

METHODISM AND PUBLIC LIFE IN ZIMBABWE:  
An analysis of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's impact on politics  
from 1891 – 1980

By

SIMON MADHIBA (s28296789)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

Philosophiae Doctor – PhD

IN

CHURCH HISTORY

At the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

SOUTH AFRICA

2010

PROMOTER: PROFESSOR G. A. DUNCAN

## **Dedication**

This study is dedicated to my late father, AsaMadhibaUshe, a local preacher and devoted leader in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. He was a principled man who inspired me to cultivate a critical and analytic approach to life. It is also dedicated to my spiritual fathers the late Rev. E. M. Mazhandu, Rev. C.C. Mazobere, Rev. E. T. Mandinyenya, and Revd. F. J. Chirisa, who is the retired former Presiding Bishop of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe who mentored me and encouraged me to value academic pursuit as an excellent and effective mission strategy.

## Acknowledgements

A research study of this magnitude could not be successful without a supportive community with which one identifies. It was through the zeal for improved life of the Wesleyan Methodist community in Zimbabwe that enabled the researcher to realise the importance of studying the church's contribution to political life in the country. The topic on Wesleyan Methodists' impact on politics in Zimbabwe could not have made sense to the researcher had he not been exposed to the church's social gospel.

My profound thanks go to my wife Getrude, whose questions, insights and criticisms shaped the line of thought for this study. I am also grateful for the support and encouragement which I received from my children Tafadzwa and Fadzai as well as my niece, Leosa, and my nephew, Tonderai, during the research process was invaluable. My thanks also go to the following: Rev. Dr. S. Zwana, Rev. B. Mugwidi and Mrs K. Muwanzi for proof reading and editing the final copy of this study meticulously.

I am indebted to my promoter, Professor G. Duncan, whose feedback challenged my analysis of issues at stake and re-directed my reflection and presentation in this study. He coaxed me to progress with the research when I felt discouraged. He was both a mentor and model for me.

My thanks also go to Rev. A. Ndlumbi, the Administrator of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, for giving me access to the church archives. I thank the archivists at the National Archives of Zimbabwe who assisted me to find the sources I needed for this study. I thank the interviewees whose responses provided the researcher with his contemporary understanding of Wesleyan Methodists' political activities during Zimbabwe's colonial era.

Finally, I want to thank God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for providing inspiration, understanding, strength and protection during the study.

## **Declaration**

I declare that a dissertation on, Methodism and public life in Zimbabwe: an analysis of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's impact on politics from 1891 to 1980, is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed ..... Date.....

SIMON MADHIBA

## **Abstract**

This study is a historical analytical investigation and theological interpretation of Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice in Zimbabwe from 1891 to 1980. In an attempt to come up with an informed interpretation of the political teaching and activities, the study traced Wesleyan Methodist political praxis John Wesley, the founder of Methodism and interpreted his teaching and practice from a third world perspective. That perspective was used as a basis for evaluating the contextualisation of his teaching by Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice during the colonial era were explored using four themes: politics of land, race relationships, Federation and war. Two hypothetical statements were tested in this study: Wesleyan Methodism outlines a framework for constructive participation in politics, and the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe provided and supported positions of political leadership in Zimbabwe.

The objectives of this study are to: unveil successes and failures of Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwean political arena, expose the historical significance of Wesleyan Methodist influence in politics for Zimbabwean history and present a

historical account of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. The methodology preferred in this study included oral history and a combination of the ecumenical and southern approaches to Church history. The study utilised archival and oral data as primary sources, the translation model of contextual theology, holistic framework for analysing history, the principle of the overriding right and the conflict transformation model as part of the methodology.

Through the use of the translation model of contextual theology, the study revealed how John Wesley used principles from the Christian message and Church tradition in addressing his political context. The study exposed that John Wesley was obsessed with accountability to God and constituency, respect for every person, respect for political structures as well as authorities and relationships among people as fundamental pillars in political activities. He based these on his understanding of God's free grace, people's liberty to accept or reject that grace and the validity of popular religious expression.

The study revealed that Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe had a special relationship with the colonial government due to an invitation by Cecil John Rhodes for the church to participate in the Pioneer Column. The relationship determined how retrogressive or progressive ministers responded to government

requirements and made demands on government until the country's independence in 1980. The study also exposed how retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists moved from acceptance and collaboration to acceptance and selective rejection of colonial policies and how both retrogressive and progressive ministers employed the concept of non-contestation of participation in armed conflict and throwing one's lot on the expected side. It also showed how progressive ministers contributed to the political emancipation of Africans and the role played by the mission-educated elite in Zimbabwe. The study ended with pointing out that Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodist political teaching and practice had very bright future prospects at the independence of the country in 1980.



## **Key terms**

There are key terms used in this study. These are:

- ecumenical historical approach
- discriminative legislation
- Wesley's teaching on politics
- political order
- politics of land
- race relationships
- mission-educated elite
- Translation model
- Conflict transformation
- Federation

## Table of Contents

Dedication .....	i
Acknowledgements .....	ii
Declaration .....	iv
Abstract .....	v
Key terms .....	viii
Table of contents.....	ix
List of tables	
Table 1 Supra-cultural nature of the Christian message.....	70
Table 2 Translation model .....	72
Table 3 Perceptions on the land .....	196
Table 4 African ministers' views on racism .....	197
Table 5 Views on the formation of the Federation .....	198
Table 6 Views on the war of liberation .....	200
Table 7 Interviewees' influence from John Wesley's teaching .....	201
Table 8 Voices of African ministers' widows on their husbands' political activities.....	202
Table 9 Conflict transformation model .....	237

Table 10 Approaches to conflict .....	239
---------------------------------------	-----

## **Chapter One                      Introduction**

1.1 Setting the stage .....	1
1.2 Motivation .....	6
1.3 Goal of the study .....	7
1.4 Literature review .....	8
1.5 The gap .....	10
1.6 Study design .....	11
1.6.1 Missionary approach .....	13
1.6.2 Nationalistic approach .....	13
1.6.3 Southern approach .....	14
1.6.4 Interpretation .....	18
1.6.5 Evaluation of historical data .....	20
1.7 Definition of terms .....	20

## **Chapter Two                      Methodology**

2.1 Understanding history .....	22
2.1.1 Nature of history .....	22
2.1.2 Meaning of history .....	31
2.1.3 Purpose of history .....	33
2.2 Sources of history .....	37

2.3 Methods of data collection .....	41
2.4 Discussing historical data .....	44
2.5 Zimbabwean context during the colonial era .....	50
2.5.1 Political dimension .....	50
2.5.2 Economic dimension .....	60
2.5.3 Socio-cultural dimension .....	61
2.5.3.1 Family .....	61
2.5.3.2 Marriage .....	62
2.5.3.3 Burial of the deceased .....	63
2.5.3.4 Transmission of knowledge from one generation to another .....	64
2.5.3.5 Security .....	64
2.5.4 Religious-ideological dimension .....	64
2.6 Conclusion .....	66
 <b>Chapter Three     An interpretation of John Wesley's teaching on politics</b>	
3.1 Introduction .....	68
3.2 Translation model .....	69
3.3 Political order .....	76
3.4 Liberty .....	78
3.5 Slavery .....	86
3.6 Impact of John Wesley's political teaching on British citizens .....	90

3.7 Wesley's political philosophy .....	97
---	----

3.8 Implications of Wesley's political teaching .....	100
---	-----

## **Chapter Four      Missionary Wesleyan Methodism and politics in colonial Zimbabwe**

4.1 Introduction .....	102
------------------------	-----

4.2 The Wesleyan Methodist Church and a Zimbabwean church geography....	102
---	-----

4.3 Politics of land .....	106
----------------------------	-----

4.4 Race relationships .....	124
------------------------------	-----

4.5 War .....	177
---------------	-----

4.6 Federation .....	186
----------------------	-----

4.7 Conclusion .....	193
----------------------	-----

## **Chapter Five      The voices of African Wesleyan Methodist ministers during the colonial era**

5.1 Introduction.....	195
-----------------------	-----

5.2 Presentation of data from interviews .....	195
--	-----

5.3 Discussion of data from interviews.....	203
---	-----

5.4 Findings from data on African ministers' participation in politics.....	218
---	-----

## **Chapter Six      An analysis of Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis**

6.1 Introduction .....	221
------------------------	-----

6.2 Insights from Zimbabwean colonial era .....	221
---	-----

6.3 Politics of land in Zimbabwe .....	223
--	-----

6.4 Race relationships .....	230
6.5 Wesleyan Methodists and Central African Federation .....	240
6.6 Wesleyan Methodists and war in Zimbabwe .....	244
6.7 Theological evaluation of Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists political praxis.....	250
6.8 Conclusion .....	256
<b>Chapter Seven    Conclusions</b>	
7.1 Introduction .....	260
7.2 Summary .....	260
7.3 Future prospects of Wesleyan Methodist political teaching and practice in Zimbabwe .....	267
Bibliography .....	274
Church documents.....	284
Archival sources .....	285
National Archives of Zimbabwe .....	285
Wesleyan Methodist Church Archives .....	285
Oral sources .....	289
Interviews .....	289
Ministers.....	289
Ministers' widows.....	289

Appendix 1 Interview questions for ministers .....	290
Appendix 2 Interview questions for ministers' .....	291

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Setting the stage

One of the most compelling issues for historical studies in Zimbabwe has to do with how to analyse and interpret the country's political ferment and to reconcile competing historical claims to land. Missionaries were the visionaries of Zimbabwe's modern history. They left written records and other traces of their thoughts and actions which continue to attract the attention of historians who live vicariously through archival research (Robert 2008:1). Historians' opinions on the meaning of missionary visions are divided.

On the one hand, those who share the values of the missionaries have tended to portray them as heroic figures who risked their lives for what they believed. On the other hand, too many historians of the late twentieth century, the missionary was not so much an idealist as an ideologue, someone who pursued single-minded goals in collusion with such forces as colonialism, imperialism, modernism, or globalisation. In other words, because of missionaries' strongly held and articulated beliefs in the universal relevance of the Christian gospel, it has been tempting to judge them by their ideas, based on whether the researcher agrees with 'missionary ideals' or disagrees with 'missionary ideologies'. What tends to be overlooked in the history of missions is how the real experiences of missionaries in specific locations, and the concrete needs and interests of early converts, both challenged and shaped the missionary visions themselves (Robert 2008:1).

The quotation above has influenced greatly the shaping of the problem to be investigated by this study. Wesleyan Methodist missionaries who came to Zimbabwe in 1891 contributed immensely to public life and modern history of the country. This study focuses on investigating the impact of Wesleyan Methodist missionaries' teaching on politics in the country during the colonial period and how African Wesleyan Methodist ministers used the teaching in addressing challenges they and fellow Africans faced. The missionaries as well as African ministers were aware of



John Wesley's teaching on politics. The study also attempts to unveil the relationship between the missionary Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice in Zimbabwe and John Wesley's. In other words the problem can be put as follows: what contribution did Wesleyan Methodism make to Zimbabwe's modern political arena during the colonial era and how was that contribution related to John Wesley's political teaching and practice?

Religion is not just a private matter, but also a public faith (Carino 2005:105). As it was proved that in an African context the functions of religion include maintaining political authority and good order (Bourdillon 1990:65). Religion permeates the public arena through definitions and proposals for good life and the good of society (Bourdillon 1990:65). Methodism impacted on the legitimacy of political organisations, the nature and form of governance, the character and structure of the economy and the state itself in Zimbabwe either positively or negatively. Hence the intent of this study is to investigate and assess Wesleyan Methodist influence on politics in Zimbabwe since 1891. This study examines the complex aspects of politics of land, race relationships, federation and war in Zimbabwe during the colonial period, with a special reference to the contribution of the Wesleyan Methodist ministers in the country.

Two hypothetical statements were tested in this study. First, Wesleyan Methodism outlines a framework for constructive participation in politics. This was tested using an interpretation of John Wesley's political teaching and practice, which unveiled that John Wesley, was ambivalent and ambiguous in his teaching. He did not come up with a theoretical framework which could be employed by his followers. However, his contextualisation of Scriptures and Church tradition offered a good example for his followers in addressing their political challenges. Second, the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe provided and supported positions of political leadership in Zimbabwe. This hypothesis was tested through an analysis and interpretation of Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice during the

country's colonial era.

There is a line of discernible Wesleyan Methodist interest in Zimbabwean politics which propelled my desire to undertake this study. The study's intention was to find out how effective the interest was. It was worthy to explore and expose the relationship between the interest and John Wesley's teachings on politics. The discernible interest is displayed in the following cases.

During the early 1890s Wesleyan Methodist missionaries joined fellow missionaries in calling for the annexation of both Mashonaland and Matebeleland. This led to the Ndebele war of resistance in 1893 and the Ndebele and Shona war of resistance in 1896 (Sundkler & Steed 2000:448). The wars of resistance have been described as uprisings. Wesleyan Methodists justified destruction of the Ndebele kingdom. I intend to analyse and assess the relationship between the Wesleyan Methodists and the settler government.

Between 1920 and 1930 the Zimbabwean situation was dominated by the land question which culminated in the enactment of the Land Apportionment Act. John White, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary and Arthur Shearly Cripps, a Roman Catholic poet and visionary, offered resolute opposition to racial segregation which was being introduced (Andrews 1935:1187-122). The same period saw determined efforts by Africans to redress the situation. These early political efforts prepared the way for subsequent large-scale political organisations led by African politicians like Joshua Nkomo, a Wesleyan Methodist preacher, and Ndabaningi Sithole (Sundkler & Steed 2000:801).

In the 1950s Wesleyan Methodists responded to the rise of African nationalism in Zimbabwe. Some leading Wesleyan Methodists, among them evangelists and preachers took leadership positions in African movements for liberation. Later on some black ministers joined the movements. One of the most outstanding ministers

was Rev. C. S. Banana, who became the first black President of Zimbabwe in 1980 (Kadenge 1991:121).

By 1964 the Federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland faced serious challenges. A new constitution was drawn to address the challenges. Joshua Nkomo, a Wesleyan Methodist preacher, was the President of the African National Congress. He successfully organised blacks to vote against the proposed constitution in a referendum. Out of the blacks who voted, 467 187 voted against the constitution while 584 voted for it (Sundkler & Steed 2000:800). This led to the collapse of the federation. In 1965 Southern Rhodesia declared a Unilateral Declaration of Independence. The Wesleyan Methodist Church refused to support the declaration. As a result the church lost all its primary schools to the state. This did not change the church's political stance.

In the 1970s the Wesleyan Methodists, like any other missionary church, faced a new challenge of the armed struggle. The World Council of Churches introduced the Programme to Combat Racism which had to be implemented in Zimbabwe as well as other countries. Armed struggle was used as one of the strategies to combat racism. This split the Wesleyan Methodist community in Zimbabwe which was a full member of the Council through the British Methodist Conference. The majority of white members of the church opposed the use of arms to correct racial imbalances. However, they supported the use of arms to defend minority rule in Zimbabwe. On the other hand, a few missionaries and the majority of blacks supported the use of arms in addressing the racial problems. Some missionaries were deported from the country because they stood up for the blacks' cause. The political tension within the Wesleyan Methodist Church continued until the country's independence in 1980.

At Zimbabwe's independence seven prominent Wesleyan Methodists were appointed into Zimbabwe's first cabinet. These included Joshua Nkomo, Nathan Shamhuyarira, Sydney Sekeramayi, Eddison Zvobgo, Herbert Ushewokunze, Enos Chikowore and

Enock Dumbuchena, (Kadenge 1991:121-122). After the independence of Zimbabwe there emerged political disturbances that deteriorated into a civil war. The Wesleyan Methodist church appealed for tolerance and supported unity talks between two major political parties, Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). A unity agreement was signed in 1987.

Another discernible Wesleyan Methodist interest in Zimbabwean politics was the creation of a Christian Social Responsibility and Human Rights Committee. Through the work of the committee the Wesleyan Methodist Church became involved in civic education, human rights campaigns, national election monitoring and in calls for constitutional reforms. This led to the church being viewed as one of the enemies of the state.

All these issues pointed out that historical research can be instituted to find out what inspired Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe to have such an enthusiasm in the political developments of the country. The discernible Wesleyan Methodist interest in Zimbabwean politics triggered my academic quest for a critical historical investigation of the subject under study. The discernible Wesleyan Methodists' interest in Zimbabwean politics revealed that both ministers and lay members were involved in political activities. This study focused on the involvement of clergy for three reasons. First, Wesleyan Methodist missionaries' involvement in politics needed to be analysed and evaluated in relation to John Wesley's political teaching and activities to find out how much they contextualised Scriptures and Church tradition. Second, African Wesleyan Methodist ministers studied John Wesley's political teaching and activities during their ministerial formation. The study sought to find out how much the African ministers drew from John Wesley's example in their voices against colonialism. Third, the scope of this study is limited to evaluating the contextualisation of Scriptures and Church tradition in Zimbabwe in the light of John Wesley's example. In that understanding by Wesleyan Methodist Church this study refers to ministers both whites and Africans, unless where it is otherwise stated.

There are a number of sideline issues I did not delve into. These include the relationship between religion and politics in pre-Christian Zimbabwe. Bourdillon (1990:65-113) adequately covered the political functions of religion in Zimbabwe. This research referred to Bourdillon's work in an attempt to establish whether there was continuity or discontinuity with the advent of Christianity.

Another issue is Wesleyan Methodism and education in Zimbabwe. One of the reasons for a separate development system in Zimbabwe was the low level of literacy that hindered Africans from understanding modern political issues. Samudzimu (1991:79-110) explored the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's contribution to education in the country from 1891 to 1991. There is no need to repeat it, but the researcher referred to this work in appreciating the role played by mission schools in raising up the mission-educated elite in Zimbabwe.

The impact of Wesleyan Methodism on economic activities in Zimbabwe needs urgent attention. However the scope of this study and time limitation does not allow the researcher to include it in the proposed study. This is left for a future study.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's involvement in human rights campaigns is another area that this study could focus on. This area requires a separate study. The research referred to it only when it was necessary for the proposed study.

## **1.2 Motivation**

We are currently in a time of political turmoil in Zimbabwe, yet there is a wealth of documentation about the Church's contribution to the political arena of the country. Documentation of events in itself is like an untapped seam of ore which will only benefit people when it is mined and processed. The following chapters in this study aim at discussing, analysing and interpreting Wesleyan Methodists' political activities

in Zimbabwe during the colonial period. There are four important factors which motivated the researcher to undertake this study which are:

1.2.1 The involvement of Wesleyan Methodists in politics gave me an impression that an inquiry is possible. The study delved into this study to find out how much of the involvement is related to the Wesleyan Methodist ethos.

1.2.2 As one of the clergy in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, the researcher wanted to assess the denomination's contribution to nation building. Lessons were drawn and proposals made for consideration by the denomination in its future work in this field.

1.2.3 Wesleyan Methodism and politics in Zimbabwe is an important subject that has not yet been given adequate attention.

1.2.4 I want to contribute to the history of Zimbabwe through offering a history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.

### **1.3 Goal of the study**

The goal of the proposed study is to portray accurately the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's influence on politics in Zimbabwe. The researcher has been mindful of the need to give conscious attention to the substance and method of his work in a bid to achieve the goal of this study because he writes as an insider.

The specific objective of this study is to explore and present vividly African Wesleyan Methodist ministers' voices against oppression and marginalisation during the colonial era. In broad terms my objectives include the following:

1.3.1 To delineate the Wesleyan Methodist teaching on politics.

1.3.2 To investigate the missionary Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's impact on politics during the colonial era.

1.3.3 To examine the African Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's voices on

politics during the colonial era in Zimbabwe.

1.3.4 To evaluate the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's impact on politics theologically.

## 1.4 Literature review

There is substantial research which has been undertaken on the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. In this study the researcher did not review every book written on the history of the denomination, only those I deemed to be significant for the study were reviewed. The literature review helped in narrowing the scope of this study. It also enabled the researcher to point out clearly the gap the researcher desired to address through this research.

In his book, *Limpopo to Zambezi, Sixty Years of Methodism in Southern Rhodesia*, C. Thorpe (1951) discussed the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe from an expatriate missionary's perspective. He concentrated on the role of missionaries' efforts and contribution. Thorpe traced and justified the denomination's separate development strategy. He concluded that the issues of Land Apportionment Act, the Pass Laws and electoral policy were too contentious to be included in a history of the denomination (Thorpe 1951:122). This is the point at which I part ways with Thorpe. This thesis contends that the voices of both white and African Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe should be heard in the history of the denomination. Thorpe's major objective was to unveil how missionaries succeeded in planting Christianity in Zimbabwe. The major objective of this thesis is to present a balanced account of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's history. This was done through a fair presentation of the African and white voices in the political arena.

In an article "*The influence of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in Southern Rhodesia, 1891-1923*" CJM Zvobgo presented how the denomination's work spread throughout the country. He outlined the early difficulties faced by Wesleyan



Methodists as a result of the reaction of chiefs and the indifference of people to the new teaching (Zvobgo 1973:66). Zvobgo presented a well detailed account of the Wesleyan Methodists' mission endeavours in Zimbabwe. His major aim was to come up with a sound historical narration of the church's developments. However, Zvobgo did not proceed to unveil the impact of the Wesleyan Methodist teaching on politics. This thesis focuses on the impact of the Wesleyan Methodist teaching on politics in Zimbabwe.

In his book, *The Wesleyan Methodist Missions in Zimbabwe 1891-1945*, CJM Zvobgo delved into the denomination's involvement in the Land Question and the Franchise Question from 1921 to 1945. Zvobgo concluded that missionaries in general supported land segregation because they believed that it would give Africans political benefit (Zvobgo 1991:148). On the Franchise Question most missionaries felt that Africans should have some say in the running of their country (Zvobgo 1991: 148). Missionaries ran the show. Here Zvobgo exposed that Wesleyan Methodist missionaries patronised Africans in Zimbabwe. This is the same as the argument in this thesis. However, the thesis goes a step further to explore and expose the voice of the Africans in politics. Where were local Wesleyan Methodists? It is important to find out how Wesleyan Methodist principles on politics were used in the struggle.

In *The Politics of the Methodist Church 123-148*, C.S. Banana (1991) outlined the political tensions that characterised the Wesleyan Methodist Church from 1896 to 1991. Banana depicted the political terrain through which Methodists trod and the threats of the political tensions on the mission of the church. Banana's major objective was to depict an accurate account of how the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe assisted Africans to develop their political careers but at the same time stifled their maximum participation in politics through paternalism. Banana was one of the Africans who made the blacks' voice audible. The difference between Banana's objective and that of this thesis is that the thesis aimed at investigating how much both the African and white voices and political activities were influenced by John



Wesley's ministry. What needs to be done in complementing Banana's work is to expose how much of the various positions advocated were based on Wesleyan Methodist teaching on politics?

Rev. C.C.G Mazobere (1991:149-174) raised two important points for this study. First, he discussed the separate development system employed by the Wesleyan Methodists. He concluded that the system was a mockery of Jesus' prayer that all his followers should be of one flock under one shepherd. Mazobere did not go further to examine whether the concept of separate development was in line with Wesleyan Methodist teachings on politics or how much impact on politics the separate development system had. The relationship between separate development system and Wesleyan Methodist teaching on politics will be discussed in this study.

Second, Mazobere raised the question of the mission field. The mission field was Zimbabwean soil. Wesleyan Methodism in Zimbabwe must be rooted and grounded in the country's soil and address people's social and political concerns. Mazobere aimed at exposing the negative impact of the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries' separate development strategy. He also exposed their failure to contextualise the Christian message in their attempts to address social and political issues which bedevilled the nation. Mazobere's work gave an impetus to this study. In terms of objectives this thesis differs from Mazobere's work in that he was mainly concerned with the church's evangelism programme, while the thesis focuses on the church's involvement in politics. The thesis intended to find out how far Wesleyan Methodism influenced political processes in Zimbabwe.

## **1.5 The Gap**

From the literature review, it is evident that there has been enlightened study on Wesleyan Methodists' involvement in politics in Zimbabwe. A gap still exists in

terms of the African ministers' voice on political and social issues that remained inaudible. It became apparent that there is a need to find out how far the African and white voices as well as political activities were influenced by John Wesley's teaching. The thesis intended to make a historical analysis and theological evaluation of the impact of Wesleyan Methodism on politics in Zimbabwe.

## **1.6 Study design**

This study is descriptive and evaluative. It explored how much of John Wesley's political teaching and practice was evident among Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists during the colonial era. The methods appropriate for the study are historical and theological. I examined the traces of Wesleyan Methodists' political activities in Zimbabwe during the period under study. The theological aspect of the analysis came from the use of the translation model of contextual theology when interpreting both John Wesley and Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and activities. A critical analysis and reinterpretation of texts was carried out using evidence from oral sources.

Primary data for this study was collected through an examination of official church records and documents, such as Synod minutes, Conference minutes, statements, magazines, correspondences and songs, journals, John Wesley's sermons, biographies of African ministers and works written by African ministers. Oral sources were also used to collect primary data. The researcher gathered oral data through interviewing seven African ministers and three ministers' widows. The ministers were selected because they served during the period and are now retired or they served towards the end of the colonial era. The ministers' widows were sampled because their husbands were assassinated because of political involvement.

Collection of secondary data was done through published and unpublished sources. Published data comprised of books, and articles. Unpublished data included keynote

addresses at conferences and synods, workshop reports. Secondary sources were used to illuminate analysis and interpretation.

Data was discussed and analysed within the framework of the historiography of African Christianity. There are a number of approaches employed by historians in writing about the history of Christianity in Africa. History of Christianity in Africa implies that Christianity is alien to Africa. It invades and causes disturbances for better or for worse in the religious life of Africans. This does not offer a balanced analysis of African Christianity.

I approached the subject from a history of African Christianity perspective. History of African Christianity was presented from an African point of view. It offers a point of view whereby Christianity is seen as an important component of African development processes. African Christianity can be compared and contrasted with Christianity from other continents. African Christianity is not an extension of European or American Christianity. It is an entity on its own. The problem I run into immediately is the fact that African Christianity as we have it today is a product of European and American missionary activities. This is with the exception of the Coptic Church and Ethiopian Orthodox Church. The translatability of the Christian message solves this problem. When Africans accepted the Christian message a new form of Christianity was born. African Christians in turn displayed African Christianity. In other words the Christian message is the seed and Africans are the soil into which the seed was sown. What germinated is African Christianity.

A brief discussion of two major approaches used in the history of Christianity in Africa is necessary. This is followed by an elaborate discussion of the southern approach, which I have chosen for this study.

### **1.6.1 Missionary approach**

This produces a history of missions written by missionaries and their protégés. The approach is coloured by missionary ideology based on missionary sources such as personal collections and archival materials. Emphasis is on the activities of missionaries and the planting of Christianity. The missionary is portrayed as the planter of Christianity in Africa. This approach ignores the people centred faith in God and downplays the roots of African Christianity, such as in Egypt and Ethiopia. It tells of how particular missionaries or groups of missionaries crossed the cultural barriers with the Gospel. African agents are not highlighted in this approach. In Zimbabwe we do not hear about Mizeki, Moleli, Chief Chiremba, Joseph Dambaza and others who made significant contributions to the development of Christianity. In the analysis and discussion of data, the researcher sought to correct the imbalance caused by this approach on the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.

### **1.6.2 Nationalistic approach**

This approach is a direct reaction to the missionary approach. It came into being in the 1950's, when African nationalism reached its peak. This approach spotlighted missionary failures and paid little or no attention to negative contributions made by local people. The missionary is portrayed as a precursor of colonialism. As the coloniser was supposed to go, so was the missionary. The approach blamed missionaries for promoting a sense of self-rejection among Africans (Banana 1991:124). According to the nationalistic approach, missionaries were guilty of destroying African culture and heritage.

This approach fails to see that some African agents were pathfinders for colonialism. For instances, whites who were in the Pioneer Column were led by Africans who knew both the geographical and religious terrain of Zimbabwean people. Another

example is that Bernard Mizeki, one of the first African Christian martyrs in Zimbabwe, was killed by Mangwende for selling out, which is, providing important and secret information to the whites. It is worthy to note who led the whites to Mazoe where Nehanda was hiding, certainly some Africans did.

The nationalistic approach to history over-glorifies African agents. As human beings Africans had their shortcomings. My aim is to expose and discuss merits and demerits of both missionaries and nationalists in the history of African Christianity in Zimbabwe, with a special reference to the Wesleyan Methodists.

### **1.6.3. Southern approach**

The southern approach is history written from the Third World perspective, a history that is written from below or under side. In Latin America it is referred to as history from the perspective of the poor. In Africa emphasis is on African initiatives in the development of Christianity. What is crucial for this approach is writing history from the perspective of the continent, the point of view of its people and their contributions to world history (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1992:77).

In this approach the role and importance of African agents is paramount. Christianity spread like veld fire in Africa because of the work of African agents of the Gospel. In Zimbabwe African agents included evangelists, catechists and teachers. In the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, like other mission churches, missionaries dominated the scene. On the ground missionaries were surrounded by clouds of African co-workers. To unveil these African men and women who fervently spread the Gospel, a balanced picture of the history of the church is required. The researcher used the Southern approach to analyse the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's impact on politics. In this approach missionaries and Africans are treated as equal co-workers.

There are three things the study intended to achieve through this approach. First, the researcher endeavoured to reveal the successes and failures of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwean political arena. Second, I showed the historical significance of Wesleyan Methodist influence on politics for Zimbabwean history. Finally, my desire was to present an intellectually stimulating historical account of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. In order to achieve these, the researcher asked afresh the question: what was the authentic Christian message for the Zimbabwean context?

This analysis of the impact of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's teaching and practice on Zimbabwean politics during the colonial era is structured as follows. Chapter one defines the parameters for the study. It states the problem, the general goal of the study, the objectives of the study and the motivation or justification of the study. In this chapter the researcher demonstrated the Wesleyan Methodists' discernible interest in political activities in Zimbabwe. The chapter also provided a literature review which led to the identification of the gap I addressed through this study. Three approaches which could be used in discussing the history of African Christianity were presented: the missionary approach, the Nationalistic approach and the Southern approach, which was preferred for this study. Also important to note is the deliberate move to interpret the historical data from a theological perspective because we are dealing with a history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church's teaching.

The purpose of chapter two is to introduce and discuss the methodological preference of this study. It presents the central theory that guides most of the analysis of this study; ecumenical approach to church history. The chapter provides a discussion on the nature of history according to this study, which is linear. It also considered paradigm shifts in the understanding of history in general as well as history of Christianity, in particular. The paradigm shifts as listed by Bosch (2004:181- 182), were adapted for this study. Another significant aspect of the methodology discussed

in this chapter is the meaning of history which is presented from an ecumenical perspective. The chapter also examines preferences of sources and how they are used. Secondary sources were used accordingly, in a manner that does not use them to fill in gaps of knowledge in primary sources. The methods of data collection were considered in this chapter as well as how historical data was discussed, analysed and interpreted. The synchronic model of discussing historical data was employed in this study.

In chapter three the researcher explored John Wesley's teaching and practice on politics. Wesleyan Methodism sprang up from John Wesley's teaching and mission work. John Wesley's sermons, letters, journals and addresses were used to present an analysis and interpretation of his teaching on politics. The chapter devoted considerable effort to a theological interpretation of Wesley's teaching. The researcher used the translation model of contextual theology to interpret John Wesley's teaching. The implications of John Wesley's teaching on politics for his followers were also considered. In this Chapter I examined one of the two overarching hypotheses which states that Wesleyan Methodist teaching on politics provides a framework from which its members can use for constructive participation in political activities. John Wesley's teaching on political order, liberty and war were examined in this chapter. Chapter four reports the investigation into the impact of missionary Wesleyan Methodist teaching on politics during the colonial period in Zimbabwe. It focuses on activities of Wesleyan Methodist missionaries and how those activities influenced Africans, as they responded to the colonial burden. Positions adopted by the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe in support of or against colonial segregation against blacks were analysed to find out if they were in line with the example of John Wesley's contextualisation of Scriptures and Church tradition. Politics of land, race relationships, federation and war are themes explored in this chapter. The study followed each theme from 1891 to 1980 in order to trace the developments in each theme from the beginning to the end of the period under study.



In chapter five the study explored the African Wesleyan Methodist ministers' voices in the socio – political arena during Zimbabwe's colonial period. The exploration was done through a presentation and analysis of data collected from interviews and a questionnaire. The voice was traced through the four themes explored in Chapter four.

Chapter six presents an analysis and interpretation of Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice. Analysis is based on a holistic approach to history, which takes into consideration political, economic, socio-cultural and religio-ideological dimensions. I also used the African initiatives in politics, the principle of the overriding right model, the conflict transformation model and the translation model of contextual theology. Through use of these models the researcher examined the second thesis that Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice were a continuation of John Wesley's teaching. The analysis revealed that Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists diverted from John Wesley's teaching whenever they felt it prohibited them from perpetuating colonial policies which they agreed with during the first fifty years of colonialism. The analysis reported in this chapter is important because it demonstrates how various groups within the church responded to the church's teaching on politics and became involved in political activities. A central contention of this study is that Wesleyan Methodism, through John Wesley's teaching, outlined how members should participate in political activities throughout history. Wesleyan Methodists have chosen to continue with or divert from the teaching depending on their political contexts.

The last chapter focuses on a summary of the findings and future prospects for Wesleyan Methodists' active participation in Zimbabwean politics. The independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 is seen as an event that ushered in a new political dispensation which required the Wesleyan Methodists to reposition themselves and make a positive contribution.



#### 1.6.4 Interpretation

Methods of interpretation of scripture in a Zimbabwean context are at the core of the discussion. John Wesley's teaching on politics addressed a particular context. They were a direct result of theological reflections from his context. They cannot be simply transferred to the Zimbabwean context without critical analysis. It is naïve and unfair to John Wesley to expect his teaching on politics to respond directly to the Zimbabwean context. John Wesley interpreted scripture to address his context; the Zimbabwean context demands interpretation of same scripture differently. The contexts raise particular and peculiar questions. Responses to the questions should come from contextual theological reflections. The first part of the study focused on contextual theological reflections as the researcher attempted to rediscover John Wesley's teaching on politics for the Zimbabwean context. The translation model of contextual theology was employed in that task.

This approach seeks to prove that church history is a history of 'theological contextualizations' (Pillay 1994). Theological reflections produce authoritative interpretation of scripture for particular contexts. In most cases theological reflections in Africa are presented as merely a propagation of authoritative interpretations for the European and American contexts. This is the bone of contention in this approach; a history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is not a mere propagation of the British Wesleyan Methodist orthodoxies. It is a history of theological contextualisation in the country.

In the second part of the study the researcher's aim was to reinterpret events more clearly so that the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe is enabled to critique her faithfulness in witness. I made deliberate efforts to move away from missionary and nationalist interpretation of events. The role of African agencies was brought to the fore without neglecting that of missionaries. The researcher examined critically the accounts on Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe history to produce a clearer

picture.

The reinterpretation process of secondary sources of this study employed the following measures:

(i) Who is the author?

This takes into account background information like, missionary, nationalist or academic.

(ii) Who were the audience?

It is important to find out who sanctioned the study as well as the target group for such writing.

(iii) What was the purpose of writing the piece of work?

Was the work for justifying church activities, practices or programmes?

Was it for church celebrations?

Was it for publication in a journal or book?

(iv) What was the context of the piece of work?

(v) What sources were used?

(vi) What was the method used?

Reinterpretation of the accounts of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's political activities provided new insights on missionaries' negative and positive contributions to political developments in the country during the colonial era. It also widened our horizons in understanding and appreciating the positive and negative contributions of Africans to the same developments.



### **1.6.5 Evaluation of historical data**

Data was evaluated from a theological point of view. The researcher used the “Kingdom of God” principle to evaluate data. The principles were drawn from Jesus’ political teaching on the “Kingdom of God”. I made an assessment as to whether the principles of the “Kingdom of God” were fulfilled in the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe as far as political teaching and activities were concerned. The evaluation attempted to establish whether the church succeeded or failed in terms of biblical principles on politics.

### **1.7 Definitions of terms**

The following terms are defined in the manner that they are used in this study.

“Society,” in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe structure a society is a local congregation of the whole body of the church's members attending one particular place of worship.

“Circuit,” the term “circuit” refers to several societies which are united for mutual encouragement and help. It is a platform for monitoring the mission of the church at society level.

“District,” it is an administrative structure of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe that comprise of several circuits which are within a large geographical setting. During the colonial era the whole of Zimbabwe was referred to as the Rhodesian District.

“Leaders’ meeting” refers to the policy implementation and monitoring instrument of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe at society level.

“Quarterly meeting,” refers to the policy formulation and monitoring body of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe at circuit level.

“Synod,” refers to a meeting of the clergy and lay leaders at District level to formulate policies and mission strategies for the church.

“Full member,” means a person who is recognised as a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe in accordance with the rules and regulations of the church. Such a person has the right to lead in any church activities.

“Local preacher,” it means a preacher who is recommended by the local preachers' meeting and approved by the Circuit Quarterly meeting as suitable to lead worship and preach the gospel within the particular circuit.

## Chapter Two

### METHODOLOGY

#### **2. 1 Understanding Church history**

The study was mindful of the fact that any historical research has a particular view of understanding, analysing and interpreting history. It was therefore, important to spell out clearly how history is understood, its significance and how historical data is handled as part of the methodology of this research.

##### **2. 1. 1 Nature of history**

The desire to rediscover the past has characterised human beings as far back as the time of Nabonidus, who lived in Babylon in the sixth century before current era, to the present day historian (Cairns 1996:17). This curiosity concerning the past has led to the development of history as a scientific field of study. History as both the past event and the written contemporary account of the past is never simple. Whenever one talks about the past, he or she is entangled in his or her contemporary perspectives of the past. “There is thus a complex, ambiguous boundary between past event, our present circumstance resulting in part as a product of the past, and our interpretation of the event” (Bradley & Muller 1995:33). In that sense the problem of the past is related to the subjective question of the present interpretation. The problem of the past is also related to the nature of historical evidence. What is at the disposal of historians are scattered traces left by the event or people who were involved in what happened. All we have are “results and traces” (Bradley & Muller 1995:34) of the past which are used in reconstructing an account of the past – history.

