? On the contrary, peace and tranquility were not to be found in *Yehud*. This postexilic community could no longer remain passive under the experiences of lack and deprivation. They decided to confront the "rulers" in an attempt to instill sanity, so that the governors would attend to the plight of the oppressed. So, the community of males and females appeared before the Jewish governors and appealed for food supplies. They said: "We and our sons and daughters are numerous; in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain" (Neh 5:2). The community comprised many people as expressed by the word *numerous*.[93] During the previous years when they could not pay tax due to lack of yield from the land because of drought, they ended up mortgaging their fields, vineyards and homes to pay tax and to get grain from the government (verse 3-4). Obviously the leadership and their families were not affected by the drought as expressed in verse 5; the ordinary folks, on the other hand, had to "subject their sons and daughters to slavery." So, these people had literally nothing left of their own, which made Nehemiah "very angry" (5:6). Their plea was not about demanding materials from

---

[93] The description "numerous" (Neh 5:2) does not depict a specified number; one does not get the implication of a "population explosion."

government to enrich themselves; they merely needed something to survive on. The question is: What social reforms did Nehemiah introduce to respond to the circumstances of usury, mortgage, tax, the land and starvation? The following six main social justice reforms taken by Nehemiah are important for discussion in view of the Zimbabwean context in order to alleviate poverty:

        (1) A public hearing to rebuke the leadership (5:7),

        (2) Usury was condemned (5:10),

        (3) The government of Zimbabwe and the abuse of tax money,

        (4) The return of personal property to the owner (5:11),

        (5) Nehemiah was not greedy to acquire land (Neh 5:16), and.

        (6) Nehemiah donated food to the poor each day (5:17-18).

9.1   A public hearing to rebuke the leadership

Nehemiah chose to listen to the concerns of "demonstrators" as these were serious, given that parents and their children went to the streets, *crying* loudly, as expressed by "…raised a great outcry" (5:1). After hearing about their hardships, Nehemiah became angry towards the Jewish governors for exploiting the people (5:6). Nehemiah's disapproval of the Jewish leadership's actions of usury and greed, led him to call for a public hearing with the leadership (5:7) in which he rebuked them for perpetuating a cycle of oppression with "our Jewish brothers" whom "we have bought back who were sold to the Gentiles." By "gentiles," Nehemiah was probably referring to the Babylonians/Persians. So, Nehemiah stood out as a prophetic voice to challenge the leadership. The *nobles* and *officials* accepted the challenge and agreed to act accordingly (5:12). How would the Zimbabwean unity government respond to one of their own who rises up

to challenge them for corruption? What can the Zimbabwean government do in order to uplift the lives of its poverty-stricken citizens?

First, many people are still struggling for survival in Zimbabwe. In the event that their suffering continues and the leadership does not address their food plight, what will they do? I wonder if the Zimbabwean people have yet appealed to the government for food assistance. The one thing Zimbabweans will not do is to go on the streets in protest against the leadership. I have mentioned elsewhere (Rugwiji 2012:160) that in view of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) it is illegal for people to form a group. The Zimbabwean government will not tolerate any means by the public, even conventional ones, to express their grievances; it is always interpreted as a rebellion and will be responded to harshly by the police. Alternatively, a few prominent individuals are whisked away by the law enforcement agencies, for being accused of inciting the masses to go to the streets in demonstration.

Second, while there is the need for at least someone from among the leaders to "reason" and to challenge others to follow his or her example, the Zimbabwean government has been extremely resistant to accept challenge. The act of a "Nehemiah" on his/her own will be viewed as an intentional effort to turn against the leadership; the response will be suspicion and mistrust; on the part of the government the reaction might even be fatal. However, there is always the need for someone to take the risk to stand like Nehemiah and rebuke the leadership for wrongdoing and oppressing the people, with full understanding that the risks for stepping both one's feet on such a "slippery surface" are high.

9.2   Usury was condemned

The *nobles* and *officials* were challenged to stop usury (Neh 5:10), a kind of corruption that forced the borrower to return a loan with huge interest. As Buckley (2000:2) observes, *usury* literary means "a bite" due to its painfulness to the debtor (Ex 22:25; Dt 23:19, 20), also known as "increase" in Leviticus 25:36-37. Both meanings carry the idea that the borrowers would repay more than what they had originally borrowed from the lender. The poverty-stricken Judeans would be left with nothing to give to their "wives and children" after repaying the loan plus interest. People had borrowed money "to pay the king's tax on our fields" (v 4). However, in both the books of Exodus and Leviticus the practice of lending money and charging interest was prohibited (Ex 22:25; Lv 25:36).

In Zimbabwe, many people are being "ripped off" due to penury; others borrow money from individual loaners, the act known as *chimbadzo* (same as *usury*), whereby the borrower will pay say 50% of the amount borrowed in interest. It does not matter whether the money is borrowed half-way before month-end. Sometimes people have formed a syndicate of lenders who have come together to "circulate" their money in a lending scam. Only one person in the group is actually known by *clients* as the lender. There is no law that protects both the lender and the borrower; the operation is conducted on the basis of mutual understanding. However, due to financial crises, the borrowers end up in a *borrowing culture*; soon after repaying the loan, they borrow again. The law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe do not seem to realise the seriousness of this "gambling," and there does not seem to exist a law that regulates this kind of "business." However, this kind of business is officially known to be run by banks also, although the interest rate by the bank is lower than that charged by privately-owned *lending houses*.

Turning once more to the Judean communities, they were "ripped off" through payment of tax. Ezra 4:20 says that "Jerusalem has had powerful kings ruling over the whole Trans-Euphrates, and taxes, tribute and duty were paid to them." However, when the temple-reconstruction project was completed and the temple dedicated, some Judean citizens were exempted from paying tax, tribute or duty, such as "priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of God" (Ezr 7:24). The above situation in Yehud, draws this discussion to explore on the subject of paying tax in Zimbabwe.

9.3   The government of Zimbabwe and the abuse of tax money

The Zimbabwean government—like many other governments in the world—largely survives on tax paid by businesses, employees and individual entrepreneurs, among other sources of revenue collection. While it is the duty of every citizen to pay tax in order for government to run national programmes or institutions that are established to protect citizens, such as the police, the army, prisons, and city councils, the grim reality is that the abuse of tax money is ever increasing. For example, we have seen previously how tax-payers' funds were used to fund the Zimbabwean soldiers in their involvement in the DR Congo's war. It was reported that Zimbabwe had told the IMF that its spending was $3 million a month, but the *Financial Times* quoted an internal memo which said $166 million had been spent on the conflict between January and June 2000 – more than $25 million a month.[94] Quite often, border posts also enrich the government or themselves

---

[94] Mugabe's costly Congo venture. s a. Online: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/611898.stm. Accessed 7 July 2012.

through scandalous activities involving travellers. Last but not least, there is the rampant abuse of government facilities, such as vehicles using government fuel.

Zimbabwe's Minister of Finance, Tendai Biti, should tighten the screws and refuse to authorise applications for funds that do not meet the requirements of national obligation. We have seen this work in South Africa, when in Parliament an MP for the Democratic Alliance, Clelland-Stokes (2002:12), protested against speculations that Thabo Mbeki was to receive a private jet when leaving office. According to Nick Clelland-Stokes: "The President's jet will cost the tax payer approximately R500m and then another R13,6m per year for maintenance. Its sheer vulgarity is appalling. SA needs jobs, houses and a comprehensive HIV/AIDS programme." Whether the deal was finalised and the jet procured or not remains unknown; however, it was brought to the attention of MPs and members of the public how naive it would appear to budget for such a luxury when the majority of South Africans is languishing in poverty.

Zimbabweans may need to follow Clelland-Stokes' example; there is need for such criticism against misappropriation of tax payers' funds among the elite holding high offices in the Zimbabwean government. The new government should put in place strategies that will prohibit abuse or misuse of tax payers' money, as well as expedite the use of revenue for enhancing the livelihood of its citizens.

9.4   The return of personal property to the owner

In Ezekiel 20:6 we read that God had sworn to give Israel's descendants "a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands". However, land and property issues were at stake with the postexilic Judeans. Their *fields*, *vineyards* and *homes* (Neh 5:3) were "invaded" and

seized by those in positions of power because they could not repay their loans, and their children were enslaved (5:5). The question is: What attachment did the Judeans have towards their fields, so much so that they went *crying* out onto the streets? I will answer the above question by examining the *land question* in Israel as depicted by the biblical text.

On the onset, the biblical text portrays the view that land, fields, and vineyards were central to the Israelites and their relationship with Yahweh. The Bible says if the Israelites humbled themselves, prayed, sought God and returned from their wicked ways, God would forgive them and heal their *land* (2 Chr 7:14), failure of which they would be uprooted from that *land* (2 Chr 7:20). The uprooting might be referring to the captivity in Babylonia. The Judeans were finally restored back to Judah where the "*land* enjoyed its Sabbath rests" (2 Chr 36:21). When they arrived in Judah, Ezra 9:11 warned the Judeans not to be "polluted by the corruption of the peoples of the *land*." We also read about vineyards and their significance in the biblical text. In 1 Kings 21 we read about the vineyard and the subsequent death of Naboth, the owner. Naboth's death followed his refusal to give his vineyard to Ahab saying: "The Lord forbids that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers" (21:3). The book of Proverbs provides of a noble wife who buys a *field* in order to plant a vineyard (Pr 31:16). This implies that during biblical times people would buy a piece of land in order to plant some crops. One would also plant a vineyard on a hill, which was perceived to be fertile (Is 5). Judah is appreciated by Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, as "a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards" (Is 36:17). Nehemiah 10:31 explains that on the Jewish calendar, every seventh year the Jews would not work the *land* and all debts would be cancelled. Nehemiah further expresses disappointment for seeing people working on the Sabbath by treading winepresses and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all kinds of loads (Neh 13:15). This

demonstrates that farm business was a daily activity in *Yehud*, undertaken even to the point of transgressing the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy.

Thus, the livelihood of the Jewish communities derived largely from subsistence farming; in the *fields* and *vineyards*, corn, fruit, grapes, and vegetables were grown. The prophet Joel (Jl 1:11) talks of farmers who are desperate: "Wail you vine growers; grieve for the wheat and the barley, because the harvest of the field is destroyed," an indication that the farmer's produce from the fields comprised barley, millet, wheat, wine, oil, and salt (Ezk 4:9; Ezr 6:9). Some of the vegetables included beans and cucumbers (Nm 11:5; Ezek 4:9), or melons, olives, figs, and grapes (Is1:8; 17:6; Jr 24:1-3; Neh 13:15). Isaiah 55:1 mentions buying "wine" and "milk," implying that among them there were vinedressers and goats breeders who would then sell to others wine and milk and receive "money."

The leaders in Nehemiah's time had vowed to bring to the storerooms in the temple foods such as: ground meal, grain, fruits of all trees, wine, oil and tithes of crops (Neh 10:37). Haggai's mentioning of "You have planted much, but have harvested little" (Hg 1:6), is also a clear indication that the Judeans were an agrarian community. Grain and wine also appear in the book of Zechariah, who writes that: "…*Grain* will make the young men thrive, and *new wine* the young women" (Zch 9:17). The Judeans also bred animals on the farms, from which they would bring sacrifices and tithes to Yahweh (Ps 50); Malachi writes that Yahweh was upset for people who were stealing by giving Yahweh sacrifices of animals that were blind, crippled, and disease-ridden (Ml 1:8). To a large extent, the Judeans survived on subsistence farming as indicated by terms such as "fields" and "vineyards" (Neh 5:3, 5) which were in turn taken as mortgages by those in power. Nehemiah might have been upset by the level of arrogance displayed by the leadership who refused to recognise the importance of people's collective production, both to the

nation and their own families. He demanded that the leaders return the *fields*, the *vineyards* and the *homes* to their original owners (5:11). To this end, Nehemiah also set up a task force which was headed by priests to make sure that "nobles and officials take an oath to do what they promised" (5:12). Perhaps the oath was a kind of written agreement to that effect. In response, the leaders committed themselves to repay back what they had taken from the poor of society. We also read that Nehemiah—although he was a governor and all government resources, including land, were at his disposal—did not acquire a piece of land (5:14), because the generality of the population did not have land. In view of Nehemiah's position with regards to land in Yehud, the unity government may need to seriously take into consideration the following approaches in order to resuscitate the agricultural sector.

9.4.1   Reviewing the land reform

Robert Mugabe became Prime Minister of independent Zimbabwe in April 1980. During the first few years into independence, Zimbabwe was a prosperous country by African standards, in part because of a large commercial farming sector run by white farmers, many of whom were Zimbabwean citizens (Howard-Hassmann 2010:890). Towards the end of the 1990s, land redistribution (particularly land invasion) has been at the centre of controversy in Zimbabwe, which caused the economic meltdown. Although there was need to resettle landless people in Zimbabwe, the concern which has been raised by many people has been the transfer of all land owned by white commercial farmers to the black people (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009:1140). Many people who were opposed to the manner in which the programme was executed, still believe that a decade that followed after the first phase of compulsorily acquiring land in 1999, plunged the

country into severe economic crisis. Zimbabwe is an agro-economy, and the bulk of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) derives largely from the production of crops such as: tobacco, maize, wheat, soya beans, potatoes and many others. In order to revert to those "golden years" of agricultral boom, there is need to review the land reform in Zimbabwe.

The review of the land reform is intended to find out where new farmers were settled to determine who owns what land. Government is currently at liberty to repossess commercial farms from individual Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, and managers of institutions, who lack both the expertise and the commitment to run a farming business; proof of the latter lies in the fact that, during the time such an occupant occupied the farm, no farming activities were taking place. Where no individuals are found to be capable of running a farm for commercial purposes, the government may "revolutionalise" its agricultural training institutions by training qualified individuals, starting with an intensive six-months training period, which will be reviewed after the first batch of graduates of farmers. This new "crop" of human resources will be appointed as managers on government-owned commercial farms, where a variety of crops, such as maize, soya beans, wheat, tobacco, vegetables, and citrus will be grown. Breeding of livestock will be one of the main activities. The model for funding will be the same as pointed out above. Commercial farmers who lost their farms during land invasions in Zimbabwe, will be given preference to acquire their original farms or another one of their choice.

9.4.2   Agriculture and economic development

The majority of Zimbabwe's rural communities, estimated at 65% of the total population (Nsingo and Kuye 2005:745), lives on subsistence farming. Subsistence farming is traditionally

known for providing livelihoods for many households. The main crops are: chibage (maize, from which they grind maize-meal that is used for making *sadza* – thick porridge), nzungu (groundnuts), nyimo (roundnuts), mbambaira (sweet potatoes), manhanga (pumpkins), muboora (pumpkin leaves, which are eaten with *sadza*), and nyemba (kind of beans, which can be boiled together with maize grains). Besides using some of their yields for household purposes, subsistence farmers also sell some of their surplus to the market in order to get money in return in order to buy other foodstuffs such as salt, bread, sugar, and vegetable oil. Those who live in city suburbs also use the under-utilised space in the backyard for cultivating crops (technically described as "peri-urban farming"), such as vegetables, maize or potatoes. However, this practice is being discouraged by city councils, because robbers might use such patches as hideouts.

Zimbabweans are also known for rearing or breeding animals, such as: cattle (from which they get fresh milk), goats, sheep, rabbits, pigs, and chickens. In times of crisis, they might sell some of the beasts to pay for school fees or roora (lobola), among other things. It follows that without land and animals such as cattle or goats one is rendered and considered poor. This provides some revelation why land continues to be critical in Zimbabwe.

The importance attached to agriculture in Zimbabwe is reflected by the government's commitment to establish the following four related ministries which are complimentary in character:

(1) Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development (formerly, Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development [Rukuni and Eicher 1994:20]),

(2) Ministry of Agriculture Parastatals,

(3) Ministry of State, Land Reform and Resettlement, and

(4) Ministry of Water Resources and Infrastructural Development.[95]

Commercial farming activities have always comprised a huge share in agricultural produce, both in terms of food production for domestic consumption as well as production for export which earns the country foreign currency. Mangena (2009:78) has observed that although the "colonizers" seized Zimbabwe's land somewhat fraudulently, the ZANU (PF) government, in an effort to correct these historical imbalances, should simply have followed just and democratic processes in the redistribution of the land rather than the use of force and violence against a relic of the white commercial farmers. Mangena further lamented that two wrongs do not make a right. The land invasions negatively impacted on agricultural productivity in Zimbabwe.

9.4.3   Negative impact of land invasions

Following the compulsory land acquisition in the late 1990s, agriculture has struggled to regain the status it enjoyed during the early 1980s. Many people have raised concerns that the controversial land reform exercise or land redistribution programme has contributed a great deal to the downturn of the Zimbabwean economy, as it has also resulted in a decline in tourism (Rugwiji 2012:148). As a result of the land invasions, the farming sector suffered numerous pitfalls. White commercial farmers who were dispossessed of their farms opted to move both their human and material resources to neighbouring countries such as Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa. Soares Nhaca, the governor of the central Mozambican province of Manica,

---

[95] See *Zimbabwe Government Internet Service Provider* (GISP). Online: http://www.gisp.gov.zw/. Accessed 1 July 2012.

confirmed that: "The Zimbabwean farmers with about 1000ha of land each have so far generated a total of 4118 new jobs" (*The Star* 14 Jan 2004). This brings into question the genuineness of the solidarity some African countries were believed to have towards Zimbabwe's land policy. This is further proved by Mkodzongi (2011:346) who likewise reports that some countries while outwardly supporting Zimbabwe's fast-track model were beneficiaries of "foreign direct investment" after offering evicted Zimbabwean commercial farmers incentives to invest in their respective countries.

The two sources above thus exposed the double standards and insincerity exhibited by African heads of state whom President Mugabe still held in high esteem as supporting the land reform in Zimbabwe. The fact that the same countries went ahead to welcome and accommodate white farmers who left the country after they were evicted from their farms in Zimbabwe explains that they have no agenda for land reform in their respective countries. Yet the same countries pretend to speak highly of Mugabe as a hero for evicting commercial farmers in Zimbabwe's controversial land reform.

Meanwhile, having lost commercial farming business, Zimbabwe was soon heading for a collision course—politics versus the economy—which resultantly destroyed the country's reputation of being the granary of Southern Africa (Nürnberger 2003:504). In addition, Moore (2005) aptly notes that once the "bread basket" of southern Africa and a major agricultural exporter, Zimbabwe now depends on food programmes and support from outside to feed its population.

9.5   Nehemiah was not greedy to acquire land (Neh 5:16).

Neither Nehemiah nor the members of his household had acquired land. It appears Nehemiah did lend money and grain (5:10: "I and my brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain"), but he did not exact usury (5:10). As one of the governors of the Persian Empire, Nehemiah had food allocated to him, as evidenced by his statement that "...neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor" (Neh 5:14). The previous governors were not only greedy and selfish by keeping the food they received from the government, they also demanded from the people "forty shekels of silver…in addition to food and wine" (5:15). This further worsened the plight of the communities. While all the other governors were busy scrambling for food and other material resources from the government at the expense of the poor, Nehemiah, in contrast, devoted himself to rebuilding the walls (5:16). In Nehemiah's statement that "we did not acquire land" (5:16), the "we" seems to refer to himself and his brothers. It appears that all other government officials had acquired land for themselves, while they also repossessed the land that belonged to the poor, which was the latter's only source of livelihood (5:5). Clearly, the more resources the governors had, the more their greed intensified. The following measures will resuscitate agricultural productivity in Zimbabwe.

9.5.1   Need for productive land usage

The Zimbabwean political leadership, community leaders and religious leaders should equally stop scrambling for land. As it is now, most leaders have more than one farm. The majority of the rural people who deserved land did not get it while the "elite" wrestled among themselves to

acquire land. Cabinet Ministers and City Council's officials have showered themselves with farms that they are not using. If the Zimbabwean government is serious about alleviating poverty among its citizens, land allocation priorities should be given to the landless people, most of whom continue to cultivate on overused and unproductive soils. The following measures may help the productive use of land in Zimbabwe.

9.5.2   Land allocation to graduates

Zimbabwean institutions of higher education have in recent years produced graduates in the field of agriculture. Instead of incorporating most of these graduates in academia and in other government departments as officers, there should be a promotion drive on the part of the Ministry of Agriculture to offer land for farming, so that they maximally make use of their skills to enhance the agricultural sector. This will also make the new farmers to become entrepreneurs or masters of their own enterprises.

9.5.3   Government should support farming

New farmers are naturally faced with financial and material constraints and lack of equipment to cultivate land. So even though they have the skills, these new farmers will still use the land for subsistence farming, using traditional methods such as hoes and household or family members as farm workers. Government should facilitate bank loans for salaries and farm inputs (i e, fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, etc) for new farmers. The loans would be payable at the end of the farming season.

9.5.4 Commercialising agriculture

By commercialising, I mean turning farms and government land into vibrant business entities that will generate income for the individual tenants and/or for the nation as a whole. This involves advertising government farms to be leased towards purchase. Farmers on lease agreements are to be supplied with inputs which they pay for at the end of the farming season. Loans in order to pay salaries for labour and cover costs for equipment during the farming season should be made available to these farmers. Proper contractual agreements should be entered into between the farmer and government/loaning institution so that failure to repay the loan is liable to prosecution. The following parastatals facilitate funds, material and human resources, as well as technical resources to guarantee the success of this ambitious project:

>   Agricultural Bank (AGRIBANK),
>
>   Agricultural Research and Extension (AREX),
>
>   Agricultural Rural Development Authority (ARDA),
>
>   Grain Marketing Board (GMB),
>
>   Pig Industry Board (PIB),
>
>   The Cold Storage Commission (CSC),
>
>   Tobacco Industry and Marketing Board (TIMB), and
>
>   Tobacco Research Board (TRB).[96]

---

[96] Ministry of Agriculture. s n. . Online: http://www.afdevinfo.com/htmlreports/ org/org_15123.html. Accessed 1 July 2012.

9.5.5 Need for dam construction

Zimbabwe has always been prone to drought leading to famine and starvation. Construction of dams across the country will serve as one of the remedies for this eventuality, alongside producing and storing abundance of food during years of plenty. The Ministry of Water Resources and Infrastructural Development will be tasked to begin constructing dams, while other government ministries and departments will see that research as well as technical and material supports are supplied.

9.5.6 Sinking of boreholes

Water has become a crisis in most parts of Zimbabwe, both rural and urban. The Zimbabwe National Water Authority (ZINWA) has been faced with a water challenge for over a decade. According to Raath (2008:6) most communities in Zimbabwe rely on borehole water as the government and city authorities have failed to provide adequate, tapped, clean water to residents. The construction and maintenance of water points, especially boreholes, is important in making water accessible to resource-poor communities who struggle daily to make a decent living. The continued water crisis in Zimbabwe makes the communities vulnerable to waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid and bilharzias, among others. NGOs such as Red Cross have embarked on a programme of sinking boreholes to salvage the water crisis in Zimbabwe's major cities. The Zimbabwean government should compliment efforts by NGOs by providing a stable political environment for NGOs to continue providing such social amenities.

If everyone in government is committed to playing their part, the agricultural sector will grow, making economic development in Zimbabwe a possibility. The same proposal was put forward by Pazvakavambwa (2011:176) who advanced the view that the effectiveness of the Ministry of Agriculture and its departments must be restored and strengthened in order to achieve success in formulating and managing the purpose of achieving food security at both national and household levels.

9.6   Nehemiah donated food to the hungry (Neh 5:17-18).

Nehemiah turned his homestead, or government house where he probably stayed, into a rendezvous where he fed "a hundred and fifty Jews and officials...as well as those who came to us from the surrounding nations" (5:17). The food that was prepared for him each day, Nehemiah gave to members of the community, included ox, sheep, and poultry. Every ten days Nehemiah had a ration of "an abundant supply of wine of all kinds" (5:18). This portrays Nehemiah as a leader committed to alleviating poverty in the community. However, Nehemiah was the opposite of the nobles and officials among the Judeans. Nehemiah invited members of the community to come and eat at his homestead (5:17). Nehemiah also gave people food every day with clear conscience, knowing that their "demands were heavy" (5:18). Now that Nehemiah had rebuked the nobles and officials to stop usury and to return the vineyards and homes to the rightful owners (the poor peasant farmers), and perhaps follow Nehemiah's example of providing food, the deprived farm communities would begin looking into the future with hope.

9.6.1   Works of charity in Zimbabwe

The leaders in the unity government—most of whom have more than enough—should also lead by example by donating food to needy people, instead of leaving the exercise to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Besides, those in power should not disrupt individuals or donor organisations that are committed to helping the poor. Mashayamombe (2009) has reported of ZANU (PF) war veterans and youth militias in the Manicaland Province who vowed to disturb distribution of food aid if NGOs do the exercise without ZANU (PF) members present. Such trends of prohibiting NGOs to distribute food have been a feature during the past few years of political uncertainty in Zimbabwe. SAPA-DPA (2008:5) has reported of President. Mugabe's government suspending the operation of Care International, the United States-based relief organisation, alleging involvement in "political activity." Such actions of disruptions are not only exacerbating starvation among communities, but are also detrimental to reversing the noble campaign of economic development and poverty reduction in the country.

On the other hand, food corruption involving government or party leadership should be condemned and culprits should be punished. For example, one incident of corruption involved the leadership in ZANU (PF). Muchemwa (2009) has revealed a ZANU (PF) controlled food taskforce plundering thousands of tonnes of mealie-meal and maize in Bulawayo at a time when residents are sleeping on empty stomachs. Muchemwa has further reported that the majority of Zimbabweans cannot afford to buy mealie-meal because they have restricted access to foreign currency, leaving the corrupt ZANU (PF) members to benefit at the expense of many.