Various schools of thought emerged and grappled with the nature of history. In this study history deals with human life, it takes into consideration the life contexts of the

historical sources and that of the historian. Our understanding of the past depends on the fusion of the two life contexts, with the context of the historian playing a decisive role (Le Roux 1993:35). History is not static; the dynamics of contexts dictate our understanding of the past. The nature of history is heavily dependent on the philosophy of history employed.

There are historians who have argued for the cyclical nature of history, which was influenced by stoicism and ancient oriental religions (Dray 1964: 63). According to the cyclical pattern history repeats itself. Bebbington (1979) presented an elaborate discussion on cyclical history, Christian history, the idea of progress, historicism and Marxist history. It is worthy looking at these views briefly. The cyclical school (Bebbington 1979:21-42) views history as patterns of cycles similar to cycles of nature, rise and fall of nations and civilisations that come and go. The major problem with this view is that it is pessimistic. If history repeats itself and the future generations would experience nothing new, then there is no reason for people to work for a better future.

The Christian view (Bebbington 1979:43-67) presents history as linear, it has the beginning which is creation and the end will be the consummation of creation. The historical process is under the guidance of God's providence. The view is optimistic and challenges people to work towards a better future. This is the view selected for this study. The idea of progress agrees with the Christian view that history is linear but rejects the theological flavour. Human beings as agents of the historical process replace God's providence. The major problem with this view is the attempt to jettison any religious propensities from history.

Historicism (Bebbington 1979:92-116) rose as a reaction to the idea of progress. It rejected the linear nature of history. This school of thought based discussion about the nature of history on the uniqueness of cultures. History is viewed as a story of the growth of different cultures. The historian's task is to comprehend the different

cultures from his or her own culture through a technique of empathy. The major problem with this view is that it presents history as chaotic, without any pattern.

The Marxist view (Bebbington 1979:117-139) presents history as linear, based on class struggles, moving towards a classless society. In the struggle people strive to satisfy their basic needs. The major problem with this view is that it is too materialistic, once people fail to achieve their material goal they lose hope. The classless society has become elusive.

It is important to mention that the nature of history advocated here is linear. Three convictions are fundamental in this view. First, God guides history in a straight line. Through providence God permits the historical process to take place according to God's grace and foreknowledge. Second, God intervenes in history. This accounts for the divine redemptive acts experienced in human history. Third, God will bring history to its logical end, i.e., its consummation. This view of the nature of history demands a historical understanding comprising the whole of humanity and referring to the ways people relate to the world, which is the ecumenical perspective. This will be elaborated below under the section on analysing historical data.

At this juncture it is necessary to explore briefly the paradigm shift in historical understanding which has provided parameters for this study. This paradigm shift is from the old history to the new history (Burke 1991:3-6). The main facets of old history are as follows;

First, history is essentially concerned with politics (Tosh 1984:73). Politics in this sense relates to the state and refers to national and international levels. Local communities are excluded. The church is included only as an institution in this perspective. Other types of history, such as the history of art, are marginalised as they are viewed as peripheral to the interests of historians per se. Second, history is intrinsically a narrative of events.

Third, old history paradigm offers history from above. History is presented as dealing with deeds of noble people, generals and occasionally churchmen. The rest of humanity is allocated peripheral roles in the drama of history.

Fourth, historical sources are exclusively documents. The historian's task is a struggle with documents (Bloch 1954:86). Historians base their work on official records, emanating from government departments and other corporate bodies, which are preserved in archives and libraries.

Fifth, any historical explanation of events is based on individuals rather than collective movements. For instance, “When an historian asks, 'why did Brutus stab Caesar?' he means, 'what did Brutus think, which made him decide to stab Caesar’” (Collingwood 1946:213)?

Sixth, history is objective. The historian's task is to present facts for the reader or to tell the story as it actually happened. Historical facts are indisputable and universal.

Seventh, history is the territory of a professional, whose task is to produce objective history.

The old history paradigm marginalises the majority. In most cases it justifies inhuman treatment of the majority in the name of great deeds of great people. It also presents certain nations or races as superior to others, which leads to exploitation and segregation. The old paradigm is not suitable for this study because of the pitfalls elucidated.

The new history paradigm has the following features:

First, history is concerned with virtually every human activity. The underlying



assumption is that reality is culturally or socially constructed. So reality is relative as opposed to old history which views reality as unchanging.

Second, history is concerned with the analysis of structures in relation to events.

Third, the new history paradigm presents history from below (Sharpe 1991:25-42). This concentrates on views of ordinary people and the experience of social change. History from below is an attempt to present a balanced account of historical evidence through striking some equilibrium between great books or ideas and history of collective memories (Tuck 1991:218-232). This is very important when writing African history where the voices of women are to be heard as well (Gundani 2004:75).

Fourth, the new history paradigm exposes the limitations of using documents as exclusive historical sources. Official records express the official point of view only. Other forms of sources present the other side of the story. The new historical paradigm employs other kinds of sources like oral (Prins 1991:120-156, Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1992:84) or visual (Gaskell 1991:87-117). Oral sources include oral history and oral tradition (Becken 1993:84-85, Vansina 1985:27-3).

Fifth, history is concerned with collective movements and individual's actions, with trends as well as events.

Sixth, historians cannot escape biases. Each piece of history has prejudices associated with creed, colour, class or gender. Whenever a historian looks at the past, he or she does so from a particular point of view. The historian cannot reflect on reality or the past directly but through conventions, schemata and stereotypes. With this we cannot talk of the voice of history but voices of history (Burke 1991:289).

Seventh, new historians are professionals who are concerned with the whole range of

human activity. This encourages them to be inter-disciplinary, learning from and collaborating with counterparts from other social sciences.

The new history paradigm is the framework in which this study is based. This study attempts to present a balanced account of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's past. As the study delves into the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's past he is mindful of the fact that Christianity is a historical faith (Bosh 2004:181), and that the church has testified to the event of Jesus, as its mission, in different historical contexts. There are six major paradigm shifts in church history which have influenced this study which the researcher adopted from Bosch (2004:181-182),

In discussing the manner in which the Christian church has, through the ages, interpreted and carried out its mission, I shall follow the historico-theological subdivisions suggested by Hans Küng (1987:25; 1987:157). Kung submits that the entire history of Christianity can be subdivided into six major “paradigms.” These are:

1. The apocalyptic paradigm of primitive Christianity.
2. The Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic period.
3. The medieval Roman Catholic paradigm.
4. The protestant (Reformation) paradigm.
5. The modern Enlightenment paradigm.
6. The emerging ecumenical paradigm.

Each of the six paradigms reveals a peculiar understanding of the Christian faith, offers a distinctive understanding of the mission of the church and a particular understanding of church history. The researcher did not discuss each paradigm as Bosch (2004: 190-507) presented an elaborate discussion and analysis of the paradigms. Bosch was concerned with developments in the history of theology of mission yet his work provides comprehensive and enlightening insights into Christian historiography. This study falls under the emerging ecumenical paradigm which takes

into consideration rediscovering the role of local churches in the historical process, the liberating effect of the Christian message and the quest for justice in the world, the household of God.

The study is mindful of the observance of “...a growing rapprochement between institutional or social church history and the history of doctrine,” (Bradley & Muller 1995:1), which resulted from an employment of new methods of research, as social sciences, in church history. The rapprochement influenced church history from the later part of the era of the modern Enlightenment paradigm to the emerging ecumenical paradigm,

...for example, one finds an increasing tendency in modern church historiography to place ideas in a wider intellectual context, sometimes broadening the latter even further, with attention to cultural symbol or “mentality.” Similarly, the new areas of research opened up for us by the study of women and ethnic and religious minorities in church history have oriented us to a wider social context. Both developments are linked to new methods of investigation, and both have contributed directly to the need for sub-conceptualizing the traditional taxonomy of church history and its sub-disciplines (Bradley & Muller 1995:1).

In the emerging ecumenical paradigm more insights have come from consideration of issues of justice and equality which demand high levels of sensitivity to differences of ideas, opinions and approaches as we discuss, analyse and interpret historical data.

Another important issue to consider as we seek to understand the nature of church history is the relationship between methods of study and the subject matter. Bradley and Muller (1995:2) put the issue as follows,

The methods as well as the subject matters of church history will, of course, continue to be contested, because conceptualizations of the past bear so directly upon matters of our self-understanding, including our individual, social, and

ecclesiastical identity. But the older arguments concerning the proper subjects and methods of the church historian, and the relationship of social sciences to the study of history, seem increasingly irrelevant; the important question for the church historian today is the suitability of the technique to the specific task of research, which in turn is determined by the overall goal of the project and the nature of evidence at hand.

The quotation above shows that the historical researcher should be aware that while the method and subject matter have been of great concern for the historian, there has arisen a shift towards the suitable technique for the proper task. The aims of historical research as well as the sources at the historian's disposal determine the techniques to be employed. As a historical researcher I am aware of the need to adopt a method that would deliver intended results and an eclectic approach that taps from more than one technique of data discussion and analysis. The researcher's aim in this study, as far as understanding history is concerned, is to re-evaluate traditional divisions and methods in Wesleyan Methodist Church history in Zimbabwe, testing their compatibility with their contemporary needs and outlook.

There is a fundamental assumption which forms the basis of this study,

Institutional church history and the history of doctrine now demand a more holistic approach that takes full cognizance of the subtle social, political and philosophical influences on theology. But recognizing the social location of ideas does not, in our view, necessitate the social determination of knowledge, nor does it lead inevitably to epistemological or methodological relativism (Bradley & Muller 1995:3).

What this means is that good historical research should aim at objectivity, even if the task is difficult and demanding a broad and comprehensive perspective in the analysis of historical data. While strides have been taken in the quest for objectivity in historical studies, it was argued that there are "...several barriers to total objectivity,

or might be called impartiality,” (Bradley & Muller 1995:48). In other words “...the historian's narrative cannot possibly be a faithful and total reproduction of a section of the past” ( Renier 1950:249). What stands in the way of total objectivity is the selective nature of traces of the past and the historian's reconstruction. Hence history continues to be re-written on the basis of newly discovered or previously neglected sources.

According to Renier (1950:250), “...no story can be told till a selection has been made among available events, and ... The selection of facts is a judgement passed upon their importance.” The selection process and individual judgement involved in the historian's task result in partiality. However, objectivity is still crucial in historical research. As Bradley and Muller (1995:49) point out, “Objectivity arises out of a willingness to let the materials of history speak in their own terms while the historian, at the same time, exercises a combination of critical judgement and careful self-restraint.” From this perspective objectivity arises as a standard of the relationship between data and its interpretation (Car 1961:158). So objectivity does not emanate from an absence of opinions, presuppositions, existential involvement nor historian's capability to set aside such biases, but “... results from an honest and methodologically lucid recognition and use of the resident bias as a basis for approaching and analysing the differences between one's own situation and the situation of a given document or concept” (Bradley & Muller 1995:49). Hence objectivity can be attained and the historian must strive to be as objective as possible.

This study understood and presented history in its linear nature. It has a beginning (creation) and an end (consummation of history). What happens in between the beginning and end is a progression of events and activities towards the end of history. The progression of events and activities take place within God's providence.

## 2. 1. 2 Meaning of history

The discussion now focuses on the meaning of history. Does history have any meaning at all? If it does what is that meaning? Speculative history (Broad 1923:1) attempts to investigate patterns in and meaning of history. Such a speculative investigation about patterns on the nature of the past is beyond the scope of this study. This study zeroes in on clearly defined problems relating to what happened in the past. History is understood as a process through which clearly defined historical problems are addressed by meticulously examining all sources relevant to the respective problems and the product of the process. According to Marwick (2001:25) what actually happened in human past, whether or not historians have written about it, is what is meant by the past and the accounts of the past written by historians is history. As a process historical understanding is treated as hermeneutics (Le Roux, 1993:36). Hermeneutics in this study refers to a science of formulating rules of exegesis on one hand and a study of the exegete's context, the text and its context and methods of understanding the text on the other hand. History in this study means two things: a body of knowledge about the past and the processes through which the knowledge accumulates as a direct result of historians' activity. As a process history has a set of procedures, the methods, which are employed to find out about the past.

The dimension from which each piece of historical work is written heavily imputes the meaning of history. This research is scientific and presents a Christian view of history. According to the Christian view history "...is about human beings who are like God yet habitual wrongdoers, who have immense creative potential yet are enmeshed in a web of circumstance and who are the shapers and yet also the victims of history" (Bebbington 1979:168). Cairns (1996:18) delineated seven ways to understand the meaning of church history. History may be understood as an event which occurred at a particular place and specific time. In that view, "... history may be defined first as an incident, an actual event or happening in time and space as the result of human action. Such an incident is absolute and objective and can be known

only directly and fully by God” (Cairns 1996:17).

History also means information about the past. This information is derived from historical sources relating to historical events. Another meaning of history is an inquiry, research to find out data about the past, (Cairns 1996:17). This is done through a scientific study of historical sources. Interpretation of historical evidence is another meaning of history. This leads to a reconstruction of the past from the perspective of method of analysis, historian's biases and available data. History as incident or event is absolute, it occurs only once in time and space, while history as information, inquiry, process, product or interpretation is relative and subject to change (Cairns 1996:18).

Another dimension requiring consideration is meaning in history. According to Pannenberg (1976:396),

Church history faces in a way no other branch of history does the question of the relevance of the religious concern to the understanding of history because it deals with the history of a religion the essence of which is belief in a God who acts in history.

Pannenberg contends that church history gives providence the treatment it deserves. It is in providence that meaning in history is embedded. In that perspective, Bradley and Muller (1995:55) observed and warned historical researchers,

We have seen the deleterious effect of nominally “Christian” convictions in our study of the slow emergence of critical historiography, and students who are anxious to locate providence in history should be ever mindful of, and loath to return to, that long and tortured process. The theological element that may find its way into the narrative and analysis of the church historian must be recognized as such and introduced only tentatively, and one would hope, winsomely. Adopting for our purposes the contention of Wolfhart Pannenberg concerning the theologian's religious conviction, we believe that these

convictions properly belong to the heuristic, not the probative, context of historical analysis and argument.

In line with Bradley and Muller's observation and warning, meaning in history lies in historical data. The historian must allow interaction of ideas as he or she seeks understanding through engaging historical materials in a dialogue.

### **2 .1. 3 Purpose of history**

“All history is ideological, because all history reflects the concerns of the individuals and societies which produce it” (Isichei 1997:7). Every piece of history is an argument from a particular perspective. In this section the focus is on history as knowledge about the past, the product of the historian's labour. Historical study must not be understood as rarefied luxury. History is essential for human survival and harmony.

“History is collective memory, the storehouse of experience through which people develop a sense of their social identity and their prospects” (Tosh, 1994:1). In all spheres of life, which include personal relationships, choices, political judgements, important decisions and others, people interpret their experiences in time perspective. Even in terms of personal or corporate identity, people trace their roots in the past. History provides a framework from which to link the present to the past in order to get meaning. In everyday life people cannot understand individual situations without reference to whether they fit into a continuing process or what happened before. History stimulates the past to be alive through the study of deposits it has left behind (Gundani 2003:6).

People are always curious to know how their society came to be the way it is. History is thus essential, fundamental and indispensable to life. Individuals and communities could barely exist if all knowledge of the past were to be wiped out. “Without history



(knowledge of the past) we, and our communities, would be utterly adrift on an endless and featureless sea of time” (Marwick 2001:31). For every community history is like memory in an individual. Without memory individuals grapple to relate to others, to make intelligent decisions and choices. They easily lose their sense of identity. The same happens to a community without history. This study aims at providing valuable history for the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.

History can be used both positively and negatively. Bank (1997:261) demonstrates that history was used by the Cape Dutch conservatives and British settler conservatives in South Africa ideologically to justify racial discrimination. From another end, history can be used to address ideological racial politics. In this presentation the purpose of history is to expose how the British settler government used history to discriminate blacks and how to empower blacks to tap from history in attempts to address the imbalances that exist.

History, in other words, has always been recognized as having some importance for the identification of truth, but only in recent times has history been recognized as having an importance in itself as the embodiment of a kind of truth...The importance of history and the dominance of historical method in the contemporary study of religion and theology bear witness, therefore, to the realization that a right understanding of the documents and of the concepts with which theology works is a historically defined and historically governed understanding (Bradley & Muller 1995:56-57).

Here, it is clear that history has value in itself. The importance of history is in that it provides a context of meaning that was not available immediately or fully to the creators of the documents. In that sense historical interpretation is very crucial as the historian attempts to reach a relatively accurate representation of the past in and for itself. Thus the purpose and importance of history are embedded in the realm of identification and definition of historical issues and of the cultivation of objectivity in judgement (Bradley & Muller 1995:60).

The purpose of Church history is pragmatic, didactic and moral. It is a memory of Christian communities which defines their social consciousness (Hoornaert, 1989:9).

Church history unveils how the Holy Spirit works in and through the Church during the ages of its existence. Church history “... links the past factual data of the Christian gospel with the future proclamation and application of that gospel in a present synthesis that creates understanding of our great heritage and inspiration for its further proclamation and application” (Cairns 1996:20). Human beings are disposed to err and this often affects the proclamation of the gospel. History helps us to correct existing evil both in the Church and communities. This is done in the full knowledge that the present is usually a product of the past and a seed for the future. Church history can also be used to challenge and correct non prophetic theologies (Gundani 2002:144). Theologies should be prophetic and informed by liberation ethics.

Church history is a motivating force for the Church, (Cairns, 1996:22), it provides information that edifies, inspires and stimulates Christians towards a higher spiritual life. Through examples of great Christian leaders like Ambrose of Milan or John Wesley, Christians are encouraged to stand for Christ against all forms of evil in ecclesiastical or political circles. In other words history can be a liberating force for both the Church and communities.

One of the major assumptions of Church history is that the kingdom of God is among people. It offers people opportunities for renewal and reshaping individual and communal lives (Kalu 1981:78). The purpose of history is to study and lay bare the complex process through which communities have been transformed by the kingdom of God in time. Church history is part of the Church's strategy for evangelism. It aids Christian communities to perceive themselves, their calling and mission in time.

Church history is valuable in analysing the African Church's practices. The African Church must address real African challenges and religious quests. There are religious practices, like healing (Gundani 2001:21), which are central in African life. Church history shows how the Church has treated such practices and what corrective measures may be taken if need be. There are also certain practises within the Church

that are totally alien to and incompatible with the African context yet continue to occupy the centre stage in liturgical life of the African Church. It is surprising to note how much African Church history lacks women models (Gundani 2004:75). The reason for this is not the shortage of leading Christian women in the African Church but an insensitive gender bias in African historiography (Gundani 2004:75). This can be corrected by utilising oral history. Church history provides a platform for the self examination of the Church and making the Church relevant to its context.

Africa has a lot of crises. History can be used to shade light on contemporary crises, such as the land crisis in Zimbabwe (Gundani 2002:122). History provides parameters through which crises may be comprehended and tackled, imbalances redressed justly and peace maintained. History also provides a framework within which the historical and legal justification of the land rights of local people's ancestors can be comprehended.

From an ecumenical perspective Africa Church history tells a sad story of how happiness and fulfilment are being banished by predatory politicians (Kalu 2005:10). This is a story of marginalisation, oppression and exploitation. Church history accounts for the experiences and shows how these can be confronted and corrected through the gospel. History shows that God sides with the marginalised oppressed and exploited, so the gospel is never neutral.

In a typical traditional African community, history was used positively. Kalu (2005:11) discussed some of the uses. History was used to relate the past to the present and future in all spheres of life. It was employed as a means of conveying and perpetuating culture. History was a tool for organising and interpreting experiences to comprehend the present and guide the future. It also provided a frame work through which political education and leadership were understood. Through history community institutions and practices were promoted, observed and respected. This value of history is vital for twenty first - century African communities. It can address

the identity crisis which has led most African communities to be at the periphery rather than the orbit of human development.

## **2. 2 Sources of history**

Historical sources are pivotal for every historical research. Any historian has to be mindful of the fact that “...historical study consists in the examination and evaluation of sources ... They contain the traces of the human story in all its remaining detail” (Bradley & Muller 1995:39). The historical task demands that the historian establishes sources to be used (Obenga 1989: 29). Sources are categorised in order to emphasise the significance assigned to each of the sources and the importance of cultivating a critical attitude towards source materials. The historical sources, as in any other scientific research, are divided into three categories, primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary data are those collected fresh and for the first time while secondary data come from presentations made by other researchers in the form of documents (Kathari 2004:95). Historical sources here refer to all types of evidence which people have left of their past activities. These include written materials, spoken word, shape of the landscape, for instance ruins, modern editions of older works and other beacons useful in comprehending the past.

At this point it is necessary to discuss the three types of sources before listing sources for this study. Primary sources are original. They are data or traces of the past, “...a document, datum, or artefact that belongs to the era under examination and that offers the most direct access to the person or issues being studied” (Bradley & Muller 1995:39). Through primary sources, which are relics and traces of the past societies, we get knowledge of those societies. Primary sources are evidence that is contemporary to the event or thought to which they refer. Taking a source as primary does not imply any value judgement of its reliability or freedom from bias, some primary sources may be inaccurate, based on hearsay or intended to mislead. So the historian has to examine the sources to get rid of such distortions. Without the study

of primary sources there is no history.

Secondary sources are produced by historians as they study earlier periods and make use of primary sources (Marwick 2001:156). They are sources which offer information about an event but stand removed from it either in time or by a process of transmission of information (Bradley & Muller 1995:41). These sources are important in research because they offer the available historical knowledge. Through their study the researcher is able to identify a research gap. They are also important as they provide historical interpretation of primary sources done and the historical perspectives employed. Secondary sources expose how historians formulate historical problems and reach conclusions on the problems. Secondary sources refer to all material written by historians and their counterparts in other disciplines about the past. The secondary nature of a source affords it a substantively different place in the work of a researcher than that occupied by the primary sources. Therefore, secondary sources must be used with due care since they embody elements of selectivity and interpretation of the researcher. They also introduce the researcher's "...own errors and misconceptions into narrative accounts" (Bradley & Muller 1995:41).

The third category is tertiary sources. These are works that are very indirect in their relationship to the past events, issues or people being studied. The works are very much reliant on secondary sources for instance historical surveys (Bradley & Muller 1995:41). While tertiary sources provide valuable information at introductory level, they cannot be employed in a scholarly historical research.

The discussion of the categories of sources leads to an important principle to be observed by all scholarly historical researchers. Bradley and Muller (1995:41) put the principle as,

A very important rule, therefore, in the research and writing of dissertations, monographs, and scholarly articles is that *secondary and tertiary sources must not be used to fill gaps in one's knowledge of the primary sources.*

The researcher observed the rule in this study.

When dealing with historical investigation in Africa there are three main sources available according to Ki-Zerbo (1989:2). These are written documents, archaeology and oral sources. In this presentation sources are further categorised in terms of written and oral forms. Modern historiography places emphasis on documentary sources and the historical task demands a technique for processing documents (Obenga 1989:29; Bloch 1954:86). A comparative unavailability and insensitivity of written sources of African history has led to the need for oral sources. This study deals with black Zimbabweans, a part of African society, which kept no written records. It is history from below which asks new questions about the past and demands new kind of sources to supplement official documents (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1992:84). This calls for oral history, which is personal memories, and oral tradition, which is material handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth (Verstraelen 2002:6). Oral sources are invaluable significant in re-reading written sources from an African perspective.

However oral sources pose challenges to the historian. The major challenges come from anthropologists' criticism which has rejected use of oral tradition in history. Their argument is that oral tradition does not provide historical facts but symbolic truth (Isichei 1997:10-11). This makes historians to increasingly be aware of the fact that oral traditions are shaped by human memory and that they are always linked to an audience. Oral sources demand an understanding of languages of people being studied.

For this study primary sources are listed according to their priority. First, there are oral sources. These are further divided into oral history and oral tradition. Oral history, as mentioned above, is the first hand information collected from informants by the historian through interviews or questionnaires. This is pivotal to the study because the

study concentrates on the recent history of Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe. Oral tradition refers to verbal narratives and descriptions of people and events in the past which have been handed down from one generation to another. These are in form of etymologies, songs, praise-songs (*imbongi*), proverbs and folklore.

The second category is written sources. These are comprised of archival collections both private and public collections. They were extracted from the National Archives and the Wesleyan Methodist Archives in Harare. These are in form of minutes of meetings and conferences, official and personal correspondence, keynote addresses, official publications of the church and reports of consultations carried out. Also private publications, especially biographies, were consulted.

The discussion on this section cannot end without a brief mention of the manner in which historical sources were used in this study. There are two major ways of using sources which were considered. First, there is the sources based approach in which the historian selects one source or group of sources which fall in his or her area of interest and extracts whatever is valuable. The historian allows the contents of the sources to direct the nature of the inquiry (Tosh 1984:54). This approach is not suitable for this study which has a clearly defined problem.

Second, there is the problem-oriented approach. In this approach a specific historical problem or question is concocted after reading secondary sources (Tosh 1984:54). Relevant primary sources are selected and studied. The historian focuses directly on points in which he or she can draw conclusions. The scope of this study demands the problem-oriented approach because of the historical question, the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's impact on Zimbabwean politics. Particular attention has been paid on sources so that each source is given adequate consideration to avoid misinterpretation or discarding illuminating sources unwittingly.

The relationship between the historian and his or her sources is one of give and take.



The two contexts or horizons discussed above, the context of the sources and that of the historian, are fused in order to come up with historical knowledge. In the fusion process the historian has to employ sceptical intelligence, to find out how, when and why a source came into being. This applies to both oral and written sources.

## **2. 3 Methods of data collection**

For this study the oral historical method is of critical importance. The modern historical method is not able to answer some questions raised in this study sufficiently. The oral historical method provides tools that enhance this study in three ways. First, most of the available written sources which were produced from either missionary or African nationalist perspective are defective. They offer partial answers to the theme of this inquiry.

Oral sources were opened up to address this discrepancy. The oral data was collected through interviews and a questionnaire. An interview has both merits and demerits. It merits which were observed through the process included that the interviewer and interviewee researched together throughout the process; follow up questions were posed and the researcher could observe the interviewee's reactions and emotional attachment to the issue at hand. The interviews provided the study with the invaluable memories of the past from which the African ministers' voice was audible.

However, interviews posed some challenges. First, some of the ministers interviewed are retired and old. They needed time to respond to a question and were not comfortable with long sessions. This was solved through allowing them the time they needed and respecting their levels of concentration. Another challenge encountered was that an interviewee could speak very fast and the interviewer failed to cope up with writing every important detail. The handicap was resolved through engaging a co-researcher who also recorded the proceedings and the two set to consider the responses.



Second, the research was concerned with both the remote and immediate history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. Oral historical method answers concerns of a historical process that is happening or happened recently. Third, this inquiry raises fundamental questions that can be best and most adequately answered by a particular audience; the Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe, shedding light on the theme of our inquiry from within, represent a better source than which cannot be found. In that sense oral sources are very important for a balanced and valuable historical investigation of an African context.

Oral history as a method is a pyrotechnic of opening up oral sources. In this study oral historical method is understood as “...the collecting of any individual's spoken memories of his life, of people he has known and events he has witnessed or participated in,” (De Jong 2000:36). The memories are recorded on visual or audio tapes or on paper. It is also a process of tapping from oral tradition, memories of unlettered oral societies which go back beyond the life time of informants (Vansina 1985:13) to produce intelligible and scientifically relevant records.

The oral historical method provides this research with an edge against a historical research which is based on documentary sources only. Through interviews the researcher participates actively in the creation or production of the oral document and has an opportunity to obtain all the needed information. However the active participation of the researcher may be a disadvantage leading to distorted interpretation of oral documents. In order to avoid constructing oral documents according to his own desires, the researcher had to guard against personal prejudices.

Another critical area in oral historical method is transcription (De Jong 2000:37). This is a process of transferring information from one form or medium to another. Oral sources need to be transcribed from speech to written documents before they are used for historical research. This has to be done with painstaking attention to detail

and meaning in order to preserve the original meaning. If the process is not done meticulously it is impossible to transpose the complete meaning of the spoken word to paper. To deal with this challenge most interviewees were asked to put their ideas on paper. Only those who find writing as a challenge were assisted. Furthermore a comparison of what was recorded by the researcher to the audio tape of the interview assisted in addressing this challenge. In this study only summary of what was considered as containing useful information for our inquiry were included.

How reliable are oral sources in scientific research? Modern historiography demands that historians use documented historical sources. This has led to a study of history that is almost exclusively based on what the historians can read in documents. Thus the claim, “...ever since historical research was placed on a professional footing during Ranke's lifetime, the emphasis has fallen almost exclusively on written rather than the spoken word” (Tosh 1984:31). With this historians' research became confined to libraries and archives. The reason for this concentration on written sources is not that oral sources are inferior. For Western history the period from the Middle Ages onwards witnessed a plethora of documentary sources. This came up as a result of a marked growth in record keeping by states and other corporate bodies. The invention of the printing press and instantaneous spread of printing in the Western world resulted in the abundance of written sources, at the historians' disposal (Tosh 1984:31). Written sources were viewed as more meticulous in terms of authorship, place and time. So it was the abundant availability of written sources which led to their supposed superiority over oral sources in modern historiography.

A twofold criterion was employed in this study to determine the reliability of oral sources in scientific research. First, there is testing of the internal validity (De Jong 2000:39). This is a process of examining factual accuracy of an oral source through looking for contradictions, inconsistencies and anachronisms in interviews carried out. Where these were evident the whole interview was discarded. However in cases where subjective feelings and motives are in question, too strict consistency was not

demanding, since mixed or even contradictory feelings about a particular experience or event in one's life are normal and can be sincere and reliable.

The second is external validation (De Jong 2000:39), which is done through a cross checking process. The oral source was compared with other sources, which are other oral sources, written sources and background information. These helped the researcher to ascertain the overall reliability of an oral source.

## **2.4 Discussing historical data**

There are seven steps used to determine problems involved in sources, their strengths and weaknesses before using, interpreting and deriving a meaning or information from a particular source. First, is the source authentic? Is it what it purports to be? What is its place of origin? Second, when was the source produced? How close is its date to the date of the events to which it relates or to dates relevant to the problem being investigated? How does the source relate chronologically to other sources? Third, what type of a source is it? Is it a private letter, an official report, oral history, oral tradition, folklore, song, saying or any other? Fourth, how did the source come into existence in the first place? What was its purpose? Who created it, an individual or group of people? What attitudes, prejudices or vested interests would the originator have? Who were the audience? Fifth, how far is the originator of the source in a good position to provide first-hand information on a historical inquiry? Is the informant dependent perhaps on hearsay? Sixth, how was the source understood by the originator's contemporaries? What does the source say? Seventh, how does the source relate to historical knowledge obtained from other sources?

Once ascertaining of sources is over, the historian employs his or her transferable skill, which is an ability to select material relevant to the topic under study, collate, analyse and communicate it in a clear and precise language. This is what Carr (1987:28-29) refers to as creative historical writing.

There are three basic techniques of data discussion employed in this presentation. These are description, narration and analysis (Tosh 1984:112). Description and narration address the historian's desire to rediscover the past, while analysis grapples with interpreting it. The why and how questions are focal points for analysis. They unravel underlying reasons, perceptions, attitudes and regulations for events.

Another important aspect in discussing historical data is an examination of historical causes. These may be events, thoughts, actions or situations. According to Elton (1970:138) historical causes can be put into two categories. The first category has situational causes, which provide conditions for the production of a given event. The second category is divided into two groups, the intentional and unintentional causes. Intentional causes are when a producer willed the product. Unintentional causes are those where a deliberate action produced unintended results or those in which there was no active will involved. An adequately carried out discussion of historical data provides a fair examination of historical causes.

As the researcher delved into analysing historical data of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe he was mindful of the emergence and development of a critical church historiography. According to Bradley and Muller (1995:13)

Two basic alterations of perspective were necessary to produce the modern, critical church historiography of the mid-eighteenth century: first, a greater scientific concern for the analysis of original documents, and second, the freedom to interpret these sources in a way that did not lead to a predetermined, or at least predictable, goal.

In an attempt to uphold analysis of original documents and an independent interpretation of my sources the study cited carefully original documents for information and to aid readers of this research in evaluating the researcher's work. This study was influenced greatly by a desire to observe an emphasis on cultural impact, to trace theological significance of the church in history, to appreciate the church's role in preserving cultural values and to emphasise the importance of ideas

in explaining the church's past (Bowden 1991:222-226).

The way, in which any church historian views providence, meaning in history and confessional loyalty, shapes the outcome of his or her research. The same is true of the method and techniques employed by the historian. In a bid to make a genuine contribution to historical understanding the researcher considered various ways in which historical data have been discussed, analysed and interpreted. A good example is Bradley and Muller's (1995:26-32), discussion of approaches to method and organisation of the history of Christian doctrine. There are four models presented in the discussion.

First, there is the general/specific model which discussed and analysed historical data according to a general outline of thought and particular issues. The first step according to the model was to break the history of doctrine into periods then provide a general survey of authors, their ideas and forces that impinged on their history of doctrine (Bradley & Muller 1995:27). The second step was to make an exposition of particular issues to come up with a special history of doctrine within the same periods. The strength of the model was that it provided a neat lay out of ideas from a particular period. It also exposed various developments of theological thoughts of the church at different times. Its weaknesses include that the model locates meaning in history in a theological framework which is contemporary with the historian. The model also attempts to compel the thoughts of particular periods of church history into a model that was alien to the period.

The second is the special or diachronic model or systematic model. This model aims at discussing individual doctrines in detail. If the model is used with a candid recognition of its limitations it leads to elaborate accounts of doctrines discussed. Its major weakness is that it imposes a systematic grid on the subject matter (Bradley & Muller 1995:29).

Third, there is the great thinker model (Bradley & Muller 1995:30) which focuses on examining contributions of individual thinkers in church history. The model has a serious problem in that it locates meaning in history in individual people. Meaning in history is to be sought in historical data rather than individual people.

The fourth is the integral, synchronic or organic model, which,

... attempts a synchronous understanding of the development of the central ideas of Christianity. While it was developed primarily by historians of doctrine, this model holds the most promise for reconceptualizing the task of the church historian on a broader scale (Bradley & Muller 1995:31).

The value of this model in this study resides in its concern for a broader dialogue between theological topics and other issues like social concerns, politics, economics and interaction of parties in the church in confrontation with one another. The researcher mentioned that this model provides a complex perspective of history. However the complexity results from historical data and when analysed properly it yields a clearer picture why ideas developed as they did.

The model also,

... provides a firmer basis for answering even the more systematic questions at the root of the other methods, granting that attention to context and development accounts for the forms of theological statement and, indeed, for the maintenance of certain forms and the rejection of others (Bradley & Muller 1995:32).

The quotation above shows that the model locates meaning in history in the interaction of ideas within a particular period as they were understood by particular individuals. The understanding of particular individuals contributed to the development of the wider community. The integral or organic model was utilised in discussing, analysing and interpreting the impact of Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe on politics.

This study is an interpretation of history from a Christian point of view. It has “a deep

imprint of theology or 'finger of God' as a dominant conceptual pattern in historical interpretation” (Kalu 1981:78). There are basic assumptions derived from this assertion which every church historian should take into consideration when discussing historical data. The first one is that the kingdom of God is among us. Historical data has to be analysed in view of values of the kingdom of God. These values include stewardship, equality, justice and love. The second one is that the kingdom of God offers opportunities for renewal, revival and reshaping of life for individuals and communities. Historical analysis treats individuals and communities with the merits they deserve.

An analysis of historical data seeks to expose and interpret patterns of interaction, mechanisms and tendencies of change as well as transformation and directions of transformation in communities. In this presentation these are discussed in the light of the kingdom of God. God's presence in Zimbabwe was there before the arrival of missionaries. Pre-Christian encounters with God are important in discussing Zimbabweans' responses to the gospel. This discussion unveils how Zimbabweans responded to the presence of the gospel, how they viewed the whole enterprise of evangelism, forms of Christian witness which sprouted from Zimbabweans' responses to the gospel and how those forms of witness impacted on interactions in society, with special reference to political activities.

The five points on ecumenical perspective of Church history suggested by Kalu (2005:21-23) heavily shape the discussion of historical data in this study. Church history demands a wider understanding of the Church, not just activities of a denomination or missionaries. It examines how people of God contributed to the stewardship of the God-given resources and how they related with one another as they were all created in the image of God. This thesis aims at placing the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's contribution to stewardship and mission into its proper context, the whole Zimbabwean scenario. Historical discussion eschews elitism in Church history and promotes a deliberate move to trace and highlight



experiences of the marginalised, exploited and poor. In this perspective history becomes a process of liberating and self-discovering for individuals and communities.

This study employed a combination of the ecumenical and southern approaches. The ecumenical approach is inclusive, as it emphasises taking the world as a household of God. From that perspective the historian is required to strike a balance among all agents of history as he or she presents an account of the past. That can be done either from the northern or southern perspective. The southern approach aims at raising voices of the oppressed or marginalised. It attempts to correct the imbalances in historical accounts which were presented from a northern approach. It corrects the misrepresentation of facts in the northern approach which depicts a scenario where the oppressed and marginalised appeared as if they had no voices against their conditions, they were saved yet not grateful and their resistance was rebellion. In this study voices of the oppressed and marginalised (African ministers) were explored but not at the expense of voices of the oppressors (missionaries and colonisers). Chapter four is dedicated to the missionaries' voices while chapter five deals with African ministers' voices.

My point of departure in interpretation of Zimbabwean historical data is that there were inner dynamics of encounters which occurred between Western and African cosmologies when the gospel was proclaimed to Zimbabweans by missionaries. The temptation is to assume that the Western type of Christianity provides solutions to Zimbabwe's challenges and must, therefore, be the starting point for Zimbabwe's Church history. This is a misrepresentation of Zimbabwean historical evidence. Zimbabwe, with its complex cultures and diverse religious expressions is the starting point of historical analysis. The analysis must discard dead wood in both Western and Zimbabwean traditions.

The study employed the translation model of contextual theology in analysing the



political praxis of John Wesley, Wesleyan Methodist missionaries and African Methodist ministers. The model is more appropriate in missiology than in history. This study examined how the teaching of a particular denomination influenced political activities in Zimbabwe. There was no way the study could avoid missiological and theological considerations. The contextual approach was used to demonstrate that when dealing with a history of a church's teaching the historian deals with various contexts in which the teaching is employed.

## **2.5 Zimbabwean context during the colonial era**

In a bid to do justice to all aspects of Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' activities within a holistic framework, this study distinguished three of four important categories of human life, as discussed by Scheffler ( 2001 : 15 – 23) as crucial in analysing Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis in Zimbabwe, namely the political, socio – cultural and religious dimensions. The three dimensions were explored in this study as a methodological consideration in order to unfold the Zimbabwean context in which Wesleyan Methodist praxis operated.

### **2.5.1 Political dimension**

The political dimension of Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' life can be divided into two major categories, internal and international politics. The internal political dimension considers people's needs and how they were addressed by politicians. White Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists were familiar with the modern political system which was employed by both the settler and colonial governments. That gave them an advantage against their black counterparts as well as a responsibility to help blacks to comprehend the rules of the game. Wesleyan Methodist missionaries in Zimbabwe were divided into two loose camps based on the manner in which the colonial government was to meet the needs of blacks in Zimbabwe. They were also divided on the basis of how the church would accompany blacks on the path towards

appreciation of modern political concepts and racial emancipation. We saw in chapter four above that from as early as 1913 to the late 1940s most Wesleyan Methodist missionaries, both clergy and laity laboured decisively in the promotion of legislation and enforcement of national and local policies. The desire to protect a Christian influence on governance of the country explains why white Wesleyan Methodists, especially missionaries, were keen to cooperate with the colonial government in the enactment of laws that would govern the country. However, in the process they sunk into racial segregation either unwittingly or deliberately. Voices of progressive missionaries like John White were not accommodated in the official stance of the Wesleyan Methodists in the country. That was in the eyes of blacks, even fellow Wesleyan Methodists.

Another important phenomenon was the introduction of modern political institutions in Zimbabwe. In traditional Zimbabwe there were chiefdoms, among the Shona speaking groups, in which authority and power were vested in the chief, who was referred to as “...the senior descendent of ancestral spirits who founded the chiefdom” (Bourdillon 1993:59). Among the Ndebele the situation was a little different. There was a king who had his subordinates, *izinduna*, and some hierarchical structure (Bourdillon 1993:59). It is important to note that,

When the colonial powers took over the government of the country, the chiefs originally lost considerable power and authority. The colonial government originally took their authority to try cases and settle disputes. In practice, however, people continued to recognize the authority of traditional chiefs in this respect: in practical terms, they had no one else to turn to sort out petty disputes (Bourdillon 1993:61 – 62).

The quotation above exposed shortfalls in the strategies of colonial powers, which in this case included missionaries. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists, like their imperial counterparts, the colonialists, had no respect for any traditional set up. They behaved as though they were entering into a political vacuum where they had to spread neatly modern precepts and values to cover all corners of the country.

The colonial government managed to displace the traditional internal politics, with valuable aid from the retrogressive elements of church, through the introduction of a parliament, cabinet, judiciary system and defence forces. Those institutions were manned by whites with blacks assigned the lowest ranks, whenever they could be employed. During that time groups like the missionary conference, white politicians, explorers, police force, army, white farmers, chiefs, mission-educated elite, African nationalists and liberation war fighters were very influential in meeting the political needs of the people. Four things which were discussed by Gibson (2009:86) are critical for this study as we seek to comprehend various groups' impact on Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis. Gibson was referring to the South African context however, his discussion sheds light on what happened in Zimbabwe. First, people receive psychological value through associating themselves with particular groups. Second, group identity shapes how people view the world. Third, group identities compel people to be concerned with their fellow members' plight that extends beyond acquaintances. Fourth, group identities connect individuals to group histories. In this analysis it is necessary to expose how the concept of group justice helped Wesleyan Methodists perceive and act on issues of land politics, race relationships, war and federation. The missionary conference acted as a watch dog for the country. They always made sure that the political developments in the country were in line with British tradition. The groups helped in moulding Wesleyan Methodist political activities as they either responded to demands from the groups or received feedback from the groups on their demands. Black Wesleyan Methodist clergy in Zimbabwe had no voice at all during the first fifty years of Wesleyan Methodist mission work in the country. Lack of exposure and incompetence in comprehending their political context may be cited as some of the reasons for their voiceless existence. They were also busy acquiring and reflecting on their new faith in relation to their traditional set up.

Another issue to be considered in this section is how the Prime Minister ruled or administered the country. Here the study examined internal policies and how they

affected the lives of ordinary people. Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice were employed in a particular setting. Initially chiefs were stripped of all authority and power because they knew nothing about modern politics which was being introduced. Right from the beginning colonial rule had a negative impact on blacks in Zimbabwe. After the military conquest of the Ndebele and Shona in 1896 and 1897 respectively, the Prime Minister established BSAC rule under the auspices of the British government. When BSAC rule was established whites, especially farmers from South Africa who were promised vast land allocations, flocked into Zimbabwe (Palmer 1977:19-20). BSAC rule introduced local government structures which undermined the role of chiefs. Land demarcations were made throughout the country as farms and land holdings were created. The process affected blacks as the map of the country was altered permanently. White farmers were granted control of large tracks of land and some blacks were forced to provide labour. The Administration established courts and taxation in the so called reserves which worsened the chiefs' role and image. The BASC rule was continued and perfected by the colonial government in Zimbabwe. Colonial policies implemented by the Prime Minister in Zimbabwe promoted land alienation, racial discrimination, labour migration, subsidising African wage labour through forcing workers' families to remain in rural areas and support themselves, as well as the exclusion of blacks in various sectors.

Colonial policies made a clear cut distinction between citizens and subjects (Alexander 2006:6). Citizens were whites and later on included a few blacks who lived in urban areas; those enjoyed rights in all spheres of life. Subjects were all who lived in the so called reserves and did not have legal claims to rights in civil spheres. Such people could be displaced from their land without any deterrent, discriminated against and exploited by the so called citizens. The relationship between citizens and subjects was based on domination. As time went by black Zimbabweans became “...aware of the range of competing claims to legitimacy the state made, and drew on these in their interactions with officials” (Alexander 2006:7). Progressive Wesleyan

Methodist missionaries' teaching on politics had its niche in blacks' engagement with whites. For instance, there was an ongoing struggle over how blacks were to live and farm in reserves which progressed towards a potential political explosion because it was always attached to "...processes of dispossession and exploitation, processes that posed a profound challenge to the state's legitimacy and so to its ability to build institutions of rule" (Alexander 2006:7). It is important to note that a group we may refer to correctly as the mission-educated elite, among whom was Rev. T Samkange a progressive African minister, was the first among blacks to challenge colonial rule. That shows the importance of mission schools in African political emancipation. When chiefs were later incorporated into colonial rule their functions included underwriting the system of labour migration, enforcing taxation and promoting colonial administrative policies in their constituencies. The colonial central force behind technical development meant squeezing more blacks into reserves and denying them any claims to land designated as European. Perpetual movement of chiefs and their people whenever their land was designated European area and migration of blacks from their homes to urban areas posed an ongoing challenge to the colonial government. Such issues became virgin land for Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and activities; surely a Christian dimension was needed in addressing the anomaly but the official stance of the church failed to provide the needed dimension as shown in chapters four and six.

Another point worthy of exploration was the creation and role of the Native Commissioners who were later developed into Native Affairs Department (Alexander 2006:21). Soon after the establishment of BASC rule in Zimbabwe there arose a widespread perception of misrule. In response to the perception the British government appointed a resident Native Commissioner through whom it would protect the interests of blacks. The move was welcomed by Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe. Through appointing the Native Commissioner the British government initiated a separate wing of administration concerned with black interests in the country. That exposed the British government's perception of blacks as a vulnerable

group in Zimbabwe even though they were in the majority. However, in practice, the work of both the Native Commissioner and Native Affairs Department were based on the philosophy of authoritarianism and paternalism as they struggled to maintain order, extract taxes and labour, promote civilisation and protect blacks in reserves (Alexander 2006:24). Alexander (2006:21) noted that on a positive note, they were outspoken critics of extreme land alienation, abusive farmers and employers as well as advocates for more land to be occupied by blacks. Inadequate land for occupation by blacks was a thorn in the flesh for the colonial government as it was always a potential threat of unrest. That was also fertile ground for Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis as they called upon the colonial government to abide by British principles in administering the country and advocated observance of Africans' basic human rights.

From 1950s on wards the Zimbabwean internal political landscape was transformed by intensified challenges from mission-educated elite, African nationalists, African led political parties which led to the liberation war. During the first phase of Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis in Zimbabwe the major concern was similar to what Ajayi (2008:243) observed,

... the challenge of politics was the extent to which it was proper for Christians to be involved in managing the structures of government ... the immediate problem was how to keep the Christian converts away from participating in the politics of their communities that might involve traditional rituals or other practices unacceptable to the mission.

Ajayi was talking about the West African experience; what he said was also reflected in Zimbabwe. In pursuit of the principle mentioned above Wesleyan Methodist missionaries joined their counterparts in drawing up rules forbidding polygamy, beer drinking, traditional dances and other practices. Mission farms, schools and local churches were used for coercing blacks into adopting a modern life style according to British tradition. The extent to which those institutions succeeded as coercive agents for colonialism and modernisation deserves to be explored but falls outside the scope of this study. It is depicted that prior to 1950 the mission-educated elite was



concerned with appropriating the ideological concepts of the contemporary political system and understanding structures of the state at both local and national levels (Ajayi, 2008:244). Their focus was fixed on determining the role of a Christian (role model), as being a bearer of moral standards and respecter of the structures of the state. So from 1950 onwards their concern shifted to how they could bring their faith and enlightenment to influence national politics. The important role of missionaries and mission schools in educating Africans in ideals of democracy and human dignity began to pay off. The political challenge for the mission-educated elite had moved to confronting colonialism and missionary imperialism with the ideology of nationalism. Their early responses to political challenges amounted to “...nationalist ethiopianism” (Ajayi 2008:244). They advocated for African agents in national politics while they insisted on European forms of politics. That tallied very well with the objectives of Wesleyan Methodist political teaching in Zimbabwe. However, such a position would not redress the political imbalances which had been perpetrated in the country for more than half a century.

When the mission-educated elite realised that nationalist ethiopianism would not work they mooted political parties that were for blacks exclusively. That gave birth to African nationalist political parties. The move divided Wesleyan Methodists, especially the white community, between those who claimed that African nationalist political parties were a form of rebellion and therefore could not be justified by Christian principles and others who justified them as a struggle against racial discrimination and a repressive political system which was opposed to Christian principles. Some black clergy who were fluent in English started to express their views and articulated the African cause at Synods for the majority of Africans who were not educated enough to comprehend the political context. Articulation of the African cause by such clergy motivated many blacks to participate in the fight against colonialism in protests, armed struggle and negotiation. The division between clergy on the basis of African involvement in politics threatened to split the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe up to the independence of the country in 1980.

The study has shown that the internal political context influenced Wesleyan Methodist political praxis. Now we turn to the international context. This section examined Zimbabwe's neighbours, as well as influence from the global village. The researcher's attempt is to understand the history of Zimbabwe, especially Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe, in relation to other nations. Who exerted greatest influence on Zimbabwean history and merits our attention? In other words the focus in this section is directed towards exposing how events and pressure from other nations and global organisations affected Wesleyan Methodist political praxis during the period under study.

The international political arena was characterised by the scramble for Africa which led Europeans to partition the continent during the rush for colonies and plundering of African wealth. Super powers like Britain (who colonised Zimbabwe), Germany, Russia, United States of America and later on China, struggled for global control. Their pressure was felt in Zimbabwe and Wesleyan Methodists had to deal with it. Of all the super powers Britain had the greatest influence on Zimbabwean history. In 1889 the British government granted BSAC "...a charter to colonise and promote commerce..."(Sobel 1978:5) in Zimbabwe. Britain had to protect her interests in the young colony and most Wesleyan Methodist missionaries, as British nationals, regarded themselves as having a dual mandate, evangelising and guarding jealously British interests in Zimbabwe. Important to note is that,

In 1914, when the time to renew the British South Africa Co.'s charter, the British government did so on the condition that the settlers be given self-government by 1924. Britain's Privy Council ruled in 1918 that Southern Rhodesia belonged not to the company but to the Crown. In 1922, Britain gave the white settlers a choice between union with South Africa and the status of a self-governing colony of Britain. The choice, by 8,744-to-5,989 vote, was colonial status, and self-government was put into effect under these terms Sept. 12, 1923 (Sobel 1978:5&7).

The quotation demonstrates beyond doubt why Britain was so attached to Zimbabwe throughout the period under study. Such British attachment to Zimbabwe compelled



Wesleyan Methodist missionaries to work laboriously for the Crown as they contributed to nation building in the new colony. They were quick to remind the colonial government that their obligation as they ruled Zimbabwe was to ensure that British principles were upheld under whatsoever circumstances. Hence Wesleyan Methodists were instrumental in legislation and administration in Zimbabwe as from 1923 up to 1950 when they began to challenge the colonial government openly on repressive political and economic systems.

There were global organisations which exerted pressure on Zimbabwe to which Wesleyan Methodists had to respond. One of the organisations was the United Nations, whose proto-type was the League of Nations established following the First World War (1914-1918). Britain was a member of the United Nations and Zimbabwe as a British colony became a member. The United Nations prescribed rights for indigenous people to which Britain, as a member, was a signatory. That had serious consequences for white Zimbabweans who employed discrimination against blacks as a model for treating Africans in the country. Wesleyan Methodists who started off as comrades in arms with their colonial counterparts were quick to realise that the tide was beginning to flow against their established order in Zimbabwe. They reacted swiftly to the new global race relationships paradigm and buttressed their theological defence for blacks with insights from the new world order. The church's struggle against all forms of discrimination against blacks as from 1951 was influenced heavily by the United Nations' principles on race relationships as shown in chapter four. I see the desire to comply with United Nations' dictates on treatment of indigenous people and sound theological probity ushering Wesleyan Methodists into an antagonistic relationship with the colonial government and its sympathisers which resulted in the church's total rejection of discrimination against blacks. It was evident that pressure from United Nations' teaching on indigenous people was one of the forces that led to a change of heart and mind for Wesleyan Methodists in their political praxis. Another force that compelled Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists to shift from collaboration with the colonial government to antagonism was a desire to

rediscover and contextualise John Wesley's political teaching and practice. When the colonial government announced the UDI in 1965, Britain succeeded in lobbying the United Nations to impose sanctions on Zimbabwe. The colonial government implored churches to assist the government through contributing towards the Ministry of Education budget. Wesleyan Methodist and other denominations rejected the invitation and lost all of their primary schools to the state. They would rather lose the schools than to be labelled as accomplice to the colonial government in its UDI.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) was another global organisation that had tremendous influence on Wesleyan Methodists political praxis. The council's Programme to Combat Racism stimulated a lot of debate in the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's synods (Banana 1996b:206-230). The WCC's offer to provide funding for African nationalist political parties in their quest for political emancipation was received by Wesleyan Methodists with mixed reactions. The Wesleyan Methodists' reaction to the offer gave birth to a third wing of the church's political teaching. The first wing justified the colonial government's repressive, discriminative and inhuman political system, with the second one advocating for the involvement of blacks in national politics without any restrictions. The third wing, which attracted most of the black clergy and mission-educated elite, advocated for a complete removal of colonialism through armed struggle. The third wing of Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching propelled many young men and women into leaving schools, employment, families and the country to train as freedom fighters and liberate Zimbabwe.

On the African continent the wave of African nationalism that swept across the continent impacted heavily and positively on Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis. When the church realised the magnitude of the wave they prepared blacks in the church for an eventual takeover of leadership. They also started to preach the gospel of African emancipation and accompanied upcoming black politicians in Zimbabwe. There was the federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland

which also influenced Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching. The federation was introduced in a bid to prepare for a multiracial society in the region. It would promote political and economic advancement but Wesleyan Methodists were disturbed by white domination of the federation, so they treated it with suspicion. Developments in Zimbabwe's neighbours also influenced Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis. When some of the neighbours attained independence it became apparent to most African nationalists and some Wesleyan Methodists that Zimbabwe would attain hers eventually. The church had to respond to such developments in order for it to remain relevant. Had Wesleyan Methodists ignored the developments it would have fallen victim to the liberation war or risked to become irrelevant for Zimbabwean post-colonial context.

The study has exposed how Zimbabwe's political context, both internal and international, was crucial for the development and interpretation of Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis. Wesleyan Methodists responded to various demands that came their way because of the political context which continued to change. During the first fifty years Wesleyan Methodist missionaries in Zimbabwe accepted colonial rule wholeheartedly, they collaborated with politicians too easily and were too prone to assume that they had an important secular function. They were too quick to employ a paternalistic strategy when dealing with African affairs as if they knew what was right for blacks. The change that emerged from 1950 and continued up to 1980 was enabled by Wesleyan Methodists' realisation that the world was not on their side and the repressive colonial rule could not be justifiable through Christian principles.

### **2.5.2 Economic dimension**

A few questions had to be answered in this section. How did Zimbabweans make a living before and during colonialism? Before colonialism people in Zimbabwe made a living through a number of economic activities. The activities included simple subsistence farming, gathering fruits, hunting, specific trades like blacksmith and

goldsmith, trading in gold and ivory as well as barter trade. There was no private ownership of land and property as what existed was some form of communalism. The gap between the poor and rich was well managed by the whole community through concepts like *kuronzera*, lending poor household cattle for domestic use, so as to avoid extreme poverty. During the colonial era black Zimbabweans were compelled to abandon traditional economic practices and adopt modern ones. In such a context Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis became handy as missionaries found common cause with government officials, business people, miners, farmers and other groups in promoting modern economic principles in Zimbabwe. It is clear that colonial dictates had a devastating effect on Zimbabwean traditional economics. That was a good recipe for stimulating blacks into resistance hence missionaries' collaboration with colonisers to silence Africans, especially in the first fifty years of Wesleyan Methodist missionary work in Zimbabwe

### **2.5.3 Socio-cultural dimension.**

A number of aspects fall under this section. However, since the study is about an evaluation of Wesleyan Methodists' political activities, socio-cultural aspects are explored in as much as they elucidated the political praxis.

#### **2.5.3.1 Family**

First, we consider the family unit. Family life was another facet of the socio-cultural dimension which helped in assessing Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and activities. Wesleyan Methodists found themselves operating in a context where family structures were patrilineal among the Shona and Ndebele and matrilineal among the Tonga (Bourdillon 1993:19). A patrilineal family system asserted that once belonged to the clan and family of his or her father and young men inherited land and cattle from him, while in a matrilineal system a person belonged to the clan and family of his or her mother and young men inherited land and cattle from their

mothers' brothers. In both patrilineal and matrilineal systems a family was understood in terms of an extended unit. An extended family consisted of parents, their biological children and close relatives. In contrast to the extended family a nuclear family consisted of parents and their biological children. Modernism promoted nuclear families which eroded the traditional social fabric and role of elders in community. Whatever changes were proposed on land use had a bearing on family life.

### **2.5.3.2 Marriage**

Marriage customs cemented roles of extended family members. In the pre-colonial era marriage was simply a family institution. Both polygamy and monogamy were acceptable. During the colonial period marriage was transformed into a civil institution with judicial implications. For a marriage to be recognised officially it had to be solemnised by a government official and clergy could be marriage officers. In that sense marriage was used as a coercive agent as blacks were forced to take up Western individualism. Wesleyan Methodists were instrumental in enforcing monogamous marriages which had both economic and political implications for blacks. It is worth exploring how authority in a family changed over the years. Before colonialism a father had authority over his children in matrilineal communities and a brother to one's mother in a matrilineal community. During the colonial era a father's authority over his children changed whenever a family moved into an urban set up. Men had authority over women before colonialism. However women had considerable power in a family since there was interdependence between men and women. Men depended on women for gathering and preparation of food, while they hunted and defended their families. With the advent of colonialism women's power diminished because of a change from subsistence to cash-crop farming. They laboured on the fields while the harvest was sold and used by their husbands as they pleased. Colonialism brought about untold suffering among women in Zimbabwe which needs to be explored outside this study.

### **2.5.3.3 Burial of the deceased**

Another important aspect of socio-cultural dimension was burial of the dead. Before the colonial era a place where one was buried was very crucial. It had a bearing on whether the deceased could become an ancestor or not. Royal families had their designated caves (*ninga*) where deceased members of the family were buried. Wesleyan Methodists, as well as their contemporary missionaries and imperialists, downplayed the role allocated to ancestors in an African world view. Political authority and the power of chiefs were derived from one's relationship with ancestors. "In many chiefdoms, the chief was the senior descendent of the ancestral spirits who founded the chiefdom," (Bourdillon 1993:59). When blacks were displaced by white farmers they were cut off from traditional burial caves and other important ancestral places. Little did whites, including Wesleyan Methodists, know that transforming family life had serious political undertones for blacks? It affected both the living and ancestors.

### **2.5.3.4 Transmission of knowledge from one generation to another**

During the colonial era missionaries introduced formal education. Traditionally knowledge was passed on from one generation to another through oral transmission. Schools were started in villages wherever a congregation worshipped. Wesleyan Methodists aimed at teaching locals to read and write so that they could read the bible for themselves. The introduction of schools resulted in a change of content which in turn meant that a different type of knowledge was to be acquired by blacks. Formal education posed a new challenge for African culture during colonialism. A modern world view that was presented to blacks demanded that they had to choose relevant elements from their culture and the colonisers' as they adjusted to the new context. The development which started as a desire to enable blacks in Zimbabwe to read the bible culminated in mission-educated elite and a literate nation eventually. Formal education equipped Africans in Zimbabwe for political activities. Wesleyan

Methodists contributed significantly to formal education in Zimbabwe and thus to the political emancipation of blacks.

#### **2.5.3.5 Security**

Military life during colonial Zimbabwe can also expose important aspects of the context from which to comprehend Wesleyan Methodist political praxis. Before colonialism in Zimbabwe chiefdoms did not maintain professional armies, except the Ndebele who had regiments called *impi*. The colonial government introduced a professional army. In times of dire need government used the conscription of blacks to boost its forces. Wars which professional black soldiers fought were the Second World War and the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. Wesleyan Methodists encouraged blacks to fight on the British side in the Second World War. When the church, in its official capacity, tried to discourage blacks from an armed struggle against colonialism it failed. Blacks who were convinced that God had blessed Britain and her allies through the defeat of Germany and her allies, saw nothing wrong in seeking God's blessing through the defeat of colonialism in Zimbabwe. What was at play here was that evil forces were supposed to be confronted and defeated at any cost for God's glory. Wars fought by professional soldiers in Zimbabwe during colonialism were linked to religion. During the war of liberation non-Christians fought in the name of ancestral spirits like Nehanda. Wesleyan Methodist teaching on politics propelled blacks' participation in wars which were fought during the colonial era.

#### **2.5.4. Religious-ideological dimension**

We refer to this dimension as religious-ideological in order to take into consideration the interplay between religious and political-ideological belief during the colonial era in Zimbabwe. In traditional Zimbabwean society worship was held at household level with communal festivals at different times of the year led by community elders or chiefs. During the colonial era worship was centralised at church buildings within



communities and national or regional structures were introduced by all denominations which operated in the country. Centralised worship was led by whites and later on by white trained blacks, both evangelists and clergy. Centralised worship was more attractive than a traditional way of worship because it was used by whites to entice blacks into embracing modern values. Africans who were converted to Christianity were regarded as more civilised than their counterparts who continued in traditional worship. Many blacks took up Christianity for the benefits and opportunities it offered. The opportunities were in the economic and social spheres of life so centralised worship was used as a coercive agent.

Worship leaders had important responsibilities which included preaching and teaching which were used as an opportunity to transform Zimbabwean society into a modern one. During the first fifty years retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe accepted colonial rule and cooperated with politicians. They were too prone to assume that they had an important secular obligation thus in their teaching they included political, economic and racial issues. Wesleyan Methodists and other denominations based their transformation agenda on the conviction that Christianity, commerce, civilisation and imperialism were intertwined. The conviction was propelled by a providential theology which compelled missionaries to go out and win people of various nations for Christ. Imperialists both Christian and non-Christian “...did believe that it was their task to reorder African religion, politics, society and economy in ways decided by them and for a good as defined by them,” (Bridges 2008:46). That led Wesleyan Methodists to have a burning desire to spread a British variety of modernism in Zimbabwe. In that vein African traditional worship was referred to as heathen and converts to Christianity were prohibited from partaking in anything related to traditional worship such as rest days, festivals and rain making ceremonies. That amounted to the direct undermining of the authority of chiefs.

A setting for exploring the interplay between colonialism and Wesleyan Methodism in Zimbabwe was provided by British imperial expansion strategies. The strategies



such as formal political power, imperial rule or cultural and economic influence (Porter 2009:60) paralleled the modern missionary movement and ushered in the British as political rulers of Zimbabwe. They elicited serious questions on the relationship between missionaries and Africans as well as colonial authorities. So imperial strategies had a significant impact on retrogressive missionary strategies, since Wesleyan Methodist missionaries were British nationals. A religious-ideological belief among retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe asserted that their political activities amounted to building a Christian nation in the new colony. That explains why they took a keen interest in the political affairs of the nation but in support of the colonial government at the expense of the Africans' plight. When they collaborated with the colonial powers in opposing the armed struggle against racism and colonialism they still claimed to be fulfilling their mission. The activities of the retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist missionaries was opposed sharply by progressive Wesleyan missionaries and African ministers as exposed in chapters four and five.

This holistic context of Zimbabwe during the colonial era was used in analysing Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice in the country. The next chapter focused on John Wesley's political praxis as we lay the platform for discussing and analysing the Zimbabwean developments.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter looked at a number of important methodological considerations for this study. First was the nature of history which was presented as the past event and what has been written about the past. It was pointed out that there is a complex and ambiguous boundary between the past event and the interpretation of that event. Second, it was argued that history is dynamic because of the ever changing contexts which dictate our understanding and interpretation of the past. For this study history has been understood as linear and under the guidance of God's providence. Another

important fact relates to meaning in history. It was contended that meaning in history lies in historical data which can be uncovered through allowing an interaction of ideas as the historian engages the historical data in a dialogue. This study understood history as having a very important purpose, as a collective memory, of providing a framework through which people interpret their experiences in time. The chapter also discussed the three categories of sources, primary, secondary and tertiary, as they were used in this study. The oral historical method was discussed showing how it was employed in the study. The southern and ecumenical approaches to history were also considered showing how they were preferred for the study. The chapter ended with a discussion of a holistic framework that was used to understand the Zimbabwean context in which Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe operated. The next chapter turns to John Wesley's political activities which will be used to evaluate Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe's political involvement from a contextualisation perspective.

## Chapter Three

### AN INTERPRETATION OF WESLEY'S TEACHING ON POLITICS

#### 3.1 Introduction

In an attempt to analyse and interpret Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and impact in Zimbabwe it is worthwhile to consider first John Wesley's political teaching and its impact on British citizens as well as non- British Wesleyan Methodists. This chapter interprets John Wesley's political teaching from a third world point of view using the translation model. Wesley's theology was rooted in the principles of the evangelical movement as well as influenced by Anglican royal theology as I shall show later. His political teaching could not escape tenets of the evangelical movement. The following text was famous and pivotal to his political teaching and practise:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God... he who rebels against the authorities is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves (Romans 13:1-2).

These verses formed the foundation on which John Wesley's political praxis was anchored. Scripture inspired, directed and limited John Wesley's political teaching and practice. Wesley's political convictions, conduct and teaching were part of his faith in Jesus Christ. He wrote,

It is my religion which obliges me 'to put men in mind to be subject to principalities and powers.' Loyalty is with me an essential branch of religion, and which I am sorry any Methodist should not forget. There is the closest connexion, therefore, between my religious and my political conduct; the selfsame authority enjoining me to 'fear God,' and to 'honour the King (Wesley 1872h:437).

This chapter delineates, discusses and interprets Wesley's teaching on politics using a translation model. The results will be used in assessing the impact of Wesleyan

Methodists on Zimbabwean politics in the next two chapters.

### 3.2 Translation model

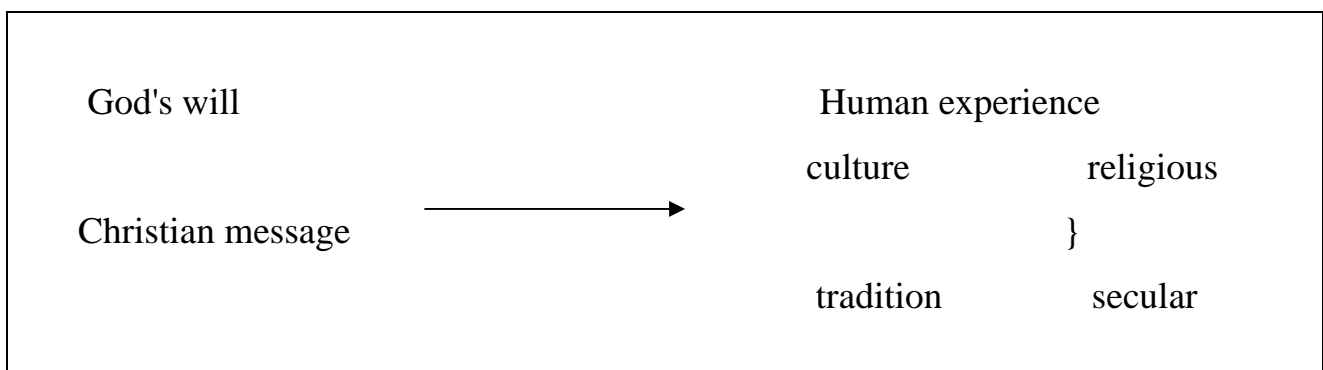
In order to present a particular perspective of John Wesley's political praxis a translation model was employed. A model is understood as a symbolic representation of selected facets of behaviour of a complex system for particular purposes. A model is an artificially constructed framework which aids research in unpacking realities that are complex. A model, as a constructed framework does not mirror total reality but dimensions of reality from a particular perspective. In other words a model does not bring the whole picture into focus but provides an angle of vision since it aims at presenting a view of reality in a particular perspective. A model suggests a procedure for a relevant engagement in theological reflection and specific interests that help to guide the use of the procedure (Schreiter 2002:6). In order to have a particular (third world) view of John Wesley's political teaching and practice the researcher utilised the translation model of contextual theology.

The notion of models is handy in articulating essential issues in contextual theology. Models of contextual theology were neatly presented by Bevans (2007: 38-139). Bevans discussed six models which are the translation, anthropological, praxis, synthetic, transcendental and counter cultural models. The translation model was preferred for this thesis because it treats scriptural message as eternal. A translation model argues for a transcendental role of scripture in history and contextual theology. It is characterised by "its insistence on the message of the gospel as an unchanging message" (Bevans 2007:37). This provides the strength of the model for this study. A fundamental assumption of this model is that "the essential message of Christianity is supra-cultural or supra-contextual" (Bevans 2007:40). The model argues correctly that the gospel message is above any culture or context.

In another way, a translation model may be understood in terms of the translatability

of the gospel. This perspective was well developed by Sanneh when he explored his thesis: “Christianity, from its origins, identified itself with the need to translate out of Aramaic and Hebrew, and from that position came to exert a dual force in its historical development” (Sanneh 1989:1). This proves that Christianity is not captive to any culture, context or civilisation. In agreement with Sanneh, this presentation views Christianity “as a religious movement, or as a vernacular translation movement, in contradiction to Christianity either as Scripture or as a dogmatic, creedal system, without, of course, denying the validity of those views” (Sanneh 1989: 6). The term vernacular is not used with any negative connotations. The Christian message, which is God's will can be planted in any culture and germinate to produce a good harvest. The diagram below illustrates the supra-cultural nature and translatability of the Christian message,

***Table 1 Supra-cultural nature of the Christian message***



The assertion here is that there is a particular context, human experience, always, into which the Christian message ought to be planted. A practitioner should understand the context in order to insert the Christian message effectively. The Christian message is unchanging, what changes is the context. So there is a content to be adapted to a particular culture always. (Schreier 2002:7). It is therefore worthy to note that cultural values, thought patterns and structures for social change are not valuable in themselves but as convenient soil for depositing the Christian message.

Translation in this model is not literal, neither is it a word-for-word nor grammatical correspondence. It is a translation of meaning, which captures the spirit of a text. This

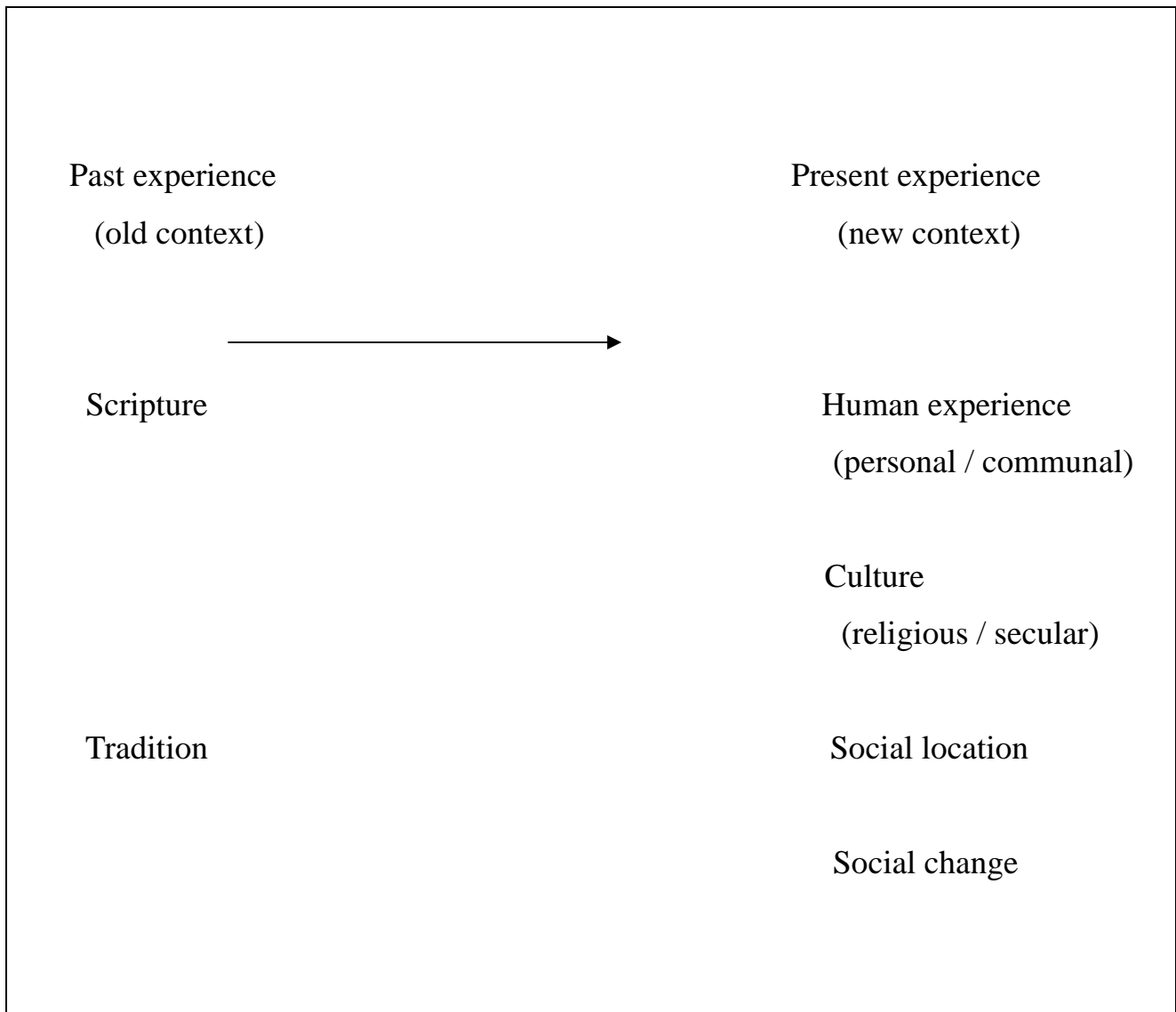
translation is done through “functional or dynamic equivalence” (Kraft 1979:269).

The aim of such translation is to elicit similar reaction from contemporary audience as was in original hearers and readers. Stated differently, the aim is to present the Christian message in a way that hearers can feel its relevance, identify with the message and respond to it in action. The quotation below elucidates this point.

By the translation model, we do not mean a mere word-for-word correspondence of, say, doctrinal language of one culture into doctrinal language of another cultural context ... and this translation might make those doctrines look and sound quite different from their original formation. Nevertheless, the translation model insists that there is 'something' that must be 'put into' other terms. There is always something from the outside that must be made to fit inside; there is always something 'given' that must be received (Bevans 2007:39).

This shows that every culture has potential to accept the Christian message and provide measures for interpretation of the message profitably for participants of a particular culture. A translation model may be presented diagrammatically as shown below;

*Table 2 Translation model*



The diagram above was adapted from Bevans and depicts the role played by past experience in moulding the present experience. The Christian message shapes, guides and challenges decision making, behaviour patterns and reactions to situations in present experience. It also provides values and principles useful in evaluating the present experience.

There are three foundational assumptions of this model which this study raises and are pivotal for this thesis, as we interpret John Wesley's political teaching. The assumptions are derived from Scriptures. The first one is that the Christian message is above all cultures and contexts. At this stage we may enumerate tenets of a Christian

message drawn from the Bible and necessary for an interpretation of Wesley's political teaching. The first tenet is that all people are equal and deserve to be treated justly because they were created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26). Therefore no one has a right to exploit, dehumanise, segregate or kill another person.

The second principle is that all people are in a state of deprivation of divine relationships. All people have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Gen 3: 16-19, Rom 3:23). Since all people have fallen, all need salvation and restoration. Without salvation and restoration people fail to execute their God given responsibilities and they will treat one another. Jesus is the Christ; in him people can find the true meaning of life.

Another principle is that God placed people in a family set up, which became an important first block of society. There are divine roles, safeguards and goals to achieve in family life (Ex 20:12, 18, Deut 6: 1-9, Col 3: 18-24). The family is responsible for it and should provide food, clothing, shelter protection and education for its members. So the socio-political and economic atmosphere should be favourable for each family to fulfil its responsibilities.

The fourth tenet is that every person has a right to own property. When the bible says, "You shall not steal" (Ex 20:15) it upholds a right to own private property. The owner has a right to buy, sell or give away own property as he or she so chooses. What this amounts to is that property rights ought to be observed strictly.

The next principle pertains to work and wealth. According to God's will, work is not demeaning but dignifying. God commanded hard work (Gen 2:15, Eph 6:6-7, 1Tim 5:8). Wealth is a product of diligent work, honesty, application of knowledge, proper use of tools and savings. People must utilise God given resources wisely in order to meet family needs, give generously to those in need and save, so as to build an inheritance for future generations.