However, examples of charity received from the region are also worthy mentioning. Our leadership ought to emulate what these others from outside are doing for the people of

Zimbabwe. Kanina Foss (2009:6) reports about Jenny Des-Fountain of South Africa who turned 50. She requested food donations for her birthday, and, subsequently, sent the abundance of food to starving people in Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile, the Zimbabwean leadership could follow the example of Nehemiah by paying school fees for learners who are struggling to pay fees due to poverty. Some of these learners derive from poor backgrounds, while others are orphans. There is no reason why government ministers should not "pool" their resources together and donate aid to needy members of society. One minister could just forego his one month's salary in order to donate the money or buy food to give to starving people. One will be surprised by the difference this gesture will make if only four ministers commit themselves that way in helping the poor. However, begger mentality should be discouraged as poverty-stricken communities develop a culture of always depending on aid. Communities should be urged to work hard as opposed to relying on well-wishers for their survival. Zimbabwe is on record for discouraging donor dependency, which is to be applauded. However, in contrast, the leadership in and of itself does not do anything to salvage the situation of starvation in the country.

10   TOWARDS POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, poverty has been a subject of concern among most communities. When Kunhiyop (2008:138) remarked: "From the tip of the horn of Africa to Namibia, poverty is pervasive...," his analysis on the prevalence of poverty on the continent also included Zimbabwe. Although the majority of Zimbabweans is generally known to be poor, the state of poverty has been

exacerbated by the dynamics of politics since 2000. The following section commences by defining *poverty* and explaining who the *poor* are.

10.1   What is *poverty* and who are the *poor*?

The above questions can be answered in various ways. Poverty can be defined as a pronounced deprivation of well-being related to lack of material income or consumption, low levels of education and help vulnerability, and exposure to risk, no opportunity to be heard and powerlessness (World Bank 2001:1). Poverty alleviation can be defined as successfully lessening deprivation of well-being (Sunderlin et al 2003:61-73; 2004:1). It follows that those who are poor are usually excluded from the mainstream political and socio-economic activities. Binza (2007:4) affirms that poverty and exclusion are multi-dimensional phenomena. The *causes* (to be discussed below) of poverty and exclusion are to be found in social, political, and economic factors. Parnell et al (2002:56) define the poor as those who are chronically hungry, perennially needy and pathetic, and have no or limited access to economic, educational, political and social resources. Following up on Parnell et al's sentiments, are Patel et al (2002:31) who concur that lack of economic, social, human, physical, and environmental assets by the poor is considered to have a link to vunerability and exposure to poverty and exclusion. Patel et al (2002:33) further lament that poverty and exclusion are associated with the pain that comes with too little or no food for some days; no shelter, no jobs, or long hours of work with little pay; emotional pain stemming from daily humiliations of dependency, and lack of power, no or limited access to information held by government and private financial authorities. Patel et al's articulation is followed up by Daphne (1998:28) who agrees that on average, the rural households spend more

than three to five hours a day fetching water, and another five to six hours are spent on collecting dung and wood to make fire. This category of the population is hit hard because the poorest of the poor reside in the rural peripheries of the country. The rural communities are faced with a number of barriers that prohibit them from increasing their economic productivity (Binza 2007:5). Having defined what poverty entails and explained the context of the poor of society, there is need to discuss some of the causes of poverty, particularly in Africa (including Zimbabwe). However, some of the causes of poverty in Africa are general, while others are specific (such as the case of Zimbabwe).

10.2   The causes of poverty in Africa

Causes of poverty in Africa in general, and in Zimbabwe in particular, are numerous. The deepening of poverty among communities in Africa is exacerbated by lack of economic growth. Due to limited space, this study will examine the following five factors which prohibit economic growth, consequently exposing the majority of people to extreme poverty: (1) geography of a country, (2) vandalism and plundering of natural resources, (3) land grabbing and invasions, (4) less tropical rains and drought, and (5) exclusion and inclusion.

10.2.1 Geography of a country

The geographical location of a country determines how efficient that country responds to bilateral and international business transactions. The following data is an attempt to give a brief

sketch (pictoral view) of Zimbabwe to show how the country's geographical location can affect its productivity:

Area	=total of 390 580 km^2 (water: 3 910 km^2 and land 386 670 km^2)
Climate	=tropical: rains from November to March
Location	=Southern Africa
Land boundaries	=border boundaries: Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique and Zambia
Coastline	=none: Zimbabwe is landlocked[97]
Terrain	=high plateau: high veld (mountaneous in the east)

In the context of the above data, I concur with Sachs and Warner (1996:339) who have clearly stated that a country's geography affects growth. Countries that are geographically isolated from world markets will face higher costs for all international activities, and may end up with lower division of labour and lower output per capita. Landlocked countries (e g, Zimbabwe), face very high costs of shipping, since they must pay road transport costs across at least one international boundary, in addition to sea freight costs. Given the location of Zimbabwe as stated by Sachs and Warner, the total costs of shipping and road transport will negatively affect the economic lives of the majority of Zimbabweans, most of whom reside in the rural areas where the same product will also add another transport cost to reach rural consumers. Even in times of political unrest or an economic embargo, a country like Zimbabwe and its people will have to struggle for survival. The economic sanctions slapped by the international community on the Zimbabwean leadership had a negative impact on the economy of the country as a whole due to the geographical location of the country.

---

[97] Zimbababwe is a landlocked country, surrounded by South Africa in the south, Mozambique in the east, and Namibia in the west, which are "blessed" and endowed with sea waters.

10.2.2 Vandalism and plundering of natural resouces

Sachs and Warner (1996:341) have noted that natural resource abundance is included as a determinant of growth. Natural resource exports are defined as the sum of exports of primary agriculture, fuel and minerals. Zimbabwe is an agro-economy. Commercial agriculture having been affected by the fast-track land reform programme (FTLRP), agricultural productivity had deteriorated drastically, which also affected exports of agricultural products (e g, tobacco, citrus, cotton, maize, wheat, soya beans, etc). Zimbabwe is not a fuel producing country. All fuel is imported from outside, whose shipping costs as explained above (see §10.2.1), also affect the pricing of goods and services in Zimbabwe. This has a negative impact on the consumer, especially the poor.

Minerals are abundant in Zimbabwe. Recently, diamond has emerged as money-spinning for individuals in Zimbabwe, while vandalism and plundering of this precious stone has claimed many lives (cf Powell and Thornycroft 2010:8; Moore 2012:6). Both the police, the army and ZANU (PF) political figures clashed with the local people in Marange (Mutare) in a desperate bid to secure this natural wealth. It has also been revealed that a Russian mining company has found diamond deposits on the farm confiscated from exiled MDC treasurer Roy Bennett (Nqindi 2012:6). It is further reported that ever since Bennett left the farm in 2004, diamonds were being looted by those in positions of power (Nqindi 2012:6).

This might be a tip of the iceberg that a lot more vandalism and looting of natural resources have occurred on a big scale at the expense of the economic stability of the entire nation and its people. The negative impact of corruption to economic growth is articulated by Mauro (1995:683) who has reiterated that corruption lowers private investment, thereby reducing

economic growth, even in subsamples of countries in which bureaucratic regulations are very cumbersome. Mauro goes on to say that the negative association between corruption and investment, as well as growth, is significant, both in a statistical and economic sense.

10.2.3 Land grabbing and invasions

Zimbabwe's economic collapse came about as a result of the government policy, particularly on the controversial land redistribution programme which was begun in the late 1990s, which influenced the land invasions. Blair (2008:15) has clearly articulated the negative impact of the invasions where he lamented that by seizing white-owned farms and handing them out to his cronies, without providing them with farming equipment, training or even title deeds, Mugabe wrecked commercial agriculture. Since the year 2000 when the invasions increased, the collapse of the agricultural sector has crippled Zimbabwe's economic life.

10.2.4 Less tropical rains and drought

According to Sachs and Warner (1996:339) Sub-Saharan Africa has a high proportion of the population in tropical climates. Casual observation suggests that countries located in the tropics tend to grow more slowly than countries in the more temperate climates. Sachs and Warner have further affirmed that African countries within the tropical climates, soils tend to be more fragile, rains less reliable, pests and veterinary diseases more prevalent, and natural disasters more frequently, all of which impede sustained agricultural growth in the tropics (1996:340).

Zimbabwe is one of the countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa within the tropical climates. Zimbabwe's rainfall pattern is unpredictable, as drought has sometimes devastated the country's agricultural productivity. A large part of Zimbabwe's population is demographically situated in the rural areas, some of them in rocky soils which are unable to cope up with the tropical heat when the rainfall is mild, resulting in drought. Many rural households are prone to poverty and starvation due to less rainfall. The agricultural sector as a whole suffers because of shortage of rainfall, resulting in less yield. Given that Zimbabwe is an agro-economy, these less tropical rains will adversley affect the whole economy of the country. Put all these factors together, they impact heavily on the poor. The *Executive Summary* (2009:3) confirms that the majority of Zimbabweans still reside in communal and original settlement areas and this is where most of the poor are found.

10.2.5 Exclusion and inclusion

The exclusion and inclusion ideologies previously practised by ZANU (PF) will impede economic development by the inclusive government. The systematic characterisation of fellow citizens or their personality as White, Black, Shona, Ndebele, war veterans, identity, or citizenship, tends to discriminate against other people and so include some to be and deliberately exclude others from being part of the programme in running the affairs of government. In the previous years, the ZANU (PF) government had employed the ideology of exclusion and inclusion in order to divide and rule as a strategy towards a government composed largely of either war veterans or Shona-dominated ruling elite, while the minorities and non-war veterans are excluded. Kriger (2003:208) has correctly advanced the same opinion that guerrilla veterans

and the ruling party worked closely together and manipulated each other when necessary, to gain and retain power and privilege in national institutions such as the army, the police and the civil service and also within the labour organisations.

In various cases, the minorities are entitled to some kind of rights, but excluded from others (Ariely 2011:241). Mlambo (2006:407) also articulates that these tactics were used time and again in the first decade of independence to advance the interests of the war veterans and the ruling party. Some sources say that the clean-up exercise of 2005 code-named Operation Murambatsvina was intended to push to rural areas city dwellers most of whom were alleged to be migrant workers who had come to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) from countries such as Malawi, Zambia, and Mozambique, who were perceived as not "indigenous" (*Zimbabwe Independent* 1 July 2005). According to ZANU (PF) terms, these categories of citizens (or non-citizens) had contributed to the formation of and voted for MDC. In addition, most of the farm workers were entangled in the political unrest involving white commercial farmers who were accused of forming and funding MDC (Rutherford 2011:501).

The following observations will clearly highlight ZANU (PF)'s policies of exclusion and inclusion.

First, the government is largely composed of people who were former freedom fighters, particularly those who belonged to the ruling party ZANU (PF). The majority of cabinet ministers were drawn predominently from those that actively participated in the liberation struggle under the ZANU (PF) ticket. Others, such as whites (who are unfortunately linked to the previous colonial rule) and members of the opposition, are perceived as *persona non grata.* The reason why Morgan Tsvangirai, amongst others, is excluded from the mainstream political

constituency according to ZANU (PF)'s terms is because he (Tsvangirai) cannot be traced to the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe's freedom.

Second, other people are excluded on the grounds of ethnicity. The majority of MPs in the ZANU (PF) government are predominantly Shona-speaking. Joshua Nkomo's Ndebele people are culturally alienated in the affairs of government. Although he was a well-known revolutionary alongside Mugabe, Nkomo was sidelined because he was leader of Ndebele-dominated rival party, namely PF-ZAPU.

Third, Zimbabwe's independence is believed to be the result of the divine intervention of the spirit mediums such as Nehanda, Kaguvi and Chaminuka. These spirit mediums are believed to have guided the freedom fighters in their struggle for liberation (popularly known as *Chimurenga*) against Ian Smith's colonial government. The Christian God is believed to function in the larger framework of local and cultural belief systems which involve spirit mediums who precisely act towards the emancipation of Africans. Most of the people linked to ZANU (PF)'s revolutionary ideology do not hold Christianity in high esteem although they believe in God ("Musikavanhu"/"Nyadenga"). In my view, this ideology arose from the sensitisation during the liberation struggle that Christianity was the colonial religion which the "white man" used to subjugate the Africans in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Those opposed to these religious values cannot constitute the ZANU (PF) government. Government officials adherent to other belief systems rarely hold influential positions. To a large extent, the present Zimbabwean government is characterised by these virtues. Having discussed the causes of poverty in Africa and in Zimbabwe, the following section now focuses on elucidating strategies towards alleviating poverty in Zimbabwe.

10.3   Strategies towards poverty alleviation in Zimbabwe

10.3.1 Agriculture

According to the *Executive Summary* (2009:3) an agriculture-led strategy provides the most direct way to address poverty, enhance employment and kick-start growth. This strategy entails reviewing the previous land reform. Farms in which no meaningful farming activities are taking place, the government should repossess these and allocate them to graduates from agricultural colleges who have the skills and the expertise to work on the land. Commercial farmers who lost their farms in the previous land invasions in Zimbabwe, will be allocated farms of the their choices for them to begin farming business again. Farmers will advertise for resumption of farming activities in the media for jobs, in order to attract previous farm workers who were displaced elsewhere, but would be willing to rejoin the agricultural sector for economic survival.

Productivity which derive from the agricultural sector has the potential of boosting the economy in Zimbabwe within a few years of the resumption of commercial farming activities. Crops such as maize, tobacco, soya beans, wheat, citrus, beans, cotton, sunflower, and many others, have traditionally provided exports from which Zimbabwe got foreign currency. The reserves of foodstuffs at the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and other storage facilities provided enough food for Zimbabweans. Many companies which closed down during the economic meltdown of the previous years, could not survive without raw materials drawn largely from agriculture.

10.3.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)

Zimbabwe is ranked among the lowest countries in the world for information technology, placed 132nd out of a total of 134 countries in 2009 (*Executive Summary* 2009:10). President Robert Mugabe had embarked on a national programme of donating computers in Zimbabwean schools. However, putting aside the so-called *campaign gimmick* on the part of President Mugabe, introduction of computers in schools was noble. The computer programme must be followed up as this will improve the knowledge of learners rather than waiting until they get to university or college to learn information and communication technology.

The modern world is being dictated by computer skills, and information technology streamlines learners to access new and well-researched ideas through computers. My opinion concurs with Bukaliya and Mubika (2011:415)'s observations that in a global village, technology has become the thing, as countries and organisations devise means of gaining competitive edge over others. ICT played a key role (and continues to do so) in linking businesses and individuals far apart in terms of geographical distance. Bukaliya and Mubika have also commented that, in pursuit of the objectives to ensure that the country advances its technology base, Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Education, has introduced the computer education in the school curriculum (2011:415). In addition to Bukaliya and Mubika's analyses, graduates who have learned information technology have a better chance of either getting employment or starting their own businesses involving computers. Internet cafes are examples of such businesses. Internet cafes thrive because everyone wants to access the "outside" world through the internet.

10.3.3 The return of human capital

During a decade of economic meltdown, Zimbabwe experienced a major human capital loss. Some migrants working as professionals overseas have gained valuable experience. The inclusive government will need to find ways to lure them back to share their skills and knowledge (*Executive Summary* 2009:11). Some of the migrants who are still living in diaspora have accumulated both wealth and skills, which will contribute immensely towards developing Zimbabwe. Poverty alleviation in Zimbabwe is a collective effort, the Zimbabwean migrants need to consider returning home to develop the country along with the rest of the people.

However, it has been learned that some of the migrants will not return soon as long as Robert Mugabe remains the influential principal in the unity government. My anonymous sources have expressed the notion that even though many migrants are prepared to return home, they have adopted a "wait-and-see" approach until after the proposed elections, scheduled for a date to be known yet in 2013. The majority of the diaspora community is opposed to Mugabe's rule, and it anticipates him losing in the forthcoming polls.

10.3.4 The neighbourhood effects

Both economic performance and political unrest of neighbouring countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have some effects on the economy of the other country within the region. I concur with Sachs and Warner (1996:350) who have stated that a country's growth depends also on the growth of the economies of neighbouring countries. Individual countries are held back not just by their own policies, but also by the policies of their neighbours as well. The above assertion by

Sachs and Warner could be correct when one takes into account South Africa and Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe's economic survival in the last decade, was primarily due to the support rendered by South Africa. Even after the formation of the inclusive government on 13 March 2009, Zimbabwe has been surviving through products, including foodstuffs, imported from South Africa. Within South Africa itself, the high shortage of jobs in the country can be attributed to thousands of migrants (the majority of them Zimbabweans), who are economically employed in South Africa, thereby competing with the natives for limited job opportunities.

One would therefore want to see the Zimbabwean economic growth be given high priority so that South Africa's own burden of "carrying Africa's crises" will be resolved to some extent.

10.3.5 The international community

Zimbabwe as a country has numerous commercial challenges due to its location of landlockedness (already explained previously). During the time when economic activities were halted by political power games in Zimbabwe, calls were made from a cross-section of society both within and outside Zimbabwe, for South Africa and Mozambique to close the borders with Zimbabwe. If this measure had succeeded and implemented by the countries concerned, it was going to agravate the suffering of the poor.

The international community not only needs to be called upon to play the role of arbitrator to resolve political conflicts, but also to salvage economic crises or coastal differences. According to Sachs and Warner (1996:351) it is a very high priority for landlocked countries (e

g, Zimbabwe[98]) to gain efficient low cost transport to coastal port facilities. The international community can be called upon to help ensure this, partly through infrastructure financing and partly through mediation of political conflicts that impede on the market access of landlocked countries. In such cases, the Zimbabwean government may appeal to the international community in order to effect or implement this mechanism.

On the other hand, a healthy labour force has a potential of improving productivity. The next section examines the issue of health in Zimbabwe.

11   HEALTH

In the ancient Near East, health was an important subject during biblical times. A few examples will shed some light. When Zechariah 11:16 says: "For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or *heal* the injured, or feed the *healthy*, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hoofs," he might have been referring to the leadership among the Judeans who did not care for the welfare of communities. The book of Malachi informs us of the healing that would prevail if the Judeans revered Yahweh. The statement: "But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with *healing* in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall" (Ml 4:2), portrays someone who has been *healed* who now leaps with joy because s/he is *released* from the bondage of illness. In the book of Second Chronicles, we read that Hezekiah prayed for the sick and Yahweh healed Israel (2 Chr 30:20). Many of the psalms are prayers to God for a return to

---

[98] Insertion is mine.

health (e g, Ps 6, 38, 102, 116). The beginning of Psalm 41 speaks of the spiritual and physical solace in time of trouble that comes from serving others (Freeman and Abrams 1999:3). Due to back pain someone complains that "there is no health in my body" (Ps 38:7), while others "have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong" (Ps 73:4). Isaiah 58:8 also gives hope to those who are sick when he says: "Then your light will break forth like dawn; and your *healing* will quickly appear."

During the decade preceding the formation of the unity government in 2009, the health delivery system deteriorated tremendously in Zimbabwe, which contrasts with the right of every citizen to be healthy. The plea for a healthy nation is expressed by Lucas and Timmer (2005) who articulate that workers who are healthy tend to be more productive over the course of longer lives. Kanyenze et al (2011:365) agree and note that "health is an important component of an adequate standard of living…. The right to health is critical to a person's life and well being, and is needed for the enjoyment of other rights." The observation by Kanyenze and others on the criticality of health in our society brings the Zimbabwean context to the fore where both political and economic conditions in recent years have plagued the health delivery system in the country. A nation of people who are deprived of the right to health also means an unhealthy workforce that will inevitably incapacitate a chain of economic development. Poverty in our society has become cause for concern as well as a basic element of vulnerability to HIV which causes AIDS. AIDS has robbed our nation of excellent human resources, influential people who could steer our nation towards development. The escalation of illness due to HIV related ailments continues to diminish our labour market, as personnel are constantly forced to stay away from the workplace. And it cuts both ways: due to economic challenges, illnesses including AIDS claim many lives, while at the same time the stagnating economy causes the health delivery system to collapse.

The unity government should create an enabling environment that will attract willing participants from the corporate world, both within and outside of the country to assist in establishing and reconstructing clinics, hospitals as well as ensuring the supply of medicine and drugs. In addition to the provision of anti-viral drugs to HIV positive patients, continuous HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns should be carried out by individuals, government departments and donor organisations. This follows the cautions correctly expressed by Menocal (2011:1729) that the state itself cannot necessarily play a leading role in providing basic social services, such as health, water and electricity; yet, at the very least, it must ensure and oversee their provision by other parties. I concur with Menocal by adding that the task of ensuring that health prevails in our nation should not be left as the government's sole responsibility. Society and the corporate community should play their roles as well. First, members of society, including hospital and clinic staff, should stop fueling corruption by abusing health facilities and infrastructure, such as ambulances, drugs, and medical equipment. Second, the corporate sector should also contribute by funding reconstruction materials for refurbishing existing health institutions and for the provision of medical supplies.

11.1   Improved health education

Lack of good quality infrastructure and equipment in the health department of health impedes service delivery. Health delivery mechanisms can be hampered by poor health facilities. Sachs and Warner (1996:363) have equally pointed out that health deficit in tropical Africa needs to be addressed through contributions of enhanced social policies, such as primary health and education for rural Africans. They went on to stress on the need for increased scientific efforts to

control or eradicate major tropical diseases such as malaria. In my view, health education on other diseases such as cholera and typhoid which impact on human health, should be given priority as well.

The movement of people, goods and services is critical for any business to thrive. For Zimbabwe to underscore remarkable economic achievements, the transport system and road networks need to be addressed. Discussion on road and railway networks is explored below.

12   ROAD AND RAILWAY NETWORKS

During ancient biblical times, road networks played a pivotal role in business, bilateral relations and communication. It was previously noted that Persian roads and bridges linked every part of this vast empire to enable communication (Briant 2002:357-87). Menashe Har-El (1981:8) articulates how the roads were built in Judea:

> The hills of Judea constitute a consolidated block rising to about 1,000 m above sea level. Their steep slopes often made road building difficult. Yet, from the beginning of Israelite occupation, through the first and second temple periods and during the Roman and Byzantine eras, more roads were built here than in any other part of the country, including other regions with greater populations.

Although these roads were built for religious purposes, as Menashe Har-EL presupposes, including the pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem, they were also used by soldiers on horses and in convoy, such as the following examples indicate: "Soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road" (Ezr 8:22); "Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me" (Neh

2:9). Many other biblical books mention the highways across Judea. For example, Numbers 21:22 talks of a "king's highway," and Isaiah 49:11 looks forward to the Judeans travelling in "highways," Lastly, Proverbs 8:2 talks of "paths meeting on high places." Har-EL (1981:12) further observes that curbstones were placed on either side of these roads to mark out the way, and to repair it after the winter rains which often washed the road away. This implies that after they built the roads, the Judeans would also repair them when they were damaged. This sets a very good example for the unity government in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe's roads are still in bad shape, four years after the unity government was formed in 2009. *Kohn*[99] (2011) concurs that roads are among Zimbabwe's neglected infrastructure, together with hospitals, schools and public facilities. Thornycroft (2011:4) also agrees that Zimbabwe's disintegrating national roads, which have seen few major repairs and little maintenance since they were built before independence, are set for a major R1,5 billion upgrade. It is reported that the loan for upgrading the roads was granted by the Development Bank of South Africa. Although it is correct to say that Zimbabwe's roads are in an extremely poor condition, Thornycroft's assertion that the roads "have received few major repairs and little maintenance since they were built before independence," needs to be challenged. Road construction is one of the major achievements undertaken by Robert Mugabe's government since independence in 1980, alongside other achievements such as building of schools, hospitals and clinics. But because this infrastructure lacked routine repairs and maintenance, the country's major roads have become dilapidated, which *Thompson*[100] (2011) prefers to describe as being in

---

[99] My informant, pseudo Kohn, was responding to my question on the state of roads, buildings, schools, hospitals and public facilities in Zimbabwe.

[100] Thompson is my pseudonymous informant.

the worst possible state. In addition, the carriageway/surface markings are no longer visible, putting the lives of motorists and other travellers at risk. It is also reported that most of Zimbabwe's rural roads have been narrowed by gullies and potholes as well as tall grass, due to a lack of routine maintenance as the regime did not have money (Rugwiji 2012:165).

Despite the loan given to the unity government to refurbish the country's roads, road construction is taking off relatively slowly, regardless of the fact that since the inception of the toll gates on Zimbabwe's roads, toll fees have been paid by motorists. Progress could be hampered by lack of equipment to carry out the project. In my view, negotiations with South Africa could be helpful and it might be good to have a South African company contracted to undertake the road project, given the fact that South African national roads are excellent.

The road network between South Africa and Zimbabwe has increased the volume of business between the two Southern African countries. Schwartz (2001:80) reports that key transport and telecommunications traffic passes through South Africa to Zimbabwe, indicating the extent to which the latter's economic infrastructure is built on the existence of close links with its powerful neighbour. Schwartz seems to glorify South Africa as the *provider*, ahead of Zimbabwe as the *benefactor*. Here I want to differ with Schwartz, the reason being that South Africa, too, continues to benefit a great deal from its close proximity to Zimbabwe.

On the other hand, the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) that owns trains and the rail transport system has abandoned most of its operations (Rugwiji 2012:166). Mbohwa (2008:25) confirms this and notes that besides being a landlocked country in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe has since 2000 been saddled with socio-economic and political challenges which have seen a decline in all economic indices, hence posing challenges to its railway system. The domestic train has traditionally provided an affordable means of transport for the majority of

Zimbabweans. Given the increase in commercial interaction between Zimbabwe and South Africa, particularly in the area of informal sector businesses, travel becomes an unavoidable necessity. Travel by train would be an option for many. It is not only the use of passenger trains that may be necessary in this regard; cargo trains may also provide cheap means of importing and exporting goods, thereby further boosting the economies of the two countries.