The last tenet of the Christian message important for this presentation is on civil government. All civil governments are under God's power. They are established by God (Rom 13:1). Civil governments ought to obey God; they are responsible before God for their actions. All civil governments have a limited responsibility, which is to protect their citizens (Rom 13:4). Each government protects its citizens from internal aggression, that ranges from crime (Ex 20:13-17, Num 35: 30, 33), unfair labour relations (Eph 6:5-9, 1Tim6:1-2) and unfair business practices (Lev 19:36). It also protects them from external aggression in the form of defence and security which lead to stability. Civil governments protect their citizens through sound legislation, an impartial judiciary system, maintaining a professional police and defence forces and promoting observance of human rights. In other words, the main role of civil governments is to protect the liberty and safety of people.

The second assumption is that a supra-contextual Christian message can be separated from a mode of expression which is bound contextually. The first step in contextualising theology is to strip a doctrine or practice of its cultural wrapping, which may be cultural values, thought patterns or structures for social change. Once this task is achieved, a search for a receptor's context should be carried out in order to get appropriate terms or actions to re-wrap the message. Both a participant and non-participant of the receptor's context can use the translation model effectively. The requirement is to comprehend the Christian message and an appreciation of the context into which the message is to be inserted.

The third assumption is that the context plays an ancillary role to the Christian message. Human experience, culture, social location and social change structures are important but not as important as the Christian message. In situations where cultural values or practices and gospel values are in conflict, the gospel content must be preserved. In other words the Christian message is the ultimate judge of all contexts.

There is no model or method that is adequate in itself. The translation model, like any other model, has its merits and demerits. One of the merits of the model is that it “takes seriously the message of Christianity as recorded in the scriptures and handed down in tradition” (Bevans 2007:42). Any church history must address how the Christian message was handed down and people's reaction to the gospel. Underlying this assertion is the claim that “Christianity does have something to say to the world and that its message is truly one that can bring light and peace to a dark and troubled world” (Bevans 2007:42). In short the translation model promotes relevant presentation of the Christian message into any context. The second merit is that the model “... recognizes the ambivalence of contextual reality ...” (Bevans 2007:42). The context may be used positively or negatively. A practitioner of the translation model should not aim to defend every teaching or action of the church but to strip it of its cultural jacket in order to get to the basic gospel message. In this way the practitioner of the translation model “... can accept the good in all cultures or contexts while still being committed to the transforming and challenging power of the gospel” (Bevans 2007:43). The model ought to be used as a commitment and liberating force rather than just a method.

Another merit is that the model can be employed by anyone committed to a particular culture or context, whether the practitioner is a participant or non-participant in the culture concerned. “With a relatively brief introduction to a particular culture or society, one can begin 'making the gospel news relevant' ...” (Bevans 2007:43). This model works very well in cross-cultural evangelism where people of another culture need to be exposed to the gospel message.

One of the major weaknesses of the translation model is that “...the notion of models is 'too neat' and a trifle 'liberal' in orientation” (Maluleke 1994:178). Maluleke observed correctly that the use of models, “... tends to project a supermarket of 'relatively good' and 'relatively bad' models from which 'consumers' may choose and mix from 'the range of methodological options are often unequal; the options very

unequal and not (really) equally available or preferable” (Maluleke 1994:178).

However, models are illuminating when dealing with realities that are more complex and differentiated. A practitioner of the translation model, or any other model should be cautious of the fact that models are constructed, ideal types not mirrors of reality. They cannot expose the whole picture of reality into focus but provide just an angle or perspective from which to view reality.

The model assumes that “... every culture is roughly similar to every other culture and that what is important in one will be important in another” (Bevans 2007: 43). This is another demerit of the model. Rough similarities may be observed between some cultures but they must not be generalised. The practitioner of the translation model ought to avoid a tendency to draw parallels between cultures. Each culture should be treated as an entity with the respect it deserves.

The discussion now turns to an interpretation of Wesley's political teaching in light of the translation model. How did Wesley utilise the Christian message as he addressed contemporary political issues? As a clergyman within the Anglican tradition, how much was he captive to church tradition? The aim of this interpretation of Wesley's political teaching is to draw out a pattern of political involvement which can be compared and contrasted with that of Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe.

### **3.3 Political order**

John Wesley was convinced that the source of power is beyond the natural world. For him power meant the supreme power over life and death, power over liberty and property (Wesley 1872k :46). Wesley was quite abreast of how power had been understood and employed from ancient kingdoms to his time (Wesley 1872k:47). In ancient monarchs supreme power was believed to originate from the king. In other nations, which were democratic, supreme power was believed to lie in people. Such a position aimed at defending people's rights against illegal encroachments of the

nobles. There were also systems of government which were aristocratic, in which supreme power was believed to be lodged in a few people, the noble and rich. For Wesley such understanding of power was based on the question of how power is administered. The most crucial question is not in whom power is lodged but “from whom it is ultimately derived” (Wesley 1872k :47), and for whose benefit it is exercised. On the origins of power Wesley asserted,

Therefore I believe, 'there is no power but from God: The powers that be are ordained of God' (Rom. X11:1). There is no subordinate power in any nation, but what is derived from the supreme power therein (Wesley 1872k :47).

According to Wesley all power, including political power, is derived from supreme power. All those who are in power and positions of authority are accountable to God, the source of supreme power. What Wesley did not consider is how people should deal with those in power who misuse the powers that are vested in them. This omission could have resulted from Wesley's preoccupation with his context, which we shall examine later. Wesley's articulation of the origins of power was not speculative. He was compelled to respond to concrete situations during his time.

Wesley rejected the supposition that the origin of power lay in people. He refuted the supposition as he wrote, “It is absolutely overturned by the very principle on which it is supposed to stand, namely, that a right of choosing his Governors belongs to every partaker of human nature” (Wesley 1872k :52). He observed that not all people participated in the election of parliamentarians but freeholders. This denied the poor, women and children a right to elect their representatives. The claim was discriminatory and thus could not be reflective of supreme power. Furthermore, no one has the right to dispose of his or another person's life. Only God has the sole right to take away life which was divinely given. God is the origin of power: this has to be comprehended and practised in the political arena.

For Wesley human authority was supposed to be a reflection of the divine power. It

was given by God to humanity and those entrusted with it represented God on earth. Human authority should act on behalf of God in preserving life and human freedom. There is no authority that exists on its own merit. All authority exists by God's grace. This is why Wesley was against democracy.

### **3.4 Liberty**

Liberty was another important strand of Wesley's teaching on politics. Wesley rightfully noted that everyone in the world desires liberty, yet liberty is scarce (Wesley 1872L: 34). Wesley refuted the assertion that liberty refers to an individual's freedom to do what pleases him or her, or to fulfil one's selfish desires. There are a number of liberties which Wesley dismissed as false. These included liberty to raid and plunder, which destroyed one's neighbours and was never good for trade, liberty of war, which violated human rights grossly and liberty to remove a disobedient king, with hopes to put a better one in place, but where would people find the better prince (Wesley 1872L:37)? For Wesley all these liberties do not work for the good of people and should be discarded.

According to Wesley, liberty should be apprehended from a two dimensional perspective, religious and civil liberties. Religious liberty is “... the liberty, (freedom), to choose our own religion, to worship God according to our own conscience, according to the best light we have” (Wesley 1872L: 37). Every person has a right to this liberty. It is a God-given right since everyone was given capacity to understand by God. Each person will be called to account before God why he or she made certain choices in life in relation to this liberty. Therefore no one has a right to deny another person this God-given liberty. For Wesley no government has any right to tamper with its subjects' religious liberty (Wesley 1872L: 37). No government should compel its subjects to take up its own religion as what happened during times of the Inquisition instituted against the so called heretics and the persecution of puritans in England and Scotland. Such acts “robbed victims of their substance, their liberty and

their lives” (Wesley 1872L: 38).

Religious liberty had to be upheld at any cost. Lack of religious liberty would result in plundering, arrests, beatings, maiming, imprisonments, and killings. Wesley encouraged British citizens to appreciate the level of religious liberty they enjoyed under their limited monarchy. He claimed that religious liberty experienced in England was comparable to none during his life time. He wrote, “Whoever, therefore in England stretches his throat and bawls for more religious liberty, must be totally void of shame and can have no excuse but want of understanding” (Wesley 1872L: 41). Wesley seemed to suggest that whenever the king and the parliament observed and promoted religious liberty, they demonstrated their right to be respected and trusted.

Wesley defined civil liberty as, “A liberty to enjoy our lives and fortunes in our own way; to use our property, whatever is legally our own, according to our own choice” (Wesley 1872L: 41). It is clear that individuals have a right to enjoy life, a right to enjoy the fruit of their labour, to own and use property legally and to dispose their property. What Wesley meant by civil liberty covers civil rights?

Wesley compared England's experiences, in terms of civil liberty, with that of other countries like France and Hungary, and concluded that there was less danger in terms of civil liberty in England than any other country. For him the British were supposed to be grateful to God and the King for the high level of civil liberty they experienced. To this effect he wrote,

You see whence this outcry for liberty arose, and these dismal complaints that we are robbed our liberty echoing through the land. It is plain to every unprejudiced man; they have not the least foundation. We enjoy this day throughout the kingdoms such liberty, civil and religious, as no other kingdom or commonwealth in Europe or in the world, enjoys: and as such as our ancestors never enjoyed from the Conquest to the Revolution (Wesley 1872L: 45).

Wesley was convinced that the level of freedom British citizens enjoyed was incomparable to any nation or past era. He went on to warn them,

Let us not, by our vile unthankfulness, yea, our denial that we enjoy it at all, provoke the King of kings to take it away. By one stroke, by taking to himself that Prince whom we know not how to value, He might change the scene and put an end to our civil as well as political liberty (Wesley 1872L: 46).

This shows that for Wesley there was a high level of civil liberty which could not be matched by any other nation. This was good cause for the British to fear God and honour the King. Calls for more civil liberty were malicious, unjustifiable and provocative. Such cries would agitate God and lead to anarchy if God took away the king. Whenever the King believed in the bible, feared God and loved the Queen, there was a guarantee for civil and religious liberty (Wesley 1931a:373).

On the American colonies' cry for liberty, at first Wesley was sympathetic to the cause of the colonies. He believed that his country had acted erroneously through employing a policy of taxation without representation. He wrote,

For I am a High Churchman, the son of a High Churchman, bred up from my childhood in the highest notions of passive obedience and non-resistance. And yet, in spite of all my rooted prejudice, I cannot avoid thinking (if I think at all) that an oppressed people asked for nothing more than their legal rights, and that in the most modest and inoffensive manner which the nature of thing would allow (Wesley 1931d: 156).

Here Wesley argued that in spite of any biases, any group of people have the right to demand their legal rights. Those who oppress others, deny or violate other people's rights should be called upon to observe and promote the rights.

However, when Wesley realised that what the American colonies were calling for was not liberty but independence he changed his stance. Wesley moved from sympathy with the American colonies to attacking them publicly. His change of mind was evidenced by remarks he made to Lord North in 1775,

I do not intend to enter upon the question of whether the Americans are in the right or in the wrong. Here all my prejudices are against the Americans; for I



am an High Churchman, the son of an High Churchman, bred up from my childhood in the highest notions of passive obedience and non-resistance (Wesley 1931c:161).

In this sense Wesley combined the “temporal and spiritual realms, that is, the political order with the ecclesiastical one” (Collins, 1999:123).

Wesley commented on different systems of government in their relation to liberty. He asserted that,

The greater the shares the people have in government, the less liberty, either civil or religious, does the nation in general enjoy. Accordingly, there is most liberty of all, civil or religious, under a limited monarchy: there is usually less under an aristocracy and least of all under a democracy (Wesley 1872i:105).

Here Wesley was steeped deep in the Anglican tradition of royal theology as I will show below under the section on impact of John Wesley's political teaching. Instead of using the Christian message to interpret democracy and evaluate government systems, he employed church tradition.

Wesley was very cautious of his position when called on to comment on political issues. When he was solicited to give remarks on his contemporary political developments he responded, “I am no politician; politics lie quite out of my province” (Wesley 1931a:370). However this did not dissuade Wesley from commenting on political activities. He was conscious of the fact that he was not a professional politician. His politics could not be alienated from his religion.

Commenting on public commotion and general discontentment in England he wrote,

I have likewise another advantage, that of having no bias one way or the other. I have no interest depending: I want no man's favour, having no hopes, no fears, from any man, and having no particular attachment of any kind to either of the contending parties (Wesley 1931a:372).

While he declared his neutrality, Wesley always challenged his audience to respect and support the king. Wesley concluded that the public commotion and general discontentment experienced were not caused by the extraordinary badness of either



the king or his parliament, not even of his ministers or of the measures they took, (Wesley 1931a:381). The major cause was influence of the French Revolution, which was anti-religion.

A person of a complete, uniform character, encumbered with no religion, with no regard to virtue or morality, squanders away all that he has. ... Now, can any reasonable man believe that the French are ignorant of all this, or that they have no hand at all therein, but are mere unconcerned spectators (Wesley 1931a:381).

Here Wesley contends that when assessing political situations it is worthwhile investigating both the internal and external forces at play.

On the question, whether ministers of religion should preach politics or not, Wesley was categorical, it is not the duty of a minister of religion to preach politics but the Gospel. However, ministers of religion were supposed to defend the king, his parliament and ministers.

There is a plain command in the Bible, 'Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.' But notwithstanding this, many that are called religious people speak evil of him continually (Wesley 1872g: 154).

Good citizens, and more so, Christian citizens, should “fear God and honour the king” (Wesley 1872c: 136). So Christians were supposed to abstain from speaking evil about the king, parliament and ministers. They were called to be cheerful subjects respecting those in power since “there is no power, whether supreme or subordinate, but of God” (Wesley 1872c: 138). Wesley laboured to instil the fear of God and honour of the king to all Methodists and his audience. In 1777 he wrote, “...you who are vulgarly called Methodists. Do any of you blaspheme God or the king? None of you, I trust, who are in connexion with me” (Wesley 1872c: 139). For Wesley it would be better to be among Sabbath-breakers, thieves or drunkards than those who blasphemed against God and the king. The marriage between God and the king was based on Wesley's understanding and teaching that God is the origin of power and the king is the fountain through which that power bubbles into the nation.

Election of parliamentarians and other representatives was another area of concern

for Wesley. He gave practical advice to freeholders, those who had the right to vote,

What are you going to do? To vote for a Parliament man? I hope then you have taken no money. For doubtless you know the strictness of the oath, - that you have received no 'gift or reward, directly or indirectly, nor any promise of any, on account of your vote,' in the ensuing election (Wesley 1872e: 196).

The position was clear, bribes and rewards in exchange of one's vote corrupted both the one soliciting for the vote and the one voting. For Wesley receiving a bribe or reward for a vote was selling one's soul, country and God. He even warned freeholders against being given entertainment, meat or drinks on account of one's vote.

When it came to voting, Wesley encouraged freeholders to vote for a candidate who loved God and his country. Wesley was clear on what was to be done in cases where “...none of the candidates have these fruits? Then vote for him that loves the king, King George, whom the wise providence of God has appointed reign over us” (Wesley 1872e: 197). This shows that for Wesley the king was sacred and lovely. Those who publicly opposed and attacked the king, members of parliament and ministers during campaigning before elections were to be denied an opportunity to represent people. There were some aspiring politicians whom Wesley described as “...not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries; no, not even of the ruler of their people” (Wesley 1872e: 97). For Wesley the king was inseparable from the country.

Another important area which Wesley tackled was war. He saw war as unjustifiable by any means be it common sense, reason or religion. He wrote,

There is war in the world! War between men! War between Christians! I mean between those that bear the name of Christ, and profess to 'walk as he also walked.' Now, who can reconcile war, I will not say to religion, but to any degree of reason or common sense? (Wesley 1872j: 221).

Wesley argued that war violated both religious and civil liberty. War was horrible and was to be avoided at any cost. He retorted,

But whatever be the cause, let us calmly and impartially consider the thing itself, [war]. Here are forty thousand men gathered together on this plain. What are they going to do? See, there are thirty or forty thousand more at a little distance. And these are going to shoot them through the head or body, to stab them or split their skulls and send most of their souls into everlasting fire, as fast as possibly they can (Wesley 1872j: 222).

War is against the Christian faith according to Wesley. It was supposed to be avoided at any cost. He continued to write,

What harm have they done to them? O, none at all! They do not so much as know them. But a man, who is king of France, has a quarrel with another man, who is king of England. So these French men are to kill as many of these Englishmen as they can, to prove the king of France is in the right. Now what an argument is this? What a method of proof! What an amazing way of deciding controversy! What must mankind be, before such a thing as war could ever be known or thought of upon earth? How shocking, how inconceivable a want must there have been of common understanding, as well as common humanity, before any two Governors or any two nations in the universe, could once think of such a method of decision (Wesley 1872j: 222).

War has no room in methods of decision making; it worsens relationships among rulers and nations. It seeks to serve interests and desires of those in power. For Wesley war was wrong and cost people terribly. He exclaimed,

Even then both justice and mercy were so shamelessly trodden under foot, that an eminent writer computes the number of those that were slaughtered, during those religious contests, to have been no less than forty millions, within the compass of forty years (Wesley 1872n: 160).

So war demonstrated how far people were from any reason to have pride in achievements made by generations before them. Wesley lamented, “And surely all our declamations on the strength of human reason, and the eminence of our virtues, are no more than the cant and jargon of pride and ignorance, so long as there is such a thing as war in the world” (Wesley 1872j: 223).

Wesley suggested three reasons why people get into war, which are differences of opinions, territorial ambitions and the scramble for colonial conquests. He was not concerned with the reasons for war, but its horror. For Wesley the American

Revolution was a real horror. He wrote,

Stop here then, my brethren, and survey the desolation. Behold the weeping and disconsolate widow refusing to be comforted! Her beloved husband is fallen! Is fallen! And is no more! See the affectionate parent hanging down his head like the bulrush! Hear the broken language of his heart! 'My son! My son! Would God I had died in thy place! O my son! my son!' This is far from the flight of imagination, or the colouring of fancy. It is the real and actual condition of many among that unhappy people and a part only of their manifold distress (Wesley 1872d: 120 – 121).

Wesley referred to war ships as a floating hell. “Is not almost every single man-of-war (warship) a mere floating hell” (Wesley 1872c:174)? While war ships signified a nation's military might, for Wesley there was no pride in them since they were used to destroy rather than promote life.

On the other hand Wesley justified war. While war was evil, there were exceptions in which war could be justifiable. “War itself is justifiable only on the principles of self-preservation” (Wesley 1872m: 71). The 1688 Revolution in England gave Wesley an understanding that revolutionaries were to be guided by a desire for liberty. For him English liberty started at the Revolution (Wesley 1872b: 137). Throughout history the desire for liberty guided the defence of Britain from external attacks. Wesley wrote, “Was it not from this principle that our British forefathers so violently opposed all foreign invaders?” (Wesley 1872L: 34).

Value for liberty compelled Wesley to support revolution against governments that oppressed people. He wrote in support of the Hollanders, who shook off Spanish rule,

Provoked by the total subversion of their religious and civil liberties: the taking away their goods, imprisoning their persons and shedding their blood like water, without the least colour of right, yea, without the very form of law. ... Add to this that the Hollanders were not colonies of Spain, but an independent people (Wesley 1872i: 112 – 113).

Here Wesley proposed a principle of using war for self preservation in face of invading forces. However, Wesley did not apply this principle to the poor and marginalised in England or the revolutionaries in America who sought representation

in parliament. Wesley commented positively on the initial success of the British army against the American colonists,

At first prosperity seemed to attend them in all their undertakings. But since we sought help from God, there has been a manifest blast upon them. Their armies are scattered; their forts and strongholds lost, their provinces taken one after another (Wesley 1872b:135).

In this case Wesley used the principle of self-preservation to justify war against American colonists. He was impressed by the initial success of the British army and interpreted it as a blessing from God.

When the tides on the battle field turned against the British army, Wesley was quick to express his fears that the American Revolution was a punishment from God for their sins.

But it is certain that iniquity of every kind, and amongst all ranks and orders of men, has and does abound; and as we are punished with the sword, it is not improbable but one principal sin of our nation is, the blood that we have shed in Asia, Africa and America. Here I would beg your serious attention, while I observe, that however extensively pursued, and of long continuance, the African trade may be it is nevertheless iniquitous from first to last. It is the price of blood! It is trade of blood; and has stained our land with blood (Wesley 1872d: 125).

He linked the British army's failure in America to inhuman treatment of people from other continents and their rush to get rich at the expense of Africans. This leads the discussion to Wesley's views on slavery.

### **3.5 Slavery**

Unlike the American struggle for independence, where Wesley sided with the English government, on slavery he took a progressive stance. He declared, “Do not you observe wherever these bawlers for liberty govern, there is the vilest Slavery” (Wesley 1872c:136)? He tabulated a history of slavery up to his time clearly. He noted,

Slavery was nearly extinct till the commencement of the sixteenth century,

when the discovery of America and of the western and eastern coasts of Africa, gave occasion to the revival of it. It took its rise from the Portuguese, who to supply the Spaniards with men to cultivate their new possessions in America, provided Negroes from Africa, whom they sold for slaves to American Spaniards. This began in 1508, when they imported the first Negroes into Hispaniola (Wesley 1872m: 60).

Wesley bracketed the revival of slavery with the commencement of European imperialism and colonialism. The pattern that emerged, as other nations acquired possessions in America, followed the example of the Spaniards and slavery took root in most American colonies.

Wesley challenged a false consciousness that led to the rationalisation of the evils of slavery during the enlightenment. He rejected the assertion that some races were inherently inferior or superior to others. For him all races were equal before God. He argued about Africans that, "... the white men first taught them drunkenness and avarice, and then hired them to sell one another" (Wesley 1872m: 65). He went on to say, "... Whites, not Blacks, are without natural affection" (Wesley 1872m: 66). It was false that Africans were inferior to Europeans and the theory that some races were inferior or superior to others was unjustifiable. Wesley wrote,

The inhabitants of Africa, where they have equal motives and equal means of improvements, are not inferior to the inhabitants of Europe; to some of them they are greatly superior... The African is in no respect inferior to the European (Wesley 1872m: 74).

Wesley used the Christian message of the equality of people before God to argue that Africans were not inferior to Europeans. He was startled by the treatment of Africans in the passage from Africa to the arrival to America. He described the events horrifically as, "... women and men, without any distinction, brought down (naked) to the shore" (Wesley 1872m: 67). He said they were branded and overcrowded, with

... heat, thirst, and stench of various kinds. ... it is no wonder, so many should die in the passage; but rather, that they survive it ... at least ten thousand of them die in the voyage; about a fourth part more die at the different islands, in what is called the seasoning. So those at an average thirty thousand die; that is, properly, are murdered (Wesley 1872m: 67).

Such cruelty was unjustifiable by whatever means.

Wesley condemned slavery and stated, “Thus the Christians preach the gospel to the Heathens” (Wesley 1872m: 67). He went on to say, “O Earth, O sea, covers not thou their blood” (Wesley 1872m: 67). That was an appeal to the spiritual realm for revenge on behalf of the victims. As if the inflictions of the voyage were not enough, upon arrival more “... punishments (were) inflicted on them” (Wesley 1872m: 68), which included castration, mutilation, whipping, various forms of torture and physical restraint. Wesley wondered, “Did the Creator intend that the noblest creature in the visible world should live such a life as this?” (Wesley 1872m: 68).

The description of the experiences of Africans throughout the passage from Africa to life in America exposed gross violation of human rights. Wesley suggested that the violation of human rights formed a strong foundation for African resistance. He gave an appropriate definition of rebellion as, “... asserting their native liberty; which they have as much right to as to the air they breathe? A rebellion is the right to assert one's desire to be free according to natural law” (Wesley 1872m: 68). At that point Wesley, the High Church Tory, the advocate of the theology of passive obedience and non-resistance, displayed the ambivalence which made him different from his contemporary Tories.

Wesley went on to reject any appeal to existing legislation to justify slavery if those laws were contrary to natural law and the law of God. He argued,

Notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right, and wrong is wrong still. There must still remain an essential difference between justice and injustice, cruelty and mercy ... who can reconcile this treatment of the Negroes, first and last, with either mercy or justice?” (Wesley 1872m: 70).

Important to note is that legislating something does not necessarily make it right, justice and mercy should be used to evaluate every piece of legislation.



Wesley was aware of “...three origins of the rights of slavery assigned by Justinian, ... all built upon false foundations: these are captivity in war, one man's selling himself to another and that men may be born slaves, by being the children of slaves” (Wesley 1872m: 71). These were wrong and slavery was irreconcilable to justice and mercy. That stance compelled Wesley to campaign against slavery vigorously. He viewed slavery as a sin against humanity and God.

There was yet another form of justification of slavery which Wesley had to deal with and this was the economic argument. He demolished any defence in favour of slavery based on economic gains. He asserted,

I answer... it were better that all those islands should remain uncultivated forever, yea, it were more desirable that they were altogether sunk in the depth of the sea, than that they should be cultivated at so high a price as the violation of justice, mercy and truth (Wesley 1872m:73).

From that position it was clear that national policies were to be subjected to justice, mercy and truth. By truth Wesley referred to scriptural truth. For Wesley “...wealth is not necessary to the glory of any nation; but wisdom, virtue, justice, mercy, generosity, public spirit, love of our country. These are necessary to the real glory of a nation; but abundance of wealth is not” (Wesley 1872m:73). For Wesley patriotism had nothing to do with supporting one's country whether its deeds were right or wrong, it had nothing to do with passive obedience and non-resistance but with justice, mercy and truth, the values of the Kingdom of God (Barry and Vorster 2003:269).

Wesley pleaded for change. His appeal did not target the public at large, nor the English nation in general, nor the parliament for, “so many things, which seem of greater importance, lie before them, that they are not likely to attend to this ... but to those who are more immediately concerned, whether captains, merchants, or planters” (Wesley 1872m :76). Wesley did not desire making oppressors victims of public outcry, “...it may inflame the world against the guilty, but is not likely to remove that guilt” (Wesley 1872m:75). That was done to liberate both the oppressed



and the oppressors. What Wesley viewed as a weakness, appeal to public outcry, and surprisingly became one of the major vehicles for political, economic and social change after his death.

In his appeal Wesley pleaded with his audience,

If, therefore, you have any regard to justice, (to say nothing of mercy, or the revealed law of God), render unto all their due. Give liberty to who liberty is due, that is, to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice. Away with all whips, all compulsions! Be gentle toward all men, and see that you invariably do unto every one as you would he should do unto you (Wesley 1872m: 79).

Wesley's final entreaty was directed to God. He wrote prayerfully,

Arise, and help these that have no helper, whose blood is split upon the ground like water! Are not these also the work of thine own hands, the purchase of thy son's blood? Stir them up to cry unto thee in the land of their captivity; and let their complaint come before thee: let it enter into thy ears! Make those that have led them away captive to pity them. ... O burst thou all their chains in sunder; more especially the chains of their sins! Thou Saviour of all, make them free that they may be free indeed (Wesley 1872m: 79).

The prayer showed that the struggle for justice is more than a mere racial or class struggle, it is a spiritual one. There cannot be social holiness without personal holiness, social transformation without individual transformation, nor new creation without new creatures in Christ (11Cor. 5:17).

### **3.6 Impact of John Wesley's political teaching on British citizens**

What can we make out of Wesley's political teaching? "It is impossible to understand John Wesley and what he did unless his background is known and understood, since even the greatest of men must be in some degree a product of his times" (Bowen 1937 : 64). One of the most celebrated positions on the impact of Wesley's political teaching is Halevy's thesis, that states,

England's industrial revolution, closely accompanied by social distress and

radical ideas could have provoked a French-style political and social revolution. Evangelicalism (Methodism) diverted English working men and their potential middle class allies from revolution, by diverting their attention to salvation as it taught them a conservative world view and the means of non-violent improvement through exercise of puritan virtues (Halevy 1990:15).

Halevy observed that the logical conclusion of the English industrial revolution was supposed to correspond to experiences of the French Revolution where there were anti-religious sentiments and a lot of bloodshed. Methodism saved England from such developments. In the same perspective Heitzenrater (1995:263) concluded that Wesley was active in helping to quell a spirit of revolt among potentially rebellious segments of British society. Halevy was correct by highlighting the centrality of salvation in Wesley's political teaching. However, his thesis was erroneous (Grassow 2005:87), it overstretches Wesley's pietism at the expense of his social and political activism.

Halevy arrived at this conclusion because of his academic pursuit which was based on,

... the influence of his philosophical training, his technique of abstract analysis, his view of historical causation, his tendency to utilitarian standards of judgement, his interest in English society and sympathy for its qualities of individualism and moral discipline, his method of historical narrative and finally, his conception of liberty as the highest practical political good (Gillispie 1990:17-18).

The Halevy thesis does not represent Wesley's political praxis adequately as I will show now.

John Wesley influenced the emerging industrial centres both politically and religiously. People who moved from the country side into developing industrial centres were grieved and embittered by the effects of the Enclosure Act and harsh labour conditions attached it (Edwards 1990:40). When they got to industrial centres, they were greeted by unregulated industrialism which fanned their resentments. While in the country side they had no voice, they suffered in silence. Whereas in

urban centres they could meet in large numbers, with political articulation and rouse one another into active anger.

In such a context, Wesley's teaching became instrumental in providing direction and meaning. John Wesley,

... did not prevent a French Revolution on English soil. Yet the industrial areas he evangelised and the classes most affected by the Methodist Revival were precisely those most liable to be disaffected by the first painful consequences of the industrial revolution. ... Methodism, therefore, softened the disturbing impact of the French Revolution abroad and the industrial revolution at home (Edwards 1990:41).

If one considered the contrasts between the social and political conditions in France and Britain, it is logical to conclude that, "...had Wesley never lived, there would have been no revolution in England similar to that in France" (Edwards 1939: 48). This is a slight shift from the Halevy thesis, instead of avoiding a French-style revolution; Methodism softened the impact of the French revolution and the industrial revolution in Britain. It is clear that Wesley inculcated virtues of self-reliance and initiative which were pivotal in giving the marginalised a sense of purpose and responsibility. Wesley condemned any gain which was selfish and exploitative.

Wesley's actual economic ethic can be summarised in four points: (1) ultimately everything belongs to God; (2) resources are placed in our care to use as God sees fit; (3) God desires that we use these resources to meet our necessities (i.e., providing shelter and food for ourselves and dependants), and then to help others in need; and thus (4) spending resources on luxuries for ourselves while others remain in need is robbing God (Maddox 2002:62).

His influence spread like veld fire because his message portrayed God in terms of love rather than power. So Wesley was both an evangelist and a social reformer.

Another perspective claimed that Wesley's political teaching were reactionary. They do not reflect any form of systematic thinking (Andrews 2005:36). For instance, when he advised voters to vote for the candidate who feared God and the king, he did not perceive such advice as political, but as a pious evangelical attitude towards

politics, which was anchored on moral criteria and biblical injunctions to obey rulers as they were ordained by God (Rack 2002:374). According to this perspective, Wesley was involved in politics because of the questions of liberty, factious attacks on the king and government as well as the American Revolution.

When interpreting these developments it is as well not to look for any profound political philosophy on Wesley's part, not to expect a very exact correlation between his political and theological views. But if, in large measure, he was reacting to events and experience as he so often did, he also carried some inherited ideological baggage which helped to condition his responses (Rack 2002:374).

The same was echoed by Andrews (2005:36) who claimed that Wesley's theology regarding war and politics did not have any systematic thinking behind it. It is true that most of Wesley's teachings on politics appear to have been triggered by experiences of his time and he delved into resolving them. These may seem to be reactionary if they are analysed as separate entities, divorced from Wesley's theological background. Wesley was an Anglican priest and he upheld Anglican theology faithfully as we shall discuss later. Referring to Wesley's political teaching as reactionary is a misrepresentation of facts.

The third perspective on Wesley's political teaching and praxis that helps to focus discussion in this chapter is that these were contradictory. The claim is that, "...contradictions in Wesley's life are obvious..." (Grassow 2005:91). While Wesley argued that war was evil and unjustifiable by any means, on the other hand he strongly claimed that war was justifiable on the principle of self-preservation (Andrews 2005:32). Wesley used the justification of war on the principle of self-preservation to support the Hollanders' cause (Wesley 1872i:112 - 113) as well as the resistance by slaves (Wesley 1872m: 68), but denied American colonialists an opportunity to use the principle. Another example of the contradictions is that, "On the one hand he (Wesley) adhered to a political loyalty to the Establishment, while on the other, sensitised to poverty and hardship, Wesley felt obliged to find solutions through political activism" (Grassow 2005:91). The contradictory nature of Wesley's

political teaching was articulated well. Grassow (2005:91) went on to solve the problem of contradictory tendencies in Wesley's teaching by pointing correctly at the ambivalence apparent in Wesley's political and social dimensions.

The way John Wesley developed the doctrine of salvation had a strong bearing on his political teaching. Tuttle (1978:334) explained elaborately how Wesley developed the doctrine of salvation using the model of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The thesis was that salvation was as a result of faith and good works. Two ideas were central, a radical obedience to God alone (faith) and a total commitment to Christian service (good works). Wesley's confession of God's sovereignty in everything provided a firm foundation for his theological teachings on authority and compelled him to value human participation in God's plans; hence politics lay within God's divine plans. This understanding of salvation characterised Wesley's early ministry up to 1738. Wesley,

... proceeded to develop a theological fusion of faith and good works, Scripture and tradition, revelation and reason, God's sovereignty and human freedom, universal redemption and conditional election, Christian liberty and an ordered polity, the assurance of pardon and the risk of 'falling from grace', original sin and Christian perfection (Outler 1964: viii).

In all this God initiated and people responded to the initiative.

The antithesis came on the scene in 1738 with the Aldersgate experience. From then on, salvation was understood to be a result of faith alone and that faith was initiated by God. The Aldersgate experience led Wesley to remove good works from the equation of salvation. So, "... salvation was the act of God alone, followed by a gradual 'growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God'" (Grassow 2005: 92). This position meant that everything depended on God solely, even on the political arena. When the British had an upper hand against the American colonists Wesley interpreted it as a blessing from God, when the tide turned against the British army, he was quick to say that was a curse from God because of their sins.

Wesley had another shift in his understanding of salvation, the synthesis, which

characterised his ministry from 1764 to his death. Salvation was a result of faith, which was initiated by God's grace, and confirmed by good works (Grassow 2005: 92). Wesley introduced love into the salvation equation, as faith, "... is the hand maid of love ... and that the goal of a Christian life is holiness, the fullness of faith which means the consecration of the whole self to God and the neighbour in love" (Grassow 2005:92 or Wesley 1872h: 462). This brought back human participation in God's plan. It was correctly noted that,

While Wesley's theological hermeneutic changed to an affirmation of human participation within this life, he never translated its political potential into political resistance, choosing instead to retain his individualistic understanding of the process of salvation (Grassow 2005:93).

After saying all this, it is now worthy to consider John Wesley's theological background and how it affected his political praxis. Wesley was influenced by both his father, who was Tory (Hulley 2006: 2) and dominated by his powerful mother, (Currie 1990: 43) who was brought up under a Puritan nonconformist tradition, "... and we are not surprised to find that the romantic appeal of the Jacobites captured Susanna Wesley..." (Harrison 1932: 10). However the influence from his parents played a lesser role as compared to that of Anglican political theology. As an Anglican priest Wesley felt obliged to uphold the church's theology both in practice and teaching. Anglican political theology was royalist as the church justified its separation from Rome. Jennings (1990:201 -202) demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt how Wesley used the Book of Common Prayer, the Articles of Religion and the Homilies, all Anglican official documents, to defend Methodist doctrine as true teachings of the Anglican Church. The three official documents of the Anglican Church provided Wesley with a ready articulated political theology from which he tapped whenever there was a political challenge to address. "The Homily as a whole presents a rather beneficent view of the institution of monarchy and of the place of that institution in the scheme of God's ordering of the world" (Jennings 1990:204). This was reflected in Wesley's political teachings.

When Wesley defended the King and his government,



It was to this royal theology, or at least some version of it, that Wesley felt himself bound as a priest of the Church of England. To oppose this monarchism on any other ground than the originally sanctioned loophole (for conscience's sake to obey God rather than humans) would mean that Wesley would, in his rather strict view, have perjured himself (Jennings 1990:205-206).

It is clear that Wesley held seriously to his church's theology. Whatever argument he came across, Wesley could not be persuaded to agree that the sanctioned loophole could apply to American rebels, but it did apply to slaves. Was Anglican political theology a major theme in Wesley's teachings? It appears Wesley only turned to Anglican political theology when it was necessary as he responded to charges.

Taken in isolation, these and similar texts would persuade the unwary reader that Anglican political theology was a central and regular theme of Wesley's preaching and teaching. Such a view would be mistaken. This political theology only appears in responses to charges made against Methodists. ... Wesley accepted the tenets of this political theology, but he never made them central themes (Jennings 1990:209).

Once more, let us return to Wesley's response to the American Revolution. He rejected the revolution because he read that what was at stake was a rejection of the system not to reform it. It is clear here that there are situations where political activism targets reforming a system, which was acceptable for Wesley and others that aim at the rejection of a system. Wesley's response to the American Revolution was threefold. He offered a personal defence of the king, whose father protected Methodists from persecution, a consideration of the justice claims of the colonists and a theoretical discussion of the relative merits of constitutional monarchy versus republican democracy (Jennings 1990: 211). When Wesley employed the political theology of the Anglican Church he had good reason to believe that the king was a friend of religious liberty as demonstrated by experience, he also had reason to believe that the American colonists' claims were a mask of special interests that were not related to liberty or justice (Jennings 1990:219). Wesley did not invent the monarchist political ideology which he employed in certain circumstances. It was a key element in the Anglican political theology. We may argue correctly that Wesley's

sympathy for the poor, marginalised and exploited, in this case slaves, made it impossible for him to reserve any sympathy for a rebellion of the wealthy, oppressors and slave masters who had no regards for human rights.