In the context of a long-term plan, South Africa and Zimbabwe may need to consider establishing rail lines that cross the two borders, such as what currently exists with passenger vehicles and airplanes. In Zimbabwe, only the elite and staff on company assignments can use airplanes[101] as a means of transport. Some cargo from Zimbabwe to another country or vice versa, is transported by air. However, most of travellers in Zimbabwe—either within or across the borders—use buses and private transport, including heavy trucks.

One would need to reflect on the critical role played by road and railway networks in connecting busnieses and countries, as well as providing means of transport for many poor people. A large number of the Zimbabwean population is poor. The majority of them use buses, heavy trucks, private/small cars and train to travel from one place/country to another for business or family attachments. Roads and railways link two or more countries together for comercial/business purposes. The reason why some believe that there were more Zimbabweans in South Africa than in other parts of the world, is the close proximity between the two southern African countries, in which most of the poor Zimbabweans used either buses/heavy trucks or trains to find food, jobs and income in South Africa. Migrants from far away and war-torn countries such as DRC would need to use a plane which only the elite can afford. In addition, most of the foodstuffs and other basic necessities are transported by road, making the price of

---

[101] This explains why this study refrains from discussing the use of airplanes for purposes of travel.

the commodities reasonably affordable to the majority poor. In addition, most of the informal traders (usually women) from Zimbabwe who trade in various wares to supplement their employment incomes or their partners' or as their only means of survival, use buses, trucks, private transport or train to traverse from one destination to another. The contribution of road and railway networks in the eradication of poverty amongst Zimbabweans is immense as people usually use roads and railways in conducting economic activities in order to survive. This makes the discussion on road and railway networks in Zimbabwe inevtitable.

Discussion on road and railway networks is followed by the contribution of the constitution in nation-building.

13   THE CONSTITUTION[102]

It was noted previously that Nehemiah was the man of action who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and introduced necessary administrative reforms. Ezra, on the other hand, succeeded in establishing the Torah from which he read and taught the returned community. Democracy is usually based on a constitution that guides its elected government and judiciary. However, the Bible is silent on the concept of *democracy* as we perceive of it today. What we find instead is

---

[102] Discusing the constitution here does not imply putting it on par with the biblical law. There is a distinction between a secular law and a biblical law. Even during ancient postexilic times, the Persian goverment had a law that adimistered the Empire, whereas on the religious side, the Judean postexilic community had its own law to administer religious, moral and ethical issues. However, Zimbabwe is also governed by a constitution. Zimbabwe still uses the Lancaster Constitution inherited from colonial Rhodesia, which was amended in 1987 when Robert Mugabe changed his title from Prime Minister to President. The constitution states that the Head of State would hold office for five years. However, there is no stipulation on the number of terms the President would be entitled to hold office. This could be the reason why Robert Mugabe has ruled Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2013. The current Draft Constitution stipulates that the President would not hold office for more than one five-year term.

theocracy, popularly defined as *the rule by a deity or by officials who are regarded as divinely guided*. Isaiah 11:1-9 depicts the kingly judge endowed with the spirit of Yahweh. Through the king, the operation of the Spirit was applied, not to a purely miraculous sphere, but rather involving political, social and ethical dimensions (Musendekwa 2011:6). It follows that the Judean leadership usually appealed to the divine in order to rule or "judge" the people. In Ezra 7:25, we read of king Artaxerxes who decreed that Ezra should "appoint *magistrates* and *judges* to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates – who know the laws of your God." This contrasts with our understanding of how government should conduct its business in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is a secular state, which means that the Bible remains a book for private and liturgical functions, whereas the country's constitution remains the "supreme law" that should guide the leadership. Sometimes the Bible as the "church constitution" is used in a court of law in Zimbabwe, when one is requested to make a vow that one "will tell only the truth." In some government functions also, the church is requested to read the Bible and pray, as many people are believed to be Christians. Yet, even though most Christian believers accept, at least to some extent, the authority of the Bible (Wisse 2000:473), the Bible cannot be used as a tool for the leadership to govern the people in the modern postbiblical world,[103] as that will exlude people of other faiths or religious beliefs. The constitution guides the state in making decisions on national matters in Zimbabwe. However, during the referendum, religious values and the

---

[103] Reference to this does not render the Bible of having no value for modern communities. It becomes very unjust and open to extreme criticism if the leadersip in government would use the Bible with the assession that: "it's a revelation from God" or with the notion that: "The Bible says." However, the Bible can become a relevant source that conveys some positive teachings for modern post-biblical societies, an endeavour which the present study has attempted to undertake by appropriating themes about the experiences of the Judean postexilic community.

freedom of the religious groupings to conduct their activities are also addressed for consideration in the country's constitution.

First and foremost, good governance is necessary for any government's economy to develop. Chalker (1991) is driven by the same thought when he writes that *democratic good governance* refers generally to a political regime based on the model of a liberal-democratic polity, which protects human and civil rights, combined with a competent, non-corrupt and accountable public administration. Similarly, Adrian Leftwich (1993:605) stresses that both "good governance and democracy" are not simply desirable but essential conditions for development in all societies.

Any legitimate government should be guided by a country's constitution. For any country to function efficiently and in a democratic manner there is need for a *people-driven* constitution.[104] Therefore, the making of a new constitution of Zimbabwe begins with a survey. The constitution survey features a variety of questions. Some questions directly address content usually included in a constitution, while others seek to survey opinions on issues of concern for Zimbabweans.[105] These concerns include, but are not limited to, the term of office and the retirement age of the president, and how heads of institutions are appointed. In Zimbabwe, appointments of the Reserve Bank governor, Attorney General, army commanders, the police commissioner, and the prisons chief, were protested against by the opposition, because they were not consulted in the process. For example, it has surfaced that Gideon Gono and Johannes Tomana were reappointed by President Mugabe as Reserve Bank Governor and Attorney

---

[105] Zimbabwe constitution: Take the survey. s n 2010. *The Zimbabwean* 6 Aug. Online:
htt://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=… Accessed 12 Jan 2011.

General, respectively, and thus remained in their positions, yet this was contrary to the MDC's demands (Barclay 2010:201). This incident illustrates the *weak* points of the current constitution. In terms of section 84 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, the President appoints judges (Madhuku 2006:346). This is why the Zimbabwean people have embarked on drafting a new constitution in an attempt to avoid such loopholes, among others.

The unity government needs to resolve the question of portfolios solely held by ZANU (PF) cronies, such as the Army, the Air Force, the Police and the Prisons while Mugabe still holds the presidency. At present the Army Commander is Constantine Chiwenga, the Police Commissioner is Augustine Chihuri, the Air Force is marshalled by Perence Shiri and the head of the Prisons is Paradzai Zimondi (Holland 2011:12). If these political imbalances are not addressed as they stand, the likelihood of a military government is ever present. If that happens, the Zimbabwean society will remember Mugabe in retrospect as a lesser evil, because political ideologies of a military rule cannot be guaranteed to be in any way *for* the people, a hypothesis to which *Levison*[106] (2011) subscribes. The above notion brings into perspective the view expressed by *Tamuka*[107] (2011) that both Mugabe and Tsvangirai should not be allowed to contest in the next elections but that a new dispensation is required. How this "new dispensation" will come about, is not made clear. Tamuka's observation raises some criticism in respect of democratic rule that demands elections to be *free* and *fair* on a "one-man-one-vote" basis.

It is equally important for SADC and the International Community to seriously reconsider their roles towards peace-building in Zimbabwe, especially in view of the possibility

---

[106] My anonymous informant.

[107] Tamuka's argument came as a response to the question of mechanisms which could be employed towards a democratically elected government in Zimbabwe. He is of the view that all current political leaders should not contest presidential elections.

of a military government, in order to avoid embarrassment in the case of a civil war. Recently, there were speculations that the Army, the Air Force, the Police, and the Prison chiefs had vowed that they will not recognize any head of state from outside the ZANU (PF) ranks. That automatically excludes Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC whom they say has not been involved in the liberation struggle for Zimbabwe's independence.

However, the United Nations General Assembly (1985) has declared that each member state should guarantee the independence of the judiciary through its constitution and national laws. Following up on the United Nations General Assembly's enforced requirement of a constitution by all the countries of the world, Zimbabwe is in the final stages of a nation-wide outreach programme canvassing public views on what the new Zimbabwean Constitution should look like. As agreed by Ile (2008:137), there is a need to encourage the cultivation of a culture of citizen participation and stakeholder involvement in public affairs through referenda and public forums that allow citizens to express their opinion in public, and lend support or offer opposition to relevant public issues through secret ballot. A truly people-driven constitution will dictate how citizens would like to see themselves being governed. *Madzimambo*[108] (2011) also acknowledges that there is a need for the crafting of a genuine democratic constitution. By *democratic* Madzimambo refers to the process of citizens participating through a referendum, in the process of which they are neither intimidated nor coerced but are provided space to register their contributions to the draft constitution. In response to the question about democracy in Zimbabwe, some scholars such as *Kingsley*[109] (2011) think that to some extent democracy will

---

[108] My pseudonymous source Madzimambo further holds that in order to prevent some flaws in the electoral system, there is need for independence in the judiciary system.

[109] Kingsley's statement does not imply that he is wishing that President Mugabe should die.

only occur when Mugabe dies, an idea which *Salem*[110] (2011) advances with the statement that to be italised "the first mechanism would be for Robert Mugabe to disappear from the scene…," meaning that it is high time he resigns and steps down. In my view, it is unlikely that he will do so any time soon.

When a country conducts and completes a referendum on the constitution in a democratic manner, the final document is owned by the people, because they have become the custodians of themselves and the stakeholders who both make the laws and abide by them. Yet the opposite has unfortunately been the case in Zimbabwe. Although citizens are believed to have contributed to the drafting of the constitution, in the final analysis the government has not been forthcoming in upholding and referring to the document when making decisions of national interest. The ongoing constitution-making process after the formation of the unity government is a response to a demand by citizens for a people-driven constitution to which, in the final analysis, the elected government must adhere.

On the other hand, Zimbabweans in the diaspora must also be allowed to vote. This proposal must be included in the new draft constitution. Previously, the diaspora community was not allowed to vote. This gave rise to speculations among many that the intensity of the economic crisis was deliberately created in order reduce the opposition support base, as those who went into diaspora were believed to be MDC supporters. Chamboko (2011) supports the above argument by stating that "… it is no longer a secret that one side of politics continues to view the Diaspora with suspicion and indignation. This side holds the perception that those who left Zimbabwe are against revolutionary policies, a bunch of sell-outs who ran to seek refuge in

---

[110] Salem has further argued that he (Mugabe) has a hold over powerful individuals and large sections of the population…and it seems that he did not (and still does not) even consider relinquishing power.

208

enemy territory." Although such a viewpoint could be correct in some respects, its flaws lie in the fact that the economic contributions of the diaspora community (see section §15 below) which sustained many families during food crises in Zimbabwe have neither been taken into account nor recognised in both the media and among Parliamentarians. The ongoing "exclusion" and "inclusion" in the draft constitution, in the final analysis, must consider allowing the right to vote for those in the diaspora who cannot physically present themselves in the country at the time of the elections.

Meanwhile, it is reported that due to bickering by some politicians, the constitution-making process has been derailed. This disturbance is believed to have been master-minded by the ZANU (PF) heavyweights (Thornycroft 2012a:6). It seems that a culture exists in ZANU (PF) which propagates that for any participation in the reconstruction of a postcolonial Zimbabwean identity to be legitimate, those involved should have traceable credentials of the liberation struggle (Kriger 2006). Papart (2008:187) writes that the nationalists perceived the war as "an opportunity for real men…who regarded violence as key to contesting [Rhodesian] state authority." The view that the final draft of the constitution will not reflect the agenda of the liberation struggle is rife among ZANU (PF) stalwarts, particularly when those outside the "liberation ring" are involved in the process, close to what Dorman (2003) implied when she spoke of "inclusion and exclusion." ZANU (PF) still holds that they should determine the future of Zimbabwe. The belief in this ideology on the part of ZANU (PF) is also noted by Lloyd (2007:704) who explains that a fascinating linguistic analysis of Morgan Tsvangirai's speech reveals a preference for inclusive, conciliatory language, contrasted with ZANU (PF)'s defensive culture of blame that frames inclusivity only in terms of liberation credentials, which Tsvangirai does not have. This ideology has been nurtured since the early 1980s, as evidenced by reports in

The Herald (26 Jan 1981, 6 Nov 1981, and 13 Nov 1981) when ZANU (PF) reminded churches, unions and other groups again and again in official speeches that inclusion was the route to peace and prosperity. In order to achieve the goal of *development* all groups had to work together in *unity* under the umbrella of the ruling party (quoted in Dorman 2003:846). This could be one of the reasons for causing disruptions to the current constitution-making process. Another major hindrance to progress has been lack of funding, which Masvingise (2011) confirms by revealing that the stalled constitution-making process was set to resume after the Constitution Parliamentary Select Committee (COPAC) secured unspecified funding from government and other international donors to proceed with the exercise.

Finally, the unity government should allow for transparency to prevail in the constitution-making process because its final completion must reflect a people-owned document. On the other hand, the unity government should see to it that office bearers, including ministers, should be learned people. I agree with Mangena (2009:82) who comments that as part of the process of coming up with a new "merit-based" democratic constitution, the inclusive government should lobby for support from the masses to enact a law that makes it mandatory for all aspiring politicians to have at least a university degree.

An educated society is an informed society, which will, among other contributions, support the preservation of our natural resources in order to promote tourism.

14   TOURISM

The biblical text shows people who used to travel from one border to another for purposes of trade or for paying a visit. A few examples will shed some light. Isaiah 63:1 speaks of people

coming from Edom, and others from Bozrah with dyed garments, a depiction that the natives of other countries used to visit Judah. We have already seen under "Road and Railway Networks" (see par 6.4 above) how the roads were constructed, so as to allow for easy access within and without the Persian Empire. For Isaiah 60:13 to say: "…to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious," was to portray the city of Jerusalem as a centre of pilgrimage. However, the people who visited Jerusalem, particularly the temple, did so for religious purposes. Haggai's rebuke when people ignored to reconstruct the temple ruins (Hg 1:4) was an indication that a once beautiful shrine had lost its splendour. Besides displacement due to the exile, numbers that visited the temple site had also dwindled drastically.

The number of tourists to Zimbabwe has decreased due to political instability and wrongdoings, in the end negatively affecting human development, defined by Ranis and Stewart (2000:49) as the improvement of the human condition so that people live longer, healthier and fuller lives. Meanwhile, a memorandum of understanding on tourism has been hammered out between South Africa and Zimbabwe, which Harare hopes will lead to 30 percent of foreign visitors to South Africa deciding to venture north of the Limpopo (Ginindza 2010:20). Given the fact that South Africa has become Zimbabwe's major economic partner,[111] the memorandum was intended to benefit both these Southern African countries in terms of tourist influx. This should be regarded as an opportunity which the unity government should grab in order to stimulate economic development in the country. Realising this potential is possible if people in positions of power are committed to having political stability prevail in the country.

---

[111] This was discussed under the subheading "Industry and Commerce" (see §5 above).

Zimbabwe is endowed with natural monuments to attract tourists, such as the Hwange Natural Parks, the Victoria Falls, Chinhoyi Caves, Great Zimbabwe Ruins, and the Matopo Hills, to name the major ones. During the early years into independence, tourists from all over the world showed a keen interest to visit these attractions. Besides the foreign currency tourism allowed to flow into the country, visitors were willing to market Zimbabwe when they returned home. Since the late 1990s, with political crises causing havoc in the country, tourism has been affected negatively as numbers of visits to Zimbabwe have been severely reduced.

The unity government's reconstruction and economic development initiatives should be serious about including Zimbabwe's fauna and flora. Many tourists' visits comprise watching Africa's "natural" wildlife, especially the Big Five that include the elephant and the rhino. Such tourist visits are continuously needed by any country for both its interaction with the "global village" and its economic sustenance. Unfortunately, poaching has negatively affected the tourism sector. A large part of the country's fauna and flora can now be categorised as endangered species due to illegal hunting and poaching, particularly in areas where new farmers have been resettled in the controversial land reform programme (Rugwiji 2012:210). The following example is a stark reminder that the fast-track land-reform programme has been tainted by poaching: Save Conservancy lost one wild dog, three cheetahs, two leopards, twelve zebras and four giraffes in snares in a single day (Dzingirai 2009:28).

Furthermore, *The Herald* (19 Sept 2000) reported that in 2000 alone, at the same conservancy, settlers slaughtered 634 impalas, 300 kudus and 187 warthogs. As new settlers become more and more irresponsible, vast areas of the veldt are set on fire, merely in order to catch rabbits or other small creatures such as mice; others kill a rhino or an elephant, not so much for its carcass, but simply for its horns (Rugwiji 2012:210). The Ministry of Environment

and Natural Resources (2010:x) has complained that wildfires have impacted negatively on grazing land for both domestic and wildlife species. Fires have also destroyed large tracts of commercial timber especially in the Eastern Highlands of the country.

In sum, these two phenomena—namely, politics and irresponsible behaviour by members of society towards fauna and flora—have collectively paralysed tourism. While the destruction that the wildfires have caused to the vegetation, wildlife, and humans, is deplorable, politics has been the main culprit in destroying tourism as a sector, as tourists feared risking their lives in a country where visitors were always associated with politics. Tourism contributes immemsely in poverty reduction in any given country. In Zimbabwe, tourism would create employment for citizens as the sector would require more labour to cope up with incrreasing numbers of tourists. However, when tourism is struck by a descrease of visitors it is highly likely that many people will lose their jobs. When this happens, "retrenched" people will join the increasing population of unemployed and hungry people. This will finally result in the exacerbation of poverty.

This situation presents a challenge to the unity government to put into motion policies that seek to promote political stability in order to revive tourist visits into the country. To a large extent, tourism has been affected negatively by the haphazard land reform in Zimbabwe. The following measures will help to sustain tourism as a sector, as well as improve the livelihoods of communities most of whom are living in poverty.

First, the issue of the environment comes onto the fore. All natural resources should be owned by government: landscape, waters, trees, mountains, minerals, and natural wonders (e g, Victoria Falls, Great Zimbabwe Ruins, Chinhoyi Caves, and many others). Rogers (2002:4) admits that roughly thirty-five percent of the average total income come from freely provided environmental goods. Rogers further notes that free natural resources, subsistence farming and

income from the sale of natural goods such as firewood and foodstuffs provide millions of Zimbabweans with their livelihoods. It is therefore important for government to identify and protect the environmental resources that sustain many of the Zimbabwean people.

Although firerwood for some has become big business, it must be accompanied by a well-coordinated programme of tree planting to replace the ones taken by those engaged in this business, in order to avoid further damage to the environment. We have seen similar initiatives like tree *planting days* at school or conference/workshop where a Government Minister of Environment or the President is honoured to educate communities on the importance of replacing trees in our society. One Mmimine has stated that tourism is widely regarded as an engine for economic development.[112] There is need for an intensive marketing drive to declare Zimbabwe a safe tourist destination. The Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (ZTA)'s function is to market Zimbabwe to the outside world. Regional and international offices were set up overseas for marketing tourism in Zimbabwe. However, the drive has been negatively affected by lack of both material and human resources due to financial constraints following the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe between 1999 and 2008. Mamimine has further suggested the following strategies as the way forward to enhance tourism and alleviate poverty in Zimbabwe:

(1) Tourism needs to come up with a Master Plan as soon as possible and it should be a product of a broad consultation of all stakeholders in the tourism industry,
(2) There is need for the ZTA to revamp its marketing strategies so that its mission can be realised,
(3) ZTA should boost domestic tourism and promote other neglected tourist destinations in the country. Government is obliged to adequately fund the Authority for it to succeed,

---

[112] Mamimine, s n. Environment and tourism in Zimbabwe since independence. . Online: http://www.ossrea.net/index.php?ption=com_contentandview=articleandid=348. Accessed 29 Jan 2013.

(4) There is need for a peaceful and transparent land reform programme that is carried out within the rule of law,

(5) Poverty alleviation is the solution to environmental conservation because alternative energy has to be affordable,

(6) Every citizen should abide by the laws of the country. Anyone breaking environmental laws, too, should be brought to book, and

(7) The Ministry of Environment and Tourim, should encourage non-consumptive forms of tourism that do not result in the destruction of the very attractions that draw tourists in the first place.

In addition to the above suggestions by Mamimine, in my view, the tourism sector must make effort to plough back to local communities for self-sustenance some of the proceeds which derive from visitors who come to the country, visiting places such as Victoria Falls, Great Zimbabwe, etc. The sector can also build schools and develop the area. It can further enhance the lives of communities by employing some of the young people from the area who have finished college or university education. A scholarship fund should be created within the tourism industry or its Ministry to assist students from poor families to go to university or college, after which they will be employed within the tourism industry in order to develop some of its programmes meant for enhancing livelihoods of local residents.

Under the following heading: *The diaspora community*, an attempt is made to articulate the role of Zimbabweans who remained in diaspora as well as those who returned from diaspora, to start investing in Zimbabwe in order to contribute towards the economic development of the country.

15   THE DIASPORA COMMUNITY

It was the postexilic community that spearheaded the reconstruction of both the temple and the walls in Jerusalem. Jeshua and Zerubbabel led in the building of the temple (Ezr 3); Ezra led in the teaching of the Torah (Ezr 7:6), while Nehemiah led the rebuilding of the walls (Neh 2:1–18). These diaspora individuals pleaded with people and authorities of hosting nations in exile to assist Judah with funds and materials for rebuilding the temple where they would teach their children, and for the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem in order to protect the city from attack. Local communities, most of whom were impoverished by the status quo in Judah, had neither the means nor the desire to rebuild the temple or the walls. When the prophet Haggai rebuked the Judeans for staying in their "panelled" homes while the *house* of the Lord was in ruins (Hg 1:14), he was probably referring to a specific group of returnees most of whom comprised the elite on the one hand, and the nobles, officials, priests and governors appointed by Persia on the other.

The diaspora[113] community refers to the Zimbabwean migrants who went to sojourn in other countries when the political environment that cracked the Zimbabwean economy forced them to leave and settle elsewhere. The diaspora community measures up to the national development in Zimbabwe like no other sector. While Zimbabweans are deeply disappointed by South Africa's seeming indifference to their *suffering* (of the diaspora community,[114] TR) and by

---

[113] Diaspora, in this study, is used to implicate any location away from home (i e, Zimbabwe). The term is not used here to show some parallel to the Jewish exile.

[114] It is perceived by some scholars such as my anonymous informant Standard (2011) that the "suffering" of foreigners at the hands of some South Africans (xenophobia) was a result of three main problems: (1) communities on the margins with scarce resources which struggled for survival; (2) business and employment areas where there is

the rough treatment endured by many migrants and refugees in South Africa (Lipton 2009:341), material and financial gains deriving from the Zimbabwean migrants living in South Africa cannot be ignored. While it is argued by scholars such as Sandu (2006), amongst others, that the AIDS pandemic, among other factors, has negatively affected production and productivity in Zimbabwe, the brain drain has also impacted negatively on economic development in the country.

It has to be noted that not all diaspora communities have the same ideology for staying away from home. Diverse ideologies impact how these communities respond to political and economic developments in Zimbabwe. This diversity in ideologies has a bearing on the future of Zimbabwe. This diversity was acknowledged by Kofi Annan who echoed that: "Many of your societies are already diverse. But, all of your societies – and many others around the world too – will become more diverse in the decades to come. This is the inevitable result of the movement of people across international borders."[115] James Muzondidya concurs with Annan and rightly observes that:

> The effectiveness of the Zimbabwean Diaspora in influencing political and economic changes in Zimbabwe has also been constrained by the divisions within the disparate diaspora groups made up of different generations and classes driven into exile by different motivations (Muzondidya 2011:136).

saturation; and (3) criminal activities perceived to be or actually perpetrated by foreign nationals. The same idea is advanced by Kingsley who, however, points out that many employers prefer Zimbabwean nationals because they are regarded as honest hard workers who won't come into conflict with the law. Kingsley adds that "this aggravates the situation."

[115] Anani, K s a. . Online: http://www.migrationeducation.org/countryprofiles.0.html. Accessed 2 July 2012.

In agreement with Muzondidya's analysis, allow me to add that in daily life one comes face-to-face with Zimbabweans who have political and economic ideologies for staying in diaspora, while other Zimbabweans have none of these, but are simply looking for job and/or business opportunities, taking advantage of the confusion created by the political situation and the economic meltdown in the country. Such "economic" diasporans are divided according to age groups: the young tend to regard life in diaspora as an opportunity to pursue a career and use it later back home; the middle-aged and the old are there to work and provide for their families back home. In view of the diasporans providing for their families back home, Bloch (2008:302) affirms that "Zimbabweans have strong social and economic ties to Zimbabwe and the inter-connectedness of these ties is evidenced by regular contact with family members in Zimbabwe and the sending of regular monetary remittances." I concur her view because from my own experience and observation I detect that Zimbabweans have always longed for home life, even to the point of "home-sickness," and are anxious not to lose contact with their loved ones back home.

There is also a different group, composed of those who ran away and have sought political asylum abroad due to persecution by the ZANU (PF) regime. Among this group divisions also exist according to diverse political ideologies. Some have settled in the diaspora while still believing that Mugabe is right. These diasporans continue to hold the view that sanctions and the land question were used by the Western bloc through a puppet opposition party (MDC) in order to create a scenario of scarcity and starvation so that people would turn against their leader. My anonymous informant has revealed that the majority of South Africans are in solidarity with this group, who, in fact, regard Mugabe as a hero in view of the yet unresolved land question in South Africa. Hence, when one discusses political disturbances in Zimbabwe,

and one lays the blame on the part of the ZANU (PF) government, one might be surprised to find a lack of interest and sympathy on the part of people of South Africa and of other nationalities engaged in the debate.

Another group of diasporans are those individuals who had already moved into diaspora before the political turmoil and the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe started. Save for some visits they made during the time when things had become tough in the country, these have become part of the hosting nation's culture, some of whom have even acquired citizenship status of those countries. This group is described by Muzondidya (2011:137) as those who "are removed from the day-to-day struggles at home and sometimes express views that are out of touch with the political realities in Zimbabwe." When one talks to such a group, one is talking to "insider-outsiders" whose interests in what is going on in Zimbabwe have since shifted, as they see themselves detached from that country. Some have vowed never to return to Zimbabwe, except for visiting.

So when we discuss the Zimbabwean diasporans, we are looking at diverse migrant communities. However, the diaspora community as a whole can contribute meaningfully to Zimbabwe's economic development in one way or another. Two examples, among many other contributions, are worthy discussing.

First, *external financial and material support from the diaspora*. Both the ruling party, ZANU (PF) and the opposition (MDC), have supporters outside of Zimbabwe who have supported their respective parties in a number of ways. The belief that only members of the MDC escaped to settle in the diaspora does not prove the realities on the ground. Pasura (2009) observes that the most important roles played by individuals living in diaspora, regardless of political affiliation, have been fundraising and mobilising human and ideological support. This

entails that these communities have represented their political parties in their diverse political ideologies, whether *right* or *wrong*. Given the fact that political parties in Zimbabwe were struggling economically during the period prior to the signing of a joint government in 2008, the diaspora communities emerged as their source for material support and springboard for fundraising. This notion is also confirmed by Muzondidya (2011:113) who remarks that raising funds for political parties from local sources has been a huge challenge in the deteriorating economic climate in Zimbabwe, and both the MDC and ZANU (PF) have had to rely on Zimbabweans outside of the country both for direct funding and in order to access donors from outside. It could further be argued that even in our present era, after the formation of the GNU, some political organisations are still dependent on assistance from these diaspora communities for their maintenance.

Second, *career advancement in diaspora*. Due to competition in the job market in the destinations where Zimbabweans have gone to settle, many have had to undergo further training in various fields of interest in order to have an edge in the job market. Given that Zimbabweans are determined to achieve success, knowing that all odds are against them away from home, skills' training has become a means to penetrate the job market and seize employment opportunities. Besides, institutions of higher education around the world—as opposed to colleges and universities in Zimbabwe—are still offering scholarships, grants and bursaries to learners (even foreigners) to study for a diploma or degree of their choice. Most Zimbabwean migrants are in possession of at least five "O" levels, which entitles them to enrol for tertiary courses in various disciplines. Many Zimbabweans have benefited from scholarships and bursaries offered by various universities in South Africa. For example, the University of South Africa has accepted

applications for bursaries and offered places to foreign nationals to pursue their Master's and Doctorate studies. This research is a result of the bursary offered at UNISA.[116]

In addition, international organisations offer educational scholarships. For example, the Academic Refugee Initiative Fund (DAVI) in partnership with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR),[117] through their scholarships for tertiary education for refugees, has assisted people with refugee status to enrol for diplomas or degrees, by paying fees and other necessities. Many migrant Zimbabweans, have taken advantage of such facilities. When all these individuals return from diaspora (which they should), their skills will greatly contribute to both the educational and economic development of Zimbabwe.

However, the diaspora community cannot commit themselves to returning home in order to contribute to the country's development with their skills or to embark on investment back home, if the future of their country is uncertain, especially as long as political issues remain unresolved. This calls for an atmosphere of calmness and a spirit of reconciliation.

16   RECONCILIATION

Postexilic biblical books are replete with teachings on reconciliation. Malachi 1:5 idealises a peaceful life in *Yehud* and says: "My covenant was with him of life and *peace…*" Malachi 2:5 also talks about a covenant of life and *peace*. Chapter 2:16 mentions God hating a man for "covering himself with *violence* as well as with his garment." Chapter 4:5 talks of Yahweh

---

[116] The present Doctorate project is a result of the bursary offered by UNISA's Financial Aid Bureau (FAB).

[117] DAVI and UNHCR 2012. Davi Scholarship Programme. Online: http://www.nwu.ac.za/webfm_send/56280. Accessed 2 July 2012.

sending Elijah who "will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers," a metaphor that suggests some reconciliation between father and son, or among families. Zechariah on the other hand talks about social life with others outside of the family when he says "In that day each of you will invite his neighbour to sit under his vine and fig tree" (3:10). The settlement of disputes is referred to in Isaiah 2:4 in the following wording:

> He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

Passages conveying the same message of peace and reconciliation include: Isaiah 56:6; 65:17-25; Psalm 98. Isaiah 57:19 calls for "peace, peace for him that is far off and to him that is near," saith the Lord, "and I will heal them." Isaiah 60:18 also depicts peaceful time so much that: "No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls salvation and your gates praise." Regardless of the bondage they had experienced, the Judeans appear to appreciate and perhaps "reconcile" with the Persians. The book of Ezra portrays this notion, where Ezra acknowledges that: "Though we are *slaves*, our God has not deserted us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem" (Ezr 9:9). Ezra would not have expressed his feeling this way towards the Persian authorities if he still held bitterness and grudge against them.

Political crises in Africa put the continent onto the centre stage when it comes to achieving reconciliation through negotiation. In Africa, it is repeatedly proven that having an

election is easy. However, the problem comes when the result is not accepted. It then becomes only a matter of time before violence erupts or governments are toppled. Reconciliation remains the basis for a long-lasting peace. Conditions for reconciliation include mutual acknowledgement of the other's nationhood and humanity, development of a common moral basis for peace, confrontation of history, acknowledgement of responsibility, and establishment of patterns and institutional mechanisms of cooperation (Kelman 2004:122-124). Mashingaidze (2009:21) adds that truth, justice, restitution and the rights of communities to express and memorialise past communal injuries are the *sine qua non* of far-reaching national healing and reconciliation projects. Du Plessis and Ford (2008:5) support the idea of establishing a truth, justice and reconciliation commission as an element of a comprehensive approach to transitional justice. In the same vein, *Donaldson*[118] (2011) remarks that peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe means taking note of injustices of the colonial and postcolonial eras and working towards redressing them. The ultimate goal is national reconciliation which will no doubt improve the country's political and economic circumstances. The real practice of reconciliation is put into motion, when the hostilities from previous political, racial or cultural conflicts are buried. After leaving office, one would want to see Robert Mugabe and his ZANU (PF) cronies to be part of a society living in peace and tranquility (Rugwiji 2012:181).

In reference to the policy of reconciliation during the early 1980s, Raftopoulos (2004:2) has obseved that the new government embarked on a vision of "national reconciliation," which, in economic terms, sought to combine a continuity of existing production structures with policies to improve the conditions of the majority of the population neglected during the colonial years. Vambe (2009:107-108) confirms this by reporting that Mugabe was once quoted as being a

---

[118] My anonymous informant.

proponent of reconciliation and peace initiatives in the country by posing and answering the following question: "Is it not folly, therefore, that in these circumstances anybody should seek to revive the wounds and grievances of the past? The wrongs of the past must now stand forgiven and forgotten." Mugabe has been militant and revolutionary from the beginning. Even during the struggle for liberation when other revolutionaries were opting for dialogue with Rhodesia's Ian Smith, Mugabe thought only war would bring freedom (Meredith 2008:2). Meredith's view is also reaffirmed by David Compagnon towards Mugabe's ideologies. Compagnon (2011:6) has stated that it was not a question of "What went wrong?" but rather "Why did it take so long to obviously go wrong?" Even though Mugabe had announced reconciliation among the groups that fought against each other during the war, in practice this message of reconciliation was not translated into desired action. Developments under his rule, such as he decay of democracy, political intolerance, and farm invasions, are testimonies to the above observation. This has led other scholars such as Muponde (2004:178) to argue that emotional asset based of Robert Mugabe's power is wharehoused in bitter remembrance of victimhood.[119] Even in the unity government, Mugabe's acceptance to be part of a coalition government is believed by some anonymous informants to be insincere.

In my view, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) should be established by the unity government in Zimbabwe if real peace is to be realised. Like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of East Timor (Trowbridge 2002:220) and the one of South Africa (TRC 1998; Wilson 2001), the Truth Commission in Zimbabwe should seek to expose crimes committed, and where possible ensure restitution and reparations to be made to the victims of violence or

---

[119] Robert Mugabe, among other African nationalists, was previously a victim of the former Rhodesian regime under Ian Smith. Many nationalists were incarcerated and massacred. Mugabe was imprisoned for ten years.

murder. This places reconciliation at the core of all peace initiatives in Zimbabwe, which will in the end attract investment in the country. No potential investor would be willing to start a busniess in a country where violence is rampant, and in which chances for reconciliation are far from being realised. Similarly, when current business owners begin to notice that business operations are continuously disturbed by violence, they will close their companies and open businesses elsewhere where it is peaceful. This will result in employees losing their jobs as well as income. We have seen how previous political crises surrounding the land question impacted negatively on the economy of Zimbabwe as a whole following the expulsion and exodus of commercial farmers. Thousands of farm workers lost their jobs and income; most of them became destitutes. This increased the level of poverty in Zimbabwe. The absence of income creates numerous problems such as poverty and crime, amongst other evils. Principals in the unity government in Zimbabwe need to seriously consider reconciliation as a task which both need to establish at all cost.

As Dirkie Smit observes, the Christian church has naturally been in the business of truth and reconciliation, and guilt and forgiveness from its beginnings. This is our job, the industry we work in. This is the reason for our existence (Smit 1995:3). This status places the church at the core of reconciliation, peace, and economic development in Zimbabwe.

17   THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH[120]

In Jerusalem, the temple had to be built. The temple occupies a central position in the book of Haggai (Assis 2008:2). The prophet Haggai had become critical about people's reluctance to build, saying: "The time has not yet come for the Lord's house to be built" (Hg 1:2). However, Haggai's statement denotes that the people were in compliance with the rebuilding project; just that they had first committed themselves to their household chores. Haggai calls upon the nation to build the temple (Hg 1).

Cyrus had given instructions on the measurements of rebuilding the temple: ninety feet high and ninety feet wide [about 27 meters high and 27 meters wide], and the costs were to be paid by the royal treasury (Ezr 6:3-4). The interest of Persia in rebuilding the temple is further "cemented" by warning Tattenai, the governor of the Trans-Euphrates and his cronies not to interfere in the building project (Ezr 6:6). This motivates scholars to suggest that the temple was established for the purpose of adimistering tax (or tithes) for the Persian Empire (Schaper 1995:528). Dandamaev and Lukonm (1989:361-362) hold that the tithe corresponded approximately to a tenth of incomes of the tax payers. It was necessary to pay it from the land which was the property of individual persons, and also from income which tenants had received from temple and other lands they had rented. It is therefore inferred that the second temple in postexilic Judah, like the first temple built by Solomon, served as a religious centre as well as a politico-economic institution. Mary E. Stevens supports this statement by arguing that the temple

---

[120] Mentioning the church—which is a New Testament concept—does not entail tracing this institution to ancient Old Testament (postexilic) times or the second temple period. The church's limited space here serves as an example of a modern institution that should play a significant role as a centre of empowering its congregants.

in ancient Israel was not just for worship but was also "concerned about economics, politics, and sociology" (Stevens 2006:24, 25, 173).

We know concretely that, apart from being a sanctuary, the temple was a treasury "centre," given the fact that "silver and gold" were taken when the temple was attacked, first by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (2 Ki 18:13-16), and second by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar (2 Ki 24:10-13) who took what was left. We learn that many gold and silver items that had been captured were returned to Judah by Cyrus, as listed in Ezra 1:5-10: 30 gold dishes; 1000 basins of gold; 1000 basins of silver; 29 censers; 30 bowls of gold; 410 bowls of silver; and 1000 other articles, a total of 5 400 in all. The return of the vessels served as a powerful symbol of continuity between the old and the new (Schuller 1988:99). It also served as evidence that Persia continued to subjugate the exilic returnees, just as the Babylonians had done previously. The Persian authorities realised how influential the Torah and the temple were in the lives of Judean communities. In order to be part of them and their belief system, Persia linked herself with the temple and in this way held sway over this part of Judea's national life. The notion of the temple being built by outside powers is depicted in Zechariah 6:15 that says: "Those who are far away will come and help build the temple of the Lord, you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you…" It is highly probable that many other temples were erected in other provinces in the Persian Empire to serve as a means of sustaining loyalty and to function as centres of administering food and taxes. In addition, King Darius issued an order that those rebuilding the temple were on employment and so were to be paid for the job (Ezr 6:8). In addition, the king requested that the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders should pray for the king and his sons (Ezr 6:10). The prophet Haggai envisions Yahweh granting peace in the

temple (Hg 2:9). So, the temple provided material, financial and spiritual support to the communities.

The modern church should be part of a corporate world that teaches its congregants how to support themselves profitably. Congregants should also benefit from the church, rather than allowing a one-way system whereby only the church benefits from the congregants through tithes and offerings. On the other hand, the church—like any other charity organisation—should design strategies for survival so that those receiving aid should not develop a dependency syndrome. One way of curbing such a mentality is to procure technical equipment such as sewing machines and organise people to form clubs of sewing, as an income-generating project. People can embark on a project of sewing uniforms for a school or schools as well as for church organisations. They can sew protective clothing for companies. The church can also procure water pumps and sink boreholes where people would have a project of growing vegetables. In what she describes as sustainable development, Manjengwa (2007:314) agrees that consolidated gardens of various sizes result in the benefit of increasing human well-being in that they ameliorate household nutrition as well as providing extra income from vegetable sales. Establishing a skills training centre is also commendable. These are a few examples of basic projects from which people can graduate to become reputable enterpreneurs. If various church groupings do the same in their own diverse way, in the long run the results from such undertakings will be overwhelming.

However, the church should be wary about receiving economic favours from government, as such "support" always comes with strings attached. Instances of such "solidarity" have repeatedly prevailed during election periods in the past in Zimbabwe. The church should also *pray* for the leadership of Zimbabwe rather than only condemning it for the wrongs they

have done. I have explained elsewhere (2012:181) that in the process of rebuilding Zimbabwe, one would look forward to a day when President Mugabe and his ZANU (PF) cronies become part of a "new" democratic Zimbabwe and learn what it means to live in a peaceful atmosphere. Besides its function in society as a charity organisation, the church should reposition itself as a powerful institution called to influence society towards development, in which it refocuses its attention to address political and economic crises. Reference to charity organisation includes the church, national and international donor orgainsations such as The Red Cross, and many others. It takes collective efforts by society to help those who are in need. During the past decade of the economic crackdown in Zimbabwe, Red Cross, besides food supplies that the organisation donated to starving communities, it also drilled boreholes both in urban centres and in the rural areas. Anonymous sources say that when the water crisis loomed at the Chikurubi Maximum Prison in Harare, threatening water shortage for inmates, the Red Cross salvaged the situation by sinking boreholes to provide clean water for both households and prison usage. While it is appreciated that some churches—in their numbers bring donations of different shapes and sizes for inmates in various prisons acrosss Zimbabwe—the other section of the marginalised society such as: orphans (both institutionalised and individuals on the streets), widows and widowers, and people with disability of different forms need to be helped also.

Religion is a powerful constituent of cultural norms and values. Because it addresses the most profound existential issues of human life (e g, freedom and inevitability, fear and faith, security and insecurity, right and wrong, sacred and profane), religion is deeply implicated in individual and social conceptions of peace (Said and Funk 2001:1). Desmond Tutu points out that in terms of peace-building religion has been explicitly involved in transformations, such as the recovery of post-apartheid South Africa (Tutu 1999:218). More recently, more than 1000

representatives of transnational as well as indigenous religious traditions gathered for the UN Millennium Summit of World Religious Leaders, which "heralded the world community's unprecedented recognition of religious peace-building" (Little and Appleby 2004:3). Earlier Rev Canaan Banana displayed the same spirit by stating the following:

> I believe that as Christians we ought to preoccupy ourselves with a search for a viable community and this we can do by joining hands with all progressive forces of change in the world. Ours is the task of finding areas of common interest with those struggling to bring about new social orders. If we do not participate in the process, we have no way of influencing the final outcome (Banana 1979:421).

However, I am quite sceptical about which criterion should be adopted in implementing peace-building initiatives involving the church in Zimbabwe and *who* should be involved. This is particularly so because some Christian organisations including some clerics have been involved in party politics in Zimbabwe, rendering their efforts partisan and their views biased. Good examples are Bishop Nolbert Kunonga of the Anglican Church and Reverend Obadiah Musindo of the African Independent Church (Rugwiji 2012:161). Reverend Musindo was a regular on Zimbabwe Television, campaigning for ZANU (PF), even composing propaganda songs that portrayed the president as divinely given (as a *god*) who should not be opposed. Bishop Kunonga, on the other hand, joined the controversial "land-grab" by grabbing and occupying a farm about 10km from Harare (Chimhanda 2009:117). In view of the above examples, it is argued that some members of the clergy may not be credible "voices" in the call for justice, peace and reconciliation.

However, there are churches that have consistently drawn the attention to human suffering, through their preaching. A good example, is the Roman Catholic Church, through the

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), which has been conspicuous in its fight for human dignity in colonial and postindependence Zimbabwe (Ile 2008:125). Besides its function as an arbitrator in Zimbabwe, the Roman Catholic Church, together with other churches, has also played the role of being the "voice of the voiceless." Those in positions of power have instilled fear to silence those they oppress in order to indirectly rob the victims of their human dignity (cf Ile 2008:125). Churches in general, and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, have now become vocal. This is the reason why over the last couple of years the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe had suffered various kinds of restrictions and threats from the Mugabe regime, all with the purpose of weakening its critical voice against those in power (Hansen 2011:247). The ZANU (PF) government is on record for the mordant manner in which it attacks the church for meddling in politics (Rugwiji 2012:174).

I have explored the spheres of the international community (including donor aid), industry and commerce, the informal sector, the political leadership, tourism, agriculture, the diaspora community, reconciliation, and the role of the church towards rebuilding Zimbabwe. The rebuilding initiatives in Zimbabwe derive from a modern postbiblical reading of Nehemiah 2:17-18, in which the postexilic community was led by Nehemiah in rebuilding the city of Jerusalem. Although direct parallels cannot be drawn in all instances, I hope to have indicated that to reflect on the Zimbabwean situation after having done the same for postexilic Yehud, has produced positive results which would benefit the reconstruction of Zimbabwe. The endeavour to appropriate *themes* within the ancient Judean postexilic literature in a Zimbabwean postcolonial discourse has therefore proven to be worthy the while.

18 CONCLUSION

First, discussed in this chapter, is the rebuilding project in Nehemiah 2:17-18 as a *theology of reconstruction,* to provide an example for the Zimbabwean leadership on the need for reconstruction and developmental projects after the formation of the government of national unity. It was explored how Nehemiah appealed to the Persian authorities for funding to rebuild the walls in Jerusalem. It was also shown that materials for rebuilding the temple as well as Nehemiah's house were supplied by the Persian government.

The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem when the Judeans were restored in Judah was compared to the rebuilding of Zimbabwe after the formation of the unity government. I have highlighted how the international community has previously played a key role and continues to do so in rebuilding and developing countries which have been devastated either by civil war or by famine. Donor communities continue to provide food, funding and material resources to affected communities in Zimbabwe, an indication that development and poverty alleviation are a result of a collective effort; government alone cannot accomplish this. It was also explored that the Zimbabwean government can only remain relevant and function as a role player in meaningful economic development, provided it enjoys the solidarity of others within the broader global sphere. Some of the main factors which were discussed as building "blocks" that can contribute towards rebuilding Zimbabwe are: The resuscitation of industry and commerce, recognising the augmentation of informal sector businesses in nation-building, the maintenance of political stability, repair and maintenance of road networks, the need for progress in the completion of the new draft constitution, the establishment of a peaceful atmosphere through reconciliation thereby increasing investor confidence and building trust in tourists wishing to

visit Zimbabwe. The roles of the church and the diaspora community in rebuilding Zimbabwe have also been outlined.

Second, in Nehemiah chapter 5:1-9, Nehemiah's social justice reforms of challenging the Jewish governors to respond to the needs of the people and the provisions of his own resources to help the poor have been given as examples to challenge the Zimbabwean leadership not to use their political positions for personal gratification; instead, they should strive towards alleviating poverty among the people. It was highlighted that Nehemiah and his brothers chose not to acquire land while the other governors were scrambling for this natural resource at the expense of the suffering masses. An attempt was made to show how the Zimbabwean political leadership undertook to compulsorily acquire land from the white commercial farmers which the "elite" in government shared among themselves, while peasant farmers who survived on subsistence farming did not have access to land.

Nehemiah's food donation to starving communities has also been examined. The Bible relates that Nehemiah was entitled to a food ration from government every day. We have seen that other governors before Nehemiah were corrupt and greedy; they did not care about those who were starving. To further exacerbate their economic situation, the governors "placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine" (Neh 5:15). But Nehemiah did the opposite: instead of using the allocation of food for himself and the members of his household, Nehemiah donated the food to starving communities.

It was commented that the Zimbabwean leadership should emulate Nehemiah's example by providing aid to needy people in our society. Members of Parliament (MPs), city fathers, pastors and community leaders were challenged in their individual capacities, to contribute

towards poverty alleviation in our society, for example, by choosing to forego their income for a month in order to pay school fees for children deriving from poor families or for orphans.

CHAPTER 5   CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND
            PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1   INTRODUCTION

The conclusions of this chapter derive from the arguments developed and the issues examined and analysed in the entire thesis (chapters 1 to 4). They concern an appropriation of the themes within the fifth century (BCE) postexilic Judah in a contemporary postcolonial Zimbabwe. More specifically, they reflect what has been achieved in terms of appropriating the situation of socio-economic instability in Yehud for the situation of socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe.

The recommendations in this chapter are indeed attempts to provide suggestions for improving socio-economic and political practices in Zimbabwe for the betterment of the lives of its citizens and especially the alleviation of extreme poverty. In addition, this chapter puts forward options for further research in a related field. The following section constitutes the conclusions.

2   CONCLUSIONS

Recognising that the the narratives about the postexilic Judean community is an ancient biblical account of the socio-economic and political experiences of a once-exiled people, I believe to have indicated that their integral relevance for the modern postcolonial Zimbabwean society cannot be ignored. With regard to the past, this study explored that the Judean returnees from

Babylonian exile (586–539 BCE)—restored through a decree issued by King Cyrus of Persia—were led by Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls and the city of Jerusalem itself.

Moving to the present, this study introduced the Zimbabwean returnees from diaspora after GNU and those who remained in Zimbabwe who are now busy rebuilding their country that was devastated by over a decade of economic meltdown. The past and the present were connected in this study through the employment of a *hermeneutics of appropriation*. For this study it means appropriating[121] the Judean postexilic experiences in the Zimbabwean postcolonial discourse.

In this thesis, complexities associated with the postexilic Jewish community in Judah were explored. It was argued that although the exiles were finally restored in Judah, real freedom did not prevail in the Persian province of Yehud. Class struggle, ethnic clashes, family marriage disputes,[122] starvation as a result of drought as well as oppression of the poor continued to haunt the "lower" classes of society. The temple formed a major component of Jewish religious life as it served as a national shrine and gathering point for pious pilgrims devoted to worshipping Yahweh where his presence was experienced. Even so, the biblical text relates that reconstruction projects took long to get off the ground as the returnees were busy building their own "houses" (Hg 1:2-4). The rebuilding of the temple only began when the prophet Haggai challenged them to start rebuilding (Hg 1:13-15).

---

[121] The *themes* within the narratives, such as: political power, economy, poverty, etc, have been appropriated. This thesis does not claim to have fully and critically employed hermeneutics of appropriation. However, it has successfully managed to "appropriate" it for the present sudy.

[122] In Zimbabwe, exclusion and inclusion on the basis of marriage is not common. It has not become mandatory yet, either by family members, ethnic groups, or the church. Anyone can marry anyone regardless of colour, race, citizenship, tribe, ethnicity or nationality.

It was also indicated that temple-building projects were associated with kingship. Kings initiated the erection of national shrines and Yahweh would elect and anoint kings for the purpose of establishing a central shrine for the national worship of the deity. King David had intended to build the temple (1 Ki 5:3), but it was his son, King Solomon, who is attributed to have begun and completed the temple-construction project. In the book of Chronicles, David is portrayed as the ideal king who organised the worshipping community, established a religious capital at Jerusalem, and made plans for building the temple (1 Chr 28:9-19).

This study has further shown that even in postexilic Yehud, the temple—in addition to its function as a central shrine to which devout Jews would pilgrimage to offer their reverence to Yahweh—was also perceived as a source of revenue by the Persian Empire, since it functioned as an administrative and economic centre. This could possibly be one of the reasons why Cyrus had offered to fund the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem in order to make it a centre for administering tax. In that sense, aid given by Persia towards the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem was not done simply for charity; it carried with it economic strings, such as taxation. However, the Judeans did not perceive Cyrus as having political and economic motives. To the contrary, among the Judeans Cyrus was perceived as a hero and an "anointed one" (Ezr 1; Is 45:1-4), because he had restored the Jewish communities with their central shrine to which they were attached.