### **3.7 Wesley's political philosophy**

A careful examination of Wesley's political praxis exposes the tenets of his political philosophy. First, Wesley argued that the source of all power was God. The source of sovereignty was God rather than people. Those in power, the monarchy; its king, ministers, parliamentarians and governors, he viewed as servants of God according to the royalist interpretation of Romans 13. Obeying the powers that be was portrayed as obeying God, while being disobedient to rulers was disobedience to God ultimately. So for Wesley there was an invisible divine hand behind every political activism blessing or cursing those involved on the basis of obedience or disobedience respectively. In any political situation where there are choices to be made, Wesley's argument encouraged people to choose obeying God rather than human beings.

Second, Wesley was concerned with the principle of human liberty, which was developed into our current understanding of human rights. He argued that the test of any government was the principle of liberty, in both religious and civil forms. In terms of selecting a government system suitable for a nation, Wesley exhorted people to choose a government system that best protected human rights. Wesley pursued this principle and concluded that a democratic government system was bad for human rights. That was demonstrated by what he claimed, “No governments under heaven are so despotic as the republican; no subjects are governed in so arbitrary a manner as those of a commonwealth” (Wesley 1872a: 87). This principle led Wesley to assert that, “There is most liberty of all, civil and religious, under a limited monarchy; there is usually less under an aristocracy, and least of all under a democracy” (Wesley 1872i:105). In Wesley's political philosophy, good politics promote observation and protection of human rights.



Third, Wesley was an empiricist (Jenning, 1990:217). He based his political arguments on the principle of the empirical state of human liberty. Wesley was not content with abstract political engagements. From this principle the actual state of human liberty in American colonies was more devastating as compared to the monarchical England. It was from the same principle that Wesley also argued that the limited monarchy in England was the best protector of human liberty as compared to any democracy. It is this principle of the empirical state of human rights that we realise that for Wesley,

... the test of any government is how it protects these liberties, these rights. It is here, rather than in his use of Anglican political theology (which in any case applies, in Wesley's view, only to monarchical governments) that we find the relevance of Wesley's political thought for the altered circumstances of our era (Jennings 1990:218).

Wesley employed the principle of the empirical state of human rights to demonstrate the unacceptability of religious persecution, corruption of legal institutions and slavery. Wesley defended and applied the principle of the empirical state of human rights. It was argued that,

... the principle of human rights fits neatly into Wesley's practice not only of reaching out to the poor with the gospel but also of championing their cause against the multitude of ways they were subjected to humiliation and exploitation (Jennings 1990 :219).

Through this principle Wesley was quick to perceive social plagues of his time, denounced them vigorously and insisted that Methodists avoided participation in them (Cameron 1990:51). Some of the social plagues were economic monopolies, dealing in distilled liquor and slavery, which subjected people to dehumanising conditions. This discussion of Wesley's political philosophy demonstrates that he used and vindicated Anglican political theology with a clear conscience. However, it was affirmed that,

In our time the Anglican political theology of kingship that Wesley supported has very little relevance. It has become very much a dead letter for most of the

earth's population. But that does not necessarily mean that Wesley's political ethic has no relevance, for that ethic is far more than Anglican royalism. It tests the state by two inter-related criteria: (1) what is the consequence for the poor? And (2) what is the consequence for human rights ? (Jennings 1990: 221).

This inquiry should be directed to political systems, public policy and political activities. This position sets the stage properly for examining Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists in the light of John Wesley's political principles.

One more thing worthy of exploration is why Wesley was obsessed with defending the king and his government. He publicly defended the king and his officials against what he saw as unjust accusations (Marquardt 1992: 46). The defence of the king may lead one to think that Wesley legitimised oppressive rule. Far from it, the king earned Wesley's defence not just from Anglican political theology, but due to his protection of religious liberty, even for Methodists. Wesley retorted,

God stirred up the heart of our late gracious Sovereign (George II) to give such orders to his Magistrates as, being put in execution, effectively quelled the madness of people. It was about the time that a great man applied personally to His Majesty, begging that he would please to 'take a course to stop these run-about Preachers.' His Majesty, looking sternly upon him, answered without ceremony, like a king, 'I tell you, while I sit on the throne, no man shall be persecuted for conscience' sake (Wesley 1872o: 210).

Wesley defended the king because the king had demonstrated beyond doubt that he protected religious liberty.

According to the translation model of contextual theology, John Wesley used principles from the Christian message and church tradition in addressing his context. What was critical for John Wesley in his political teaching and practice were accountability to God, respect for every person, respect for political authorities and sound relationships among people as pillars in political activities. These were based on his understanding of God's free grace, the liberty of people to accept or reject that grace and the power and validity of popular religious expression. His political teaching and practice were justified through the model. Important to explore is how

his followers employed his teaching in various contexts, hence this study which seeks to delve into how Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe responded to the political order operational during the colonial era.

### **3.8 Implications of Wesley's political teaching**

Wesley's political teaching has profound implications for the ongoing history of Wesleyan traditions. Wesley argued that authority is divine, this has two implications. First, Wesleyan political theology challenges those in power to recognise their subordinate position. The church should hold the powers that be accountable to God, the source of sovereignty, and to their constituencies. Second, those in positions of authority are legitimate only when they recognise God's sovereignty and display willingness to reflect God's image. It is also the task of the church to remind the powers that be of their obligation to act on behalf of God in preserving human freedom and protecting human rights.

Another implication is derived from Wesley's insistence on human rights for all. The affirmation of politics that protect human rights demands developing a political theology that surpasses Wesley's limits so as to address issues of social order.

Our task as Methodists in bringing salvation must be translated into social action that affects every aspect of society – in particular the social issues of unemployment, poverty, inadequate housing and related moral issues of crime, violence and social dislocation (Grassow 2005 : 95).

This was said in relation to the South African context and has relevance to the Zimbabwean one.

Wesley claimed that war is horrendous. The principle that supreme power over life and death lay beyond the natural world meant that no one had the right to depose another's life. This implies that other means of resolving disagreements, differences and conflicts should be explored. War, as a last resort, is justifiable only on the principle of self-preservation. “Wesley's condemnation of both war and revolution

was not unconditional. He regarded wars fought in defence of the rights and sovereignty of a people to be justified, but condemned war in general” (Hulley 2006: 115). Therefore, it is also the task of the church to recommend conflict resolution models to be used in the political arena. The following chapters assess the impact of these implications on the political activism of Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists.

This chapter has demonstrated that John Wesley did not work out a theological framework from which his followers would analyse their political activities. What he did was to use Scriptures, church tradition and theological reflections to respond to the political challenges of his time. From that perspective each generation has to contextualise Scripture, church tradition and theological reflections as they respond to their contemporary political challenges.

During the colonial period in Zimbabwe the official stance of the Wesleyan Methodist Church was not related to John Wesley’s political teaching and practise as revealed in chapter four. On the other hand African Wesleyan Methodist ministers’ voices against oppression and marginalisation in Zimbabwe displayed a lot of influence from John Wesley. The theological training of African ministers required them to study John Wesley’s thinking and they drew from his teaching as is exposed in chapter five of this study. However, we should be mindful of the fact that John Wesley was ambivalent and at times ambiguous as stated above. He did not produce a set of doctrinal yardstick to be used in any political context. It is his example of contextualising Scriptures and church tradition to address his context which each generation should use. An evaluation of Wesleyan Methodist ministers carried out in this study was based on how they contextualised Scriptures and church tradition.

## Chapter Four

# MISSIONARY WESLEYAN METHODISM AND POLITICS IN COLONIAL ZIMBABWE

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with a period the researcher refers to as the missionary Methodism era in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. In an attempt to minimise confusion the researcher used Zimbabwe in reference to the country except in quotations. The missionary Methodism era refers to a period when Methodist expatriate missionaries were responsible for Methodist mission work in the country. The chapter delineated, examined and interpreted Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and activities during colonial rule in light of John Wesley's teaching on politics. The bone of contention focussed on testing a hypothesis that Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis was a continuation of Wesley's political teaching. Points of continuity and discontinuity are highlighted and discussed. Four subheadings are used to explore Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis. The four are the politics of land, race relationships, war and federation. The thematic approach was preferred against the chronological one for the purposes of clarity and paying adequate justice to each theme. This would not be achieved through the chronological approach. Wesleyan Methodist ministers, both missionaries and Africans, were divided into two categories; retrogressive and progressive. The categorisation was

done based on their views and action towards marginalised Africans' participation in politics.

#### **4.2 Zimbabwean church geography**

Before exploring the four themes of this study it is necessary to consider a church geography of Zimbabwe during the period under study. This consideration places the Wesleyan Methodist Church within its proper context. This study recognises that when Wesleyan Methodist missionaries arrived on the Zimbabwean mission field other missionary societies had already operated in the country. Gonzalo da Silveira, a Roman Catholic missionary from Portugal introduced Christianity to the Munumutapa Emperor and his court in the sixteenth century (Bhila 1977:25). His success in the Munumutapa Kingdom was short lived as he was martyred because of the Muslim influence (Bhila 1977:26). Gonzalo da Silveira's efforts were followed by those of the Dominicans and Jesuits which failed to make an impact and were abandoned in the later part of the eighteenth century (Rea 1977:14-23). The early missionary efforts did not achieve any lasting results (Bhebe 1999:122). This study has taken the fact into consideration since it is critical to consider such a failure when writing about political involvement of missionaries who came into the country after such a dismal failure.

According to Bhebe (1999:122) a new missionary venture was initiated by Robert Moffat of the London Missionary Society who visited Muzilikazi and later on got permission to start mission centres at Inyathi and Hope Fountain in 1859. The Berlin Missionary Society sent African evangelists from South Africa into parts of Mberengwa and Mwenezi (Bhebe 1999:122). The Roman Catholic missionaries reappeared on the mission field and were given permission to establish a mission station at Empandeni by Lobengula (Bhebe 1999: 122). The significance of these early missionary efforts was not in their evangelistic success but in that "...they helped, through the correspondence and publications of the missionaries, to open

Zimbabwe and its resources of the human souls to the gaze of the Christian world” (Bhebe 1999: 122). It is within this context that we should under the activities of Cecil John Rhodes’ British South Africa Company who “...swindled a mineral concession out of Lobengula and used it to gain permission from the British government to colonize Zimbabwe, missionary organisations both in South Africa and abroad were stirred into action” (Bhebe 1999: 122).

Rhodes desired to use the Christian message to pacify Africans (Bhebe 1999: 123) so he made an offer for missionary societies to take advantage of the new opening of Zimbabwe and to avoid suspicion and criticism from fellow British citizens (Zvobgo 1996 :3). The offer was very effective, between 1890 and 1900 ten denominations were operating in Zimbabwe and 325 730 acres were given to missionary societies in land grants (Bhebe 1999: 123). The quotation below pointed out correctly that mission stations were another form of settlers, they were responsible for land dispossession of Africans.

This was one of the aspects of the close association of the Christian Missions with the rest of the colonial forces which the anti-colonial revolutionaries like Mugabe and others kept on referring to. In early years missions, like any other settlers, seemed to have no scruples in participating in the general land dispossession of Africans. Even though churches in later years were at pains to explain to the nationalists and anti-colonial critics that the land they held was not being used for commercial profit but for the social advancement of Africans, all the missionaries imposed economic and social regulations on their properties, which clashed with the customs and traditions and restricted the economic advancement of their tenants so that the latter were forced to abandon their traditional homes and to fling themselves on the reserves which were invariably groaning under the weight of overpopulation and overstocking (Bhebe 1999:123)

We now turn to a closer examination of the Zimbabwean church geography in order to be more specific when dealing with the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe in relation to its role on the political arena. Churches which operated in colonial Zimbabwe can be put into three broad categories. According to Hallencreutz (1991:160-161) the churches that operated in Zimbabwe can be classified as national



churches with a double mandate, such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Wesleyan Methodist Church, mission- related regional churches, such as the Lutheran Church, the Salvation Army, the United Methodist Church, the Church of Christ and other mainstream churches, and (c) independent or spirit churches, such as the Zion Christian Church of Samuel Mutendi and others. Bhebe (1999:123-124) agreed with Hallencreutz on the categorisation of the churches. This categorisation was adopted for this study.

The national churches with a double mandate had the liberty to spread throughout the country as their ministry targeted both Africans and Europeans. On the political arena the concept of separate development which was employed by the national churches led to serious tensions within the churches and between the churches and the state and eventually led to violent divisions based on racial lines. According to Bhebe (1999:124) a comparison of the three denominations that fell in the category of the national churches showed that the Roman Catholic Church fared better than any of its counterparts in terms of condemning the brutal atrocities committed by Rhodesian security forces against Africans. This position was confirmed in this study as shown in chapter six below.

The mission-related regional churches, whose membership was predominantly African, were sympathetic to the African nationalist aspirations (Bhebe 1999: 125). However, Bhebe was quick to point out that there were “...differences of sympathies either for the internal expressions of the more moderate nationalists of the African Nationalist Council from 1970 onwards or for the more militant options advanced by the liberation movements operating from Zambia and since 1974 also from Mozambique” (Bhebe 1999:125). This study did not go deeper into issues pertaining to this category of churches since that is outside the scope of the study. However, what has been discussed so far gives a clear picture of the Zimbabwean church terrain during the colonial era.



The independent or spirit churches, which may be referred to as African initiated churches, emerged to a larger extent as a result of Africans' reaction to missionary dominance. These churches were supportive to African nationalist objectives (Bhebe 1999:126). This study referred to this category of churches in order to map up the church geography in Zimbabwe during the colonial period. An investigation on the extent to which these churches supported the African cause is not a concern of this study.

We have seen the church landscape in which the Wesleyan Methodists were operating during the colonial era. The study now focuses on how they fared on the political arena as one of the national churches with a double mandate.

#### **4.3 Politics of land**

The establishment of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe rested more on the politics of land than evangelism as I will now show. Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodism sprang up as an extension of Methodist mission work in South Africa. Rev. Owen Watkins, who was chairman of Transvaal District of the Methodist Church, contemplated mission work beyond the Limpopo River. This was never realised because the Methodist Missionary Society (MMS) in Britain, did not grant permission due to financial constraints (Thorpe 1951:39). On the other hand, Cecil John Rhodes, one of the great British imperialists in Southern and Central Africa, had his eyes fixed on Zimbabwe and beyond (Thorpe 1951:31). After King Lobengula finally succumbed to Rudd, Maguire and Thompson's trickery persuasion he made a "...untidy cross and thumb-mark... to the bottom of the document; and so the famous Rudd Concession was signed in October 1888" (Thorpe 1951:32). Rudd and his colleagues were sent by Rhodes to negotiate for permission to prospect for gold in Mashonaland. The Rudd Concession became the basis of a violent dispossession of blacks by a white minority in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe had remained unknown to most

Europeans in Southern Africa. The little information available was provided by hunters and explorers. Therefore, “With the concession granted by Lobengula to Mr Rudd and others, to prospect for gold in Mashonaland, and the formation of the Chartered Company in 1889 to work on the concession, the curtain of mystery was withdrawn” (Whiteside 1906:461). Once the Rudd Concession was signed, Rhodes was quick to move into Zimbabwe. He formed the British South Africa Company (BSAC) mobilised the Pioneer Column and marched to Zimbabwe. In 1890 Rev. I. Shimmin, a Wesleyan Methodist minister in South Africa, was invited by Selous to participate in the pioneer column which was on a northward movement ( National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (NAZ) (6 3/ 4 IN) 50 years; the story of the growth of Methodism in Bulawayo 1895-1945, October, 1945 ). Shimmin was unable to join the pioneer column because he had to be given permission by the church first. However,

... a few months later he, (Shimmin), had an interview with Cecil Rhodes. As a result of this meeting Mr Rhodes offered, on behalf of the Chartered Company, a gift of 100 pounds a year for five years towards the expenses of a mission station in Mashonaland. He made a further promise of building stands and mission sites in various parts of the country if Methodism would help pioneer the way to civilisation in Rhodesia (NAZ, 50 years; the story of the growth of Methodism in Bulawayo 1895-194, October, 1945).

The way was paved for an adventure into unknown land beyond the Limpopo River. The fact was pointed out by the MMS in 1914 when they wrote, “ ... in 1891 the British South Africa Co. offered our society land, and 100 pounds a year towards the cost of a Mission in Southern Rhodesia” (Methodist Missionary Society 1914: 148). As the Rudd Concession paved way for invasion of Zimbabwe by white settlers, Rhodes' offer did the same for Wesleyan Methodist mission work in the country. Rhodes was from a Christian family, which is why he invited the Church to participate in his Pioneer Column. He might have invited the church in order to make his conquest of lands beyond the Limpopo River legitimate and win support from Britain. Another reason was that he needed clergy as chaplains and moulders of community. Whether Christians were aware of disastrous consequences of partnering

with British imperialist agents is not clear.

Rhodes' offer was referred to the MMS, in London, but did not reach the intended destination until the Pioneer Column arrived at Fort Salisbury, now Harare. The MMS accepted Rhodes' offer and granted permission for Watkins to march north across the Limpopo river (Thorpe 1951:39). Watkins and his team reached Fort Salisbury on 29<sup>th</sup> of September, 1891. As men on a mission,

Soon after their arrival they, (Watkins and Shimmin), had an interview with Mr. Rhodes and Dr. Jameson, who kindly promised them tracks of land in different parts of the country for Mission farms, and also plots of ground in the various townships for churches and schools. All these promises were more than fulfilled (Whiteside 1906: 462).

The quotation shows that Rhodes fulfilled the promises he made to Wesleyan Methodists through Shimmin in 1890. The promise of land was enacted from 20<sup>th</sup> October, 1891, when Rhodes specified the area in which Wesleyan Methodists were to claim their farms. “Mr Watkins met Cecil Rhodes on October 20<sup>th</sup> and got from him stands in Salisbury, (now Harare), and three farms for mission work – at Epworth, at Hartleyton in chief Lomagundi's area, and in the eastern district” (National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (NAZ) (MET1/11-12) Methodist Statements, A short summary of the history of Methodism in Southern Rhodesia, 1898). With this Wesleyan Methodists made a stride into the politics of land in Zimbabwe.

It was the BSAC's policy to give large estates to missionary societies who sent missionaries to the country. Wesleyan Methodists as well as other missionary groups, like the Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Episcopal Methodists, accepted the land offers and used them for various mission activities. As a result of the tracks of land and African converts who started to populate the mission farms missionaries found themselves involved in administration issues directly (Weller & Linden 1984:201). In this regard missionaries started to assume secular power, carrying out such administrative duties as administration of justice which had been carried out by chiefs

and later on became the role of the government. This explains why the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries, as well as their counterparts, formulated rules and regulations to be observed by African converts on mission farms. Sooner than later, missionaries' functions overlapped with those of administrators.

Rev. Watkins left for South Africa leaving Shimmin with the task of establishing Wesleyan Methodist work. Shimmin decided to visit chief Makonde in order to initiate mission work. Before reaching the chief's area, he learned that the chief had been killed by the Ndebeles as the result of an accusation that he had shown white people where to prospect for gold. Shimmin was guided by Selous to an area in Zwimba where he pegged a farm, which he named Hartleyton, after Rev. Marshal Hartley (Whiteside 1906: 462). This was done without consultation with traditional authorities. It must be noted that a pledge for financial support and land made Wesleyan Methodist mission work possible in Zimbabwe. Right from time of entry, the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe was entangled in land politics. Wesleyan Methodists ignored blacks' right to land as they entered Zimbabwe. On this point the Church sided more with British imperialism than gospel values. It is important to explore how Wesleyan Methodists participated in politics of land in Zimbabwe in light of the offer pledged by advocates of British imperialism.

The defeat of the Ndebele and Shona in 1896/7 by the BSAC led to the conquest of Zimbabwe. A new dispensation was ushered in Zimbabwe. The new era witnessed an abolition of the Ndebele

“...monarchy, control over cattle, land, labour and settlement fell increasingly beyond the authority of political leaders” (Palmer 1977: 229). It was so because the British settlers viewed the wars of resistance by locals as uprisings. They had to put stern measures in place to suppress local people once and for all, as they created a new nation under the auspices of the British Empire. The land was renamed after Rhodes, the great imperialist. Alexander (2006:19) went on to note that, “All this went hand in hand with the expansion of missionary activity: new ideas percolated through the

region, unfettered by strict controls previously exercised by the king.” Wesleyan Methodist missionaries were not exempted in the expansion. The politics of land in Zimbabwe was never an issue of scarcity of the commodity, but one of who had authority over it, who had the right to use it and how it was distributed among citizens. This was new in Zimbabwe and the black population had to respond to it even though they did not comprehend the British values which were now employed.

The Wesleyan Methodists accepted and promoted the new order as is evident in some of the resolutions made by their Synod. A Synod is the highest decision making meeting held by a district of the Wesleyan Methodist Church which meets annually. In 1920, during the peak of the passing of legislation on land in Zimbabwe, the Wesleyan Synod urged the settler government to consider seriously agricultural training for locals seriously. The following quotation illustrates the point.

The Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of Rhodesia, assembled in Salisbury, in January 1920, urges upon the Administration of this country the desirability and importance of undertaking as early as possible, some definite form of Agricultural training for the Natives of the territory (Wesleyan Methodist Archive, Harare [WMA] Methodist House, (18-24) Synod Minutes, 3 January, 1920).

This quotation shows that Wesleyan Methodists justified the settler annexation of Zimbabwe and takeover of authority on land as well as determining forms of land usage. Local people were ignorant of modern farming methods, but they were not inexperienced in terms of land use. The desire to train locals in agricultural methods was not for their good, but to facilitate easy control by the settler government. It was also an important strategy for encouraging absorbing blacks into the new nation being established.

In the same year, 1920, Synod made another request to the settler government, “The Synod also requests the Administration to consider the question of facilitating for natives the purchase of land from the Government” (WMA, MH, Synod Minutes, 3 January, 1920). The request exposes that for Wesleyan Methodists the invasion of

Zimbabwe by the BSAC was legitimate. That was scandalous. The settler government was illegitimate, yet the Wesleyan Methodist Church appealed to it to consider selling land they invaded to people they had displaced. It is surprising to note how they ignored local people's God-given right to their land. For local people it was startling to realise that they were required to purchase land on which they had stayed from time immemorial. The issue of capacity to pay was another problem. The issue of land purchase by blacks marginalised them as second class citizens in their motherland. This act by Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe diverged from John Wesley's attitude towards Africans, as was seen in chapter three above.

It is worthy to explore how Wesleyan Methodists administered land allocated to them for mission work. In 1922 the Wesleyan Methodist Synod adopted a resolution on objectives and rules for mission farms. There were six objectives set out as follows;

- 1 To see the Mission Farms populated by Christians Natives whose manner of living will be a wholesome example to the heathen people of neighbouring reserves.
- 2 To organise the Christians of our Farms into a powerful agency for evangelization.
- 3 (a) To teach our tenants how to build good houses in planned villages.  
(b) How to make the best possible use of the land allotted to them, by green manuring & rotation of crops.  
(c) How to order their communal life by Native Councils.
- 4 To introduce afforestation schemes under the guidance of the Government experts.
- 5 To perform some small amount of agricultural farming work on behalf of the Mission so that costs of Mission Transport, animal and Native Gatherings, such as Quarterly Meetings may be minimised.
- 6 In order to secure these objects the Synod directs that the following rules be enforced (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24) Rules on mission farms, 11 January, 1922).

A Quarterly Meeting, the highest decision making meeting for a circuit of the Wesleyan Methodist Church is held once in every three months. A circuit is a number of congregations grouped together for administration purposes. The objectives for mission farms exposed how the church and settler government's agendas were intertwined. The church aimed at a complete turnaround of society, forms of land use



and cultural values, including the shape of houses and structure of villages. A demand for transfer of allegiance from traditional leaders to Native Councils was considered treacherous. The church also introduced forced labour on mission farms as a cost cutting measure. What Wesleyan Methodists were not aware of was the impact of such objectives on blacks. Such activities on mission farms revealed the segregative tendencies of the white settlers' programme. Zimbabwean Methodists on mission farms started to raise alarm bells and alerted fellow blacks of the impending injustices.

Rules to be observed on mission farms were segregative. Five general rules were agreed upon to be enforced in all Wesleyan Methodist farms. Additional rules were set for particular farms. The general rules were as follows;

- 1 No objections shall be raised to marriage arrangements already entered into, but a polygamous contract shall not be entered into after the person has become resident on the Farm.
- 2 No beer parties shall be allowed; & the sale of beer made on Mission Farms is strictly prohibited.
- 3 All children between the ages of 6 & 14 must attend school. A fine of 5/- (shillings) shall be paid by the parents or guardian of any child who without satisfactory excuse fails to make at least 150 attendances per year.
- 4 Non-essential works must be suspended on Sundays.
- 5 All persons settling on Mission Farms shall be subject to the control & direction of the Minister in Charge, both in regard to the lands they plough, & all other matters (WMA, MH, Rules for mission farms, 11 January, 1922).

Additional rules for specific farms exposed that there were rentals to be paid by each household on the farm ranging from 5/- to one pound, a dipping fee fluctuated between 2/- and 2/6, while grazing fee was 1/- per head per annum. On Epworth farm each household was allowed ten head of cattle that would graze free of charge. A grazing fee of 1/- was charged for any extra head. If a tenant brought a beast belonging to a non-resident onto the farm, a grazing fee of 1/- per beast per annum was charged. While on Sandringham farm the position of a family kraal was decided on by the Minister in Charge (WMA, MH, Rules for mission farms, 11 January 1922).

The rules undermined Zimbabwean traditional social life. They were crafted carefully so as to complement the efforts of the settler government. Their endeavours on mission farms exposed how much Wesleyan Methodist missionaries worked hand in glove with colonialists in terms of the politics of land. Little did they know that Zimbabwean blacks would one day bundle them together with the imperialists. On this matter Wesleyan Methodists treated tenants on mission farms as second class citizens which was a deviation from John Wesley's teaching on politics. The rules for mission farms denied Zimbabweans their liberty and rights to land. The paternalistic strategy used on mission farms was unrealistic and an insult at the same time. How could a Minister in Charge decide on where a family kraal was to be erected? That was a direct attack on one's manhood.

In 1923 Wesleyan Methodists advised the Chief Secretary of the State for colonies, in Britain, to put in place a system that would address the land issue once and for all.

The Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia desires respectfully to urge the following matter for the favourable consideration of His Majesty's Chief Secretary of the State for the colonies; (1) In order to make fuller and more suitable provision in the matter of land supply for the Natives of this Territory, we suggest that the proposal of the Chief Native Commissioner of the Territory should be put into effect, viz.- That suitable and sufficient areas of unalienated land adjoining the present Reserves should be set apart, surveyed in suitable blocks, and offered for sale to Natives who may wish to become individual owners of land. We regard this, not only as an act of justice, but likewise a wise policy to meet the immediate and future needs of these people (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24), Letter from D Gray to Secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 17 January, 1923).

Wesleyan Methodists had realised the need for a representative of black Zimbabweans on a range of issues, including land. So they urged the Chief Secretary of State for the colonies, in Britain, to implement a proposal for a Chief Native Commissioner, in Zimbabwe, without delay. Their hope was that the Chief Native Commissioner would coordinate work done by Native Commissioners and ensure that local people's interests were considered in running the affairs of the country. This



was a noble cause, but the officer had to be a white person. They were convinced that the proposed officer would implement their desire for preparing land not yet designated, which lay adjacent to reserves, for purchase by individual blacks. The move aimed at empowering some individual blacks. Once a person owns a particular piece of land, he or she has rights over the land and a voice in certain decisions made. Here the church advocated for the speedy integration of Africans into modern Zimbabwean society. They did it in the name of God's love and justice. It showed continuity with John Wesley's political teaching. However, for the local Zimbabweans the activity had a far reaching negative impact. First, it provided the final blow in undermining the king and chiefs' authority over land as individuals would now own land. In the traditional set up land was owned by the whole community, which included ancestors and the living, with the king or chief holding it in trust. Second, it led to the breakdown of the traditional code for the social fabric of society. Individuals who bought land would move away from their communities to form new ones which had different social fabrics. Their allegiance was to be transferred from traditional leaders to settler officials. This divided local people to the advantage of the settler government.

The church became very concerned with the imbalances in land distribution in the country. In 1929 they engaged the colonial government on the issue and offered to dispose of land owned by the MMS by way of selling it to blacks, and hoped that other missionary societies would follow their example, as it is seen in correspondence between the church and the officials of the settler government. In a letter written by the Chief Native Commissioner, H. M. Jackson Esq., to Rev. Frank Noble on 31 January 1929, he acknowledged receipt of a resolution from the Wesleyan Synod and informed him that government officials had given due attention to the resolution. He wrote, "I am sorry that it does not seem possible for the Government to accept the proposal that land held by missionary societies should be disposed of by sale to Natives ..." (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (29-30) Letter from HM Jackson Chief Native Commissioner to F Noble, 31 January, 1929).

The Chief Native Commissioner reiterated the government position that no land owned by missionary societies should be sold to blacks. There was a great deal of correspondence between the Wesleyan Methodists and the colonial government regarding issues pertaining to blacks which ranged from protests, encouragement, proposals and agreements. This shows that the Church and the settler government were in disagreement and heading towards direct confrontation on matters relating to the black population in the country. Africans' concerns had taken centre stage in Wesleyan Methodists' involvement in the politics of land in Zimbabwe. What they lacked was input by black Zimbabweans on the matter. They employed a paternalistic strategy on matters related to blacks.

In 1931 the colonial government enacted discriminatory legislation designed to undercut African competition and subsidise white production through the Maize Control Act. Wesleyan Methodists studied and evaluated the Act. In the following year they advised the colonial government of the negative impact of the Act on blacks in Zimbabwe. It was resolved that, "... Synod approach the Government concerning the great suffering among Native people caused by the new Maize Control Act. The selling price is too low and the buying price too high" (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (31-32) Synod Minutes, 14 January, 1932). This was communicated to both the colonial government and the Chief Native Commissioner. However, it fell on deaf ears and no action was taken either to repeal the law or to amend it. That did not deter Wesleyan Methodists from pressing on for the Africans' cause. The Maize Control Act was cast as a conservation measure which would see more Africans squeezed into reserves. By that time African farming methods were based on use of a plough, as they embraced new technology. That had proved the effectiveness of Africans' hard work shown in expansion in arable acreage in reserves. The Act was one of the ways colonialists used to slow down developmental progress among blacks. The church realised this and was right in challenging it. The context was no longer conducive for blacks, including Christians, to realise their developmental potential.

The situation continued to deteriorate until there were voices calling for more representation of blacks in national affairs. The Chief Native Commissioner alone was ineffective. The Church joined the call for a Commission on Native Affairs and impressed on the Prime Minister the urgency of appointing the proposed commission. In 1935 the Wesleyan Methodist Synod resolved to send communication to the highest officer in the country. They entreated the Prime Minister, “The Synod respectfully urges the Prime Minister to appoint the proposed Commission without delay, as there are many grave and urgent matters demanding settlement, foremost amongst which is the improvement in economic status of the native population” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (35) Synod Minutes, 4 January, 1935). The Wesleyan Methodists had faith in the proposed commission. They realised that time was running out for the colonial government. Blacks were now losing their patience and the situation would easily deteriorate to chaotic levels.

They went on to offer suggestions for consideration by all who were interested in the permanent welfare of both the white and black population of the colony. At that time the church started to raise alarm regarding the salient impact of segregating blacks from the white population. The church made it clear that the land issue was the main source of Africans' discontent. They suggested, “... that the existing Native Reserves should be reduced in number and that the reduction in number should be compensated for by an increase in area for the remaining reserves” (WMA) MH Synod Minutes, 4 January, 1935). It is not clear why the church suggested a reduction in the number of reserves. May be it was for easy control or security reasons. The call for increasing the area of reserves aimed at de-congesting the reserves. This would be interpreted by blacks as giving back the land to its legitimate owners. In some way it was respecting black Zimbabweans' right to their land. The major problem was that blacks had no say regarding these proposals; they had to dance to the tunes of their white oppressors.

When Wesleyan Methodists were convinced that the colonial government did not deal with the land issue with the urgency it deserved, they then proposed creation of a Native Development Board (NDB) (WMA, MH Synod Minutes, 4 January, 1935). The proposed board would comprise of representatives of the government, representatives of societies which had been engaged for a period of at least ten years in endeavouring to improve the conditions of native life and representatives of the natives. All of those representatives were to be drawn from the white community since blacks had no say in the country. The idea of increasing African representation was brilliant but racial discrimination frustrated all efforts. The functions of the proposed board included the following:

That all crops, livestock and all other products of the Reserves not required for consumption within the reserves should be delivered to the NDB for disposal.  
That all importations of goods required for consumption or use within the reserves should be subject to the authority of the NDB.  
That all Native Purchase Areas should be adjacent to Native Reserves, the products of such Native Purchase Areas to be subject to the following conditions:-

- (1) Freedom of trade within the reserves in the same manner as products of the reserves.
- (2) All products not disposed of within the reserves to be delivered to the NDB for disposal.
- (3) The NDB to be empowered to utilise loan funds for development of the Native Purchase Areas (WMA, MH Synod Minutes, 4 January, 1935).

As usual the colonial government did not accept the proposal. Important to note is that Wesleyan Methodists took seriously the plight of blacks in terms of land ownership and use. Their collaboration with the settler government immediately after the conquest was proving to be costly. The moment they started to differ with government's segregative land policies they were treated with suspicion. What the proposal for a NDB revealed was a burning desire to champion the African cause.

Even when the going got tougher by each day the church did not lose heart. In 1944 the church applauded the government for its plans to develop reserves. The plans aimed at enlarging the reserves, a call which had been made by the church about a

decade before. The Synod urged the government,

This Synod recognises that the Government is preparing large-scale plans for the development of Reserves and Native areas and that some of the plans are now beginning to operate, but in view of the overcrowding of African areas we urge upon the Government the need to set aside more land for African occupation. We further urge that this need is not only acute, but immediate, in that reports are continually heard of the impossibility of finding suitable unoccupied areas in which African families may be located. Synod presses that action be taken without any further delay (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (44) Synod Minutes, 8 January, 1944).

The church was concerned with overcrowding in reserves, yet they never considered the type of soil in areas which were reserved for blacks. Most of the areas were arid or semi-arid, low rainfall characterised them and others were rocky and unsuitable for agriculture. All of the fertile, arable and productive land was designated for use by whites. This was supposed to be the church's concern in order for all citizens, who were created in the image of God, to at least benefit from a God-given resource, land.

The first half of the century of colonial rule in Zimbabwe witnessed a dramatic alteration of land use and authority over it. The colonial government forged a racially based division of land between freeholder white land and reserves for blacks. Each category had a distinct system of governance. The NAD was responsible for moulding authority patterns in reserves through modernising tribal rule. Their task was complicated by blacks' interaction with urban areas, influence from missionaries and NAD's own efforts towards the development of reserves. Africans defended their right to land as they resisted ambitions of the colonial state in transforming ways in which Africans lived and farmed. Wesleyan Methodist missionaries supported and worked together with colonialists in their endeavours to substitute African understanding and use of land with European modernism.

The impact of new order in politics of land resulted in economic changes during the 1940s. There was marked growth in secondary industry and a boom in tobacco production. The economic growth engendered severe labour shortage and reduction

in food production. On the other hand there were massive evictions of blacks from land designated as European Areas. That intensified land shortage and pressure within communal reserves. It was a cause for concern as government officials got worried over conservation and productivity in reserves. NAD officials realised a need for a radical reorganisation of blacks' involvement in national development, especially both urban and rural economies. Both government and NAD officials were convinced that a new Act was inevitable.

In 1944 the colonial government appointed the Native Production and Trade (Godlonton) Commission. The Commission crafted the basis for a new Act, the Native Land Husbandry Act. It argued that Black farmers in Zimbabwe were lazy and destructive. It also justified coercive intervention by government as it was seen to be state responsibility to usher blacks into progress and increased productivity. Wesleyan Methodists never commented on the Commission's proposals which suggest that they were in agreement with it.

Of all colonial legislation on land, the Native Land Husbandry Act 1951 was the most notorious, ambitious and disastrous effort to modernise the country. The Act stated that it was a state obligation to ensure black farmers' agricultural productivity. In that view, a policy of compulsory planned production was to be implemented. Black farmers were to be directed what crops, acreage and areas to plant. They needed also to be directed on what livestock to keep. The intention was to enforce good husbandry culture as well as control marketing and distribution of resultant products. The Act divided land in reserves into farmed arable fields owned by individual households and communal grazing areas. The Act also introduced de-stocking and grazing schemes as primary means of stock management. That proved to be a recipe for disaster as it provoked most violent outbreaks of rural resistance.

The Native Land Husbandry Act perceived the problem in reserves as one of overcrowding. It proposed limiting the number of blacks with land rights as a best

solution. That was done through abolishing labour migration between communal reserves and urban areas. The other measure was to issue all saleable land and stock rights to a permanently limited number of black farmers. So those who could not get land and stock rights would be forced to migrate to urban areas permanently, thereby providing the much needed labour. The Act aimed at revolutionising black Zimbabweans' participation in economy. The intended final allocation of land to the limited blacks would lead the African to become either a peasant farmer only or an industrialised labourer divorced from land. That would ease pressure in reserves. The Act also called for a fundamental ideological shift which would cease to think of Africans as communal tribes-people but as rational individuals participating in an impersonal market. In that scenario, those excluded from land would be candidates for a stable labour force for the booming industry. Limiting the number of farmers with rights to land would promote individual responsibility, adoption of recommended agricultural methods and investment. With such aims the Act repudiated the traditional communal rights to land and traditional leaders, like chiefs and headmen, authority over it.

It is surprising to note the Wesleyan Methodists' silence on the Act. The church as an institution was numb, may be once again blood was thicker than water. The church aimed at civilising Africans. The Act, once implementation to the spirit of the letter, the Zimbabwean nation would be deemed civilised. So opposing the Act could be viewed as derailing missionaries' efforts. However, the Act was opposed fiercely by blacks, including Methodists. In 1963 Wesleyan Methodists revisited the Land Apportionment Act and exposed how segregative it was. They advised the Colonial Government that, "... Synod affirms its conviction that the Land Apportionment Act should be repealed" (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (63) Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1963).

The following years witnessed the colonial government's attempts to deal with the land issue conclusively. The Land Tenure Act was enacted and promulgated. It



became one of the urgent issues to be dealt with by the church up to the Synod of 1965. An appraisal of the Act was considered by delegates at the Synod. They comprehended its impact on black Zimbabweans as well as on mission farms in either European or African areas. The Synod resolved,

... to inform all its people of the implications of the Land Tenure Act with regards to Mission Farms in European and African areas and will be ready to assist any Tenant who desires to procure alternative land in Tribal Trust Areas (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (65) Synod Minutes, 5 January, 1965).

Even when the Wesleyan Methodists became conversant with the catastrophic aspirations which inspired the crafting of the Act, they did not match its implementation with the resistance it deserved. The church was not immune to racial discrimination as we shall see later. They offered to assist any member affected by the Act which proved that they had either accepted defeat or they approved implementation of the Act to a certain extent. Synod went on to point out,

However, it, (Synod), affirms that Christians of all races are one family and that we recognise the denial of the Christian Gospel in the Act because it seeks to entrench a division in the Christian family on grounds of race (WMA, MH Synod Minutes, 5 January, 1965).

The quotation showed that Wesleyan Methodists realised how ruinous such legislation was to the Church and community at large. Dividing the church on racial grounds posed serious challenges for the Christian community. It was in complete contrast to gospel values, yet Wesleyan Methodists allowed it to carry the day. In this case they allied themselves with their kith and kin at the expense of Christian principles and black Zimbabweans whom they had to evangelise. It was a clear departure from John Wesley's political example.

In 1969 the colonial government enacted the Land Tenure Act. The Act enforced land segregation and placed responsibility for Tribal Trust Lands on people, through representation by tribal land authorities. The Act divided the country into European and African areas. A further consideration of implications of the Land Tenure Act/Bill



on mission land was carried out. The church noted that its mission farms had been classified as following; Tegwani, Chemhanza, Kwenda and Marshall Hartley were designated as European land within an African Area, Waddilove, Epworth, Chivero, Pakame and Rukundo as European owned land within European Area (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (69) Synod Minutes, 12 January, 1969). All church farms, by virtue of belonging to churches which were led by missionaries, could not be designated as African land. That was serious because blacks were not allowed to be on land designated as European Area.

Wesleyan Methodists concluded that, “In both cases the Act was designed gradually to eliminate the African tenant from Mission land” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (69) Christian Citizenship Committee Minutes 4 November, 1969). The church defended blacks' right to mission land successfully. The church defended locals' rights to mission land for two reasons. First, if all blacks were evicted from mission farms, missionaries would be bundled together with colonialists as agents of British imperialism, which would mean that they forfeited their right to evangelise in Zimbabwe. Second, their desire to civilise blacks through mission farms would be thwarted. So they had no other positive option but to side with blacks. However the church was only successful in protesting against implementation of the Act on mission farms for a while.

In 1972 the government attempted in vain once again to evict blacks from mission farms. Wesleyan Methodists observed that, “During the past year some of the implications of the Land Tenure Act have been made clear in the possibility of the eviction of the African tenants at Epworth and other mission farms designated as European areas. The Methodist Church has made known to the Rhodesian authorities its strong opposition to these proposals” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (72) Synod Minutes, 18 January, 1972). The church felt obliged to oppose implementation of the notorious Land Tenure Act on mission farms. While it appeared as though the church opposed the Land Tenure Act in

protection of its land, in reality it was a fight against repressive and segregative legislation. Resistance against the Land Tenure Act on mission farms motivated blacks to mobilise nationwide resistance to the Act.

Church resistance against implementation of the Land Tenure Act on mission farms continued unabated. In 1973 the Salisbury Area Council registered its concern with the Christian Citizenship committee. The Wesleyan Methodist Church had divided the country into regional administrative structures, which were referred to as area councils. The concern from Salisbury Area Council read, “The Area Council's deep concern about the Government's renewed intention to evict the law-abiding Epworth tenants as reported in the press. To this end the Area urges the District, jointly with other churches, to continue to resist to the bitter end these inhuman Government intentions” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (73) Christian Citizenship Committee Minutes, 6 January, 1973). The quotation exposed the church's attitude of bitterness towards the government of the day, as well as a desire to continue tackling the problem ecumenically. It is important to realise that while the church resisted segregation of blacks in politics of land through its structures, individual Wesleyan Methodists took it upon themselves to fight it through political structures.

It is important at the end of this section of the chapter to analyse the missionary Wesleyan Methodists' involvement in politics of land in Zimbabwe. According to Banana (1996a:124-127) the history of this country would have been different without the contribution of such missionaries as John White (Wesleyan Methodist) and Arthur Shearley Cripps (Anglican). Banana (1996a: 125) quoted a section of Rev. John White's letter to J. Harris in 1923 on the Land Apportionment Act, which is as follows;

In other words, it carried with it segregation. Against such racial divisions in the past, have I protested in principle. I could not see the justice of it. My views have undergone a change. The right of the native to purchase land anywhere means that they purchase nowhere.

Three things come out strikingly in the quotation. These are: the Act was segregation. John White had protested against segregation in the past and provision for Africans to purchase land meant that they were dispossessed forever, since they could not afford any price. Rev. John White's protest against segregation of Africans was also discussed by Andrews (1935:118) who concluded that John White stood against his own countrymen on behalf of the rights of Africans. Andrews (1935:122) went on to say Rev. Cripps was complementary to John White's protests. He championed the campaign for better treatment and kinder relations between races, pointed out where there was a miscarriage of justice in law courts and agitated for more land for Africans. The official stance of missionary Wesleyan Methodism in Zimbabwe denied such voices in support of Africans to be heard.

On the other hand, African ministers did not just watch the situation continue. As early as 1915 there were African Wesleyan Methodist ministers who were determined to fight against the segregation of Africans by whites. One of those men was Rev. Matthew Zvimba (Ranger 1995:27) who pioneered a rebellion against missionary Wesleyan Methodism and founded the Church of the White Bird in the Zvimba area. Matthew Zvimba was once a pupil of John White (Ranger 1995:38) and it was from him that he learnt the progressive stance in favour of Africans.

Banana (1996a:125-126) pointed out that Rev. Matthew Rusike, a prominent and articulate African Wesleyan Methodist minister, gave evidence to the Land Commission of 1925. In his submission Rev. Rusike pointed out that it would be admirable if Africans were allowed to purchase land between farms and reserves. According to Banana (1996a:26), Rev. Rusike would appear as though he "was in actual support of the concept of segregation ... he was not necessarily supporting the Act. ... For he said, it was now a question of how much the African could salvage out of the unequal land apportionment."

Meshek Zvimba, a brother to Matthew Zvimba (Ranger 1995:28), was another

African minister who could not swallow the bitter pill of segregation in the church and opted out. After seven years of ministerial training, the Synod resolved not to ordain him after a report deemed unsatisfactory (Ranger 1995:28). Ranger (1995:28) went on to say Meshek Zvimba resigned from the Wesleyan Methodist Church and started his A-ti-tongwe ('We are not governed') or the African Methodist National Church. Meshek Zvimba was very political and he struggled against the colonial government's refusal to permit his church to erect church buildings.

What is clear is that even though the official stance of the missionary Wesleyan Methodist Church ignored the voices of missionaries and African ministers who championed the African, the voices were loud. Without such voices the history of Zimbabwe would be different. The discussion now focuses on the question of race relationships.

### **4.3 Race relationships**

Whenever people of different races are brought together issues of race relationships, the way in which people or groups behave towards each other, surface. When white settlers conquered Zimbabwe brutally and decided to invade the country, race relationships came into play sooner rather than later. The context in which to understand race relationships during the colonial era has to be explicit. White settlers came from two categories important for this presentation, imperialists and missionaries. On the other hand were the Zimbabweans, who populated the country in various tribal groups. In such a context every category had rights to be respected and obligations towards others to be observed. With this understanding of the context in mind we now turn to a historical assessment of the race relationships in colonial Zimbabwe. Our discussion continues to explore the hypothesis that Wesleyan Methodists' political activities were a continuation of John Wesley's teaching on politics.

As early as 1892 Rev. I. Shimmin wrote, “My relationships with the company (BSAC) are most cordial and I always find its officials willing to meet me in every possible way” (National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (NAZ) (SH 1/1) The Mashonaland Mission, 1892). Both the imperialists and Wesleyan Methodist missionaries were from Britain. Although their missions were different, with imperialists aiming at the expansion of the British Empire and missionaries eyeing expansion of God's kingdom, the mission field was the same. Conflict of interest was inevitable. The quotation shows that at that time they worked hand in glove to create a new country in Zimbabwe on the basis of British values.

In 1922, white settlers were given an opportunity to decide on the way forward in terms of managing the country's affairs. Wesleyan Methodists had this to say,

Several things have combined to make the year 1922 a memorable one in the experience of this District. The European people of Southern Rhodesia were called upon to make the most momentous choice in their history, and decided, by a large majority, to reject the offers made to them by the Union Government, and to take the management of their affairs into their own hands, feeling that responsible government, at all events at present, gave them the greatest scope for their energies, and the greatest promise for their future welfare. As a church we feel that we have a great responsibility to both the white and the native populations at this critical time, to keep the highest ideals of government, of even justice, and of righteousness before them (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24), Rhodesia District report, 11 January, 1922).

How can we comprehend this from a race relationships perspective? Offers made by the Union government were to white settlers only. The attitude was that black Zimbabweans had no share in the whole scenario. At that point Wesleyan Methodists made it clear that they desired groups, whites and blacks, to be treated with justice. In that sense they were in line with John Wesley's teaching on race relationships. What the church was not aware of was the fact that worse was yet to come.

Following their desire to make a positive contribution to race relationships in Zimbabwe, Wesleyan Methodists inquired on how they could co-operate with the



League of Nations? They wrote,

The Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Rhodesia declares that it is in full sympathy with the aims of the League of Nations, and promises to do what it can to forward its great and beneficent purpose. The Synod instructs its Secretary to inform the Committee of the League of Nations Union that it is desirous of being informed of the Union's operations relating to the rights of Indigenous Natives (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24), Synod Minutes, 17 January, 1923).

Signals had already shown that white settlers were not interested in observing local Zimbabweans' rights. The church felt that it would bring the issue of observing blacks' rights to the attention of white settlers. In spite of all efforts made, Wesleyan Methodists failed to compel whites to change their attitudes towards blacks. The church continued to propose ways in which white settlers would engage blacks positively. In 1924 Wesleyan Methodists presented a request to the Missionary Conference, an ecumenical missionary conference which dealt with missionaries' interests in the country. The request was,

This Synod requests the Missionary Conference to make representation to the Government urging that greater opportunities to secure positions of work in the Government service be offered to students trained in our Missionary Educational Establishments" (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24), Synod Minutes, 9 January, 1924).

The church felt that they were doing a very commendable job of producing employable graduates through their institutions. Such graduates were to be accorded due priority as civil servants in the settler government.

In the same year, 1924, Wesleyan Methodists discussed a contentious representation of blacks in the Rhodesian Parliament. They encouraged their white counterparts,

This Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church urges upon the Government the desirability of providing some means whereby the Native people of this Territory will be directly represented in the Rhodesian Parliament. It suggests that on the lines of the Kenya settlement there should be at least two European representatives nominated by the Imperial Government to represent them, (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 9 January, 1924).

The church was right in calling for direct representation of blacks in parliament. They



fell short in their definition of direct representation. How could British nominated white settlers represent blacks directly? In situations where white settler interests clashed with those of blacks, it was obvious that white settler interests would carry the day. Here the church viewed blacks as incapable of representing themselves in parliament; hence they called for a paternalistic arrangement. If their earlier claim of raising graduates capable of taking any civil employment was something to go by, why would they call for a paternalistic arrangement? Blood was thicker than water here; Wesleyan Methodist missionaries could not imagine a situation whereby blacks would be part of the legislators enacting laws which would govern them. What they should have done was to argue for blacks to be involved actively in parliamentary affairs.

Another significant development in 1924 was that the imperial government in Britain granted self-government to Southern Rhodesia (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24) Wesleyan Methodist Church annual report, 9 January, 1924). That brought about joys and fears among Wesleyan Methodists. They were used to dealing with the British government. The new order meant that they had to find their rightful place and niche. In the new order there were both opportunities and threats for the church. Wesleyan Methodist missionaries were consoled by the presence of government officials at the Missionary Conferences as a sign of good will and co-operation. The new order demanded that the church be abreast with any new legislation and make a positive contribution. On the land issue, which was discussed above, Wesleyan Methodists were supportive to settler government legislation initially. They took it to be their responsibility to partner government in moulding a young nation.

Race relationship issues were also at play within the church. Black Wesleyan Methodists, either clergy or lay leaders were regarded as inexperienced and incapable of taking positions of great responsibility. The whites' cultural assumption was challenged by the Kwenda Quarterly meeting in 1936. They asserted,

This Quarterly Meeting believes that the time has come when more confidence should be placed in the African People in the Government of their own Church, and that step by step, under the guidance of the European Fathers, those in office should be allowed to take the responsibilities more fully. In this way it is felt that the work will go forward as the various workers understand their work and their various relationships with other workers in the Church (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (36) Synod minutes, 14 January, 1936).

The call for self examination in terms of race relationships in the Wesleyan Methodist Church was fitting. It came at a time when the church was challenging the government to abandon its separatist and discriminatory policies. Wesleyan Methodists had to put their house in order first since they practised racism and paternalism in all spheres of leadership in the church. The call fell on deaf ears as Wesleyan Methodist missionaries continued to employ paternalistic attitudes towards blacks.

In 1941 Rev. Herbert Carter, who was a progressive District Chairman, openly opposed the Prime Minister in Synod as he said,

I must express here a difference of opinion with the Hon. The Prime Minister who has stated that he will not approve of the entry into Rhodesian politics of Africans until there is a much greater number of intelligent natives with the capacity for politics. One learns to swim in water, and the natives of the country will become politically competent (as they must) by being given such political or pre political responsibilities in Native Councils and Boards of Management as they are able to carry. There is not much hope for them as long as all the political, governing and industrial power is in the hands of the white race. Some measure of local self-government might well be the prelude to the inevitable co-partnership between white and black (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (41) Chairman's Address, 8 January, 1941).

The church was speaking out. It was at a time when government was intensifying the implementation of discriminatory policies. There were more voices calling for active participation by blacks in the political activities of the nation. Important to note is the strong assertion that if white politicians demanded a distinctive level of political maturity among blacks, a platform was needed for blacks to start exercising political



responsibilities. However Carter still maintained that black politicians were to display political competence. The suggested avenue would ensure that blacks were groomed towards the desired level of political competence. Monopolising political activities as a preserve for whites was a major cause of restlessness among blacks.

Rev. Carter went on to say,

If we fight the idea of German racial dominance in Europe we must not continue to preach and practise unending British racial dominance in Africa. The powers of Government belong to the governed on a true democratic principle. The real Battle for Africa is not being fought against German Nazism and Italian Fascism but in the minds of white and native races in British controlled Africa against racial prejudice and selfish injustices (WMA MH, Chairman's Address, 8 January, 1941).

For Carter racial dominance was immoral regardless of who perpetrated it, which was in line with Wesley's teaching on politics. It was unreasonable for the British to fight German racism in Europe vehemently while on the other hand enforcing British racial dominance in Africa. He pointed out correctly that powers of government belonged to those governed, in that sense to Africans as well. By denying blacks in Zimbabwe their right to powers of government the colonial government forfeited its right to exist. Africans were recruited to fight Germans in support of the British. That battle was not as important as the mental battle against British racial discrimination and severe injustices.

Wesleyan Methodists were challenged to take a firm stance against racial discrimination. If the situation was not addressed accordingly, it would degenerate into civil war. Rev. Carter put it as follows;

All Government, even good Government, and most industrial concerns, need injections of Christian principles, and the serum must be prepared. Economic injustice, with resultant poverty and dissatisfaction, leads straight to revolutions and wars (WMA MH, Chairman's Address, 8 January, 1941).

The call for the church's active participation against racial discrimination was moving from one of persuasion to demand. Some of the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries, like Carter, were beginning to lose their patience towards the colonial government's

determined pursuit of racial discrimination and the marginalisation of blacks. Carter drove his point home. What was required was a theological framework for practical ways of engaging politicians on race relationships in Zimbabwe. Previously Wesleyan Methodist missionaries had used their experience in Britain in addressing challenging situations. The colonial government was autonomous from Britain so Wesleyan Methodists missionaries needed new strategies to engage on race relationships.

The race relationship issues continued to take centre stage in Wesleyan Methodist debates in 1945 with African representation in parliament stealing the show. In an address to Synod the District Chairman emphasised,

The second matter is that of African representation in Parliament. We rejoice that this has now become practical politics – a far cry from the time when a plan for this representation was presented to the Bledisloe Commission (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (45) Chairman's address to representative session of Synod, 11 January, 1945).

The chairman applauded government for agreeing to implement the proposal to have blacks representing fellow blacks in parliament. That was a milestone in Zimbabwean history. In rejoicing on that matter it showed how much Wesleyan Methodists were convinced that Africans were ready to comprehend and tackle political issues. For the church that move was a positive step in addressing the race relationship issue. Legislation was pivotal to the fight against all forms of racial discrimination. With blacks as part of the legislators, the church looked forward to a day when some of the discriminatory laws would be repealed.

However, the chairman was quick to point out the political guile of white politicians, as he warned Wesleyan Methodists against accepting the move naively. He continued to say,

We are however perturbed and disappointed with two aspects of the proposals that have been made. Judging the business on principle and not as politicians it is our view, (1) that nomination by Europeans and election by Europeans will not be deemed satisfactory and fair. There must be some place for African

choice from the beginning, even though it is far removed from universal franchise and a ballot vote which are certainly not feasible at present (WMA MH, Chairman's address to representative session of Synod, 11 January, 1945).

There were reasons for the church to be perturbed. The colonialists in Zimbabwe were not going to give blacks their political rights on a silver plate. They were not prepared even to share power with blacks. Nomination and election by whites would ensure that the whites' interests continued to dictate the affairs of the country. There was no way for independent African thinkers to be allowed into the political arena. Only those blacks who were deemed to be dancing to the tune of the whites would be nominated and elected into parliament. That was not acceptable and the church was right in challenging it. Every group of people have a God given potential and right to determine their destiny. Calling for total involvement of Africans in the political life of the country was Christian and would afford them justice which they had been denied for decades.

The other concern raised by the chairman concerned the common voters' roll. He lamented,

The indication of a tendency to remove all African voters from the common roll, or at least to admit no more after the special arrangements for mass representation have been made, are very unacceptable. There are many Africans who by Education, intelligence and service to the country have earned the right to be reckoned as full citizens of the country and this include the right to vote with other citizens ... (WMA MH, Chairman's address to representative session of Synod, 11 January, 1945).

The quotation shows that Wesleyan Methodists were convinced, well ahead of politicians that some blacks had matured to such a level that they were capable of handling political issues. Such an argument would persuade the white politicians to consider the matter from the church's perspective. While the church appeared to champion the cause of the Africans, it may be argued that they were demonstrating that they had done their job meticulously. The African who had once been referred to as uncultured, without a religion and uncivilised was now ready for co-option into the modern community. We should not be quick to conclude that the church acted for the

good of black Zimbabweans. The situation was becoming unbearable by each day and the church might have seen that the best option was to implement the policy of adaptation as quickly as possible. The policy would soften blacks' attitudes towards whites which were reaching alarming levels. On the other hand white politicians may have viewed a quick employment of the policy as a threat to the white community. Whites were in the minority and their politicians saw their security in separate development, marginalisation and discrimination.

By 1950 African nationalism was becoming a major force to reckon with in Zimbabwe as a result of activities of the African National Congress which was led by Joshua Nkomo, a Wesleyan Methodist local preacher. Peadar (1984:94) pointed out that the resurgence affected the Methodist churches to which many nationalist leaders belonged. Methodism in Zimbabwe fed the nationalist movement in the same way Presbyterianism did in Malawi (Weller & Linden 1984:208). When the church realised how grave the race relationships issue was for the nation, they decided to tackle it on two fronts; within the church and in the community at large. In order for such a task to be accomplished a sound theological declaration was needed to set parameters for action. In 1951 the Wesleyan Methodist Synod made a declaration on race relationships, (National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (NAZ) (MET 1/1/5) Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on 'race relationships', 1951). It is necessary to examine the declaration since it became the spring board from which the church began engaging government on race relationships.

The preamble of the declaration stated that church was making known its mind on the all important subject of relationships between people of different racial origin which composed the population of the colony. It asserted the fundamental characteristic of the matter as follows:

In the first place we would say that in our view what is loosely called the 'colour' or the 'Native' problem is fundamentally a matter of human relationships in a deeper and wider sense. The attitudes which lead to

misunderstandings and ill-feeling do not relate only to people of differing racial origin and varieties of pigmentation: they become operative within all the groups which make up our multi-racial society. The problem is human before it is racial (NAZ, Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on 'race relationships', 1951).

Here the church put the race relationships challenge into proper perspective. The whole situation was to be considered from another dimension, a clear and uncorrupted understanding of humanity. Such an understanding would lead to positive race relationships. The church then declared emphatically that humanity is one. Two arguments were used to show that humanity is one. First, they used the United Nations' *Declaration on Human Rights*. They said,

... there is one human race, and to humanity belongs a universal and abiding dignity. Fundamentally and inherently all men have undifferentiated possibilities, capacities, needs and rights. The U.N.O. Declaration of Human rights and essential freedoms cannot be successfully challenged in principle. The principle does not become invalid through the fact that in the human race there are many stages of attainment, or the further fact that for a variety of reasons (the principal of which is the absence of world contacts until modern days) the African people are generally speaking, backward (NAZ, Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on 'race relationships', 1951).

Wesleyan Methodists started by arguing from the political domain. White politicians in Zimbabwe could not succeed in invalidating principles raised in the United Nations' *Declaration of Human Rights*. These were developed and declared by their fellow politicians. On the basis of that declaration, the church challenged the colonial government to work towards positive race relationships, through allowing justice to flow like a river and observing blacks' rights.

Second, the church used principles from the Christian faith to ascertain that humanity is one. Here there is need to quote the whole section as it is in the declaration. One point leads to another and fragmenting it may result in missing the gist of the matter. The section stated that,

FROM THE CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW the issue is quite clear.

(a) The creation of mankind in the image of God who 'made (out) of one

(substance) every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth'. God the creator is the Father of all and there is no distinction of persons in His sight.

(b) The salvation of any through our Lord Jesus Christ inescapably implies the salvation of all on the same terms of faith in Him. There is but one Saviour and Lord. In view of the majesty of that truth, human differentiations are of no account in a Christian Church or a Christian Society.

(c) The task of the Christian Church is to raise every creature to his highest: to present every man perfect in Christ. It is our firm faith that the power of the Gospel is sufficient for this immeasurable task and is even now delivering believers 'out of the power of darkness and translating us (without distinction) into the Kingdom of the Son of His love.'

(d) We do not find any justification in the Bible or in the history of mankind for the doctrine of white or any other racial dominance, or lasting superiority. These are not Christian principles, nor do they agree with a proper attitude of humanity before Almighty God. The possession of strength and ability lead, not to rule, but to service.

(e) Christian people in the light of the foregoing have as immediate duties the responsibility to examine their own conscience, amend their own attitudes and practices; and further to examine on behalf of the weak and underprivileged the legislation which discriminates against them, with the hardships which are inflicted upon them. Acceptance of Christian principles must issue in Christian action (NAZ, Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on 'race relationships', 1951).

What a turning point for the church! That was what they should have done from the beginning of mission work in Zimbabwe. The major question for this study is why such a radical shift from the usual stance? The statement was drawn by two committees: the Temperance and Social Welfare Committee which comprised of nine whites and three Africans ministers, and the African Temperance Committee which was composed of nine Africans ministers (The Methodist Church of Southern Rhodesia Handbook, 1951:4). Rev. T.D. Samkange, a progressive minister was a member of both committees. It was through the efforts of progressive ministers, both whites and Africans that such a statement was drawn. The church accepted the statement officially but failed to implement it because most of white ministers were against it. In all fairness the mission of the church ought to be based on Christian principles. The *Declaration* was circulated widely, even among politicians. In that way the church was calling for corrective legislation and treatment towards blacks in Zimbabwe. The declaration was also introspective, in that it aimed at challenging the



same church to review their attitudes towards blacks. The significant question was, how could white Wesleyan Methodists claim to represent Christ in their mission endeavours and at the same time view blacks as second class citizens? The declaration brought on track Wesleyan Methodists who repented from racial discrimination. Racial discrimination derailed the church from its God-given mandate, which was to evangelise all nations without any prejudice. The declaration was congruent with John Wesley's teaching on politics, which was evangelical.

The *Declaration* went on to articulate realisation of potential exhibited by Zimbabwean blacks in all spheres of life. The church noted that,

Great changes have taken place in the Africans, from the timid and subservient humility and reverential courtesy of earlier days to an independence of spirit, frequently difficult and discourteous, which marks modern contacts. These are changes in African conceptions which accompany realisation of personality and human worth. The contacts which have occasioned the change are not all missionary. Contacts in employment and increasing knowledge of the world are among the major contacts. If education leads to an idea that, for the present, an educated African can find more congenial and remunerative employment than manual labour with the concomitant conditions of low pay and inadequate accommodation and amenities, in this he is not only following the white races, but is right in that the country needs educated service as well as physical labour (NAZ, Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on 'race relationships', 1951).

Wesleyan Methodists noted correctly that the Africans they were now dealing with were different from those of an earlier period. The contemporary African matched his white colleagues in many ways. Black Zimbabweans had learnt and mastered the means to achieve their ambitions. They used what they learnt from their oppressors to respond to the exploitative tendencies of whites. The church realised that and were quick to point at it. Progress made by blacks in mastering modern idiosyncrasies was a result of contacts with various whites in employment, influence from education and experiences from other parts of the world. The inclusion of a defence against viewing missionary contact as the only reason for the awakening of blacks suggests that there was bad blood between missionaries and white politicians in Zimbabwe. White politicians and some non-politicians regarded missionaries who were championing



the African cause as traitors. They had collaborated in creating a European type nation in the new colony which was based on British supremacy. On the other hand black Zimbabweans, including Wesleyan Methodists, seized every opportunity that came their way and maximised missionary solidarity to achieve their goals. The church's attitude towards blacks was now positive and racial discrimination had to give way to impartiality.

Another area that was an important section of the *Declaration* dealt with factual relationships. The section was divided into two categories; general and personal. The general category dealt with what happened in the public arena like economic, political and social fields. The church made it clear that economic, political and social status received great publicity. In that publicity two things had to be distinguished, which were discrimination and discrimination against? The declaration asserted that, “‘Discrimination' may be necessary, protective and helpful, but 'Discrimination against' on the grounds of race alone is unchristian, and also against the best interests of the state” (NAZ, Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on ‘race relationships’, 1951). Surely discrimination against is unnecessary in whatsoever circumstance. Christian principles deny exercising discrimination against anyone. Suggesting that 'discrimination against' on the basis of race alone was not Christian presumed that under certain circumstances it was permissible. That was an error.

Considering that black Zimbabweans had advanced tremendously differences between them and whites had become less and of decreased significance. The *Declaration* demanded that, “Restrictions and discrimination (in the public and private sectors) therefore should disappear progressively and as rapidly as possible” (NAZ, Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on ‘race relationships’, 1951). They had no place in a nation that claimed to be Christian, democratic and modern. From a Christian point of view whites were supposed to treat blacks in the way they preferred blacks to treat them. Wesleyan Methodists had

become aware of the fact that if the race relationships issue was not addressed amicably whatever was done for Africans by whites would be treated with suspicion. Black Zimbabweans were fed up of being used for white aims and advantages. The church pointed out that suspicion had become a dominating factor among blacks and could be eradicated through mutual trust between the races. What had resulted from the prevailing race relationships was the existence of two camps, which was dangerous and was leading to mutual antagonism. The declaration went on to claim that,

We would express the view that the present relationship is interpreted by Africans as a denial of his rights and a withholding of the opportunities for his advancement and his enjoyment. The prohibitions with regard to occupation of places for residence and business, the denial of admission to cinemas and hotels: the inconveniences which relate to travelling are all resented and many of them could be and should be rendered less obnoxious (NAZ, Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on 'race relationships', 1951).

Here the church interpreted correctly the plight of Africans. Blacks' rights were violated grossly in their day to day lives. The injustices were not called for and had to go. It was sad for blacks to be treated as second class citizens in their motherland. Denying Africans access to European designated areas was obnoxious, an insult and scandalous. The church was moderate when they said it was to be taken as less obnoxious.

The personal category zeroed in on personal relationships among people. Wesleyan Methodists insisted that personal relationships were paramount and called upon all people, regardless of race to work towards betterment of those relationships. They observed that,

Habitual discourtesy and lack of human consideration are fruitful causes of difficulty and indeed of dislike mounting to hate. Wisdom would direct us to cultivate helpfully the best feelings in Africans: if we do not, all will in the end suffer from the worst (NAZ, Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on 'race relationships', 1951).

Race relationships sponsored by the colonial government encouraged whites to be

inhuman. They were regarded as civilised yet their attitudes and actions towards blacks were negative and provocative. Instead of positive co-existence with blacks, they employed every means they could to push blacks to the peripheries of Zimbabwean society. That unveiled the colonialists' barbaric plundering of African worthiness and pride. Blacks responded to that attitude with matching dislike and hatred towards whites. The church warned whites that if they did not correct their negative attitudes towards blacks, they were going to suffer the wrath of the same blacks. What the church feared was a change of roles with the victims turning tables against their oppressors. So what was proposed was a result of both the fear of God and that of African resistance.

Another aspect of personal relationships dealt with in the *Declaration* was whites' condescending attitude towards blacks. It was clarified that, "Attitudes of patronage and condescension arising from feelings of superiority are resented not only by the intelligentsia but by ordinary people, especially employed people" (NAZ, Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on 'race relationships', 1951). Attitudes of patronage were meant to instil a sense of inferiority complex and dependence in Africans. That would ensure the superiority of whites. Wesleyan Methodists discerned a high level of abhorrence and resentment among blacks. Such attitudes were supposed to be ameliorated or done away with completely. They promoted strained race relationships.

The final section of the *Declaration* tackled issues related to the state in view of race relationships. Issues presented in that section were based on how blacks perceived government action and legislation. It seems the church was now more concerned with blacks than whites. It could have been due to their desire to see blacks being drawn to the hub rather than pushed to the periphery of society. We should remember always that the church had whites at heart and feared that the situation might deteriorate to levels where blacks would take the law into their hands and revenge. Such a situation would be catastrophic for the white community.

The preamble to the section stipulated, “The more advanced Africans regard Government action and legislation as the measure of White attitude to themselves and their fellow” (NAZ Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on ‘race relationships’, 1951). The church was concerned with how black Zimbabweans comprehended, interpreted and reacted to government action and legislation. That had a ripple effect on both blacks and whites. So the *Declaration* had to sound warning bells to whites and give direction to blacks. The section then went on to specify what Wesleyan Methodists stood for and called upon government officials to observe,

- (a) Education. The demand for universal primary education, and adequate higher educational facilities, we regard as entirely right and reasonable.
- (b) Economic position. Low wages, bad housing, lack of opportunities for advance to responsible positions, are still fruitful causes of dissatisfaction and bad feeling, but it is recognised that the country is awakening to the facts.
- (c) Admission to professions. The more highly educated Africans look for medical and other professional training, and are distressed at the difficulties which confront them and the inadequacy of the present facilities. They feel that they are needed for the good of the African people and are not without justifiable personal ambitions. The Methodist Church shares their view in this matter.
- (d) Land. The areas set aside for Africans' use are considered to be inadequate for human and stock requirements. Under all other complaints, this persists as a major factor. The de-stocking proceedings and rigid limitation under present legislation are deeply resented as unfair in relation to the land areas of the Colony. The so-called necessities of the position will not be appreciated and accepted while large tracts are virtually unused.
- (e) Franchise and Citizenship. While daily human requirements, material and immaterial, are of first importance, no awakening people are indifferent to national status and democratic disabilities. The new high requirements for franchise are regarded as designed to prevent Africans becoming parliamentary voters, and should be re-considered. The establishment of Municipal Advisory Boards is regarded as a poor substitute for a responsible share in Local Government. The Church agrees heartily with the civilised African who feels that the time has come for the emancipation from the restrictions which apply to Africans in the mass. The unpleasant word 'frustration' will be heard constantly until the emancipation is effected. Freedom which is earned is a right and not a privilege.
- (f) Great resentment is occasioned by the attitude to Africans expressed in certain police action such as long detention for, and methods of, examination

on suspicion: restricted diet, and corporal punishment in gaols and places of detention. The operations of the multiple pass laws render inoffensive Africans liable to examination, detention and fines, or imprisonment when unable to pay.

(g) These specific matters are among the practical tests by which the 'Partnership' policy is being measured and will be measured. The advance from the doctrine of trusteeship to that of partnership is welcomed as a real step in the right direction. The Church however desires to stress the necessity for implementing the policy in sincere and practical ways. Real co-operation in the Government of the country (both central and local) and in all worth-while enterprises is called for by justice and wisdom. Without the hope and incentive which real sharing offers, there is no prospect of real peace or real prosperity (NAZ Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on 'race relationships', 1951).

The section was very crucial for Wesleyan Methodists in that it provided a framework within which they could address race relationship issues. It spelt out what the church stood for and advocated as far as racial discrimination was concerned. Segregation against blacks was disparaged and viewed as detrimental to the development of a democratic nation. The section called for a deliberate move to recognise Africans' intelligence and ability already displayed in a number of fields. The church had realised that continuing to deny blacks opportunities in whatever sphere of life was suicidal. They encouraged implementation of the much talked about partnership policy. One of the problems with the partnership policy which the church did not take seriously was the fact that the parameters of the policy were drawn by whites and were therefore one sided. However, the declaration raised most of the important question on the race relationships dilemma the country was facing. It also delineated specific items which Wesleyan Methodists expected politicians and all influential members in communities to address. The declaration was a positive step taken by the church in redressing the race relationship imbalances.

Wesleyan Methodists were also concerned with racial discrimination within the church. Some of the politicians were Wesleyan Methodists and most whites, Methodists included practised discrimination against blacks at will. Earlier on, in the 1920s, Wesleyan missionaries joined others in supporting colonialists to create a new

nation in Zimbabwe. The church collaborated in separate development by implementing separate mission work; European and African mission work. Wesleyan missionaries discriminated against blacks in Zimbabwe from the inception of mission work. Individual missionaries had challenged that position but their lone voices were not loud enough to bother the church. 1951 was a milestone in the Wesleyan Methodist Church's mission focus in relationship to racial discrimination against blacks in Zimbabwe. After drawing up the declaration on race relationships, the church had to come up with a strategy for tackling the issues from within. A statement on race relations was drawn, with a preamble similar to that of the declaration. The statement was divided into four sections dealing with Christian principles on race, a word to Christian Europeans, a word to Christian Africans and a word to both African and Europeans alike. We shall look at each of the sections in turn.

There were four Christian principles concerning race which Wesleyan Methodists reaffirmed as Christian convictions to be upheld by every member of the church. The principles were as follows:

1. God has made from one stock 'every nation of men for to dwell on the face of the earth'.
2. God is, therefore, the Father of all men. With him there is no favoured nation: He loves and cares for all men and seeks to raise them to the full stature of Christian manhood.
3. To that end He sent His Son Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the World.
4. The Christian Church was established by Our Lord to carry on the work begun by Him. Within this community, first of all, the problem of race must be faced and solved. We Christians must put our own house in order before we attempt to pass judgement upon the world at large, (National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (NAZ) (MET1/1/6) Statements, Statement on race relations, 1951).

The principles were clear; there is one God, the creator of the human race. Therefore, there was and will be no race that is superior to others before God. The same was to obtain in daily life. Christians had the obligation to see that the principle was observed, beginning from within. God's love, care and protection were to be enjoyed



by all regardless of race, colour or social status. Since Jesus died for all and God's redemptive grace was sufficient for everyone there was no acceptable reason for white Wesleyan Methodists to discriminate against blacks. All who accepted Jesus as their saviour were children of God, whether black, white or coloured. There was no reason for perpetuating racial discrimination against blacks, first within the church and then in community. Christians were supposed to confront and solve the race relationships problem. They were called upon to tackle the problem directly and lead the way. The challenge was for the church to be introspective regarding racial discrimination against blacks. This was a step in the right direction. How members seized and utilised the opportunity was another thing.

The section on advice to white Wesleyan Methodists called each one to examine them critically if the race relationships challenge was to be resolved amicably. It asserted that,

In the task of reconciliation, each group has its own contribution to make. The Christian European will recognise frankly the tendency of all men to allow their judgements to be coloured by their own racial heritage. There he will endeavour to be scrupulously fair in his judgements at all times. He will apply no standard of judgement to members of another race that he would not apply to those of his own (NAZ, Statements, Statement on race relations, 1951).

The church realised that there was something terribly wrong in race relationships within and beyond itself. Blacks and whites did not view one another dispassionately. There was need for reconciliation and whites had no alternative but to make their contribution to the process. In their contribution, whites were called upon to guard against their racial heritage. White racial heritage was dominating race relationships both in the church and communities at large. If reconciliation was to be achieved the white community had to stop applying a segregative standard of judgements towards blacks, standards they would not apply to fellow whites. The golden principle called for here was, do unto others what you would like them to do unto you. The declaration on race relations discussed a few paragraphs above would help white Wesleyan Methodists to amend their attitudes toward blacks, thereby implementing



the golden principle.

The section went on to plead with whites,

He will seek to understand and to sympathize fully with the changing conditions of African society, and the consequent difficulties that obstruct progress.

His deep and abiding concern will be to assist in that progress, and, though there may be differences of opinion concerning the timeliness of each step, there can be no uncertainty about the goal. He will favour no course that hinders another's progress.

To that end he will endeavour to make personal and friendly contacts with Africans. He will be courteous at all times and will gladly acknowledge the changing social status of those to whom respect is due (NAZ, Statements, Statement on race relations, 1951).

The statement solicited understanding and compassion towards blacks. The order of the day was discrimination against and cohesion of blacks in fulfilling whites' ambitions. Christians were not supposed to behave in the same way. Whites, including Christians, expected blacks to develop in a particular direction. By the time the statement was drawn, Wesleyan Methodists still felt that the desired progress had not been attained. There were difficulties that hindered the intended progress referred to but not spelt out. They missed the mark because Africans were progressing well under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The manner in which they called for an end to racial discrimination against blacks was misinterpreted as obstacles to progress by whites. Another important exhortation to white Wesleyan Methodists was to take a deliberate step towards reconciliation through personal and friendly contacts with blacks. The call came at a time when white contacts with blacks in designated places, businesses and relationships were anathema. The same was experienced within the church, so the statement sought to correct it by exhorting white Christians to give due respect to their fellow black Christians first and then all blacks.