It was also noted that the biblical text depicts Yahweh using Cyrus (a Gentile) to liberate the Judeans and to undertake the rebuilding task of the temple in Jerusalem. Isaiah 44:28 says: "Who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, let it be rebuilt and of the temple; let its foundations be laid.'" This annunciation is repeated in Isaiah 45:1. The concluding portion of the above text affirms that Cyrus was not an

adherent to the Jewish religious tradition. It says: "For the sake of Jacob my servant, of Israel my chosen, I summon you by name and bestow on you a title of honour, though *you do not acknowledge me*" (Is 45:4). In contrast to the Babylonians who had subdued Jerusalem and banished the Judeans to a foreign land in Babylonia, the Bible depicts Cyrus as being favourable to the Judeans by allowing the deportees to return to their land of origin as well as by funding the rebuilding of their temple. It was the "elite" (kings and the rich) and not the *common people* (the poor and those considered an uninfluential section of society) who were at the core of the religious consciousness among the Judeans. This fact compromised the "liberation" for the poor and a postexilic internal conflict which aggravated their circumstance in stead of relieving it. They were, as the poor, once again at the shortest end.

Besides their adherence to and reverence of Yahweh in the temple, the Judeans were also commanded to keep the Sabbath (Neh 13:17-18; Is 58:13-14; 66:23). In this study it was discussed that the Sabbath was an important religious institution in Israel, and emphasis on keeping the Sabbath had begun to play an important role in the religion of the postexilic Judeans: adherence to the Sabbath was seen as a sign of obedience to Yahweh. Neglecting the Sabbath meant disobeying Yahweh which would result in pestilence, invasion and loss of land. Yahweh would "…kindle an unquenchable fire in the gates of Jerusalem that will consume her fortresses" (Jr 17:27). Keeping the Sabbath would please Yahweh so that he would "…cause you [Israel] to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob" (Is 58:14). The Babylonian captivity was a consequence of disobeying Yahweh, particularly on the Sabbath. In addition, Jeremiah had also pronounced the reason for the captivity, that: "the rich and the powerful, who had grown fat and sleek" could not deliver justice; "they do not plead the case of fatherless to win it; they do not defend the rights of the poor" (Jr 5:27-28).

It was discussed that the restored Judeans were looking forward to shaping their own identity and destiny in Yehud. They started reconstructing the walls that were demolished by Nebuchadnezzar's army. On the other hand, the Persians—who controlled both the economic and political affairs of the province of Judah—would see to it that systems and methods were put in place to administer day-to-day business activities both at the provincial level and in respect of the Empire as a whole. To be able to administer funds received from the province as a whole, the temple served as an administrative centre and Judean governors were tasked to perform the function of collecting tax.

The study also highlighted that payment of tax was a major source of revenue for the Persian Empire. We can infer the Persian policies including collection of tax, by referring to the Babylonian policies. Babylonian rulers had appointed Jewish governors to oversee the political and economic affairs among the Jewish communities.[123] The basic organisation set in place by the Babylonians was not changed by Cyrus (550–530 BCE), who allowed most regional administrators under the Babylonian system to retain their administrative roles (Berquist 1995:23-44). The Persian authorities had adopted a policy of ruralisation as a deliberate strategy of creating a large tax base for their exploitation (McNutt 1999:195). It is in these capacities that the Judean governors defrauded their own people, denying them justice and depriving them, as expressed in words of those oppressed: "mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine… We had to borrow money to pay the king's tax on our fields and vineyards" (Neh 5:1-4). This situation "forced" the people to go onto the streets in demonstration against the leadership for ignoring their plight. In response to the starvation of the Judeans who

---

[123] During the Persian period Zerubbabel appointed as governor of Judah under King Darius I (Hg 1:14; 2:20-22); Nehemiah was appointed governor of Judah under King Artaxerxes I (Neh 5:14).

did not have anything to eat as a result of the exploitation described above, Nehemiah was "outraged" and called for a "meeting" with the leadership whom he challenged and accused of exacerbating the starvation and poverty of their people by practising *usury* which needed to be stopped (6-10). Nehemiah further told the leadership to give back all that it had taken from the people (5:11). Nehemiah went further to provide food to the starving communities (17-18) as an example for others to emulate.

This study has offered an alternative approach towards reading the narrative about the Judean postexilic experiences in Yehud, namely by appropriating these for the Zimbabwean postcolonial and post-ZANU (PF) eras. Turning to the latter, it was asserted that between the years 1999 and 2008, following the controversial fast-track land reform programme, more than 10 000 rural people[124] (especially farm workers) are believed to have died after their removal from farms and the consequent loss of employment, housing, nutrition, and access to health-care facilities (Raath 2007:6). Due to the economic meltdown which worsened until 2008, Zimbabwe's inflation[125] reached a record of 231 million percent, rendering the Zimbabwe dollar worthless.[126] Generally, everything was in bad shape during this tragic period: there was political violence, shops were empty, hospitals and schools were closed, while preventable diseases like cholera wrecked havoc, killing over four thousand people. Yet, in the midst of all these happenings, South Africa, among other African countries, argued that Zimbabwe needed an

---

[124] Zimbabwe's rural communities are estimated at 65% of the total population. See Nsingo and Kuye (2005:744-760)

[125] The economic situation has changed since the introduction of the US dollar in Zimbabwe after GNU was signed on 13 Mar 2009.

[126] Mashavave, R s a. Zimbabwe unity government under threat. Online: See http://inwent-iij-lab.org/Weblog/2009/10/20/zimbabwe-unity-government-under-threat/ Accessed 13 Aug 2012.

African solution to her problem. *Shandai*[127] (2012) similarly opines that "an African solution to African problem is best here." Yet Africa has struggled to find a lasting solution to the Zimbabwean problem and only proposed for the unity government as an alternative, choosing to keep the ruling party in power.

This study explored that President Robert Mugabe's policy of land reform was launched as an attempt to quell the MDC support base, as the MDC had mobilised majority support in terms of party politics. Du Preez (2008:19) laments that Mugabe, his security forces and the ZANU (PF) militias have done awful, awful things to their political opponents, with—truth be told—their opponents sometimes retaliating violently in return. Until now (at the time of writing the thesis), the negative impact of the land reform has left many people suffering: jobs are scarce; the US dollar[128] is largely accessed through informal business dealings. It was argued that corruption is still rampant even after the formation of the government of national unity. Tax-payers' money is being used to promulgate partisan and hegemonic agendas. *Templeton*[129] (2012) concurs and notes that "taxed money that should be utilised to develop the country's economy, to develop work for the people, is now used by the monarchs who do not care for those who look up to them for leadership." If Zimbabwe is to underscore tangible economic development, the leadership in the unity government should constantly remind itself of the gloomy past in which various forms of maladministration by the elite in government had plunged the country into severe economic meltdown, resulting in the starvation and impoverishment of the majority of people.

---

[127] My anonymous informant.

[128] This is the currency which is currently used in Zimbabwe since the formation of GNU.

[129] My anonymous informant.

2.1   Contributions of the research to scholarship

I contend that this study has done justice to the title of the entire thesis and the objectives of the investigation have been achieved. The research will contribute to Old Testament scholarship.

In this study, the experiences of the Judean postexilic community were appropriated for the political and socio-economic situations in a postcolonial Zimbabwean context. No other Old Testament scholar in Zimbabwe or elsewhere has as yet undertaken such an investigation. In this thesis the employment of the approach called *hermeneutics of appropriation*[130] has uniquely been explained and discussed in detail. The approach was used to appropriate *themes* within the Judean postexilic literature in the Zimbabwean postcolonial context.

Chapter 1 provided an overview of what would follow in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5. The historical background of the postexilic Judean community was discussed in *chapter 2* as the principal narrative on which the entire thesis hinges. The chapter explored the restoration of the Judeans from Babylonian captivity back to Judah, the aid in terms of material resources given to the returnees for building the temple in Judah, the temple building project, Nehemiah's rebuilding of the city and its walls, and lastly, famine and exploitation of the poor by the "elite," amongst other themes.

In *chapter 3*, postcolonial, postcoloniality and postcolonialism were defined and the uses of the terms for the Zimbabwean situation were explained. *Hermeneutics of appropriation* was defined and explained; examples of it functions were given. It was, for instance, illustrated how Zimbabwean poets and novelists have used the Bible to underscore moral and ethical teachings.

---

[130] *Hermeneutics of appropriation* is used to some degree by scholars such as Paul Ricoeur, Richard Kearney and Ruby S. Suazo, among others, as discussed in chapter 3 (see §3.1).

It was noted that these novelists seem to be saying that religion can best be understood and accepted if it fits within the people's environment.

It was also argued that postcolonial governments have tended to criticise their predecessors (for example, former colonial/apartheid masters) for causing both political and economic crises affecting their respective countries, an ideology which I deliberately referred to as "retrospection." The same understanding is depicted in a statement by Snyman (2002:64) who remarked that "maybe the day of reckoning with past Western (British) exploitation has arrived. But who is answering for the sins of the past? Is it a case of the fathers who ate sour grapes and their sons' teeth setting on edge [Ezk 18:2]?" As opposed to admitting their own guilt and mistakes, which I coined as an exercise of "introspection" (or "self-examination"), the postcolonial Zimbabwean government embarked on the controversial land reform programme in the early 2000s, in which white commercial farms were seized. In other words the white farmers "lost the farms which their forefathers had taken from the Africans," a kind of punishment for the "sins" of their fathers. Farms were seized because it was alleged that commercial farmers also supported the formation of the opposition MDC.

As for the Judeans, it was explained that the returned Judeans did not need to reflect on the Babylonian captivity and their restoration by means of the *liberation motif*. Although a *theology of liberation* had motivated them in shaping their history, where they came from, and how Yahweh sustained them politically, they now needed to be guided by a *theology of reconstruction* in order to rebuild the temple, the walls and their own houses as well as working towards establishing peace and tranquility in Yehud under the leadership of Nehemiah. Jesse Mugambi's and Charles Villa-Vicencio's theology of reconstruction informed the discourse in this regard. Although Tinyiko Maluleke had earlier on criticised Mugambi and Villa-Vicencio,

he did not show a total deviation from their proposed theology of reconstruction either. Mugambi and Villa-Vicencio proposed a shift from liberation theology to theology of reconstruction as a movement from the past to the present, from one phase of the struggle to the other. When I introduced the terms "retrospection" and "introspection" in chapter 3, I was actually in support of their viewpoints in which I proposed to move away from a blame-game of criticising former colonial beneficiaries for political and economic crises in the present.

Chapter 4 of this study articulated the dynamics of power, democratisation and socialisation exhibited in Nehemiah 5. The chapter pointed out that Nehemiah had focused on rebuilding the city and its walls, rather than paying attention to the "opposition politics" by Sanballat and Tobiah who were attempting to destabilise the building project. Moreover, whereas his fellow Judean governors had focused on siphoning wealth through corruption, usury and greed (Neh 5:15), Nehemiah had devoted himself to rebuilding the city and walls (5:16).

Nehemiah's focus and determination on rebuilding the walls by declaring: "…But out of reverence for God, I did not act like that. Instead, I *devoted* myself to the work on the wall…" (Neh 5:15-16), were portrayed as service to Yahweh. In providing food to the needy and rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah was looking for favours from God (Neh 5:19).

The Zimbabwean leadership was challenged by this study to render service to needy communities, for example: striving towards poverty alleviation, providing food to and paying school fees for orphaned children.

In conclusion, the main thrust of this study was not meant to dispute other hermeneutical approaches in biblical interpretation, or prove the uniqueness of a *hermeneutics of appropriation*. Rather, hermeneutics of appropriation was employed as an approach to interpret *themes* (i e,

political power, the economy, poverty, starvation, oppression, tax, greediness, etc) within the postexilic narratives for the modern postcolonial Zimbabwean context.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study makes the following five recommendations with particular focus on GNU in Zimbabwe as proposals towards transforming the socio-economic status of Zimbabwean citizens:

(1) An appeal to the Zimbabwean Diaspora community,

(2) A quest for contesting the "myth" of fear,

(3) A new constitution,

(4) International bilateral relations, and

(5) Nehemiah's social reforms in the Zimbabwean unity government.

3.1 An appeal to the Zimbabwean diaspora[131] community

Nehemiah must have been a good communicator, a fundraiser, and a *public relations officer*. He used these skills while in exile to lobby for donations for the building of the walls in Jerusalem.

---

[131] Reference to *diaspora* here does not—in any way—denote it as parallel to the Jewish exile. Some difference exists between the exile of the Jews in Babylonia and the migration of the Zimbabweans to some parts of the world. While the Jewish captivity in Babylonia was a result of the invasion of Judah and the abduction of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, the migration (discussed as *diaspora* in this study) of the Zimbabwean people to different parts of the world— particularly between 2000 and 2008—was a result of the political and economic disturbances as "push" factors from Zimbabwe. In reality, no country had ever taken Zimbabweans as captives. However, the term "diaspora" is used in this study as an alternative description for migration; it denotes any location away from home.

245

Nehemiah served as the cupbearer[132] of King Artaxerxes (Neh 1:11), which allowed him the opportunity to speak to the king and request favours from him. King Artaxerxes responded favourably to Nehemiah's request for aid of material resources.

The contribution of the diaspora community towards economic development and reconstruction in Zimbabwe cannot be overemphasised. It was stated in chapter 4 how the diaspora community played a crucial role by representing their respective political movements abroad, as well as by soliciting for funding from donor organizations, something which these political parties were unable to do back home because of the economic crisis in Zimbabwe. It was also explored how the diaspora community salvaged the economic situation and food crisis of their loved-ones back home by sending money and food supplies when Zimbabwe's economic situation had worsened in the years 2007 and 2008. The study illuminated how, for example, in South Africa, Zimbabwean diasporans were hardworking and economically-engaged for self-sustenance. The xenophobic attack on Zimbabwean "foreigners" by some South African nationals was because "these *foreigners* appear to be working harder and be more trustworthy over against their SA compatriots who think everyone owes them a living and a life" (*Kohn*[133] 2012). However, the diaspora community should continue playing the role of resource community towards rebuilding Zimbabwe and advancing economic recovery in the post-ZANU (PF) era. A report issued by the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, titled: *Report of a conference on engaging Zimbabweans in the diaspora towards economic*

---

[132] This task probably gave Nehemiah some willingness and humility to serve as well as some experience necessary for the future. This experience might have helped him in his own capacity as governor in the province of Yehud.

[133] My anonymous informant.

reconstruction (2009:9) has proposed the following recommendations towards economic development in Zimbabwe:

1. To ensure that the Zimbabwe government and other governments' engagement with the Zimbabwe Diaspora is institutionalized within a coherent policy framework;

2. To develop and maintain a database of the Zimbabwe Diaspora that helps to address the social and human development needs of Zimbabwe;

3. To strengthen Zimbabwe Diaspora networks and increase their ability to contribute towards comprehensive national recovery and development;

4. To engage co-operating partners, all stakeholders and relevant institutions on supporting Zimbabwe's recovery and development;

5. To ensure effective citizenship rights and representation for the Zimbabwe Diaspora;

6. To publicise, maintain relevance and facilitate the continuous discussion of Zimbabwe Diaspora issues internally and externally to Zimbabwe;

7. To share global standards and practice for ease of doing business in Zimbabwe as the country moves forward;

8. To support the development of public sector institutions that work effectively and deliver.

In addition to the above propositions by the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation, the diaspora community should lobby for food aid as a contribution towards assisting drought-stricken communities and other needy people in Zimbabwe. Mudzonga and Chigwada (2009:8) recommend that the country receive food aid in the form of programs, budgets and emergency aid, or under nutritional support projects. They further propose for Zimbabwe to consider negotiating long term food procurement agreements and arrangements with net food exporters or food exporting enterprises so as to secure favourable prices (to assure affordability) and

quantities (Mudzonga and Chigwada 2009:10). Procurement of food supplies could also be arranged via the diaspora community.

3.2   A quest for contesting the "myth" of fear

In Judah, there were people who were opposed to the rebuilding of the walls in Jerusalem: "Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod…" (Neh 2:19; 4:7). The opponents were not only determined to destabilise the building project, but they were also prepared to kill all those involved in the work (Neh 4:11). These threats made the Judeans to be afraid to which Nehemiah responded with the following words of encouragement: "Don't be afraid of them…" (4:14). The motifs by Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men of Ashdod for trying to stop the rebuilding of the wall and the city was that the project was regarded as "rebellion against the king" (Neh 2:19). It was alleged that Nehemiah was "plotting to revolt" and that he planned to "become king," so that "even appointed prophets would make this proclamation about you: 'There is a king in Judah!'" (Neh 6:6-7).

Moving to the present, Zimbabweans live in fear of their own government, which is almost as "by default" opposed to strategies towards change and transformation. In my book, entitled: *Reading the exodus liberation motif in the modern postbiblical world: The Zimbabwean society and the reality of oppression*, I argued that "Zimbabweans are generally peaceful people, but the government creates a great amount of unprecedented timidity among them, given the lethal nature and obvious caricature associated with ZANU (PF)'s puissance" (Rugwiji 2012:163).   This question of *fear*, can to my mind best be understood by bringing into

perspective a Shona proverb which asks: "Makunguwo zvaakatya, akafa mangani?."[134] The above question is an attempt to implicate the idea that if Zimbabweans truly yearn for a democratic society and look forward to establishing a responsible government, they must "liberate" themselves from the "grip" of fear which was inflicted by the ZANU (PF) regime. In my view, it appears there is a price to pay for the liberation of others. Until such time when people are prepared to sacrifice for the sake of freedom of others—to which Gundani (2010) once referred as "putting one's head on the block"[135]—*real* freedom will not prevail in Zimbabwe. Gundani's remarks—though not referring particularly to ZANU (PF)—can be interpreted to mean that in ZANU (PF) there is a tendency of reciprocating with torture to calls for justice as a strategy for intimidation. Pithouse (2010:15) states that the fear of violence, like the fear of monsters, is primal and universal. I concur that the infliction of pain which results in death has effectively been used as strategies to drive shivers of fear in the people of Zimbabwe so that, regrettably, no attempt is made to venture into opposition politics. Zimbabwean citizens also fear for the economic meltdown to resurface. Moyo laments that "Zimbabweans' greatest fear is a return to the economic crisis that peaked last year [2008] when shop shelves were bare, basic services collapsed and cholera killed thousands" (2009:20).

However, Zimbabweans need to demystify this "fear" so that national transformation can prevail. For national transformation to take place, citizens should be committed to challenging

---

[134] This is a Shona expression which is literally translated, "while the birds called *crows* feared, how many of them died?" This phrase is intended to convey the idea that some people tend to become nervous even of situations which pose no amount of harm to their lives. Even if some endeavours appear threatening, one should always remember that life is always about *taking risks*.

[135] This assertion derived from an informal discussion with Paul Gundani in 2010 at Unisa, Pretoria. The phrase "putting one's head on the block" might mean sacrificing oneself even through persecution or other forms of punishment.

the ruling elite against corruption, injustice, poverty, violence, and many other forms of evil perpetrated by those in positions of power. Violence or militancy is not the best option to bring sanity and justice in Zimbabwe. In my view, the following pathways may help the country to restore order and delivery of justice.

3.3   A new constitution[136]

It was highlighted in this study that the Bible is portrayed as the "law" regulating how the Judean society should live. When we read the books of Ezra-Nehemiah as well as the Pentateuch, we are confronted with Yahweh and his influence on the day-to-day ethical and moral trajectories of the Judeans. It was shown in chapter 2 (see §6.5) that the Law that Ezra read for the people when they were released from the Babylonian captivity (see Ezr 7:10; Neh 8:1: "For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the Lord, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel") was a reference to the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) in which the Ten Commandments were recorded.

The people were also required to obey the law of the king which was operational in Yehud as a province of the Persian Empire. Both the law of God and the law of the king were to be obeyed by the people (Ezr 7:26). King Artaxerxes—acknowledging the Jewish law according to their tradition—advises Ezra to effect punishment by murder: "Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation

---

[136] Discussing the biblical law in the context of the constitution of Zimbabwe is not intended to put the two on par with each other. The Jewish law is discussed here to illustrate that the ancient postexilic Judean community were bound by regulations which they were required to adhere to. This view serves to communicate the idea that the constitution in our modern-day Zimbabwe cannot be the same as the law of ancient biblical Judah.

of property, or imprisonment" (Ezr 7:26; 10:8). Hence, apart from the "biblical law,"[137] Yehud as province of the Persian Empire was guided by a national law—"the law of the king," a kind of a people-oriented constitution—with which to run the affairs of government as well as for executing judgment in case the law was *broken*. The biblical law was administered by Jewish elders (for example Ezra) at the level of their religion (Yahwism). Above the biblical law, there was a national law that every citizen of the Persian Empire had to adhere to regardless of their religious persuasion.

Zimbabwe currently uses the Lancaster Constitution inherited from colonial Rhodesia, which was amended in 1987 when Robert Mugabe changed his title from Prime Minister to President. It states that the Head of State would hold office for five years. However, there is no stipulation on the number of terms the President would be entitled to hold office. This could be the reason why Robert Mugabe has ruled Zimbabwe from 1980 to 2013.

However, there has been an on-going process of drafting a new constitution to replace the current one. It can further be proposed that Zimbabwe—like any other democracy—needs a genuine people-driven constitution towards the formation of a new government. In Zimbabwe the production of a genuinely-crafted people's constitution will provide room for free and fair elections which will result in a democratically-elected government. Adoption of a new charter would pave the way for new elections following disputed presidential polls in 2008 (*The Star* 2010:4). At the time of wrapping up this study, there was an ongoing process of engaging by COPAC with the Zimbabwean citizens to contribute towards a people-driven constitution. In spite of occurrences of on-and-off disruptions by some members of political parties, it is hoped

---

[137] According to Ezra 7:26 the distinction between the religious law and secular law is apparent.

that the process will yield desirable results, after which elections for a democratic government—as opposed to the current unity government—will be conducted. Mudzwiti (2010:8) is of the view that a referendum will test Zimbabweans' acceptance of the new constitution. Once the new constitution is accepted, elections can be held. Although the successful role played by both SADC and South Africa for facilitating the formation of a unity government in 2009 is commendable, as it managed to stabilise the political crisis in Zimbabwe, there is need to conduct free and fair elections towards the formation of a democratically-elected government for substantial economic development to occur. *Carlson*[138] (2012) argues in this regard that "Mugabe could do something noble by stepping down and allowing the democratic process to run its course…" If it happens, as proposed by *Carlson* above, that President Robert Mugabe steps down, economic development will prevail because the aged Zimbabwean leader has become unpopular with many democracy-seeking and peace-loving people in Zimbabwe and beyond, including those in diaspora.

Following the loss of the rule of law in Zimbabwe, the international community imposed a travel ban on the Zimbabwean leadership. These sanctions impacted negatively on the economy of Zimbabwe as a whole. While some critics, including *Crowell*[139] (2012), would want Zimbabwe to be slapped with some economic embargo, arguing that, "sanctions made South Africans change their politics," hoping that the same approach will bring change in Zimbabwe as well, I am personally opposed to sanctions because they exacerbate the plight of ordinary people, especially the poorest of the poor, in the country**.** This constitution can just remain a piece of paper if the leadership does not adhere to its contents and stipulations. Parliamentarians—who

---

[138] My anonymous informant.

[139] My anonymous informant.

represent the voices of the majority of people in the country—should constantly and consistently contest the ideology of adopting a motion or its implementation in view of what the constitution stipulates. The term of office of the president must clearly be spelt in the constitution (see "political leadership" section §7, "the constitution" section **§**13 in chapter 4, and "a new constitution," section **§**3.3 in chapter 5).[140] The current draft constitution provides a five-year term for the presidency. However, checks and balances are needed and the citizens of Zimbabwe should demand the exit of the person holding the office of president when the term lapses.

3.4   International bilateral relations

Although the presence of the Persian administration in Yehud could be perceived as an "infringement" on the sovereignty of Judah or a "new" form of *captivity,* as was discussed in chapter 2, in response it was argued that the Persian Empire had emerged as a cog-wheel in the facilitation of economic and infrastructural developments in the provinces under its jurisdiction of which Yehud was one. In chapter 4, it was explained that Judah benefited economically by being part of the Persian Empire. It was highlighted that in Judah's history the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon a large gift, "an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon" (2 Chr 9:9). For the purpose of constructing the temple, King Solomon had further entered into bilateral relations with Hiram, King of Tyre, whereby the two traded in cedar, pine, algum logs, lumber, ground wheat, barley, wine, and olive oil (2 Chr 2:1-10). We

---

[140] The current Draft Constitution stipulates that the President would not hold office for more than one five-year term

have seen how in the postexilic period, trade between the Judeans, Sidonians and Tyrians existed as recounted by the biblical text: "Then they [the Judeans] gave money to the masons and carpenters, and gave food and drink and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, so that they would bring cedar logs by sea from Lebanon to Joppa, as authorised by Cyrus king of Persia" (Ezr 7:7). We read that agriculture was the mainstay in Israel, referred to as "a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey" (Dt 8:8). We also read that Judah was not lacking in mineral resources as described in Deuteronomy 8:9: "a land where the rocks are *iron* and you can dig *copper* out of the hills." This notion is also depicted in 2 Chronicles 2:7—in which King Solomon requested from Hiram, King of Tyre—men skilled in *gold*, *silver*, *bronze* and *iron* to work on these minerals. It was highly probable that the Judeans were in a position to export these products in exchange for imports from neighbouring countries.

Considering Zimbabwe, its location as a land-locked country (see "geography of a country" §10.2.1 in chapter 4) causes it to rely largely on its neighbours for its economic sustenance. For example, all exports and imports to and from the sea have to pass through countries such as Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. Cross (2009:8) remarks that Zimbabwe is a landlocked state and very dependent on its neighbours. In the context of the above, Zimbabwe should seriously consider improving its bilateral relations with its neighbours as well as the international community for economic development to recur. *Madison*[141] (2012) also emphasizes the need to revise the foreign policies in Zimbabwe in order to encourage export performance. For example, in the Sub-Saharan region, South African firms should be involved in the rebuilding of infrastructure such as repairing and upgrading roads and bridges, government

---

[141] My anonymous informant.