The statement then turned to black Christians,

The Christian African has no less important a contribution to make and one of no less difficulty. It will require that he will recognise honestly the immensity of the task and of the effort needed for accomplishment, and that he will rise

above unmerited suspicion of others who labour at his side in the same cause (NAZ Statements, Statement on race relations, 1951).

The church pointed out correctly that blacks had a critical contribution to make for reconciliation to be realised. However, to bundle all reactions to racial discrimination as unmerited suspicion was malicious and superfluous. If racial discrimination against blacks in Zimbabwe continued unabated they would be enslaved or moved out of their motherland. The church was supposed to give the blacks' position the respect it deserved and challenged government officials to desist from abetting whites in discriminating against blacks on whatever grounds. Both whites and blacks laboured side by side but not for the same cause. Whites laboured to perpetuate the exploitation and marginalisation of blacks, while blacks laboured to free themselves from the shackles of white superiority complex and racial discrimination.

The statement showed that the church was convinced that the contribution of blacks was pivotal in addressing the challenge before them. There was a need to raise and put African concerns into their proper context. The statement went on to challenge black Wesleyan Methodists,

The Christian African will also maintain a standard of unbiased and restrained judgement. He will learn to distinguish between inequalities that have been occasioned by unjust discrimination and those which spring unavoidably from the backwardness of his race. He will recognise gladly how much has already been done for his people in the brief period of recent history, both by private and public enterprise, and he will realise that future progress will depend, not so much on what is done for, as on what is done by his people. Progress can only be achieved by work well done and by faithful service. The Christian is judged by the quality of his work and service (NAZ. Statements, Statement on race relations, 1951).

The demand for blacks to distinguish between unjust discrimination and that which was based on the fact that they were backward was perplexing. It presumed that discrimination against blacks on the grounds of backwardness as compared to whites was justifiable. In that statement the church erred and digressed from John Wesley's teaching on politics. Christian principles, which were used in the declaration on race

relations, do not give room to any form of discrimination against anyone under whatever circumstance. They attempted to soften blacks and persuaded them to accept a certain level of discrimination against themselves. That did not work for the good of the church. On the question of appreciating what was done for blacks by whites in recent history, bad things outweighed the good ones. There was no reason for blacks to review their history gladly. What Africans lost through the process of colonialism, social values, family ties and natural beauty of the country, would not be recovered. The call for progress which was based on work done by people and not for people is what the church should have advocated from the inception of mission work in Zimbabwe. If we judge Wesleyan Methodists on the basis of the quality of work and service they had done up to the time of drawing the statement on race relations, they messed up and their work was below par. Their work was intertwined with that of colonialists, marked by high level collaboration. The section was supposed to provide black Wesleyan Methodists with practical steps to follow in addressing the race relationships challenge before them. It was an inadequate document in terms of giving blacks direction. It shows that the black voice was not yet given space in the church, yet the church had operated for more than half a century in the country.

The statement ended with an appeal to both whites and blacks. It would not be conclusive to leave whites and blacks separate in terms of addressing the race relationships challenge. Hence the statement was concluded,

To African and European alike the church would declare-  
We recognise that the task of building a society in which all races can live and work together in equity and peace is an intensely difficult one.

We believe that by God's Grace and in accordance with His Law of love it can be accomplished.

We believe that God has called our generation to demonstrate His power, first in our own lives, then in our homes, in our businesses, in the Church, and so throughout the whole land of Rhodesia.

This challenge is addressed in the first place to our own Methodist people. We are being measured by the canons of conduct which arise from our belief in God and from our fellowship in the Gospel. We, therefore, appeal to all Methodist people, African and European, to examine for themselves their own actions and attitudes in the light of this challenge, and to strive by God's Grace

to build up a Church of which it can be said, 'Ye are all one man in Christ Jesus' (NAZ Statements, Statement on race relations, 1951).

The task of building an equitable and peaceful society was a mammoth endeavour because of the intransigent attitudes of many whites. The paternalism employed by whites in relation to blacks led to their false security and a resolute pursuance of freedom among Africans. Faced with a situation where neither of the parties was prepared to compromise, the church realised that only God's grace and love would unwind the complexity of the relationships. That had to saturate the church first and then the communities. The assumption of the church was that once individual Christians started to use God's grace and love in relating to people of another race, it would permeate the whole country sooner than later. The last paragraph reminded Wesleyan Methodists and other Christians of their obligation to be the light of the world. It challenged them to examine their attitudes and actions towards people of another race in the light of God's grace and love. That was evangelical and sounded like John Wesley speaking.

It is important to note that while Synod adopted the statement and encouraged Wesleyan Methodists to implement it, most retrogressive missionaries did not agree with it. The development threw the church into a state of tension between the conservative and retrogressive missionaries on one hand and the progressive missionaries and African leaders on the other. African members, both clergy and laity, were becoming frustrated and impatient with the lack of direction and none implementation of the statement by Synod. The situation was worsened by the appointment of Rev Whitfield Foy, a more progressive missionary to a European circuit in Harare in 1956 (The Methodist Church of Southern Rhodesia Handbook 1956:3). His sympathy and advocacy for the African cause were not accepted by white lay leaders in the circuit so they called for his transfer (Peaden, 1984:95). The claim and demand made by the white lay leaders had ripple effects on the African circuit in Harare where the white Superintendent treated blacks in an inhuman manner. The African lay leaders called for the transfer of their Superintendent.

The matter was finally resolved by the 1960 Synod which was characterised by fierce debate as both white and African voices were heard. Synod ended up transferring both ministers (Peaden, 1984:95). Finally the African voice was heard and implemented. The decision by the same Synod to appoint a white minister (Rev. David Kynaston) under an African Superintendent (Rev. Jacob Tabaziva) was a symbol of African victory (The Methodist in Southern Rhodesia 1961:13).

Now that the Wesleyan Methodist teaching on race relationships was clarified through the statement on racism, the thesis explores how the new position redirected their attitudes and actions. The refocused position was no longer congruent with government policies but it was never implemented because retrogressive missionaries controlled the church. The church and state were supposed to head towards collision. That never materialised because of the retrogressive stance of the church leaders. On the other hand progressive Wesleyan Methodists both missionaries and African ministers, like Rev. T.D. Samkange, began civic education among blacks and encouraged all who qualified to register as voters. Those who did not qualify but were willing to register were assisted in various ways. Some missionaries who had the Africans at heart started to encourage political discussions and activities on mission farms and educational institutions. That resulted in wide spread political activities in the country to which the colonial government responded with indiscriminate arrests and detentions. In 1959 the Wesleyan Methodist Synod considered the issue of Africans registering as voters. They realised that there was a small number of qualified Africans who were registered and that registration through Native Commissioners was very unpopular with blacks (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA), Methodist House, (59) Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1959). Synod resolved to “... urge all church members who have the necessary qualification to enrol as voters so as to have their share in choosing of the country's leaders” (WMA MH Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1959). The church had taken it as their obligation to mobilise Africans for active participation in politics. The situation left

one wondering how the resolution was implemented with so many retrogressive missionaries among the church ranks. Only progressive leaders implemented the resolution.

The following year Synod received with joy a report on ecumenical action taken by church leaders against discriminatory legislation. It recorded, “This Synod confirms and upholds the action taken by the leaders of churches, including our own, in condemning certain aspects of recent legislation as being contrary to the accepted principles of British justice” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (60) Synod Minutes, 8 January, 1960). The church was right in encouraging a fight against exploitative legislation. The problem with their efforts was advocating principles of British justice which did not go well with the Africans. Synod went on to declare their intention, “We, therefore, urge the Government to withdraw the Preventive Detention Act, 1959 and to cause all political detainees to be released or brought for trial in open court” (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 8 January, 1960). The Act was intimidatory and inhuman so it had to be repealed. It aimed at separating African political leaders from their party members, thereby destabilising any meaningful political activities among blacks.

In the same year, 1960, Rev. T. A. Beetham, who was Africa Secretary in the Methodist Missionary Society in Britain visited and addressed the Zimbabwean Synod. In his address he raised pertinent questions on the race relationships issue. He inquired,

Is the country of the future going to be composed of two rigidly separated communities, both in town and in farming? Has the Preaching, the Fellowship, the Pastoral Witness, the Service to be organised by the Methodist Church through almost completely separate arms, growing even more separate as more African Ministers become available for African circuits and more African graduates staff Tegwani and Waddilove? Or are these aspects of witness to be directed by One Church to the Evangelism of a whole people? Evangelism to be European on the one hand and African on the other or is it to be Rhodesian? (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (60) Address to the representative session of Synod by the Rev. TA Beetham, Africa Secretary, Methodist Missionary Society, 9 January, 1960)



That was a wakeup call for the church to revisit their God-given mandate. Instead of carrying out their task according to Godly principles, Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe employed a segregative strategy which distorted the Christian message. Separate development in mission work, which had been the pride of missionaries operating in Zimbabwe, posed a serious threat for Christianity. The heresy preached and practised resulted in a divided church which was justified by unsound doctrine. The challenge from Rev. Beetham was directed towards what the church existed for - evangelism. Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe pretended as if there was evangelism for whites on one side and another one for blacks. Hence a call to review their service was made.

Beetham went on to exhort the church,

If that synthesis is to be the goal it may take a long time to reach, but unless the sights of the Church are set on that future, however much at present it lacks clear definition, and then present planning will only lead up a blind alley. This will militate against rather than help the ultimate goal, and the church will be discredited; what is much more important, the Christ who stands behind the Church will be discredited too (WMA MH, Address to the representative session of Synod by the Rev TA Beetham, Africa Secretary, Methodist Missionary Society, 9 January, 1960).

The goal of evangelism within a multiracial society is a synthesised community where racial differences enrich rather than hinder fellowship. Beetham was correct in pointing out that through separate development such a synthesis would take long to achieve. The church was too concerned with the present yet they needed to strategise for the future. Separate development discredited the missionaries, the church and Christ ultimately. In other words Beetham challenged white Wesleyan Methodists to consider how blacks felt about separate development within the church.

On the issue of separate development Banana (1996a:22) claimed that the practice led to the church having a double mandate instead of a single one. That left the church with a formidable task of fostering unity in fellowship among its white and African



members.

Another important exhortation to Wesleyan Methodists in 1960 was given by the District Chairman, who said,

Sometimes the Church is told that it ought not to concern itself with politics, though it is interesting how glad politicians are to quote Christian opinion which appears to favour their political party. While the Church ought not to become involved in party politics it has a right and a duty to speak of political and other affairs in the light of Christian principles and to point out to all people, and particularly to those in authority, the Christian attitude to questions of the hour. And there are severe important questions to be asked at this time” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (60) Chairman’s review, 8 January, 1960).

The Chairman's address aimed at accelerating Wesleyan Methodists' participation in political activities. For the first time the church spoke of its non-participation in party politics. That stance was influenced by the mushrooming of African political parties as a result of African nationalism which was sweeping across the African continent. The Chairman saw the church's political niche in the Zimbabwean challenge as providing direction through interpreting the situation from a Christian perspective and employing Christian principles to address the challenges. The Chairman’s address did not take into consideration the African ministers’ voices. He aimed at discouraging African Wesleyan Methodist ministers from participating and encouraging members to be involved in political parties yet white members were at liberty to participate. Progressive Wesleyan Methodists seized the opportunity and most of the courageous political leaders emerged.

The Chairman then turned to specific issues which needed action, one of which was,

Another subject of concern is the detention laws of Southern Rhodesia, against which there was so widely-based a protest at the time the Bills were laid before Parliament. Ought not this legislation to be repealed, since it runs counter to fundamental human rights? And ought not the detainees to be allowed to return to normal life and their present restrictions not be continued to become a focus of discontent in the land (WMA MH, Chairman’s review, 8 January, 1960)?

Such strong arguments led the church to formulate resolutions against discriminatory legislation which were circulated among members as well as the colonial government officials. Statements like this became a source of inspiration for detainees as they realised that they had some form of support from the church. On the other hand such statements led to restlessness among retrogressive missionaries and colonialists who had to grapple continuously with controlling political activities among blacks as well as churches' political influence on Africans. Progressive church leaders were calling for the removal of all discrimination against blacks in political activities. The colonial government was not yet prepared for such a move.

The Chairman ended his exhortation on race relationships with a crucial observation,

It is interesting to notice how time after time the Government suggests a forward move which the church has been urging for years. A recent example is the recommendation by the Select Committee now studying African use of land that Africans should be permitted to acquire freehold title of urban housing stands. It is true that this is to be limited to certain African townships but it is a welcome step forward and it is hoped the Government will implement it without delay. A man gains in self-respect when he has a home he can call his own and ownership gives him an incentive to play a responsible part in the life of the community. Many people cling firmly to the present segregation in residential areas but the logic of development of a multi-racial society is that people of any race should be able to buy freehold land wherever it is for sale and to exercise the local government vote which is associated with the payment of rates on such land (WMA MH, Chairman's review, 8 January, 1960).

Wesleyan Methodists noticed that the colonial government was always lagging behind the church in resolving problems related to political activities among blacks. That was right, the church, as the conscience of society, should lead the way rather than react to politicians' activities. An important observation was made in the review, owning a piece of land would bring back the lost pride among blacks. That would be enough motivation for them to be involved actively in the political affairs of the country. The church saw that as one of the ways through which blacks would be moved from the periphery to the centre of the nation. Black Wesleyan Methodists who were capable of acquiring freehold land jumped onto the wagon and their voices started to be heard in the political arena. However, that was not in line with the voices

of progressive church leaders who laboured for total eradication of racism and political oppression.

In 1961 Wesleyan Methodists concentrated their efforts in pushing for more black participation in the legislature. That was raised in a statement, “The Synod recognises the critical importance of early and substantial participation by Africans in the legislature” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (61) Synod Minutes, 12 January, 1961). According to the Synod the best way to address the issue of discriminatory legislation was to allow substantial and effective participation of blacks in law making. What they did not consider was the fact that the colonial system needed more attention before Africans were to participate. In pursuit of their appeal Wesleyan Methodists pleaded with influential people,

To this end it (Synod) strongly commends to Southern Rhodesian Government, and to all Methodists that - the necessary steps be taken to empower the delimitation Commission now sitting to delimit Constituencies on the basis of density of adult population and potential voting strength in the next five years (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 12 January, 1961).

The Synod was determined to redress race relationship imbalances once and for all but their efforts were misdirected as they did not address the real causes of racism. They no longer talked of blacks who qualified to register as voters, but all adult people who were potential voters. Wesleyan Methodists called for respecting blacks' dignity and voting rights. All Methodists, including white members who were active in politics, were implored to push for a new type of constituency which was inclusive but that was never realised. Only progressive ministers continued to provide morale support and encouragement for black members of the church who were involved in party politics. With such support an increase in black Wesleyan Methodists' involvement in politics was guaranteed.

The Chairman's review which guided the church in its endeavours was categorical,

The Church is active and vigilant in seeking the application of the principle that all people are equally children of God and have the right to live their lives to the full under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, exercising all those abilities

with which God has endowed them. The Church presses for basic human rights to be respected, such as the recognition of the equality of people before the law and the right of an accused man to open trial before an independent judiciary face to face with the accuser. It asserts the right of a man to be treated innocently until he is proved to be guilty and to the protection of his person and home from interference and intrusion for reasons other than the commission of non-political crime (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (61) Chairman's review, 11 January, 1961).

The above quotation became the foundation of the church's campaign against the violation of basic human rights in Zimbabwe. Activities to assist detainees, their families and restricted black politicians were undertaken inspired by the above quotation. In such activities the progressive ministers were perpetuating the example of John Wesley's teaching on liberty. The quotation referred to people of all races but by that time it was more meaningful to blacks than whites. It focused more specifically on issues of detention without trial, restrictions of black political leaders, intimidation and all suppressive strategies used by colonialists to coerce Africans into submission.

The Chairman's review also asserted,

The Church has not only the right but duty to speak on social and political matters when Christian principles are being ignored but it is not the business of the Church to engage in party politics. The Churches are not to be lackeys of political parties to judge which party is the most acceptable and to back that one. There are things which are acceptable and things which are not acceptable in the policies of all parties (WMA MH, Chairman's review, 11 January, 1961).

The quotation suggested that speaking on political and social issues was conditional, when there was a violation of Christian principles. Wesleyan Methodist missionaries regarded the country as Christian, not realising that the struggle against the colonialists was both political and religious. Some African nationalists advocated that the white man's political and religious systems were responsible for the Africans' misery. Insistence on being non-partisan to political parties showed that the church was beginning to face challenges of open support of certain political parties among its ranks.

In spite of all calls from progressive church leaders, including some Wesleyan Methodists, to redress the race relationships challenge, the colonial government remained adamant. On the other hand Africans' zeal for political emancipation continued to escalate. The government reacted to Africans' political enthusiasm with intensifying detentions and restrictions. Wesleyan Methodists sent communication to government officials demanding positive action. They wrote, "The Synod of the Methodist Church urges the Government to release, without delay, all restrictees held at Gokwe, these men have suffered detention or restriction for nearly three years without ever having been brought to trial" (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (62) Synod Minutes, 7 January, 1962). Here the church was taking the government to task. In addition to that call, the church encouraged government to enact legislation that made racial discrimination in public places illegal (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (63) Synod Minutes, 14 January, 1963). The church also argued that no progress would be made through the suppression of political parties.

In 1963 the church made an important observation in the political field, the banning of nationalistic political parties. The colonial government had come up with another form of racial discrimination against blacks. In order to perpetuate white dominance they enacted laws which rendered nationalistic political parties illegal. That was a new form of oppression. Progressive Wesleyan Methodists from various parts of the country raised alarm bells. From Waddilove Circuit calls were made for the church to inform government that its action in banning Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) was deplorable (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (63) Christian Citizenship Committee Minutes, 13 January, 1963). From Zvishavane members sent a recommendation to Synod which was radical. They requested the church to demand that government consider the following,

1. We believe that a party similar in aims to the now banned ZAPU must be allowed to come into being.
2. We believe that the leaders of the now banned ZAPU must be allowed to

take part in political activities, unless they are proved guilty by court of law of having broken the law of the country, in which case they should pay the penalty and then be allowed all the rights of normal citizens.

3. We believe that there is no likelihood of peace and prosperity in this country until people of all political parties are allowed and prepared to thrash out their differences in a new constitutional Conference, under the Chairmanship of a British Minister (WMA MH, Christian Citizenship Committee Minutes, 13 January, 1963).

Synod did not approve the recommendation because of the retrogressive stance of most missionaries. However, the recommendation showed that the political teaching of the church had permeated various communities. Church members, even at community level, regarded the national political concern as their obligation. From such recommendations Wesleyan Methodists warned the government that, “No progress will be made by the suppression of political parties” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (63) Chairman’s review, 14 January, 1963). The move fuelled Africans’ hatred towards the colonial government and the white race in the country. That strategy proved to be disastrous as one political party would be formed once another was banned. The organisation of a party was destroyed, but its aims and objectives continued to be cherished by its erstwhile members, hence their expression in the formation of another political party. What the church called for was, “Freedom of lawful political expression (which) must be accorded in any civilised state” (WMA MH, Chairman’s review, 14 January, 1963). The colonial state regarded itself as a civilised one but important traits of civilisation, like freedom of political expression, were missing.

Progressive Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe demanded observance and respect of personal liberty. They claimed,

The deprivation of the personal liberty of an individual, by imprisonment or otherwise is a matter for the courts and it is not to be left to a political decision on grounds of expediency. When a man has broken the law let him be charged and tried, so that not only is justice done but it is seen to be done. The time is long past for the present detainees either to be released or tried (WMA MH, Chairman’s review, 14 January, 1963).



That was said in the same understanding of personal liberty as it was taught by John Wesley. Progress and improvement in race relationships were dependent on how much personal liberty was respected. Leaving matters of personal liberty in the hands of politicians was suicidal for the nation. It led to the mushrooming of political prisons which were over populated with political detainees. Hence the church pushed for their release or trial for justice to be done and be seen that it has been done.

Another call made in same year was against use of intimidation against blacks,

Similarly, no progress will be made by the use of intimidation. The use of physical violence, or the threat of it, and of such things as petrol bombs is utterly to be condemned. So far from doing anything constructive in developing the political and social life of a nation, violence has the entirely opposite effect of hardening opinion and creating hatred and division, and all who claim to have any kind of influence should use it to the full to bring an end to this hooliganism (WMA MH, Chairman's review, 14 January, 1963).

The whites' strategy of intimidation which was implemented through physical violence, threats, detentions and restrictions yielded counter intimidation through such activities as petrol bombs. No democratic nation can be built on intimidation. The church was right when they appealed to anyone who had any form of influence to use it to bring the state sponsored hooliganism to a halt. The church was aware that the state had an obligation to preserve peace and manage the affairs of the nation. The church had a moral obligation to proclaim principles by which the state and its people had to live. The principles were not an invention of the church but revealed in the word of God.

Our Lord summed them up in the two great commandments, the first, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with thy entire mind' and the second, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' The outworking of these include freedom for people of all races to live in peace and quietness in the country in which they have chosen to live or in which they were born, freedom to worship according to their conscience, freedom to work and to prosper, and freedom to associate with their fellows. Man and nations neglect those principles at their peril, for it is God who has the last word and it is God who pronounces judgement and puts it into effect (WMA MH, Chairman's review, 14 January, 1963).



Four things were clear for the church. The first was that whatever happened, even in race relationships, was supposed to be evaluated through biblical principles. The second was that biblical principles governed life for people of all races and provided a platform for everyone to enjoy God-given freedom. The third crucial fact was that neglecting these principles resulted in gross inhuman activities which led to destruction. The fourth point was that God would judge all activities and relationships between races ultimately. Such teaching would inspire Wesleyan Methodists from all walks of life to fight against racial discrimination against blacks.

Progressive Wesleyan Methodists' teaching on politics and race relationships, in particular, stimulated blacks' involvement in political activities in spite of severe discrimination by whites. The church had to find a way of dealing with a new challenge, which was church members' participation in party politics. The challenge threatened fellowship among members as they started to expose symptoms of strained relationships based on political party affiliation. In 1964 the Synod made its stance clear,

It is none of our business as a church to support one political party as against another, Every Methodist is free to join whatever party he or she likes and we have members in all parties. But it is not only our business but our bounden duty to state the principles, including the political principles, by which people should live and nations should be governed (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (64) Synod Minutes, 6 January, 1964).

The position was clear, the church as an institution, did not take sides with any political party. Members were free and encouraged to participate fully in political activities through parties of their choice. The church demanded that its members comply with biblical principles as they were expounded through the church's teaching on politics. That position addressed adequately race relationship challenges in the political arena. In that regard Wesleyan Methodists and other mainline churches like the Roman Catholic hierarchy favoured partnership between races (Peadar, 1984:63).

Turning on to the legitimacy of the government, the church taught that,

A country will be at peace and flourish only if its government is based on common consent and there is an opportunity from time to time for the generality of people to review or withhold that common consent from those in power. ... The difficulty with all races in Africa today is that fear dominates political thought, and whenever fear comes in at the door wisdom flies out at the window and democracy cannot function properly in any form (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 1964).

The church contended that government needed to be legitimate. The legitimacy was supposed to be based on the consent of the majority. At that time the colonial government received consent from a minority comprising of whites and few blacks who were deemed civilised enough to participate in the political activities of the nation. The church was correct when it called for widening the range from which consent was to be sought. The church also advocated for opportunities where people would withhold or confirm their consent through the vote. Fear, which was a result of intimidation, was seen as a deadly enemy that derailed political maturity in Africa. Both the oppressors and oppressed were entangled in the web of fear.

In 1965 the Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church reviewed the crisis that the country faced. They recognised that the franchise was regarded as one of the political rights of modern communities. A call was made to regard majority rule as a legitimate and honourable aim for the nation. The church pleaded, “We urge our fellow Christians to exercise the keenest vigilance against all forms of injustice and intimidation whether by individuals, political groups or by the government itself” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (65) Synod Minutes, 10 January, 1965). It was argued that injustice and intimidation were incompatible with majority rule. Synod learned with sadness experiences of some of their members and lamented,

Some of our members are socially ostracised because of their church witness, in other places they are persecuted for their loyalty to the church, and some of our preachers and members are in restriction. Intimidation has spread into some of the rural areas where it has seriously affected our work. Church workers have been threatened and attacked and some have had their homes destroyed. Churches have been burned down and church members threatened that the same will be done to their own homes if they are seen to be attending worship

(Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (65)  
Resolution on the work of God, 10 January, 1965).

Church members were not immune to the effects of sour race relationships. In some cases the worship life of the church was affected severely. Participation in political activities had a costly price for the church but they did not give up. During the year Christians, across denominational divides, staged demonstrations and witnessed the deportation of missionaries who were viewed as dangerous to the colonial government, like Bishop Dodge and Rev. R. Hughes. In Harare, Marondera and Masvingo Wesleyan Methodists registered their disapproval of the banning of the *Daily News*, a newspaper that was circulated widely among blacks (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 10 January, 1965). The aim of banning the newspaper was to withdraw information facilities from Africans. It would have been better if the government sought to settle its differences with the newspaper in courts. The Salisbury (Harare) Area Council deplored violence and intimidation of every kind by whomsoever it was committed. They wrote

It (the Area Council) is convinced however that no permanent answer to violence lies in simply banning political parties and consequently regrets deeply the banning of the PCC and ZANU. As an alternative the Area Council calls upon the Government to seek a solution to the country's present difficulties through renewed consultation with African leaders and to make a sincere attempt to remove the basic causes of racial strife (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (65) Christian Citizenship Committee minutes, 10 January, 1965).

Banning of political parties continued and the church reminded the government that the move fuelled violence rather than halted it. Dialogue with leaders of banned and nationalist political parties was proposed as an alternative.

Towards the end of 1965 the church received many reports on police brutality through its Area Councils. The Marandellas (Marondera) Area Council requested Synod of 1966 to consider three issues and send recommendations to government. The issues were,

The Marandellas Area Council views the present political situation with deep

dismay and reaffirms its belief that the only solution to the profound uncertainty in the country will be in the peaceful and rapid establishment of democratic rule.

The Marandellas Area Council feels disturbed about the reports of police brutality which have reached the ears of some of its members and requests the Christian Citizenship Committee to make urgent investigations on this subject and take appropriate action according to findings.

The Marandellas Area Council deplores the injustice which has been done on people who have been restricted without trial. We urge Synod to press for an amendment of the law which will make elementary justice available (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (66) Minutes of Marandellas Area Council, 3 January, 1966).

The quotation showed that the church had provided a platform through which communities could air their experiences, grievances and concerns. Important to note is that what happened in communities was captured and relayed through church structures to the national level. Synod would then impress upon government officials the need to redress the situation.

Detention and restriction without trial of African political leaders continued. The situation deteriorated and levels of insecurity increased throughout the country. Wesleyan Methodists raised their voices against what was obtaining in the country. They asserted,

The Synod...recognizes that detention and restriction without trial may be necessary for a brief period during a state of emergency, but reaffirms its opposition to the policy of detention and restriction at the discretion of a minister without trial, without appeal to a court of law and without any form of judicial review. Synod further regrets that in September 1966 the 1965 constitution was amended so that legislation could be introduced which would enable government to detain or restrict without trial and without declaring a state of emergency. Synod records its opposition to an amendment which brings within sight the permanent removal of the basic human freedoms laid down in the Declaration of Rights in the 1961 Constitution (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (67) Synod Minutes, 7 January, 1967).

In Wesleyan Methodist teaching on politics, detention and restriction without trial

would only be acceptable in a state of emergency in order to control riotous situations. That had to be for a short period before taking such people to be tried in courts. The Government had amended the Constitution in a bid to legalise detention and restriction without trial. That was scandalous and the church opposed it. Only blacks would be detained or restricted. Whites who were regarded as enemies of the state were deported.

In the same year Synod announced the impact of the race relationships on the life and ministry of the church in Zimbabwe. Involvement of its members in political activities posed a serious challenge and threat to the unity and fellowship within the church. Synod noted and advised that,

The present situation has put the Christians into two distinct camps. The Church is facing a period where it is losing the courage to speak out and say what it stands for. We have entered the second year of political unrest of the country and this is our second Synod in this dilemma (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 7 January, 1967).

Wesleyan Methodists were divided in terms of their understanding, interpretation and implementation of improved race relationships. Some stuck on to the discrimination against blacks which was perpetuated by colonialists. Others defended the integrity and rights of Africans fiercely. Tension between the groups was mounting and threatened the existence as well as the mission of the church. The church had two major challenges to deal with: division in the church and the government's discriminatory agenda. Division in the church was more serious as it had a direct impact on the teaching and voice of the church. From that time onwards church leaders struggled to keep the church united and in fellowship.

Synod went on to warn that there was a false claim that peace prevailed in the country, with particular reference to African townships and rural areas. There was discontent and bitterness among people. On the surface it appeared as though there was cool or calmness in people yet underneath there was dissatisfaction and a bitter sense of insecurity. That was a result of segregative race relationships. The situation

could not be resolved by way of security measures based on detentions and restrictions. The church retorted,

There are many Christians and non-Christians who are detained and restricted without having been brought before the courts and tried. ... The Church should be a mediator and exercise its duty of reconciliation so that the deadlock which has arisen may be solved by a peaceful and just solution. May the power of God prevail in this difficult time of our history in this land (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 7 January, 1967)?

The situation demanded the services of a mediator and the church realised that it was part of their obligation to mediate between white and black politicians. However the church had a major task of holding its feuding members together. That made mediating between politicians a formidable adventure. The church pressed on with their role as mediator even if some of its leaders did not approve of it. A report on work among detainees from Rev. F. Rea was received by Synod and recorded,

Mr Rea reported that he had been unsuccessful in his effort to secure the release of Mr Chinamano. He hoped that if the political situation improved we might secure a return to the 1959 system of a judicial review in camera (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 7 January, 1967).

Mr Chinamano was one of the first nationalists in Zimbabwe. He was a Wesleyan Methodist who was detained for political activities. Negotiations aimed at his release failed, but there was hope that he would be released. Synod encouraged Rev. Rea to pursue the matter.

Day to day life continued to be unbearable. The more the church engaged government on race relationships the situation became worse. White politicians had their ways of dealing with challenges before them. They would not take heed to calls from churches or British Government. Wesleyan Methodists implored,

We are living in a country where there is uncertainty and the relationship of races is strained. There are various things which cause these unhealthy relationships, such as the present political situation, the Property Owners' Protection Bill, Separate Development, etc ... The Church has an urgent duty and purpose, which is to preach the Gospel of the brotherhood of all men, and to practise what it preaches. The situation can only be put right through devoted men and women of changed heart and mind (Wesleyan Methodist



Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (68) Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1968).

The church was convinced that one of the most important agents for change was the gospel of brotherhood. If people were converted by such a gospel their participation in political activities and race relationships would be positive. A call to change the hearts and minds of people was congruent with John Wesley's teaching.

The District Chairman exhorted Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe to proceed with advocating for justice and peace resolutely. In an address to the church he proclaimed,

I was greatly distressed when I received the information concerning the banning order of the Revd. J. H. Roberts from the Tribal Trust Land. I had an interview with the Secretary for Internal Affairs, but no reason was given. The Church has been attacked severely by the present political situation. ... Is the Church going to stop its witness for justice and peace? It should continue to strive to overcome the forces of the world (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (68) Chairman's review, 13 January, 1968).

The colonial government did not tolerate missionaries who promoted Africans' involvement in politics. That led to attempts by government to prevent such missionaries from contact with the majority of blacks in rural areas. The church saw such banning and restriction as an infringement by the state on its mandate. The Church had an obligation to promote peace and justice which was viewed as interfering with politicians. What the church did was to plead with politicians, who claimed to be Christians, to employ biblical principles so as to attain a democratic society. That inspired the District Chairman to encourage Wesleyan Methodists to soldier on in overcoming principles used by white politicians of his day which he described as forces of the world.

Synod decided to address all Wesleyan Methodists on a number of issues which were crucial. The issues included permissive clauses in the Municipal Act of 1967, a decision by Salisbury City Council to implement the clauses, publication of a bill



whose purpose was to legalise residential segregation of Asiatic, coloured and European races and the Minister of Local Government's announced intention to remove families of domestic servants from residence within areas where they worked. Synod informed members,

We observe with great concern that our country is reverting to a policy of both residential and social segregation of races. It has long been the policy of our church to strive towards a non-racial society. The present trends show little signs of 'protecting the rights of all people' as often promised. We urge our Methodist people to examine these facts in the light of Christian principles and exercise their duty in accordance with their conscience (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (68) An address to the people of Methodism in Rhodesia from the District Synod, 15 January, 1968).

Wesleyan Methodists were against all the new legislation which withdrew the limited liberties enjoyed by blacks in the country. The policy of residential and social segregation had been the bone of contention between the church and state since 1950. Wesleyan Methodists, both whites and blacks were exhorted to evaluate the developments in the light of dictates of Christian principles. Such exhortation helped members to judge for themselves whether what was called for or implemented by government was acceptable or not. Once their conclusion was affirmative the matter was upheld. The church empowered members to make informed decisions and act responsibly.

Violence continued to escalate and the church sounded warning bells to no avail. Political negotiations which had started on the recommendation of the British Government raised a lot of hope among Zimbabweans. In 1969 the church lamented,

During the past year there have been hopes and expectations for a settlement. The fearless negotiations and the visit of the British team for talks failed to bring the desired results on both sides. The proposals put out by the British Government for a settlement have not been accepted by the Rhodesian officials nor by most of the African people. This continued state of affairs brings a fundamental crisis in relationships between the African and European communities in the country (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (69) Synod Minutes, 12 January, 1969).

For the first time there was an opportunity for a political round table in which blacks

were participants. The British Government, who brokered the negotiations, employed a paternalistic approach and failure was the logical result. Political thought and practise were rooted deeply in race relationships. No political settlement would be clinched before addressing racial discrimination against blacks. Any attempt to persuade either side to compromise was seen as succumbing to racial demands from the other group. Failure to reach a political settlement was interpreted differently by people of various races. The gap between whites and blacks widened and the church regarded it as a fundamental crisis in race relationships.

The church went on to appraise its members of the impact of failure to reach a political settlement,

This unfriendliness makes it difficult to preach and hear the Gospel of reconciliation which the people of this land desperately need. There is a danger that the gap between black and white is widening. ...The situation cannot be solved by new constitutions and new legislations, but a change of heart will bring a just settlement of the situation (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 12 January, 1969).

The change of heart referred to by Wesleyan Methodists would be achieved through repenting from discrimination against Africans. The widening gap between blacks and whites made such repentance unattainable. Reconciling the feuding parties would guarantee a political settlement. For the church race relationships had deteriorated to a level which could not be resolved by a new constitution or legislation. The situation needed divine intervention which would restore fear of God, love for one's neighbour, justice and peace.

The colonialists pressed harder on their discrimination against blacks and intensified racial barriers. In solidarity with fellow Christians Wesleyan Methodists declared,

We associate ourselves with the words of the (Catholic) Bishop of Matebeleland; that the gospel is preached first and foremost by the determination and sacrifice of those who will not tolerate the barriers, who will defy authority if need be in the spirit of the apostles who said to the authorities of their day, we must obey God rather than men (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (70) Minutes of the Salisbury Area



Council, 30 August BF,1969).

In the past the Wesleyan Methodist Church encouraged its members to participate actively in political affairs and redressing racial discrimination in the country. Time had come for it to advise them to disregard ungodly authorities in order to obey God. The church voiced its concerns,

We deplore the use of chiefs for the political propaganda of the Administration and thereby dividing them from their own people. Chiefs are tribal leaders and not political leaders. We deplore the dividing of the country into Mashonaland and Matebeleland because this is encouraging tribal friction. It should not be government policy to urge tribalism (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (70) Synod Minutes, 9 January, 1970).

The quotation shows that the colonial government was determined to take its racial segregation policies to the Africans' back yard. They utilised a divide and rule strategy when they tried to incorporate chiefs into local government. The church was correct in challenging the move. It was sad to realise how government attempted to propel tribalism in Zimbabwe through introducing language based regions in the country. Dividing the country into Mashonaland and Matebeleland was a deliberate move to divide and then control Zimbabweans. Police details from Mashonaland were deployed in Matebeleland while those from Matebeleland were posted in Mashonaland. With institutionalised police brutality the move generated hatred between the Shona and Ndebele citizens. That was a new twist in the race relationships challenge.

The Zimbabwean race relationships challenge attracted international attention. The World Council of Churches (WCC), offered to assist Zimbabwe to deal with racial discrimination against blacks through its Programme to Combat Racism. Wesleyan Methodists had to analyse the offer and its impact and then advise members on the best way to respond. In 1971 the church made its position known,

The Synod of the Methodist Church in Rhodesia believes that Christians ought not to support violence in any form. Whilst acknowledging that racism is an evil to be overcome, we believe that advocacy of physical force will not bring this about. In fact it will only create further mistrust between the races and



misery among the people.

In considering the WCC Programme to Combat Racism we note that the Council Executive has made it clear that it was not supporting the military purposes of the organisations to which it made grants but rather their political aims, namely justice, equality, human dignity and freedom (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (71) Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1971).

Wesleyan Methodists saw a looming danger in the WCC offer. The colonialists had all the state resources and machinery which they used to suppress blacks' sentiments. The offer would provide resources for blacks to utilise in reversing racial discrimination in the country. For blacks their opportunity had come to mobilise a military campaign against their oppressors. The WCC endorsed direct confrontation with perpetrators of racial discrimination in Zimbabwe through the Programme to Combat Racism. That was interpreted as complementary to calls from the international community for a military strategy to deal with the unbearable racial discrimination against blacks in Zimbabwe. It appears that Wesleyan Methodists realised it hence they inquired how the funds were to be used by political parties.

Realising that they would not succeed in persuading the WCC to stop funding nationalistic political parties, Wesleyan Methodists went on to assert their teaching on the matter. They gave in to the WCC stance and pointed out,

In humility we accept the Council's challenge that it is the duty of the Church to work for the removal of all that violates these principles. The Church should speak out against those things which are a barrier between race and race and between God and man, because it preaches peace and harmony among all peoples. The Christian way forward is to make all men of all races aware of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man and the interdependence of each upon the other in the affairs of the world today (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1971).