254

buildings/offices, schools, clinics, hospitals, etcetera. The South African newspaper *Mail and Guardian* (5 March 2009) observes that apart from the political pressure, South Africa has vested economic interest in the recovery of Zimbabwe. Most of the products and services needed in Zimbabwe would be sourced from South Africa, such as fertiliser and agricultural equipment.

The aggressive revolution of promoting "indigenisation" by promulgating the Indigenous and Empowerment Act which requires foreign companies to award 51 percent of their ownership to indigenous Zimbabweans (Khuziwayo 2010:5) will only rekindle a decline of the country's economy which was beginning to recuperate. We have seen in chapter 4 how institutions such as banks and the mining sector have been earmarked for promoting the so-called "indigenisation" of local companies. This may become part of the same catastrophic cycle that previously left its mark in the form of the fast-track land reform programme of the late 1990s which impacted negatively on the economy as a whole during the ten years that followed. Although to some extent indigenisation might be considered noble when it is intended to genuinely empower the formerly marginalised communities, in order for them to have access to mineral resources, Musewe (2010:16) sounds indifferent by arguing that under ZANU (PF), *indigenisation* means that those who are friendly to the ruling party get access to natural resources and/or obtain mining rights. It also means that those who are seen as threats to the dominance of the party are denied such privileges. We have seen that those who benefited from the previous fast-track land reform largely comprised the elite in government or those whose credentials were traced to the liberation struggle. The majority, whose means of survival derived from farming, lost it all when the farming activities were disrupted by farm invasions. In the same fashion, the indigenisation of mines might cause more damage to the country's reputation, as it clearly has the potential of impacting negatively on industrialisation and economic development in Zimbabwe. If this

indigenisation exercise is allowed to continue unabated, the international community may lose confidence in investing in Zimbabwe. This will result in further closure of the few companies operating in the country and an acute loss of jobs. Although China and countries of the Far East are alleged to be potential investors in Zimbabwe—hence ZANU (PF)'s adoption of the "Look-East" policy—their presence should be augmented by other business players and bilateral relations from some parts of the world for a competitive edge to exist.

3.5   Nehemiah's social justice reforms in the Zimbabwean unity government

This study explained that Nehemiah's social reforms (Neh 5:6-18) should serve as examples that the Zimbabwean leadership should emulate in order to eradicate the socio-economic ills negatively affecting development in Zimbabwe. A revolution does not usually begin with the majority; it is actually individual activists who influence the majority towards transformation. We note in this regard the examples of the biblical Nehemiah, Martin Luther King Jr of the USA, and Nelson Mandela of South Africa.[142]

The Zimbabwean leadership has a lot to learn from the former South African President Nelson Mandela. It is reported that when Mandela became President in 1994, he undertook to

---

[142] Examples drawn from the biblical story of Nehemiah for this thesis have been used in order to conscientise the leadership in the unity government in Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean citizens at large to emulate his individual contribution in challenging fellow governors as well as his works of charity by donating food to the hungry. But there are other examples. The famous story of Martin Luther King Jr (USA) and his contribution in the emancipation of the marginalised African Americans has become an inspiring story of individual integrity and acumen from which many Africans, as well as academics, draw lessons in their political and theological discourses which are streamlined towards liberation. Secondly, Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison at Robben Island for his fight against apartheid in South Africa. Mandela was released on 11 Feb 1990. For many people, Mandela has emerged as a true beacon of justice and freedom. For Martin Luther King Jr of the USA and Nelson Mandela of SA.

donate one-third of his salary (i e, R150 000) to the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund which was established to address the needs of marginalised youth.[143] In Zimbabwe, the food crisis from 2000 to 2008 was extremely severe. Only organisations such as the World Food Programme (WFP) and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) salvaged the situation to prevent the crisis from turning into an actual famine. If the Zimbabwean leadership could emulate Mandela's salary donation and other charity initiatives, the burden of eradicating poverty and providing for those starving would be shared among a number of stakeholders.

Nehemiah as an individual was able to challenge the Judean governors to change their corrupt practices to work towards the betterment of the lives of communities. Nehemiah went further to provide food to the starving communities. Zimbabwe needs people like Nehemiah to stand up and challenge the leadership in government to work towards alleviating starvation and poverty among the majority of Zimbabweans and to expose and unravel corruption among government ministers. One example of a "Nehemiah" is Roy Bennett, who, upon his release from the notorious Chikurubi Maximum Prison in Harare (Zimbabwe), was critical of the living conditions experienced by inmates at the prison. Bennett lashed out that, "The inhumanity with which the prisoners are treated and their total lack of recourse to any representation or justice combined with the filth and stench of daily life is something I will never forget and I will not rest until their conditions are improved."[144] Bennett was released from prison on 28 June 2005, after serving 8 months. Since September 2009, Bennett has been living in exile in South Africa.

---

[143] President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. s n 1998. *Office of the President* Aug. Online: chttp://virtualology.com/worldleaders/NELSONRMANDELA.NET/. Accessed 25 Jan 2013.

[144] See, Bennett, R s a. Wikipedia. Online: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Bennett_ (politician). Accessed 14 Aug 2012.

4 PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

For further research, the following propositions are presented:

4.1 Use of archaeological evidence

The use of archaeological evidence (or artifactual evidence[145]) is critical in an academic endeavour to support the claim by the biblical text. This study does not claim to have exhausted archaeological data on the discussion of the political and socio-economic contexts in postexilic Judah. For example, more *archaeological evidence* has shed light on how the postexilic Judean community conducted their political and socio-economic lives. Further study is needed to investigate this aspect, taking new material data into account.

4.2 Critical interpretation of the biblical text for the African readership

The study of Old Testament historiography has largely been explored philosophically by academics and biblical experts in isolation from the socio-economic and political realities of the African people most of whom read the Bible regularly. The fact that African cultural, moral and ethical lifestyles are neither represented nor mentioned in the Bible—even though most Africans

---

[145] Max Miller warns that although artifactual evidence is a good source for clarifying the material culture of times past, it is a very poor source of information about specific people and events because "the stones don't lie, because they don't say anything." Artifactual data typically are neutral on historical matters and subject to a range of interpretations. For more information, see Miller, M 1987. Old Testament history and archaeology. *Biblical Archaeologist*, Mar, 59.

read the Bible every day—further allienates them from some "good" teachings of the Bible pertaining their every day life. As it is now, the Old Testament narratives are read for their spirituality and not for understanding them for one's broader political and socio-economic contexts. I categorically propose that if the Old Testament is to be understood for its worth, researchers and academics should endeavour to appropriately undertake their scientific and critical investigations in order to assist the general reader to make sense of the Bible in his/her own context. The *hermeneutics of appropriation* used in this study was an endeavour to appropriate the *themes* (e g, political and socio-economic situations in Yehud) as depicted within the Judean postexilic literature, for the Zimbabwean postcolonial context. A postcolonial reading of the Judean postexilic literature was informed by the political and socio-economic experiences of the Zimbabwean people during the postcolonial era. Although the biblical story does not provide clearcut answers for every problem, it at least served as a stimulus to search authentically for answers in the present context, taking general values and principles that persisted in ancient Judah into account.

4.3   Further investigation on the Jewish political freedom

This study has argued that genuine peace and freedom did not prevail in Yehud, even though the Judeans were restored in their land; both the Persians and the Judean governors exploited and discriminated against the poor of society. Further research is needed in order to establish whether the Jews were able to achieve and sustain the quality of life associated with "freedom" during the periods that followed (e g, Hellenistic period 333–63 BCE), and even after the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948. In other words, future research may need to respond to the

following question: Can freedom ever be achieved or is the search for it an ongoing process?

4.4   Further research to re-kindle Old Testament scholarship in Zimbabwe

In my view, Old Testament scholarship in Zimbabwe—entailing critical exegesis of the biblical text—does not feature as it should. This assession is supported by lack of contributions by Old Testament scholars in accredited international journals.[146] The following observations suffice as possible answers to this scenario.

First, it appears Old Testament scholarship in Zimbabwe is in the "silent" or "dormant" period. This vacuum creates some "appetite" to uplift Old Testament scholarship in the country. One way of undertaking such an endeavour is to encourage a culture of writing, beginning at University level. The other way is to propose the founding of a local journal or society, such as the title: The Old Testament Society of Zimbabwe (OTSZ) or the Zimbabwe Society of Biblical Studies (ZSBS). Through this institution, Old Testament scholars are obliged to meet once a year to read papers and to discuss important topics pertaining to the Old Testament. On the other hand, my own future research (e g, postdoctoral, peer-reviewed articles) will attempt to narrow this gap.

Second,   critical Old Testament scholarship in Zimbabwe has been "invaded" by the proliferation of *bogus* theological colleges or universities which offer so-called degrees

---

[146] In recent years, articles by Zimbabwean Old Testament scholars have not featured in journals such as: *Old Testament Essays*, *Journal for Semitics*, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament,* among others. By way of an example, Ezra Chitando has written remarkable works in some journals on various themes; however, his strength appears to be generally in Religious Studies and Theology. For one of Ezra Chitando's works, see Chitando, E 2010. Equipped and ready to serve? Transforming theology and religious studies in Africa. *Missionalia* 38/2, 197-210.

(*madegree epasi pomuti*[147]) in theology or Biblical Studies, operating under the auspices of tertiary education in Zimbabwe. It has been established that the majority of the teaching staff at some of these institutions does not meet the basic requirements for recruitment and appointment, such as sufficient evidence of teaching/research experience at a tertiary institution or college of higher education in their field of specialisation. Most of these theological colleges do not stress on specific entry requirements to be accepted for study in different categories of programmes/courses offered. This indicates a strong bias towards the financial aspect on the part of the institution as the main focus for its establishment. Production of knowledgeable graduates who would contribute in developing society, poverty alleviation, or make a significant contribution in critical scholarship is taken for granted. A thrust towards research is taken lightly.

Most of these Bible colleges are church-oriented, making them centres of learning for prospective students whose main aim is to do "preaching" to the bruised corpus of parishioners who always turn to the Bible for answers. Emphasis on critical thinking in view of their political and socio-economic circumstances is usually not part of the curriculum.

It is my personal proposal that the government of Zimbabwe evaluates its criterion for issuing operating licences to these colleges/universities—whose formation and orientation are broad-based—so that only credible institutions of higher education can establish such centres in Zimbabwe.

In my future research, I intend to explore that credible Master's and Doctorate

---

[147] *Madegree a epasi pomuti* is a Shona phrase which means "degrees which can be obtained anywhere, even under a tree in the bush." Such "degrees" are not earned qualifications. In Zimbabwe, a degree can be obtained at any private college, some within a short period such as six months or one year. Quite often, no formal entry qualification is required, thereby reducing a degree to just a piece of paper. Some of the graduates from these colleges/universities are recycled into the system as part of the teaching staff.

dissertations and theses can only be supervised by qualified and experienced practitioners in order to produce Old Testament students capable of contributing towards critical biblical scholarship. In my view, excellence in Old Testament scholarship can only prevail in the context of the credibility of the institution, entry requirements and the quality of staff.

5   APPENDICES

5.1   Appendix 1: Letter of consent

Dear Respondent

As a doctorate student at UNISA, I am carrying out a research study for my thesis on the title: *Appropriating Judean postexilic literature in a postcolonial discourse: A case for Zimbabwe*. So I intend to collect information through the use of questionnaires. The investigation is particularly modelled for chapter 4 (a reformulated version of chapter 5) about Zimbabwe on the heading, *Reconstruction and economic development in the post-2008 era in Zimbabwe*: *Nehemiah's initiatives as examples*; it is an attempt to gather primary sources for the chapter. Primary sources are vital materials on which this research is based because they usually originate from the place and time period involved. Primary sources present original thinking, report a discovery, or share new information. You are therefore requested to be as "original" as you can and provide information based on your independent viewpoint.

Declaration: Please note that the details you will provide are required for research purposes <u>only</u> and your contribution will be reflected in the thesis. For security reasons and a question of confidentiality, your name will be treated as anonymous {ie nothing like Johnson (2011) said....}. However, your name will appear in the acknowledgement section, in which no information related to a specific contributor is categorically mentioned. Questions arising from any anonymous information remain the sole responsibility of the researcher.

Allow me to thank you in advance for participating in the interviews for my research study. If you have any questions regarding the completion of this questionnaire, please contact me using the following details:

Name of Researcher	: Temba Rugwiji (Rev)
Position	: Doctorate Student
Student Number	: 34879498
Institution/Location	: University of South Africa (UNISA)
Programme/Degree	: Doctor of Literature and Philosophy
Course/Area of Study	: Biblical Studies (Old Testament)
Thesis Title	: *Appropriating Judean postexilic literature in a postcolonial discourse: A case for Zimbabwe*
Contact Details – Cell	: 0843465948
– Email/s	: rugwit@unisa.ac.za/ rugwiji@yahoo.com
Promoter/Supervisor	: Prof E Scheffler

PLEASE SUBMIT THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE BY 30 APRIL 2011.

5.2   Appendix 2: Research questionnaire

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

PERSONAL DETAILS OF RESPONDENT

Name:
Position/Capacity:
Business Division:

CONTACT DETAILS

Telephone:
Email:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

PART A

Questions 1–8: Please type your response in the spaces provided.

PART B

Questions 9–17: Please show your rating by placing a cross (X) in the relevant box.

PART A

1. Civil strife is common among African nations emerging from colonialism or imperialism. To what would you attribute this scenario?

2. "Tyranny is difficult to eradicate in the developing world, particularly in Africa." Is this hypothesis correct? Support your view.

3. Politics is the most extenuating factor that derails development among communities in Africa. Briefly explain.

4. Many Zimbabweans went to live in Diaspora (e g South Africa). How would you explain South Africa's reaction to foreigners in view of xenophobia?

5. What mechanisms could be employed for the possibility of a democratically elected government in Zimbabwe?

6. In your own words, how would you describe the phrase *peace and national transformation* in Zimbabwe?

7. What are your views on foreign policy and international trade in Zimbabwe?

8. In brief, outline some prerequisites towards development in Zimbabwe.

PART B

9. How would you describe the political situation in Zimbabwe if the opposition (e g MDC) wins the presidential election?　　Stable ☐　Violent ☐　Deny Results ☐

10. In your opinion will the army, the police and the judiciary recognize the opposition leadership in Zimbabwe?　Yes ☐　　No ☐ Possibility of Military Rule ☐

11. If ZANU–PF wins the presidential election in future, would the economic environment in Zimbabwe improve?　　　　　　Yes ☐　　　No ☐ To Get Worse ☐

12. Do you think targeted sanctions have generally had a negative impact on the economy of Zimbabwe?　　　　　Yes ☐　No ☐　　　To some extent ☐

13. How long do you think it will take the Zimbabwean economy to begin stabilizing again?

5 years ☐   10 years ☐   15 years ☐

14. How would you describe the state of roads, buildings, schools, hospitals and

public facilities in Zimbabwe?   Bad ☐   Worse ☐   Worst ☐

15. What do you think is the state of food security and other social amenities in Zimbabwe

after GNU?   Scarce ☐   Abundant ☐   Not enough ☐

16. What would you say is the state of the following sectors in Zimbabwe after GNU?

Education:	Improved ☐	Not Improved ☐	Worsened ☐
Employment:	Improved ☐	Not Improved ☐	Worsened ☐
Health:	Improved ☐	Not Improved ☐	Worsened ☐
Housing:	Improved ☐	Not Improved ☐	Worsened ☐

17. How would you rate the poverty of the majority of people in Zimbabwe?

Poor ☐   Very Poor ☐   Extremely Poor ☐

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Temba Rugwiji (Rev): Researcher

4 April 2011.

Key:

MDC   = Movement for Democratic Change

GNU   = Government of National Unity

ZANU (PF)   = Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front

5.3   Appendix 3: Pseudonyms of respondents

Carlson Feb 2012

Crowell Feb 2012

Donaldson June 2011

Farai June 2011

Kingsley June 2011

Kohn June 2011

Kundai June 2011

Levison June 2011

Madison Feb 2012

Madzimambo June 2011

Salem June 2011

Riveridge June 2011

Shandai Feb 2012

Simpleton June 2011

Simukai June 2011

Tamuka June 2011

Templeton Feb 2012

Thompson June 2011

6   BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abraham, K 1982. *From race to class*. London: Grassroots.

Achtemeier, E 1982. *The community and message of Isaiah 56–66*. Minneapolis: Augsburg.

Ackroyd, P R 1968. *Exile and restoration*. Philadelphia: Westminster.

Adamo, D T 1989. Understanding the Genesis account in an African background. *Caribbean Journal of Religious Studies* 10(2), 17-25.

Adamo, D T 2001. *Reading and interpreting the Bible in African indigenous churches*. Eugene, OR: WIPF and Stock.

Adamo, D T 2010. The Deuteronomist(s)' interpretation of exilic suffering in an African perspective. *Old Testament Essays* 3(1), 9-27.

Ahlström, G W 1984. The travels of the ark: A religio-political composition. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43/2, 141-149.

Albright, W F 1965. *The biblical period from Abraham to Ezra*. New York: Harper and Row.

Allegro, M J 1971. *The chosen people: A study of Jewish history from the time of the exile until the revolt of Bar Kocheba*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Annan, K s a. Diversity of migrants. Online: http://www.migrationeducation.org/countryprofiles.0.html. Accessed 2 July 2012.

Anchor Bible Dictionary = ABD s v 'Remnant': 669.

Another hitch in Zim constitution campaign. s n 2010. *The Star* 22 Jan, p4.

Archer, J L 1990. Bound by blood: Circumcision and menstrual taboo in postexilic Judah. No pages. Online: http://www.womenpriests.org/theology/archer .asp. Accessed 21 May 2011.

Ariely, G 2011. Exloring citizenship spheres of inclusion/exclusion: Rights as "potential power" *Patterns of Prejudice* 45(3), 241-258.

Ashton, M 1992. *The exiles return*. Worcester: Billing and Sons.

Assis, E 2008. The temple in the book of Haggai. *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* Vol 8/19: 2-10.

A third of Zim jobs lost since land crisis. s n 2002. *Citizen* 7 Jan, p24.

Atkinson, K 1997. On further defining the first-century CE synagogue: Fact or fiction? A rejoinder to H C Kee. *New Testament Studies* (NTS) 43, 491-502.

Austin, B, Balance, R, DeMott, N, and Nall, P 1998. *Adult formations: Learners study guide*. Macon: Smyth and Helwys.

Bakon, S 2003. Exile and return. *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 31(2), 1-8.

Balentine, S E 1996. The politics of religion in the Persian period, in Barton, J and Reimer, D J (eds), *After the exile: Essays in honour of Rex Mason*, 129-146. Macon: Mercer University Press.

Banana, C 1979. The biblical basis for liberation struggle. *International Review of Missions* 68(272), 417-423.

Banda, Z J 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Barclay, P 2010. *Zimbabwe: Years of hope and despair*. London: Bloomsbury.

Beach, B N 1979. 'Chimurenga': The Shona rising of 1896–97. *The Journal of African History* 20(3), 395-420.

Bennett, R s a. *Wikipedia*. Online: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Bennett_ (politician). Accessed 14 Aug 2012.

Berlin, A 2005. Psalms and the literature of exile: Psalms 137, 44, 69 and 78, in Flint, P W and Miller, P D, Jr (eds), *The book of Psalms: Composition and reception,* 65-86. Boston: Brill.

Berquist, J 1995. *Judaism in Persia's shadow: A social and historical approach*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Betlyon, J W 1986. The provincial government of Persian period Judea and the Yehud coins. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105(4), 633-642.

Betlyon, J W 2005. A People Transformed Palestine in the Persian period. *Near Eastern Archaeology 68(1/2), 4-58.*

Bimha, A 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Binza, S M 2007. South African government policies: Towards combating poverty and exclusion. *Joernaal Eietydse Geskiedenis* 1 Dec, 4-5.

Blake, R 1977. *A history of Rhodesia*. London: Eyre Methuen

Blair, D 2008. How to rebuild Zim after Mugabe. *The Star* 3 Apr, p15.

Blenkinsopp, J 1988. *Ezra-Nehemiah: A commentary*. Philadelphia: Westminster.

Blenkinsopp, J 1992. *The Pentateuch: An introduction to the first five books of the Bible*. New York: Doubleday.

Bloch, A 2008. Zimbabweans in Britain: Transitional activities and captivities. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 34(2), 287-305.

Blum, E 1990. *Studien zur komposition des Pentateuch*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Bogdan, R C 1972. *Participant observation in organised group settings*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

Bookholane, L 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Borg, I and Shye, S 1995. *Facet theory: Form and content*. London: Sage.

Boshoff, W, Scheffler, E H and Spangenberg, I (eds) 2006. Preface, in *Ancient Israelite literature in context*, 9. Pretoria: Protea.

Boshoff, W 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Bosman, H L 2009. The Sabbath as a marker of identity due to the reinterpretation of the Pentateuch during the exile. A Paper read at the *ProPent* Congress, Pretoria. Aug 2009.

Bourne, R 2011. *Catastrophe: What went wrong in Zimbabwe?* London: Zed Books.

Briant, P 2002. *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Trans. Peter T. Daniels. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Bright, J 1972. *A history of Israel.* 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Westminster.

Brockington, L H (ed) 1969. *Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther*. London: Thomas Nelson and Sons.

Browne, L E 1951. *From Babylonia to Bethlehem*. Cambridge: Heffer and Sons.

Brueggemannn, W 1982. *The creative word: Canon as a model for biblical education*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Brueggemannn, W 1985. *Hopeful imagination*. Philadelphia: Fortress.

Brueggemannn, W 1997. *Cadences of home: Preaching among exiles*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.

Bryne, T 1988. *Working for justice and peace: A practical guide*. Ndola: Ndola Mission Press.

Buckley, S L 2000. *Teachings on usury in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.

Buhlmann, W 1982. *The chosen peoples*. Middlegreen: St Paul Publications.

Bukaliya, R and Mubika, A K 2011. Teacher competence in ICT: Implications for computer

education in Zimbabwean schools. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education* 1(4), 414-425.

Campbell, A F 1979. Yahweh and the ark: A case study in narratives. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98(1), 31-43.

Cardascia, G 1988. Babylonia under Achaemenids, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica* Vol. 3. London: Routledge.

Cartwright, C 2004. Reviews. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 136(1), 88-89.

Castle, G 2001. Glossary, in Castle, G (ed), *Postcolonial discourses: An anthology*, 502-510. Malden: Blackwell.

Cataldo, J W 2009. *A theocratic Yehud? Issues of government in a Persian period*. New York: T and T Clark.

Chakaipa, P 1959. *Karikoga gumiremiseve*. Salisbury: Longman.

Chakaipa, P 1961. *Pfumo reropa*. Salisbury: Longman.

Chakaipa, P 1966. *Rudo ibofu*. Gwelo: Mambo Press.

Chalker, L 1991. *Good governance and the aid programme*. London: Overseas Development Administration.

Chamboko, M 2011. Has Zimbabwe diaspora been neglected? Online: http://nehandaradio.com/2011/08/15/has-the-zimbabwe-diaspora-been-neglected/. Accessed 10 June 2012.

Chimhanda, F 2009. Church involvement in the transition to democracy in postcolonial Zimbabwe (1980–2008). *Studia Historiae Ecclesiaticae* XXXV(1), 103-119.

Chimhanda, H F and Dube, A 2011. Postelection violence in Zimbabwe (2008-2010): The agency of the Roman Catholic Church in national healing and democracy. *Missionalia* 39/3, 268-285.

Chipangura, W 2005. Zimbabwe becomes inhospitable as crisis worsens and people have nowhere to run. *Moto Mirror* 262. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Chirovamavi, M 2011. Interview author. Harare, Zimbabwe.

Chitando, E 2010. Equipped and ready to serve? Transforming theology and religious studies in Africa. *Missionalia* 38(2), 197-210.

Chung, F 2006. *Re-living the second the chimurenga: Memories from the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Clelland-Stokes, N 2002. SA does not need a jet. *Business Sunday* 8 Aug, p12.

Clements, R E 1965. *God and the temple.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Clements, R E 1965. Deuteronomy and the Jerusalem cult-tradition. *VT* 15, 300-312.

Clements, R E 1968. *God's chosen people: A theological interpretation of the book of Deuteronomy*. London: SCM.

Clines, D J A 1984. *Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Cohen, S J D 2005. *Why aren't Jewish women circumcised? Gender and covenant in Judaism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Compagnon, D 2011. *A predictable tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the collapse of Zimbabwe*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Cone, J H 2000. Black liberation theology and black Catholics: A critical conversation. *Theological Studies* 61(14), 731-747.

Coogan, M D 2011. *Old Testament: A historical and literary introduction to the Hebrew Scriptures*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Crawford, H 2007. Architecture in the Babylonian period, in Leick, G (ed), *The Babylonian world*, 81. London: Routledge.

Crowley, A 1923. *Aramaic papyri of the fifth Century BCE*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Dada, A O 2010. Repositioning contextual biblical hermeneutics in Africa towards holistic empowerment. *Black Theology: An International Journal* 8(2), 160-174.

Dandamaev, M A and Lukonin, V G 1989. *The culture and social institutions of ancient Iran*, tr by P L Kohl. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Daniels, L 1994. *Changes in the small-scale enterprise sector from 1991 to 1993: Results of a second nationwide survey in Zimbabwe. GEMINI Technical Report* No.71. Bethesda, MD: Development Alternatives, Inc.

Daniels, L 2003. Factors that influenced expansion of microenterprise sector: Results from three national surveys in Zimbabwe. *Journal of International Development* 15, 675-692.

Daphne, J 1998. Getting South Africa working. *Naledi Policy Bulletin* 1(2), Apr, s a.

Daube, D 1963. *The exodus pattern in the Bible*. London: Faber and Faber.

DAVI and UNHCR 2012. Davi scholarship programme. Online: http://www.nwu.ac.za/webfm_send/56280. Accessed 2 July 2012.

Davies, P R 1975. Ark or Ephod in 1 Samuel 14:18. *JTS* 26, 83.

Davies, G 1999. *Ezra and Nehemiah*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.

De Gruchy, J W and Villa-Vicencio, C 1994. *Doing theology in context: South African perspective*. Cape Town: D. Philip

Denscombe, M 1998. *The good researcher guide: For small scale-scale social research projects*.

Buckingham: Open University Press.

De Vaux, R 1965/73. *Ancient Israel: Its life and institutions*. Darton: Longman and Todd.

Dobson, J 1993. *Holding on to hope when God doesn't make sense*, 27. Wheaton: Tyndale House.

Dooley, D 1995. *Social research methods*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Dorman, R S 2003. NGOs and the constitutional debate in Zimbabwe: From inclusion to exclusion. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 29(4), 845-863.

Dozeman, T B and Schmid, K (eds) 2006. *A farewell to the Yahwist? The composition of the Pentateuch in recent European interpretation*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature.

Drazin, N 1940. *History of Jewish education from 215 BCE to 220* CE. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.

Dube, M W 2000. *Postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible*. St. Louis: Chalice Press.

Dube, M W 2002. Jesse Mugambi is calling us to move from liberation to reconstruction! A postcolonial feminist response. Paper presented at a symposium at the University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Dube, G, Chifera, I and Rusere, P 2010. Zimbabwe's Finance Minister Biti unveils 2011 budget, anchoring economic growth to political stability. No pages. Online: http://www.voanews.com/zimbabwe/news/Zimbabwes-Finance-Minister-Biti-Unveils-2011-Budget-Anchoring-Economic-Growth-to-Political-Stability.html. Accessed 2 Sept 2011.

Duerksen, P D 1988. Canaan as a land of milk and honey. A study of the evaluative descriptions of Israel's land. PhD thesis, Drew University, Madison.

Du Plessis, M and Ford, J 2008. Justice and peace in a new Zimbabwe: Transitional justice options. *Institute for Security Studies* 164, 1-20.

Du Preez, M 2008. A TRC could help Zim pick up the pieces. *The Cape Argus* 18 Sept, p19.

Dzingirai, V 2009. The impact of political crisis on natural resources: A case study of Zimbabwe. *Africa Insight* 39(3), 23-37.

Edelman, D 2005. *The origins of the second temple: Persian imperial policy and the rebuilding of Jerusalem*. London: Equinox.

Eph'al, J 1988. Syria-Palestine under Achaemenid rule, in *Cambridge ancient history* IV. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fabricius, P 2012. SADC blocks Mugabe's fast-track poll: Zimbabwean leader in an attempt to bypass election conditions spelt out in political agreement. *Sunday Independent* 3 June, p8.

Farisani, B E 2002. The ideologically biased use of Ezra-Nehemiah in a quest for an African theology of reconstruction. *Old Testament Essays* 15(3), 628-646.

Farisani, B E 2003. The use of Ezra-Nehemiah in a quest for an African theology of reconstruction. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 116, 27-50.

Farisani, B E 2010. Black biblical hermeneutics and ideologically aware reading of texts. *Scriptura* 105, 507-518.

Farisani, B E 2011. The Naboth vineyard story (1 Kings 21) and poverty eradication, in Scheffler, E H and Van Heerden, W (eds), *The Bible and the eradication of poverty: Biblical Studies – Old Testament* (Tutorial Letter OTS2604/501/3/2011), 61-72. University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Farnen, R F 1994. *Nationalism, ethnicity, and identity: cross-national and comparative perspectives*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Feldman, M S, Sköldberg, K and Horner, D 2004. Making sense of stories: A rhetorical approach to narrative analysis. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 14(2), 147-170.

Finkelstein, I 2008. Jerusalem in the Persian (and early Hellenistic) period and the wall of Nehemiah. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32(4), 501-520.

Foss, K 2009. Jenny's call to help Zimbabwe answered. *The Star* 23 Jan, p6.

Frankel, R M, Devers, K J and Kelly, J 2000. Qualitative research: A consumer guide. *Change and Practice* 13(1), 1-8.

Frankenberg, R and Mani, L 1993. Crosscurrents, crosstalk: Race, 'postcoloniality' and politics of location. *Cultural Studies* 7(2), 292-310.

Freedom, D L and Abrams, R J Z 1999. *Illness and health in the Jewish tradition: writings from the Bible today*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.

Games, D 2006. A nation in turmoil: The experience of South African firms doing business in Zimbabwe. *South African Institute of International Affairs Business in Africa Report No.8*. Braamfontein: SAIIA.

Gathogo, J 2009. African theology of reconstruction as a practical theology for all. *Practical Theology for South Africa* 24, 99-121.

Gebbard, J S 2007. Power, economy and social organisation in Babylonia, in Leick, G (ed), *The Babylonian world*, 276. London: Routledge.

Gills, B K and Gray, K 2012. People power in the era of global crisis: Rebellion, resistance, and liberation. *Third World Quarterly* 33(2), 205-224.

Ginindza, B 2010. Zim, SA work on plan to lift cross-border tourism. *The Star* 19 Apr, p20.

Godwin, P 2011. *The Fear: Robert Mugabe and the Martyrdom of Zimbabwe*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Goldingay, J 2000. The significance of circumcision. *JSOT* 88, 3-18.

Goldingay, J 2003. *Introduction to the Old Testament: Israel's Gospel.* Vol I. Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity.

Gono, G 2008. *Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's monetary policy statement: Consolidating economic productivity and inflation stabilisation.* Online: http://www.afcast.org.zw/zimbabwe/ZimPL1977.htm. Accessed 13 June 2012.

Gono tells banks not to process Zimplats exports. s n 2012. *City Press* 27 May, p2.

Gottwald, K N 1985. *The Hebrew Bible. A socio-literary introduction to the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress.

Grabbe, L L 1992. *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian.* Vol. 1: *The Persian and Greek periods*. Minneapolis: Fortress.

Grabbe, L L 1998a. *Ezra - Nehemiah*. London: Routledge.

Grabbe, L L 1998b. *Old Testament readings*. London: Routledge

Grabbe, L L 2000. *Judaic religion in the second temple period: Belief and practice from the exile to Yavneh*. London: Routledge.

Grabbe, L L 2008. *A history of the Jews and Judaism in the second temple period*. London: T and T Clark.

Gray, J 1964. *The Canaanites*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Green, S and Nieman, A 2003. Social development: Good practice guidelines. *Social Work/Maatskaaplike Werk* 39(2), 161-181.

Grubb, N W and Ryan, P 1999. *The roles of evaluation for vocational education and training: Plain talk on the field dreams*. Geneva: ILO.

Hachlili, R 1997. The origin of the synagogue: A re-assessment. *Journal of the Study of Jud*aism, XXVIII, 34-47.

Hadjor, K B 1992. The Penguin Dictionary of third world terms. London: Penguin.

Hall, S 1996. When was 'the postcolonial'? Thinking at that limit, in Chambers, I and Curti, L (eds), *The postcolonial question: Common skies, divided horizons*, 242-260. New York: Routledge.

Hamilton, J R 1973. *Alexander the Great*. London: Hutchinson.

'Hands off Zimbabwe,' Mugabe tells Blair. s n 2002. *Staff and agencies* 2 Sept, s a.Online: http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2002/sep/02/greenpolitics.Zimbabwenews. Accessed 7 June 2012.

Hansen, H B 2011. Donors and the crisis in Zimbabwe: Experiences and lessons learned, in Besada 2011: 247-268.

Hanson, P D 1987. Israelite religion in the early postexilic period, in Miller, P, Hanson, P D and McBride, D (eds), *Ancient Israelite religion,* 485-508. Philadelphia: Fortress.

Har-El, M 1981. Jerusalem and Judea: Roads and fortifications. *The Biblical Archaeologist* 44(1), 8-19.

Hazvina, F, Zivengwa, T, and Makochekanwa, A 2010. Zimbabwe: The 11th province of South Africa – From one form of domination to another: A horse and rider relationship. *Journal of Strategic Studies* 1(1), 81-102.

Hesselgrave, D 1991. *Communicating Christ cross-culturally*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Heyns, D 1992. Time and reality: Science in dialogue with the prophet Amos, in Wessels, W and

Scheffler, E H (eds), *Old Testament science and reality*, 257-276. Pretoria: Verba Vitae.

History will judge ageing Mugabe as people's oppressor. s n 2012. *The Times* 22 Feb, p14.

Hoffman, L A 1996. *Covenant of blood*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Hoffmeier, K J 1997. *Israel in Egypt: The evidence for the authenticity of the exodus tradition.*
New York: Oxford University Press.

Hoglund, K 1992. *Achaemenid imperial administration in Syria-Palestine and the missions of
Ezra and Nehemiah*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

Holland, H 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Holloway, I and Wheeler, S 1998. *Qualitative research for nurses*. London: Blackwell Science.

Holmgren, F C 1987. *Ezra and Nehemiah: Israel alive again*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Holter, K 2002. *Old Testament research for Africa: A critical analysis and anonatated
bibliography of African Old Testament dissertations*, *1967−2000*. New York: Peter Lang.

Hopkins, D N 1989. *Black theology: USA and South Africa – Politics, culture, and liberation.*
New York: Orbis.

Hopkins, D N 1999. *Introducing black theology of liberation*. Maryknoll: Orbis.

Housier, R 1998. *Counselling and educational research – Evaluation and application*. Thousand
Oaks: Sage

Howard-Hassmann, R E 2010. Mugabe's Zimbabwe, 2000–2009: Massive human rights
violations and the failure to protect. *Human Rights Quarterly* 32(4), 898-920.

Ile, I U 2008. Civil society and citizen participation in governance processes in Zimbabwe.
Journal of Public Administration 43(2), 124-140.

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), The 2009. Report of a Conference on Engaging

Zimbabwes in the Diaspora Towards Economic Reconstruction held at Le Franschhoek Hotel, Franschhoek, Cape Town, South Africa.

Isa, M 2007. Why business is booming. *Financial Mail* 30 Mar, s a.

Jacobs, M, Grady, R and Bolnick, A D, 2012. Current circumcision trends and guidelines, in Bolnick, A D, Koyle, M and Yoshua, A (eds), *Surgical guide to circumcision*, 3-8. London: Springer

Janzen, D 2002. Politics, settlement, and temple community in Persian-period Yehud. *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 64, 490-510.

Jesse, A 1999. Self-employment and social security: A literature survey. *International Social Security Review* 52(1), 3-5.

Jewish Encyclopaedia, s v 'usury.' Online:

http://www. jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14615-usury. Accessed 1 Feb 2012.

Johnson, A R 1970. Psalm 23 and the household of faith, in Durham, J J and Porter, J R (eds), *Proclamation and presence: Old Testament essays in honour of Gwynne Henton Davies*, 255-271. Richmond: John Knox Press.

Joliffe, F R 1986. *Survey designs and analysis*. Chichester: Ellis Horwood.

Kanael, B 1963. Ancient Jewish coins and their historical importance. *The Biblical Archaeologist* 26(2), 37-62.

Kanyenze, G et al 2011. *Beyond the enclaves: Towards a pro-poor and inclusive development strategy for Zimbabwe*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Karombo, T 2012. Zimbabwe squeezes implants to forfeit stake in Mimosa. *Business Day* 21 Feb, p16.

Kaufmann, Y 1970. *The Babylonian captivity and Deutero-Isaiah, history of the religion of Israel* Vol 4, 5. New York: Union of the American Hebrew Congregations.

Kearney, R 1996. Introduction, in Kearney, R (ed), *Paul Ricoeur: The hermeneutics of action,* 1. London: Sage.

Kee, H C 1990. The transformation of the synagogue after 70 CE: Its import for early Christianity. *NTS* 36, 1-24.

Kelman, C H 2004. Reconciliation as identity change: A social-psychological perspective, in Bar-Siman-Tovi, Y (ed)**,** *From conflict resolution to reconciliation*, 111-124. New York: Oxford University Press

Kessler, K 2002. Building the second temple: Questions of time, text, and history in Haggai 1:1-15. *JOST* 27(2), 243-256.

Kessler, J 2007. Diaspora and homeland in the early Achaemenid period: Community, geography and demography in Zechariah 1-8, in Berquist, J L (ed)**,** *Approaching Yehud : new approaches to the study of the Persian period*, 137-166. Atlanta : Society of Biblical Literature.

Khuziwayo, W 2010. Imara sees imminent return to growth at Zim mines. *The Star* 10 Sept, p5.

Kidner, D 1979. *Ezra and Nehemiah: An introduction and commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity.

Killian, J 1989. *Form and style in theological texts: A guide for the use of the Harvard referencing system*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Kriger, N 2003. *Guerrilla veterans in the post-war Zimbabwe: Symbolic and violent politics, 1980-1987*. Cambidge: Cambridge University Press.

Kriger, N 2006. From patriotic memories to 'patriotic history' in Zimbabwe, 1990-2005. *Third World Quarterly* 27(6), 1151-1169

Kritzinger, J N J 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Kraabel, A T 1987. The Diaspora synagogues: Archaeological and epigraphic evidence since Sukenik. *ANRW* II.19/1, 477-510.

Kuhrt, A 1983. The Cyrus cylinder and Achaemenid imperial policy. *JSOT* 25, 83-97.

Kuimba, G 1963. *Gehena harinamoto.* Salisbury: Longman.

Kuimba, G 1965. *Tambaoga mwanangu.* Salisbury: Longman.

Kunhiyop, S W 2008. *African Christian ethics.* Nairobi: WordAlive.

Lamb, C 2007. Zimbabwe's top cleric urges Britain to invade. *The Sunday Times* (London). Online: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/africa/article2010591. Accessed 28 June 2008.

Lancaster, C 2007. *Foreign aid: Diplomacy, development, domestic politics.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Lang, B 1985. No God but Yahweh! The origin and character of biblical monotheism, in Geffre, C, Jossua, J P and Lefebure, M (eds), *Monotheism*, 41-49. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

Launderville, D 1989. *A comparative study of kingship in biblical Israel, homeric Greece, and Mesopotamia of the old Babylonian period.* Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Microfilms International.

Leeming, D 2004. *Jealous Gods and chosen people: The mythology of the Middle East.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Leftwich, A 1993. Governance, democracy and development in the Third World. *Third World Quarterly* 14(3), 605-624.

Lemche, N P 1993. The Old Testament – A Hellenistic Book? *SJOT* 7, 163-193.

Le Roux, M 2003. *The Lemba: A lost tribe of Israel in Southern Africa*. Pretoria: UNISA Press.

Le Roux, M 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Levine, L I A 1989. The age of Hellenism: Alexander the Great and the rise and fall of the Hasmonean kingdom, in Shanks, H (ed), *Ancient Israel from Abraham to the Roman destruction of the Temple*, 177-204. Washington, D C: Biblical Archaeology Society.

Levine, L I A 1996. The nature and origin of the Palestine synagogue reconsidered. *JBL* 115, 425-48.

Lieu, J M 1994. Circumcision, women and salvation. *New Testament Studies* 40, 358-370.

Lipton, M 2009. Understanding South Africa's foreign policy: The perplexing case of Zimbabwe. *South African Journal of International Affairs* 16(3), 331-346.

Little, D and Appleby, S 2004. A moment of opportunity? The promise of religious peace-building in an era of religious and ethnic conflict, in Coward, H G and Smith, G S (eds), *Religion and peacebuilding*, 1-23. Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Lloyd, J 2007. Two opponents of Mugabe. Against the grain: Memoirs of a Zimbabwean newsman by Geoffrey Nyarota; Citizen of Africa: Conversations with Morgan Tsvangirai by Stephen Chan. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33(3), 703-05.

Lucas, S and Timmer, P 2005. *Connecting the poor to economic growth: Eight key questions*. Washington, DC: Centre for Global Development.

Mabugu, J 1979. *Ndambakuudzwa akaonekwa nembonje*. Gwelo: Mambo Press.

Madhuku, L 2006. The appointment process of judges in Zimbabwe and its implications for the administration of justice. *SAPR/PL* 21, 345-369.

Mafu, T 2007. Zimbabwe food rush gives Musina Super Spar a 75% boost. *Business Report* 23 July, s a.

Mahanya, M 1976. *Rufu runobereka rufu*. Salisbury: Longman.

Makari, C 1971. *Sarura wako*. Salisbury: Longman.

Makari, C 1985/92. *Zvaida kushinga*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Makofane, MK 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Maluleke, T 1994. The proposal for theology of reconstruction: A critical appraisal. *Missionalia* 22(3), 245-258.

Maluleke, T 1996a. Black and African theologies in the new world order: A time to drink from our own Wells. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 96, 3-19.

Maluleke, T 1996b. Review of Mugambi, J N K. From liberation to reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers. *Missionalia* 24, 473.

Maluleke, T 1997. Half a century of African Christian theologies: Elements of the emerging agenda for the twenty-first century. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 99, 4-23.

Mambondiyani, A 2011. Chinese companies under scrutiny in Zimbabwe.

Online:

http://www.opendemocracy.net/andrew-mambondiyani/chinese-companies-under-scrutiny-in-zimbabwe. Accessed 29 June 2012.

Mamimine, s n. Environment and tourism in Zimbabwe since independence.

Online:

http://www.ossrea.net/index.php?ption=com_contentandview=articleandid=348. Accessed 29 Jan 2013.

Mangena, F 2009. Platonic justice and Zimbabwe's eight dark years of political polarization: Is

merit-based democracy tenable? *Phronimon* 10(1), 71-87.

Manjengwa, J M 2007. Problems reconciling sustainable development rhetoric with reality in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33(2), 307-323.

Manyonganise, M and Chirimuuta, C 2011. Christians' participation in politics in Zimbabwe: A privilege or right? *Missionalia* 39/3, 287-305.

Mapara, J 2003. The Bible and literature: A case of biblical influence in some Shona novels. MA thesis. University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Maposa, R S, Sibanda, F and Makahamadze, T 2011. African theology and identity: Reflections on Zion Christian Church experiences and responses to the Zimbabwean crisis, 2000-2010. *Missionalia* 39/3, 248-267.

Maré, L P 2010. Psalm 137: Exile – Not the time for singing the Lord Song. *Old Testament Essays* 23(1), 116-128.

Masenya (ngwana' Mphalele), M 2004. *How worthy is the woman of worth?: Rereading Proverbs 31:10-31 in African-South Africa*. New York: Peter Lang.

Masenya (ngwana' Mphalele), M 2010. Parental instruction in differing contexts: Using hermeneutical phenomenology to understand selected biblical and African proverbs. *Old Testament Essays* 23(3), 728-751.

Masenya (ngwana' Mphalele), M 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Mashavave, R s a. Zimbabwe unity government under threat. Online: http://inwent-iij-lab.org/Weblog/2009/10/20/zimbabwe-unity-government-under-threat/. Accessed 13 Aug 2012.

Mashayamombe, T 2009. ZANU (PF) militias disrupt food donations in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Online: http://www.zimeye.org/?p=10240. Accessed 11 July 2012.

Mashingaidze, T T 2005. The 1987 Zimbabwe National Unity Accord and its aftermath: A case of peace without reconciliation?, in Hendricks, C and Lushaba, L (eds), *From national liberation to democratic renaissance in Southern Africa*, 82-92. Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Mashingaidze, T T 2009. Zimbabwe's illusive national healing and reconciliation processes: From independence to the inclusive government: 1980-2009. *Conflict Trends* 19-27.

Masvingise, W 2011. New constitution ready in September. *The Financial Gazette* 7 Jan,

S a. Online:

http://www.financialgazatte.co.zw/top-stories/6809-new-constitution-ready-in-septem.

Accessed 13 Jan 2012.

Mathieu, D 2004. Male chauvinistic religion, in Sample, R J, Mills, C W and Sterba, J P (eds), *Philosophy: The big questions*, 190-200. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Maundeni, Z 2004. Why the African Renaissance is likely to fall: The case for Zimbabwe. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 22(2), 189-212.

Mauro, P 1995. Corruption and growth. *The Quarterly Journal of Economies* 110(3), 681-712.

Mavinga, J N 2011. Jeremiah's oracle: A contextual reading of 23:1-8 and 33:14-26 in the African leadership situation. *Old Testament Essays* 24(1), 118-141.

Mays, J L 1994. *Psalms* (interpretation). New York: John Knox.

Mbeki, T 2002. Southern African countries act to bring peace and stability to the region. *ANC Today* 2(3), 18-24 Jan, s a.

Mbiti, J 1970. *Concepts of God in Africa*. London: SPCK.

Mbohwa, C 2008. Operating a railway system within a challenging environment: Economic

history and experiences of Zimbabwe's National Railways. *Journal of Transport and Supply Chain Management* 25-40.

McDade, B E and Spring, A 2005. The new generation of African entrepreneurs: Networking to change the climate for business and private-sector led development. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* 17(1), 17-42.

McKay, H A 1998. Ancient synagogues: The continuing dialectic between two major views. *Currents in Research* 6, 103-142.

McNutt, P 1999. *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel*. London: SPCK.

Mdluli, A 2012. Retailers shrug off Harare order. *The Star* 10 Feb, p1.

Meagher, K 1995. Crisis, informalisation and the urban informal sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Development and Change* 26(2), 259-284.

Menocal, A R 2011. State building for peace: A new paradigm for international engagement in post-conflict fragile states? *Third World Quarterly* 32(10), 1715-1736.

Merafhe, M S 2007. Zimbabwe solution must be homegrown: Iinterviewed by Stephanie Hanson. Online: http://www.cfr.org/china/merafhe-zimbabwe-solution-must-homegrown/p14910. Accessed 7 June 2012.

Meredith, M 2008. *Mugabe: Power, plunder in the struggle for Zimbabwe*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball.

Merrill, H E 1991. *A biblical theology of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody.

Miller, J M and Hays, J H (ed) 1986. *A history of ancient Israel and Judah*. Philadelphia: Westminster.

Miller, M 1987. Old Testament history and archaeology. *Biblical Archaeologist*, March: 55-63.

Miller, L M 2010. Nehemiah 5: A response to the Philippe Guillaume. *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 10(13), 1-7.

Mills, N 2002. The language of slaughter, in Mills and Brunner 2002: 3-17.

Ministry of Agriculture. s a. Online:

http://www.afdevinfo.com/htmlreports/org/org_15123.html. Accessed 1 July 2012.

Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Management 2010. Zimbabwe's fourth

national report to the Convention on Biological Diversity. Online:

http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/zw/zw-nr-04-en.pdf. Accessed 24 June 2012.

Mitchem, S 2000. Sankofa: Black theologies. *Cross currents* 50(1and2), 177-184.

Mkodzongi, G 2011. Land, liberation and compromise in Southern Africa. *Review of African Political Economy* 38(128), 345-346.

Mlambo, E 1997. *The economic structural programme: The case of Zimbabwe, 1990–1995*. Harare: UZ Publications.

Mlambo, A 2006. Guerrilla veterans and the Third Chimurenga. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32(2), 406-408.

Mogashoa, H 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Moghalu, K 2008. Electoral conflicts in Africa: Is power-sharing the new democracy? *Conflict Trends* 4, 32-37.

Moltmann, J 1985. Inviting the triune of God, in Geffre, C, Jossua, J P and Lefebure, M (eds), *Monotheism*, 50-58. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

Moltmann-Wendel, E 1986. *A land flowing with milk and honey*. London: SCM.

Moore, C 2005. Mugabe to speak at hunger debate as he defies EU travel ban again. *The Telegraph* (London). Online:

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml? Accessed 13 Jan 2011.

Moore, D 2012. Progress, power and violent accumulation in Zimbabwe. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 30, 1-9.

Moore-Gilbert, B, Stanton, G and Maley, W (eds) 1997. *Postcolonial criticism*. London: Longman.

Moser, T 1997. The Old Testament anti-usury laws reconsidered: The myth of tribal brotherhood. *ETH/KOF Arbeitspapiere* Nr. 49, 1-9.

Moving forward in Zimbabwe: Reducing poverty and promoting growth. *Executive Summary* 12 Oct, p1-12.

Moyo, J 2009a. No relief for Zim until debt is paid up. *Mail and Guardian* 19 Mar, p12.

Moyo, J 2009b. Drafting a new Zim charter: Proposed Constitution may start another battle. *Mail and Guardian* 2 July, p14.

Moyo, J 2009c. Zim recovery takes a hit. *Mail and Guardian* 12 Nov, p20.

Moyo, S 2011. Land concentration and accumulation after redistributive reform in post-settler Zimbabwe. *Review of African Political Economy* 38/128, 257-276.

Muchemwa, M 2009. ZANU (PF) food taskforce plunders grain. Online: http://www.zimeye.org/?p=1599. Accessed 11 July 2012.

Mudimbe, V Y 1977. *The idea of Africa*. London: James Curry.

Mudzonga, E and Chigwada, T 2009.*Agriculture: Future Scenarios for Southern Africa – A Case Study of Zimbabwe's Food Security*. Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Mudzwiti, M 2010.Zim's MPs scramble for seats on gravy train. *The Times* 6 Jan, p8.

Mugabe: 'Let me keep my Zimbabwe.' s n 2002. *The Telegraph* 2 Sept, s a.

Online:

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1406028/Mugabe-Let-me-keep-my-Zimbabwe.html.

Accessed 8 Jan 2013.

Mugabe's costly Congo venture. s a. Online:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/611898.stm. Accessed 7 July 2012.

Mugabe's ZANU (PF) loses majority. s n 2008. *BBC News* 3 Apr, s a.

Mugambi, J N K 1991. The future of the church and the church of the future in Africa, in

Chipenda, J B, Karamaga, A, Mugambi, J N K and Omari, C K (eds), *The Church of
Africa: Towards a theology of reconstruction*. Nairobi: A.A.C.C.

Mugambi, J N K 1995. *From liberation to reconstruction*. Nairobi: East African Educational

Publishers.

Mugambi, J N K 2010. Theology of reconstruction, in Stinton, D B (ed), *African theology:
Current conversations*, 139-149. London: SPCK

Mugobo, V V 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Mungoshi, C 1975. *Ndiko kupindana kwamazuva*. Gwelo: Mambo Press.

Mungoshi, C 1983. *Kunyyarara hakusi kutaura*? Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House.

Muponde, R 2004. The worm and the hoe: Cultural politics and reconciliation after the third

chimurenga, in Raftopoulos, B and Savage, T (eds), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and political
reconciliation*, 176-192. Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.

Musendekwa, M 2011. Messianic expectations as prophetic responses to crises: A Zimbabwean

perspective. MTh thesis, University of Stellenbosch, Cape Town.

Musewe, V 2010.The lesson of Zim.*Warning*: SA shows the signs. The *Citizen* 23 Aug, p16.

Mutambara, T E 2010. Zimbabwe's trade: Implications for industrial development in the

Southern African Development Community Free Trade Area. *Journal for the Study of Economics and Econometrics* 34(1), 27-52.

Muzondidya, J 2011. The Zimbabwean diaspora: Opportunities and challenges for engagement in Zimbabwe's political development and economic transformation, in Murithi, T and Mawadza, A (eds), *Zimbabwe in transition: A view from within*, 112-158. Auckland Park: Fanele.

Mwalubunju, O and Otitodun, E 2011. Task of rebuilding Zimbabwe has just begun. *Business Day* 10 Oct, p9.

Mwaura, P N 2010. Christian identity and ethnicity in Africa: Reflections on the gospel of reconciliation, in Stinton, D B (ed), *African theology: Current conversations*, 128-138. London: SPCK.

Myers, J 1965. *Ezra, Nehemiah: Introduction, translation, and notes***,** AB 14. New York: Doubleday.

Ndaba, N 2011. De Beers, Zim diamond feud gets bloody. *City Press* 13 Nov, p3.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, J S 2009. Making sense of Mugabeism in local and global politics: 'So Blair, keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe.' *Third World Quarterly* 30(6),1139-1158.

Ndlovu, R 2011. Fears tighten screws on Zim business. *Mail and Guardian* 5 May, p17.

Ndlovu, R 2012a. Zim finance ministry moves to halt bank seizures. *City Press* 12 February, p5.

Ndlovu, R 2012b. Dark days ahead for Zim: Officials and ministers have run up huge electricity debts. *City Press* 19 Feb, p4.

Nel, R 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Neuman, W L. 2006. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston: Pearson.

Neusner, J 1965. *A history of the Jews in Babylonia*. Leiden: Brill.

New settlers slaughter impalas, kudus and warthogs. s n 2000. *The Herald* 19 Sept, s a.

Nhamo, S 2001. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Nkurunziza, J D 2008. A paper presented at the ninth annual global development conference on security for development: Confronting threats to safety and survival, 26 Jan to 2 Feb 2008 at the United Nations conference on trade and development (UNCTAD), Geneva, Switzerland. Online: http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Knowledge/30754226-FR-2.4.3-NKURUNZIZA-TUNIS.PDF. Accessed 1 Nov 2012.

No future for Zim while Mugabe stays in charge. s n 2008. *The Herald* 23 Dec, p4.

Noonan, B J 2011. Did Nehemiah own Tyrian goods? Trade between Judea and Phoenicia during the Achaemenid period. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130(2), 281-298.

Noth, M 1960. *The history of Israel,* tr by Peter R. Ackroyed. 2nd ed. New York: Harper and Row.

North, R 1969. The Chronicler: 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, in Brown, Fitzmyer and Murphy 1969: 402-438.

Nqindi, J 2012. Diamonds found on Zim farm. *Sunday Times* 24 June, p6.

Nsingo, S A M and Kuye, J O 2005. Democratic participation for service delivery in local government in Zimbabwe: Humanising structural configurations and legal provisions. *Journal of Public Administration* 40(4), 744-760.

Nurnberger, K 2003. God's mission practice: The struggle for liberation, dignity and justice in

African societies. *International Review of Mission* 92(367), 498-520.

Nyarota, G 2006. *Against the grain: Memoirs of the Zimbabwean newsman*. Cape Town: Zebra Press.

Olson, M and Pearson, F S 2002. Civil war characteristics, mediators, and resolution. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 19/(4), 421-446.

Omar, D 1998. Introduction to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Online: http://www.truth.org.za. Accessed 2 June 2012.

On land seizure. s a. *The constitution of Zimbabwe*: *Chapter III, Section 16*, p10. Online: http://www. Kubatana.net/docs/legisl/constitution_zim_000420.pdf. Accessed 13 Jan 2011.

Oosthuizen, N T 2002. Babel, Babble, and Babylonia. Reading Genesis 19:1-9 as myth. PhD thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria

Otto, E 2006. Old and New Covenant. A postexilic discourse between the Pentateuch and the book of Jeremiah. Also a study of quotations and allusions in the Hebrew Bible. *Old Testament Essays* 19(3), 939-949.

Parnell, S et al 2002. *Democratising local government: The South African experiment*. Cape Town: UCT Press.

Pasura, D 2009. Zimbabwean migrants in Britain: An overview. Online: http://migrationeducation.de/49.1.html?andrid=157andcHash=b9366be6eb00e22d84fc2d 9e8709e036. Accessed 2 July 2012.

Patai, R 1960. *Family, love and the Bible*. London: MacGibbon and Kee.

Patel, R et al 2002. *Voices of the poor: Can anyone help us?* New York: Oxford University Press.

Pazvakavambwa, S 2011. Addressing food security: A view from multicultural institutions, in Besada, H (ed), Zimbabwe*: Picking up the pieces*, 157-179. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pellissier, R 2011. Research design and questionnaire design. Presentations at a Research Directorate workshop, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Perspectives on exclusion and inequalities: A move towards democracy. s n 2007. *Joernaal Eietydse Geskiedenis* 1 Dec, 1.

Pienaar, H and Agencies 2008. Zim gets ready to walk into the future: Top African brass due at power-sharing signing today. *The Star* 15 Sept, p3.

Pithouse, R 2010. Poor unfairly branded as violent: The police, media and the middle class discriminate against society's poverty-stricken when they battle injustice. *The Daily News* 22 Oct, p15.

Pfeiffer, F C 1962. *Exile and return.* Grand Rapids: Baker.

Plaskow, J 1991. *Standing again at Sinai*. San Francisco: Harper.

Pleins, J D 1993. *The Psalms: Songs of tragedy, hope and justice*. Maryknoll: Orbis.

Pocket Oxford Dictionary (POD) s v 'Diaspora.'

POD s v 'grill.'

POD s v 'politics.'

POD s v 'usury.'

Poll frees Libya from grip of Gaddafi's dictatorship. s n 2012. *The Star* 9 July, p4.

Porter, B 1993. *Images, power and politics: Figurative aspects of Esarhaddon's Babylonian policy*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.

Powell, I and Thornycroft, P 2010. Zim diamonds are socked in blood: Locals used as slaves

as military ignores Kimberly requirements. *Sunday Independent* 12 Dec, p8.

President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. s n 1998. *Office of the President* August, s a. Online: chttp://virtualology.com/worldleaders/NELSONRMANDELA.NET/. Accessed 25 Jan 2013.

Pritchard, B J 1954. *The ancient Near East in pictures relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Purvis, J D 1999. Exile and return: From the Babylonian destruction to the reconstruction of the Jewish State, in Shanks, H (ed), *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman destruction of the Temple*,150-175. Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society.

Raath, Jan 2007. Weeds and wasted lives in Zim. *The Herald* 28 June, p6.

Raath, J 2008. Harare residents make do and use boreholes as water supply dries up. *The Herald* 8 Dec, p6.

Raftopoulos, B 2004. Current politics in Zimbabwe: Confronting the crisis, in Harold-Barry, D (ed), *Zimbabwe: The past is the future,* 1-18. Harare: Weaver Press.

Raitt, A T 1977. *A theology of exile.* Philadelphia: Fortres.

Ranis, G and Stewart, F 2000. Strategies for success in human development. *Journal of Human Development* 1(1), 49-69.

Ratheiser, M H G 2007. *Mitzvoth ethics and the Jewish bible: The end of Old Testament theology*. London: T and T Clark.

Ricoeur, P 1974. Conflict of interpretations, in Newton, K M (ed), *Twentieth century literary theory: A reader*, 60-63. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Ricoeur, P 1997. *Conflict of interpretations*, ed by Don Ihde. Northwestern University Press.

Riessman, C K 1993. *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage.

Ringgren, H 1963. *The faith of the psalmist*. London: SCM.

Riyano, L 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Roberson, M T and Sundstrom, E 1990. Qualitative design, return rates, and response favourableness in an employee attitutde questionnaire. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 75, 354-357.

Robert Mugabe: The survivor. s n 2008. *BBC News* 22 June, s a. Online: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3017678.stm. Accessed 17 Feb 2009.

Rogers, G 2002. Zim environment sustains millions. *The Herald* 14 March, p4.

Römer, T 2008. Moses outside the Torah and the construction of the diaspora identity. *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 8(15), 2-12.

Rugwiji, T 2008. Reading the exodus tradition from a Zimbabwean perspective. MA thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Rugwiji, T 2010. The function of the exodus motif in the biblical tradition. Paper read at *ProPent* research conference on the theme 'Pentateuch and Psalms,' Bass Lake Country Lodge, Pretoria.

Rugwiji, T 2012. *Reading the exodus liberation motif in the modern postbiblical world: The Zimbabwean society and the reality of oppression*. Saarbrücken: LAP Lambert Academic.

Rukuni, M and Eicher, C R (eds) 1994. *Zimbabwe's agricultural revolution*. Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Rutherford, B 2011. On the promise and perils of citicenship: Heuristic concepts, Zimbabwean example. *Citizenship Studies* 15(3-4), 499-512.

Sachs, J D and Warner, A M 1996. Sources of slow growth in African economies. *Journal of African Economies* 6(3), 335-376.

Sadomba, Z W 2009. Peasant occupations within war veterans-led land occupations: Grassroots conflicts and state reaction in Zimbabwe. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 36/2, 436-443.

Said, A A and Funk, N C. The role of faith in cross-cultural conflict resolution. Paper presented at the European Parliament for the European Centre for Common Ground, Sept 2001.

Sandu, N 2006. National Railways off track. Online: http://zimbabwesituation.com/jan16a_2006.html#Z17. Accessed 23 June 2012.

SAPA-DPA 2008. Zim blocks food relief charity. *The Star* 5 June, p5.

Saunders, R 2011. Zimbabwe: Liberation nationalism — old and born-again. *Review of African Political Economy* 38/127, 123-134.

Schader, J M 2010. A spatial reading of Psalms 46-48. *Old Testament Essays* 23(1), 139-160.

Schaper, J 1995. The Jerusalem Temple as an instrument of the Achaemenid fiscal administration. *Vetus Testamentum* 45(4), 528-539.

Scheepers, C 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Scheffler, E H 2001. *Politics in ancient Israel*. Pretoria: Biblia.

Scheffler, E H 2006a. Reading the Bible in context, in Boshoff, W, Scheffler, E H and Spangenberg, I (eds), *Ancient Israelite literature in context*, 11-17. Pretoria: Protea.

Scheffler, E H 2006b. Israel's pre-monarchical traditions (1250–1020 BCE), in Boshoff, W, Scheffler, E H and Spangenberg, I (eds), *Ancient Israelite literature in context*, 58-76. Pretoria: Protea.

Scheffler, E H 2006c. The exilic literature (586–539 BCE), in Boshoff, W, Scheffler, E H and Spangenberg, I (eds), *Ancient Israelite literature in context*, 142-167. Pretoria: Protea.

Scheffler, E 2007. Criticising political power: The challenge of Deuteronomy 17:14-20. *Old*

Testament Essays 20(3), 772-785.

Scheffler, E H 2011. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Schramm, B 1995. *The opponents of Third Isaiah: Reconstructing the cultic history of the restoration*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Schuller, E 1988. *prophets: Message of biblical spirituality*. Delaware: Michael Glazier Inc.

Schwartz, R 2001.*Coming to terms: Zimbabwe in the international arena*. London: I.B. Tauris Publishers.

Serfontein, J L 2012. An Old Testament perspective on imagining a changing society: Ezekiel as a case study. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Shaw, C S 1993. *The speeches of Micah. A rhetorical-historical analysis*. Sheffield: JSOT.

Sibanda, T 2008, Zimbabwe: MDC decries appointment of Johannes Tomana as Attorney-General. Online: http://allafrica.com/stories/200812180879.html. Accessed 30 June 2012.

Sire, J W 2005. *Learning to pray through the Psalms*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity.

Slemon, S 2001. Postcolonial critical theories, in Castle, G (ed), *Postcolonial discourses: An anthology*, 100-116. Malden: Blackwell.

Smit, D 1995. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Tentative religious and theological perspectives. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 90(1), 3-15.

Smith, D L 1989. *The religion of the landless: The social context of the Babylonian exile*. Bloomington: Meyer Stone Books.

Smith, D L 1996. The politics of Ezra: Sociological indications of Judean society, in Carter, E C and Meyers, L C (eds), *Community, identity and ideology: Social science approach to the Bible*, 537-556. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

Smith, M S 2001. *The origins of biblical monotheism: Israel's polytheistic background and the Ugaritic texts*. Oxford: University Press.

Snyder, L L 1962. *The imperialism reader: Documents and readings on modern expansion*. New York: Van Nostrand.

Snyman, G F 2002. The body, rhetoric and postcolonial criticism. *Religion and Theology* 9(1and2), 63-88.

Snyman, G F 2011a. Looking into black eyes and feel the embarrassment: A hermeneutic of vulnerability. Paper read at OTANES research seminar on the theme 'Reconciliation,' University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Snyman, G F 2011b. Interview with author. UNISA, Pretoria.

Soko, M and Balchin, N 2009. South Africa's policy towards Zimbabwe: A nexus between foreign policy and commercial interests. *South African Journal of International Affairs* 16(1), 33-48.

Spangenberg, I 1992. The Job and the powerless God, in Wesseles, W and Scheffler, E H (eds), Old *Testament science and reality*, 304-316. Pretoria: Verba Vitae.

Spangenberg, I 2006a. The literature of the Persian period (539–333 BCE), in Boshoff, W, Scheffler, E H and Spangenberg, I (eds), *Ancient Israelite literature in context*, 168-198. Pretoria: Protea.

Spangenberg, I 2006b. The literature of the Hellenistic period (333–63 BCE), in Boshoff, W, Scheffler, E H and Spangenberg, I (eds), *Ancient Israelite literature in context*, 199-236. Pretoria: Protea.

Spangenberg, I 2010. Psalm 24: Cosmology, temple and ethics. Paper read at *ProPent* research conference on the theme 'Pentateuch and Psalms,' Bass Lake Country Lodge, Pretoria.

Spangenberg, I 2011. Reconciliation of different kind: The Christian religion and science. Paper read at OTANES research seminar, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

South Africa's position on Zim. s n 2009. *Mail and Guardian* 5 Mar, p14.

Stark, R 2001. *One true God: Historical consequences of monotheism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Stephens, S 1994. A theology of reconstruction: Nation-building and human rights – Book reviews. Online:

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/ mi_m2065/is_n4_v46/ai_15918290/.

Accessed 3 June 2012.

Stern, E 1982. *The material culture of the land of the Bible in the Persian period 538–332 B C E.* Jerusalem: Bialik Institute/Israel Exploration Society.

Stern, E 2001. *Archaeology of the land of the Bible II. The Assyrian, Babylonian and Persian periods (732-332 BCE).* New York: Doubleday.

Stern, E 2002. 'Yes there was,' *Biblical Archeological Review* 28(3), 39.

Stevens, M E 2006.*Temples, tithes, and taxes: The temple and economic life of ancient Israel*. Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers.

Stoneman, R 1997. *Alexander the Great*. New York: Routledge.

Strauss, L M 1995. *The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The promise and its fulfillment in Lukan Christology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.

Strawn, B A 2009. Psalm 137, in van Harn, R E and Strawn, B A (eds), *Psalms for preaching and worship: A lectionary commentary*, 345-353. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

Strydom, J G and Wessels, W J 2000. *Prophetic perspectives on power and justice*. Pretoria: Biblia.

Suazo, R S 2006. Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics of appropriation as an experimental tool towards the clarification of the Filipino identity through family orientation as a core Filipino value. PhD thesis, University of San Carlos.

Sugirtharajah, R S 2002. *Postcolonial criticism and biblical interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sukenik, E L 1934. The oldest coin of Judea. *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* XIV, 178-184.

Sunderlin, W D, Angelsen, A and Wunder, S (eds) 2003. Forests and poverty alleviation, in *State of the world's forests*, 61-73. Rome: FAO.

Sunderlin, W D, Angelsen, A and Wunder, S (eds) 2004. *Forests and poverty alleviation*. Jakarta: Centre for International Forestry Research.

The church and the environment, s a. Online: http://distributism.blogspot.com/2007/12/church-and-environment.html. Accessed 1 July 2012.

Thornycroft, P 2011. R1,5bn loan for major Zim roads upgrade project. *Sunday Independent* 9 Oct, p4.

Thornycroft, P 2012a. Talks on draft Zim charter face pitfalls: ZANU (PF) hardliners can stall progress again after four years of bickering. *Sunday Independent* 13 May, p6.

Thornycroft, P 2012b. Zim mining Minister blocks R6bn injection. *Sunday Independent* 20 May, p8.

Togarasei, L and Chitando, E 2011. "Be therefore reconciled to one another": The Church's role in justice, healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. *Missionalia* 39/3, 210-227.

Torrey, C C 1910. *Ezra studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Torrey, C C 1936. The foundry of the Second Temple at Jerusalem. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 55(4), 247-260.

Torrey, C C 1943. The evolution of a financier in the Ancient Near East. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 2(4), 295-301.

TRC 1998. Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report. Cape Town: Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Trowbridge, E 2002. Back road reckoning, in Mills, N, Brunner, K and Berkeley, B (eds), *The new killing fields: Massacre and the politics of intervention*, 207-225. New York: Basic Books.

Tsodzo, T K 1972. *Pafunge*. Salisbury: Longman.

Tsvangirai declares personal assets. s n 2012. s l 21 July, s a. Online: http://nehandaradio.com/2012/07/21/tsvangirai-declares-his-personal-assets/. Accessed 7 Aug 2012.

Tsvangirai hasn't got his sums right. s n 2008. *Daily Paragraph* 3 Apr, s a.

Tutu, D 1978. Whither African theology, in Fasholé-Luke, E W et al (eds), Christianity *in independent Africa*, 336. London: Rex Collins.

Tutu, D 1999. *No future without forgiveness*. London: Rider Books.

UN envoy told conflicting tales about violence in Zimbabwe. s n 2012. *The Star* 24 May, p4.

United Nations General Assembly 1985. Basic principles on the independence of the judiciary. Resolution 40/186. United Nations, New York.

Ukpong, S J 1994. Towards a renewed approach to enculturation theology. *Journal of Inculturation Theology* 1, 3-15.

Upkong, S J 2000. Developments in biblical interpretation in Africa: A historical and

hermeneutical perspective. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 108: 3-18.

Usue, E 2007. Restoration or desperation in Ezra and Nehemiah? Implications for Africa. *Old Testament Essays* 20(3), 830-847.

Usue, E 2010. Nehemiah's religio-ethical wisdom in resolving an economic crisis in Judah (Neh 5:1-19): A lesson to be learned in Africa. A paper presented at OTSSA's 53rd Annual Congress, 15-17 Sept 2010. North-West University's Vaal Triangle Campus.

Vambe, M and Chari, T 2007. Scars of Operation Murambatsvina: Rethinking citizen and subject in contemporary Zimbabwe. *INSIDE AISA* 1 June, p9.

Vambe, M T 2009. Contesting the myth of '*A people's war*' in Bruce Moore-King's *White man black war* (1989). *Journal of Development Societies* 25(1), 107-120.

Vanderhooft, D S 2000. *The Neo-Babylonian Empire and Babylonia in the Latter Prophets*. Atlanta: Scholars.

Van Dyk, P 1992. The truth in history and myth, in Wessels, W and Scheffler, E H (eds), *Old Testament science and reality*, 91-106. Pretoria: Verba Vitae.

Van Dyk, P 2000. Ancient Israel's own creation myth, in Scheffler, E H (ed), *Fascination discoveries from the biblical world*, 94-95. Pretoria: Biblia.

Van Dyk, P 2003. Violence and the Old Testament. *Old Testament Essays* 16(1), 96-112.

Van Rensburg, G 2007. *The leadership challenge in Africa*. Hatfield, Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Van Rensburg, D 2011. Groeikoers van 9,3% voorspel. *Nuusfokus*. *Sake*24. 28 Aug, p7. Online: http://www.sadcbankers.org/SADC/SADC.nsf/LADV/0DC89F72BE7BB21C422578C40 0499ECA/$File/Zimbabwe.pdf. Accessed 28 Aug.

Veith, G E 1983. *The gift of art: the place of the arts in Scripture*. Downer Grove: Inter-Varsity

Press.

Villa-Vicencio, C 1992. *A theology of reconstruction*: *Nation-building and human rights*. Cape Town: David Phillip.

Walzer, M 2002. Arguing for humanitarian intervention, in Mills, N, Brunner, K and Berkeley, B (eds), *The new killing fields: Massacre and the politics of intervention*, 19-35. New York: Basic Books.

Warmback, A E 2008. The journey continues: Oikotheology and urban ministry. *Missionalia* 36(2/3), 166-180.

Waskow, A 1990. Exodus is not enough. *Cross Currents* (Winter), 516-525.

Weavind, T 2012. Time to get into Zimbabwe. *Sunday Times* 27 May, p5.

West, G O 1997. Finding a place among the posts for postcolonial criticism in biblical studies in South Africa. *Old Testament Essays* 10(2), 322-342.

White, J (ed) 1993. *Recasting the world: Writing after colonialism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Whittaker, M 1984. *Jews and Christians: Graeco-Roman views*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkinson, D and Birmingham, P 2003. *Using research instruments: A guide for researchers*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Williamson, H G M 1985. *Ezra, Nehemiah. Word biblical commentary*. Waco: Word.

Williamson, H G M 1988. The governors of Judah under the Persians. *Tyndale Bulletin* 39, 59-82.

Wilson, R A 2001. *The politics of truth and reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the post-apartheid state*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wisse, M 2000. The meaning of the authority of the Bible. *Religious Studies* 36(4), 473-487.

World Bank 2001. *World development report 2000/2001: The fraying web of life*. Washington, DC: World Resources Institute.

World Bank 2006. *World development report 2007: Development and the next generation*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Bank 2009. *Africa development indicators: Youth and employment in Africa: The potential, the problem, the promise*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

World Health Oranisation 2007. WHO and UNAIDS announce recommendations from expert consultation on male circumcision for HIV prevention. Online: http://www.who.int/hiv/mediacentre/news68/en/index.html. Accessed 25 May 2013.

Yamauchi, B E 1980. The archaeological background of Ezra. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 137, 195-211.

ZANU (PF) confirms coaching people over constitution. s n 2011. *The Zimbabwean* 1 Jan, s a. Online: htt://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid= … Accessed 12 Jan.

ZANU (PF) declares that inclusion is the route to peace and prosperity. s n 1981. *The Herald* 13 Nov, s a.

ZANU (PF) hawks darken the sky ahead of runoff. s n 2008. *Business Day* 7 Apr, p7.

ZANU (PF) reminds churches, unions and other groups that inclusion is the route to peace and prosperity. s n 1981. *The Herald* 26 Jan, s a.

ZANU (PF) tells churches, unions and other groups that inclusion is the route to peace and prosperity. s n 1981. *The Herald* 6 Nov, s a.

ZCBC 2003. A call to metanoia: Listen to the inner voice. *AFCAST* Mar, p4-6. Online: http://www.afcast.org.zw/zimbabwe/ZimPL2003a.htm.

Accessed 15 Feb 2008.

Zenger, E 1996. *A God of vengeance? Understanding the Psalms of divine wrath*. Louisville:

Westminster John Knox.

Zimbabwe announces poll results. s n 2008. *BBC News* 2 May, s a.

Online: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7380445.stm. Accessed 4 Jan 2010.

Zimbabwe constitution: Take the survey. s n 2010. *The Zimbabwean* 6 Aug, s a.

Online:

htt://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=

Accessed 12 Jan 2011.

Zimbabwe's displaced white farmers creating jobs in Mozambique. s n 2004. *The Star* 14

Jan, p20.

Zimbabwe Government Internet Service Provider (GISP). Online:

http://www.gisp.gov.zw/. Accessed 1 July 2012.

Zim Police arrests constitution activist Madhuku. s n 2011. *The Zimbabwean* 1 Jan, s a.

Online:

htt://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/index.php?option=com_contentandview=articleandid=

… Accessed 12 Jan.

Zimudzi, T B 2012. Book review. A predicable tragedy: Robert Mugabe and the collapse of

Zimbabwe. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 30(3), 508-511.

Zuwarimwe, J and Kirsten, J 2010. The role of social networks in development of small-scale

enterprises in the Chimanimani district of Zimbabwe. *Agrekon* 49(1), 17-38.

Zvarevashe, I M 1976. *Kuraone. Salisbury*: College Press.

Zvarevashe, I M 1983. *Museve wade nyama*. Salisbury: College Press.