Wesleyan Methodists registered that arguing with the WCC would not pay any dividends so they resorted to an appeal to the church's teaching on racial discrimination. Like John Wesley, they saw an answer to the racial challenge in change of heart and mind which could be achieved through internalisation of the

gospel. The church spotlighted human dependence on God and interdependence in a world that had changed greatly. In that whites were reminded that they needed blacks for their survival, the same was true of blacks. From an existential point of view both races, whites and blacks needed one another, so racial discrimination against blacks or whites was unacceptable.

A number of developments were considered by Synod in that year which included the removal of the Tangwena people from their land, withdrawal of citizenship from Mr Guy Clutton-Brock and his deportation, restriction of Bishop A.T. Muzorewa from rural areas and banning of Rev. C. A. Taylor from visiting Gonakudzingwa for pastoral visits to political detainees. Synod recorded its dismay with regard to such government actions. Government actions like the ones listed above led to further deterioration of relationships between races, rendering the country one of the most insecure nations in the world.

In 1972 Wesleyan Methodists continued to debate the issue of political settlement in Zimbabwe. The church could only encourage politicians to prioritise the national interests before their political parties. Allegations of police brutality and other inhuman treatment of blacks were brought to the fore and the Pearce Commission was assigned to investigate them. The church advised its members,

On the political front the main concern facing Christians is the question of the proposals for a settlement of the constitutional crisis between Britain and Rhodesia. Synod is deeply divided on the issue and unable to come to a common mind. On the other hand grave deficiencies in the proposals were pointed out, especially by the African representatives. It was felt that members of Synod could submit evidence to the Pearce Commission according to their conscience, and at the same time the Synod again calls on the members of the Methodist Church in Rhodesia to work for reconciliation among the races and a just solution of the political problems facing the country.

The future seems to be dark and we are afraid. But we believe that ultimately all things are in the hand of the Master (God) and we commit ourselves to him (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (72) Synod Minutes, 17 January, 1972).

Synod was deeply divided on racial and political issues because by that time more

black members were attending Synod than before. White members had power based on language and financial strength while blacks' power derived from being in the majority and conceptual clarity on the change movement across the nation. Evidence on violation of human rights by state organs would bring the church into direct confrontation with government, so the church left it to individual members. The situation was frightening and demanded a lot of faith in God and courage hence calling all Wesleyan Methodists to commit themselves to God.

Wesleyan Methodists followed carefully the influence of recent legislation and actions towards greater racial separation and discrimination and prayed that a solution would be found which would be for the unity, peace and justice of all people of the land. In 1974 the church coaxed its members to take full and active part in community, local government and national affairs and to accept nomination for membership of committees, councils and parliament (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (74) Synod Minutes, 10 January, 1974). There was social unrest which stemmed from implementation of segregative legislation against blacks. In that regard the church resolved,

That consideration is given to the increasing problem of displaced, homeless persons in the urban areas. That this should be treated as a matter of urgency and two competent investigators should be appointed to work with members of other churches. That the information collected be prepared and presented to the Heads of Churches, for consideration and further action (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 10 January, 1974).

The quotation shows that Wesleyan Methodists valued an ecumenical approach in addressing the challenge before them. The magnitude of the problem deserved the concerted effort of the Christian community in the country.

The church was aware that the government had gone for years without any recognition by the international community. The parliament was accountable to a minority electorate and the electorate turned a blind eye to acts of injustice against the majority for their selfish interests. Many people of outstanding ability and



knowledge were not permitted to address the situation because of the discriminatory legislation. Those who qualified to act as watch-dogs of justice were very few. The church demanded, “We need more men and women whose hands and tongues are not tied” (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 10 January, 1974). That was a noble request but would government heed the voice of the church?

Addressing racial segregation within the church, the District Chairman had this to say,

But within this country there are still some people who call themselves Christians and worship within our midst, who have doubts in their mind. These people say there should be an African church and a European church bearing the same name, 'Methodist Church'. There is no place for such people in the Methodist Church and they should march out. Such people are in a minority, but make the work of the church difficult in some societies. I make it quite clear that the Methodist Church is one church for black, white and coloured members of our community. I appeal to those whose ideas are in doubt, to kneel and pray that such ideas should be removed from their minds. The country is racially divided, but the Church cannot accept this as the will of God (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (74) Chairman's review, 10 January, 1974).

The chairman's remarks exposed that division on the basis of racial segregation was hindering the mission of the church. There were calls from racist white members for employing complete separate development in the church. For them European and African cultures were incompatible, so were the expressions of worship. They advocated what was in congruence with what obtained in the political arena. The chairman noticed it and his harsh order for them to march out of the Wesleyan Methodist Church was appropriate since their demand undermined the unity and fellowship of the church. It would have been blasphemous for the church to bless racial division while it was led by an African.

In 1975 the Wesleyan Methodist Synod resolved that church members were to be encouraged to participate in all social affairs as Christianity was inseparable from life. The church's leaders meetings and quarterly meetings were instructed to include



questions that would relate to members' involvement in local affairs (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (75) Synod Minutes, 12 January, 1975). The resolution was arrived at after Synod had realised:

The situation in our country has been disquieting for a long time. People are living in a position of uncertainty. The whole world knows and we know, how near to breaking point relations between black and white could be. The northern border situation caused a disruption in African life. The protected villages have not been accepted by the tribesmen. They have never accepted communal punishment. These are the kind of acts which have strained relationships between various groups of people in Rhodesia. The Africans find themselves discriminated against, economically, socially and politically – often on grounds of race alone. In some circles it is said the country is threatened by communism, if so, and communism is to be taken seriously as a threat to this country, it will never be beaten by the present methods. No one has ever defeated communism by guns, police, restriction and repression, rather these are the oppressive methods used by the communists themselves. The wish to overcome oppression grows vigorously among the educated and half educated who are denied political rights, economic opportunities and human dignity and above all among those who are treated as if there were some lower form of life. This is therefore what we must strive to overcome (Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (75) Chairman's review, 12 January, 1975,).

Protected villages for blacks, compelling all people from a particular area to leave their homes and crowding them in a fenced area where they were housed in tents, provided with daily rations and guarded by armed forces, were introduced in the northern border of the country. Such an activity was done in an attempt to isolate the communities, monitor the movement of people in those areas since blacks had resorted to an armed struggle against racism and to reduce free mingling of Zimbabweans with their northern neighbours. The move was a menace, inhuman and scandalous. The church was correct in referring to it as communal punishment. No one who had a sober mind would moot such a thing let alone implement it. That showed how determined the colonialists in Zimbabwe were prepared to destroy Africans. The level of discrimination against blacks had reached intolerable proportions. The church rejected any attempts to use threats from communism as a justification of racial discrimination against blacks. In fact, it was the hard heartedness of the whites and severe discrimination against blacks which led blacks

to seek for solidarity from the international community and thereby getting into contact with communists who were against capitalists. One of the worst things done against blacks by whites was to treat blacks as if they were destined to be a lower form of life. In showing that strategies employed by white colonialists were somehow similar to those utilised in communism, the church inspired blacks to seek military solidarity from communists.

The church once again reiterated that the racial challenge before the nation was to be resolved through negotiations. In the negotiations both parties needed to sacrifice some of their extreme demands in order to strike a deal in which no one was a loser. The country needed a constitution that was based on the principle of freedom and equality for all races. The church made it clear that the majority “...do not wish to replace white racism with black racism” (WMA MH, Chairman’s review, 12 January, 1975) but to make Zimbabwe a country where both black and white could work harmoniously together in equality. The chairman went on to say,

May God protect our people from racial hatred. Let it be our aim to show Africa and the rest of the world that it is possible, within our country for black and white to live and work together for a common cause, working to achieve a community where there is 'neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bound nor free, but all are one in Christ Jesus. ... As no man is an island so neither is any nation; none can live to itself alone, for all are of one human race, created in God's image and likeness, created to rule (Gen 1:28), created to use resources of God's creation for the common good (WMA MH, Chairman’s review, 12 January, 1975).

At that time nothing was more desirable than an inclusive nation, where racial hatred and all forms of discrimination based on race were eliminated. That compelled the church to evoke God's intervention.

The signs of the time revealed that a military clash was inevitable as blacks were determined to tackle the bull by its horns. Wesleyan Methodists, especially the white community sensed danger and voiced out through a motion to Synod from Trinity Circuit that requested Synod to, “Affirm its conviction that murder, torture and rape

which are the intention and consequence of terrorism, by whomsoever committed, cannot be reconciled with the concept of Christian love” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (76) Synod Minutes, 18 January, 1976). This shows that most of the white Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe held a conviction that any military effort to redress racial discrimination amounted to terrorism. Acts of terrorism by state machinery against blacks was explained falsely as efforts to maintain peace and order.

The situation along the country's northern border deteriorated further as blacks clashed with state armed forces. The Wesleyan Methodist Church lamented,

The loss of life in the northern border has continued...The church condemns violence in any form. There may be some people who feel and think that violence is the answer to our problems. They should think so as individuals and in no way involve the church (Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (76) Chairman's review, 18 January, 1976).

The quotation shows that there were some Wesleyan Methodists who justified strongly the armed struggle against white racism and advocated for its public acclamation by the church. Such demand would divide the church further, hence its refutation.

In the same year Synod made an important observation,

The tragedy of the present situation in the country is that large numbers of white people, particularly in the towns are ignorant of the real situation and the issues at stake. In particular there is wide spread ignorance of how the Land Tenure Act operates, of the discrepancy in educational opportunities and the gross economic poverty of the African population. The consequence of this ignorance involves the existence of two nations in one country, causing political opinions to be divided into two extremes, then the moderate element becomes obliterated and the result is a sinful separation among members of the same church. Many in a false hope imagine that the measures the Government is taking will ensure prolonged peace and prosperity (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 18 January, 1976).

The observation must have been a wake up call for white Wesleyan Methodists as they realised that their perpetuation of racial discrimination against blacks was

founded on ignorance. They were supposed to repent from it and help politicians to address the challenge positively. Instead most white Wesleyan Methodists maintained their stance until 1980 when Zimbabwe achieved its political independence.

Two important resolutions were made by Synod which had a significant bearing on racial discrimination. The first was that, “Encouragement be given to our ministers (clergy) to be actively involved in local and municipal affairs so that they are available for chaplaincy work if they are so requested” (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (76) Resolutions, 18 January, 1976). Such encouragement to clergy as well as laity catapulted black Wesleyan Methodists into political and social activism. Whenever they participated in political, economic or social activities, they bragged of support from the church. The church also resolved, “That leaders' meetings in their Agendas discuss matters of social concern in their areas” (WMA MH, Resolutions, 18 January, 1976). Discussion of social concerns would plunge the church deep into race relationships issues. If the resolution was implemented to the spirit of the letter Wesleyan Methodists would participate in large numbers in the political, economical and social realms. The desire of the church was to see Wesleyan Methodists practising their faith in addressing day to day challenges.

In 1976 Government set up a commission to investigate wide spread discrimination against blacks. Wesleyan Methodists, like other denominations, were requested to submit evidence to the commission. In its wisdom,

The Church decided not to give evidence, but left the matter to individuals who could give evidence if they so wished. The Government is aware that racial discrimination exists in the country and therefore it is surprising that a Commission needed to be set up to hear the evidence. Racial discrimination should be done away with and each person should be permitted to advance according to his merit and ability. Discrimination is the root of the trouble in this land (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 18 January, 1976).

The church viewed the setting up of a commission on discrimination as a mockery. The intentions in instituting the commission of inquiry were not clear. Racial

discrimination was institutionalised and sponsored by politicians through state organs. The church hit the nail on the head when they demanded the abolition of racial discrimination against blacks in Zimbabwe. That had to be done unconditionally.

1977 was a very important year for the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe. The Methodist Church in Britain granted autonomous status to the Zimbabwean District. The move meant that Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe were of age and could plan and implement mission work in the country. So the District was transformed into a national Conference. The British Conference had read well the political tides in Zimbabwe because three years later, in 1980, Zimbabwe got its independence. Race relationships had escalated to war and the District Chairman struggled to provide guidance to the church. He retorted,

As I am writing this review the situation of the country is in a sad and serious situation. Young and old African people, including women are leaving the country for guerrilla training. School children have absconded, the destruction of the lives both black and white is a disturbing factor in the country. The rural people do not know what to do, they are in the middle of the conflict. The curfew areas are extensive and Protected Villages and one of our ministers works from such a village in the Mount Darwin District, the Rev. M. Masvanhise and his family. The killing of innocent people is taking place in the operational areas...This state of affairs must be condemned...On behalf of the Church and the people I refute these acts of violence and intimidation as a means of achieving their objective, whatever their policy (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (77) Chairman's review, 16 October, 1977).

While the church encouraged its members to participate actively in the fight against racial discrimination church leaders never thought that black members would take part in armed struggle. The zeal of blacks to fight for their liberation took the church by surprise. The church could not stop those crossing borders to get military training. What they could only do was to condemn and refute violence, intimidation and murder which resulted from racial discrimination.

The Chairman went on to denounce atrocious activities reported in most parts of the

country,

I condemn atrocities amongst innocent people, inflicted upon those in this country. It does not matter whoever does it. Every form of violence is condemned. If there is not settlement, there will be an intensification of the war which may bring in foreign countries (WMA MH, Chairman's review, 16 October, 1977).

The Chairman was right, innocent people were subjected to barbaric abuses and massacre which had to be refuted out rightly. However, the situation had deteriorated to levels where war was unavoidable. It was unfortunate that innocent blood was shed in the process of addressing the race relationships issues. The blood of those massacred in the struggle against racial discrimination became the seed for the liberation of Zimbabwe. The Chairman was concerned with a political settlement which was based on negotiations. Even if it had taken more than two decades the Chairman and most of leaders were still convinced that negotiations would lead to a peaceful settlement one day. They were afraid of a full scale war which would attract other countries and the damage would be more severe. Race relationship issues were addressed adequately through the independence of the country in 1980. The church applauded the politicians' programme for reconciliation which was implemented immediately after independence.

It is interesting to note that from the inception of Wesleyan Methodist mission work in Zimbabwe to the 1940, Wesleyan Methodists teamed up with the colonial government in enacting and implementing segregative laws against blacks. There were few lone voices which tried to redress the anomaly. In the meantime mission schools and institutions were producing students who could match their white counterparts. From 1941 to 1980 the church struggled to correct the racial imbalances in the nation. The effort and encouragement of progressive ministers resulted in confidence building among blacks who later on shook off successfully the shackles of white supremacy.

A brief analysis of the race relationships in the church and in community from a



missionary Wesleyan Methodist perspective shown above would shed more light.

When the BSAC rule was introduced in Zimbabwe and later on the colonial government took over Africans were subjected to many unpleasant experiences.

According to Andrews (1935:14)

There was needed, at that special time in Africa, a prophet, who would stand out against oppression whenever it was to be found and be ready to accept the 'prophet's reward.' God sent a man whose name was John. If he had not borne witness with a fearless courage in Mashonaland, the whole history of the people of the soil would have been different.

That was a correct judgement of Rev. John White's contribution to Zimbabwean history. For Ranger (1995:13) Rev. John White was a major contemporary critic of the BSAC administration before the 1896 Shona up rising and of its conduct during their suppression. Ranger (1995:13) quoted Rev. H. O. Briggs who wrote of Rev. John White as,

Mr White is a man of strong character and firm conviction, a man with backbone, He is a man whom none can meet without respecting. He will buckle to nobody and to no government. In the early days he carried his life in his hands because of his defending the rights of the natives against the unprincipled white men more than one of whom threatened to shoot him at the first favourable opportunity.

The quotation shows that Rev. John White was committed to the African cause. A few cases are worth mentioning to prove his commitment.

When Rev. John White arrived in Zimbabwe he was disturbed by the injustices he saw in Europeans' dealing with Africans and spoke against the injustices (Andrews 1935:36). When he came face to face with Rev. George Eva's ill-treatment of Africans, he reported the case and made sure that Rev. Eva was relieved of his administrative position (Andrews 1935:38). One would wonder why Rev. John White was so obsessed with the plight of Africans. When he was ordained for the ministry, the charge given by Rev. Marshall Hartley encouraged him to cultivate deep sympathy for Africans, learn their languages and like "Jesus Christ our Lord, be a true man among his fellow-men" (Andrews 1935:28). These words compelled Rev.



John White to remain focused as he served in Zimbabwe.

From such encouragement Rev. John White,

... never minimised or made light anything which he saw to be evil. ... It was because his sense of justice among his own fellow-countrymen was so high and his faith in Christ was so strong, that John could not endure any injustice when he saw it committed by those who professed and called themselves Christians. ... But public and official injustices he could not endure. He spoke out, with burning words of rebuke, whenever he came up against it (Andrews 1935:40-41).

Rev. John White stood up with his shoulders above all other Wesleyan Methodist missionaries in fighting for the rights of Africans. The official stance of missionary Methodism in Zimbabwe chose to ignore his voice. He used two fronts to fight for the African cause. The first one was through confronting his fellow countrymen as seen above. The second one was through being a mentor to African ministers. The following African ministers went through his hands Rev. Matthew Zvimba (Ranger 1995:28), Rev. Thompson Samkange and Rev. Esau Nemapare (Ranger 1995:13). Rev. Thompson Samkange was very active in the fight against racial discrimination against Africans both in church and society. While at Kwenda Mission he protested against discrimination against African ministers using his experiences in the circuit (Ranger 1995:26). He also fought against racial discrimination against Africans in the country through political activities to the level of becoming the President of the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Congress from 1943 to 1948 (Ranger 1995:87-118). Like his mentor, Rev. John White, who was involved in the ecumenical movement as chairman of the Southern Rhodesia Missionary Conference, Rev. Thompson Samkange served as secretary of Native Missionary Conference. Ecumenical involvement accelerated the fusion of ideas and political activism.

Rev. Esau Nemapare, a close friend of Rev. Samkange, left the Wesleyan Methodist church and founded the African Methodist Church as he shook off the discrimination against Africans in the church (Banana, 1996a:63). The voices of such progressive missionaries and African ministers were not represented in the official stance of the

church. However, their contributions made Zimbabwean history what it is today. We now turn on to next theme, war.

#### 4.4 War

This section delineates the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe's teaching on war and their activities. Questions about what the church said in relation to war also refer to the rightness and wrongness of war. The section traces the Wesleyan Methodist teaching during the colonial period in Zimbabwe. An attempt was made to find out if the teaching was in congruence with John Wesley's on the subject.

In the period 1896 to 1897 Zimbabwe experienced the war of resistance. It is important to that variant reports were sent by missionaries to the Methodist Mission House in London. Retrogressive missionaries like Rev. Isaac Shimmin and Rev. George Eva blamed Africans in a bid to justify white brutality against Africans. Banana (1991:125) cited Shimmin and Eva's claims about the war respectively.

It is not my opinion only but that of those who have lived for many years in the country among the natives, when I say that until we give them a thrashing we may expect periodic outbreaks such as this and many of us will lose our lives.

Rev. Shimimin condemned Africans for the unfortunate situation the country was in as seen in the quotation above.

Banana (1991:125) went on to quote Rev, Eva who said,

The Matabele have of cause brought this war upon themselves but they have been hardly dealt with and now the only way to put down the uprising is by the sword or our lives would be in great danger. Force is the only power they have any respect for.

Rev. Eva was writing to the Methodist Mission House in London. He blamed the Ndebele for the outbreak of war and commended the brutality employed by the BSAC in dealing with the uprising. He went further to suggest that more force was needed to punish the Africans as seen in the quotation. Banana (1991:125) went on to point out that Rev. John White was in sharp contrast to Rev. Shimmin and Rev.

Eva. He cited Rev. John White's contention,

The Chartered Company ought to be held responsible for actions of their servants. Some of these fellows think less of shooting a Mashona than they do of shooting a dog. Burning huts, stealing meat, raping their women are common occurrences. ... There can be no doubt that misgovernment of the BSAP is in some measure responsible for the native uprising. In their eagerness to make money they have neglected their duties as governors, especially towards the native population of Rhodesia. We are now reaping the result of their maladministration (Banana 1991:125-126).

From the quotation Banana (1991:126) was correct to conclude that Rev. John White was different from Rev. Shimmin and Rev. Eva. He blamed the BSAC and BSAP for the war. Rev. John White was ahead of any other missionary in Zimbabwe when it came to fighting for the Africans' rights. Andrews (1935:42) argued that Rev. John White was convinced that the war of resistance would have been avoided had the white settlers treated Africans more humanly and justly. That concurs with Banana's view. Andrews (1935:50-56) quoted at length a portion of Rev. John White's article to the *Methodist Times*, in London. The quotation was very important for this study. It was not to be cited in full but vital sections were referred to in the study. Rev. John White was concerned with the interpretation of the causes of the war and he pointed out that his fellow countrymen had argued that the Africans had been treated with decency in the past hence the uprising (Andrews 1935:51). It meant that Africans were not grateful for what the whites had done for them, which was wrong according to White who contended that it was cruelty to Africans which led to the uprising (Andrews 1935:51). His argument was supported by the following evidence. Rev. John White reported a case of an official who used his position to get a chief's daughter forcefully for immoral purposes. The officer was found guilty and expelled from the country only to resurface nine months later to lead a force raised to punish rebelling Africans (Andrews 1935:51). That action was wrong and interpreted as cruelty against Africans.

Another form of official injustice and cruelty against Africans happened in 1894. A

police officer was killed by a chief, Mamziva Zuba (Andrews 1935:51-52). The Administration sent a force under the Sub-Inspector of the police to punish the murderer or murderers. Rev. George Eva was in charge of the Presbyterian Mission Station some thirty miles from the place. The force arrived at the station while Rev. Eva was finishing his sermon. Rev. White claimed that according to previous arrangement a number of chiefs had been invited to the service (Andrews 1935:52). Rev. White went on to narrate the event. The officer in charge of the force ordered that the chiefs be arrested. The chiefs were told that those who would attempt to run away would be shot. After leaving the Mission Station three of the seven chiefs were shot, one escaped and three were taken away. According to Rev. White the innocent chiefs were killed under the pretext of being perceived as running away from arrest. The matter was reported but the settler government did nothing about it (Andrews 1935:52). The event was confirmed by Ranger (1995:1) who said it happened in the Zvimba area, where the BSAP flogged those who resisted arrest, shot and killed four chiefs and took three other chiefs as hostages. The act was very provocative and raised serious resentment against whites among Africans in Zvimba area. One thing which is clear in the manner in which the BSAP reacted to African activities they perceived as wrong is that they aimed at revenging. The officers went out with all effort to punish rather than to maintain peace and order. The same principle of punishment rather than maintaining peace and order was employed by the colonial government in later years.

The other things which Rev. White pointed at were the Hut Tax and how it was collected (Andrews 1935:52), the Ndebele and Shona police officers who were used to harass Africans tyrannically (Andrews 1935:53) and the ill-treatment of African girls who were bought by settlers and taken as slaves (Andrews 1935: 54). For Rev. John White the injustices suffered by Africans at the hands of whites tended to instil fear and hatred towards the government of the day and its officials. He charged “Put these foregoing facts together and let me ask you whether the charge of injustice to the Africans is a cruel, cowardly and wicked lie” (Andrews 1935:54)? Rev. John

White was correcting falsehoods which were being spread through the popular opinion among retrogressive missionaries.

It is the contention of this study that reading from Rev. John White's article, the inhuman treatment of Africans by the BSAC and BSAP resulted in the war of resistance in 1896 and 1897. The claim by the official stance of Wesleyan Methodist missionaries was wrong and retrogressive. Rev. John White's article put the record straight when it came to the interpretation of events which led to the war. White was hated by his fellow countrymen for his stance but was loved and respected by Africans.

Banana (1991:126) concluded correctly that:

The question of whether Christians should participate in armed conflict has always been a thorny one. It would appear that during this period under review the issue of participation was never contested, it was rather a question of, on which side of the war one threw one's lot.

The majority of Wesleyan Methodist missionaries threw their lot on the side of the BSAC at the expense of the Africans they were there to evangelise.

In 1918 the District received a letter from the Missionary Society's office in Britain which showed that there were celebrations and rejoicing at the collapse of the German empire (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24) Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society letter to Rhodesian Synod, 29 November, 1918). In response to the letter, the Synod concurred with British Wesleyan Methodists that the collapse was to be received with joy as it was a gift from God. Synod wrote,

Though we are on the out-skirts of the Empire ... from the beginning to the triumphant ending of this conflict we have been with our friends in the homeland on our sympathy and our prayers. No people throughout this wide Empire have rejoiced more than those of Rhodesia – both European and native – that God has vouchsafed to our arms this overwhelming victory (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (18-24) Letter to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Committee, 16 January 1919).

The manner in which Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe welcomed the defeat of Germans exposed the fact that they approved and supported the war against German. They regarded German imperialism as opposed to Christianity. War against them was justifiable and victory was credited to God. That was done in solidarity with other parts of the British Empire, since Zimbabwe was not under threat of German Nazism. Their attitude towards war was at variance with John Wesley's example on war because there was no threat to Zimbabwe, hence no need for self preservation through war. At that time the concept of non-contestation of participation in armed conflict, advanced by Banana (1991:126), was employed as missionaries in Zimbabwe stood by their home country.

In 1941 Herbert Carter, the then District Chairman, made comments on the second world war which were aimed at motivating blacks in Zimbabwe to participate actively in the war. In his address to Wesleyan Methodists as well as the nation at large he said,

We are vitally concerned that Africa, with its huge dependent and undeveloped Native population, should be governed in accordance with Christian principles and not come under the domination of Nazi or Fascist slavery. Britain's fight is for Africa no less than for Britain. ... The democratic principles, the cause of freedom, the opportunity for national development, the right to be educated to the full limit of the mental power possessed, political and economical justice, all belong to the nations and tribes of Africa and will justly be claimed by them (WMA MH, Chairman's address, 8 January, 1941).

The quotation exposed how much the chairman grappled to convince black Zimbabweans that they were also under Nazi or Fascist threat. That would fire up their desire for sovereignty and join the war on the British side. The claim that Britain's fight was for the good of Africa in the same way it was for Britain was unrealistic. The British were involved in the war for their own interests more than for defending democratic principles for Africans. In that claim Carter misrepresented John Wesley's example and arm-twisted black Zimbabweans to defend British interests at the pretext of the African cause. The same principle of non- contestation



of participation in armed conflict and throwing one's lot on the expected side (Banana 1991:126) was at work in the official stance of Wesleyan Methodists. Africans who were involved in the Second World War were exposed to realities beyond their contexts. Some could not reconcile the fact that they were defending British interests which were under threat from Nazism and Fascism while in their country, Zimbabwe they were reeling under British imperialism. Victory against Nazis and Fascists enlightened Africans to realise that an invading imperial force can be overcome through war. That planted the desire among some Africans to confront European imperialism with armed struggles. When Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe encouraged Africans to participate in the Second World War on the British side they did not know that Africans would later use their war experiences against colonisers. So as negotiations for a peaceful political settlement between the colonisers and African nationalist political party leaders proved to be elusive some Africans started to contemplate using an armed struggle to overthrow British imperialism in Zimbabwe.

From 1960 the situation in Zimbabwe deteriorated to levels where war was inevitable. The church faced a scenario which was different from previous experiences in which they supported war. At that time the battle field was no longer abroad. Church members were divided and involved in war on different camps. The principle of non- contestation of participation in armed conflict and throwing one's lot to the expected side was challenged. The Chairman then, Andrew Ndlela, was on record denouncing war. In 1974 he said, "Personally I am opposed to all forms of terrorism and the use of violence as a means to end conflict" (WMA MH, Chairman's review, 10 January, 1974). Rev. Ndlela was the first Zimbabwean to be elected District chairman. He took over the leadership of the church at an arduous moment.

Reports of war activities were received from all parts of the country. In Matebeleland the Area Council lamented,

We meet at a time of very grave uncertainty in the country. Nearly all our circuits in the Area are affected by the current situation and we continually hear



reports of a serious nature which directly affect the church and the normal life of the people. Just as UDI was not the answer to the question of independence, war is not and cannot be the answer. Peaceful negotiation is the obvious answer, all concerned should recognise this as a matter of urgency – who has ever won a guerrilla type of war, no side seems to lose and none can win – the lessons of Burma, Vietnam and similar countries are a reminder to this. The answer lies in the hearts of men, women and the youth of this country (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (76) Chairman's review, 18 January, 1976).

It was clear that the Area Council was perplexed by reports of atrocities which followed the escalation of war. What the Area Council failed to read was that progressive Wesleyan Methodists employed the concept of none contestation of participation in armed conflicts and throwing one's lot to the expected side. On the other hand retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist missionaries laboured in vain to determine the expected side for all Wesleyan Methodists in the country. The Area Council preferred peaceful negotiations to war and castigated an armed struggle to redress racism but three decades had passed by without any peaceful settlement in sight. The retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists were proved wrong because war led to the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980.

The war of liberation, which was often referred to as terrorism, intensified and in 1977 the church had to voice out,

War is contrary to the will of God. In obedience to God no Christian can support a political party which is based on an unjust discrimination, on grounds of colour, race or religion between people who live and work in the same country (WMA MH, Chairman's review, 16 October, 1977).

Just asserting that war was contrary to God's will was not enough. The church was expected to expand the statement and use the Bible to elaborate the desirable position. The chairman should have employed John Wesley's example and declared that blacks were justified in waging a war against racial discrimination. We saw in chapter three above that according to John Wesley war was justifiable before God only when it was waged in attempt for self preservation. So the liberation war in Zimbabwe was justifiable according to John Wesley's teaching on war.

The magnitude of the liberation war in Zimbabwe demanded theological reflection and a declaration similar to the one on race relationships. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist leaders in Zimbabwe fell short of expectation as they could not provide definitive guidance to members during the war. It is not clear whether they ignored John Wesley's example on war deliberately or they found it to be incompatible to their context according to their judgement. Their teaching on war was shallow theologically and therefore provided lip service to members and the nation.

On the other hand progressive Wesleyan Methodist ministers provided a theological justification for participation in armed conflict to redress racism. One of such ministers was Rev. Banana, a political theologian and ecumenist (Hallencreutz 1996:1-18). Rev. Banana (1991:142-143) resigned from the Wesleyan Methodist ministry when he suddenly realised that there was no room for him and other progressive ministers to express their theological reflection on participation in armed conflict. He had worked on the WCC's Programme to Combat Racism and thought that it was an ample opportunity for the church to redress racial imbalances. To his dismay the church resolved to disapprove the WCC programme at their meeting at Waddilove and he wrote in his resignation letter,

I believe that the action of the World Council of Churches was deliberately ... misrepresented and that instead of understanding their motives and joining them in fighting the evils of racism and injustice we have surrendered to the very evils which motivated their action.

The events of Waddilove were a great burden to me ... during the days that followed and I hoped that the recommendation made there was only the viewpoint of a number of clergy and not the attitude of the whole church ... I now find myself unable to reconcile the gospel of Christ ... with the official pronouncements of my church. ... I find it impossible to exercise my special ministry with a church which has to my concepts denied its Christ (Banana 1991:142).

Banana felt that it was better for him to opt out of the church than to remain where he was being compelled to deny his faith in Christ. Banana (1996b:206-233)

consolidated his combat theology as he reflected on the Wesleyan Methodist Church's responses to the WCC Programme to Combat Racism. Banana (1996b: 228-229) concluded that the WCC gave the church a rare opportunity to make its positive contribution towards the nationalist struggle for independence and the church failed to seize the opportunity. He went on to say that in discussing the matter the church concentrated on violence and by it they referred to the armed struggle for liberation. Here we see a similar attitude to that which was challenged by Rev. John White earlier on, whereby injustices practised against Africans were overlooked and any attempts by Africans to redress racism and demand their rights were condemned as violence. Without the contribution of progressive ministers like Rev. John White and Rev. Canaan Banana the history of this country would be different. The study now turns to the question of the Federation of Central Africa.

#### **4.5 Federation**

The political, economic and racial puzzle of the late 1940s in Zimbabwe led colonialists to opt for a federation of Southern Rhodesia, (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia, (Zambia) and Nyasaland, (Malawi). The background to the Federation expose that there were factors which led both Africans and whites to have some degree of confidence in the proposal presented. Whites felt that they were less secure and threatened by Africans' political advancement and demands made by some church leaders. On the other hand Africans realised that African nationalism was fast becoming a major force in the country. Its leaders were drawn from the mission-educated elite just as what happened elsewhere throughout the African continent (Weller & Linden 1984:208). The development of African nationalism led to a new dimension whereby the church-state relations had to move from an engagement between government officials and white church leaders to one that involved African nationalists since they were able to articulate their views.

The federation aimed at shaking off British interference in Zimbabwe on the one

hand and neutralising African political enthusiasm on the other. The formation of the federation engendered objections from many Wesleyan Methodists in Britain. The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Britain communicated their views to their counterparts in Zimbabwe in 1954,

There is no easy road to that order of society in which all men have opportunity to exercise their natural abilities and in which all men dwell in peace. There will be honest and sincere differences of opinion about the steps to be taken. For instance, when we in Britain were studying the proposal for Central African Federation we were all agreed that the right way would be towards a society in which the potential abilities of every citizen would be fully developed for the good of all. But, regarded as a political proposition in present circumstances some of us approved the plan of federation and others disapproved. ... We are commanded by our Lord in every situation to love our neighbours as ourselves. There is no hope of progress through argument or policies which are based on hatred or contempt (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (54) Synod Minutes, 3 January, 1954).

Wesleyan Methodists in Britain were divided on the subject of federation for a number of reasons. Implementation of the proposal of a federation would limit or eliminate British influence in Zimbabwe, a country which had been under British leverage for more than five decades. That was interpreted as a rebellion against the British. Some thought that the move would open floodgates for extreme inhuman treatment of blacks by the white minority in the country. Others saw possibilities of frank and direct engagement between blacks and whites, without interruption from outsiders. What they desired was an inclusive society which would ensure development of everyone's potential for the benefit of all. How to attain such a society remained a formidable puzzle. Hence they called upon Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe to love their neighbours and preach the same to the whole nation.

In 1959 Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe were compelled by the situation to address issues related to the Federation. The Federation and independence dominated political debates of the time. The major question was in terms of how to extricate the nation from the vices of racism. If federation was the way, would that mean independence from British rule? For the blacks the crucial question was whether

federation would lead to independence from white rule eventually. The church had to guide its members, since many Wesleyan Methodists were involved in political activities. The church rose up to the expectation and showed the way,

The Synod believes that under the guidance of God the Federation of the three territories of Central Africa can achieve the well-being of all its peoples. It also believes that independent status and an educated and enlightened democracy are the goals to which all must work.

It considers that the granting of independence should be delayed until such time as the Federation has gained the confidence of the majority of the people and until this confidence can be adequately expressed.

It is convinced that the Governments concerned are morally and legally bound by the conditions explicit in the preamble to the constitution and implicit in the Protectorate status of Barotseland and Nyasaland to ensure that no final steps to independence be taken until the inhabitants of the territories, expressing themselves through acceptable and reliable channels, are known to desire it (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1959).

Synod made a very pivotal observation that under the guidance of God the Federation would yield expected results, but were colonialists prepared and willing to follow God's guidance? The teaching of the church on federation was positive, while that on the status of independence was negative. The church was concerned with independence from Britain. Little did church leaders realise that blacks, including Wesleyan Methodists, were eyeing independence from colonialists which would bring racial discrimination to a halt. A demand for a particular level of confidence among the majority and its expression according to white minority's standards as well as a call for not taking any steps towards independence was unfortunate. That was targeted at denying the black majority their right to independence.

Synod went on to make a double pronged resolution addressing governments in the concerned territories and the Christian community. To the governments in question Synod advised,

The Synod therefore, calls on the Governments concerned:-

- (a) To take no irrevocable step until the above conditions are fulfilled.
- (b) To take all possible steps to win the confidence of all the peoples concerned.
- (c) To prepare a programme in which the stages towards independence will be

implemented gradually in accordance with the above conditions (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1959).

The above quotation showed that Wesleyan Methodist teaching was interested in ensuring that the Federation gained trust, support and confidence from the majority. It suggested that independence was only achievable after the federation had been accepted by the majority and in total control of political and economic activities of the three territories. Here again, independence was not from colonial rule but Britain. It would appear as though the church called for steps towards independence of the territories but it was only in relationship to British influence on the colonial government. Little or nothing was offered to blacks. That was contrary to John Wesley's teaching which argued that in cases of oppression God sides with the oppressed.

To the Christian community in Zimbabwe the Wesleyan Methodists had this to say,

The Synod recognises that the Christian Church has a special responsibility to our country as it seeks to achieve these goals. It therefore calls on all Christian people:

- (a) To pray earnestly that God will guide the Governments and peoples concerned so that His will may be done in the Federation.
- (b) To gain such knowledge of the issues involved that they can make an intelligent contribution to the ideal of partnership.
- (c) To use all available means inside and outside the Church to deepen understanding between the peoples of the Federation and to refrain from any disruptive actions during the progress to independence (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1959).

The church was on the right course when they called upon all Christians in the country to pray earnestly and seek God's will and guidance. Partnership became a selling concept for encouraging blacks to accept the federation. However the partnership scale tilted in favour of the white minority. In real terms, it was paternalism rather than partnership. The black elite picked it up and campaigned fiercely against the federation. Some Wesleyan Methodists, such as Joshua Nkomo, participated in the campaign. The third proposal would function as a tranquilliser for radical political activities which would disrupt the federation. The proposals did not



achieve the intended objectives because black Zimbabweans were by then determined to fight against racial discrimination and segregative legislation.

Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe wrote a letter to the Federal Prime Minister, Roy Welensky, in which they enclosed a copy of their resolution on the status of the Federation. The letter was signed by the District Chairman, Rev. Jesse Lawrence. In a response to the letter the Prime Minister had this to say,

Thank you for your letter of the 23<sup>rd</sup> January enclosing a copy of a resolution on the status of the federation adopted by the annual Synod of the Methodist Church. I have taken note of the terms of the resolution and I believe there can be little doubt that a number of the basic sentiments to which it gives expression are widely shared amongst thinking people, particularly in regard to the need for all of us to deepen our understanding of one another and to make a positive contribution to the partnership ideal as necessary steps in the attainment of the goals of independent status and an educated and enlightened democracy.

I do not, at this point of time, want to anticipate in precise terms what the Government's approach will be to the question of independent status. As you know, the Constitution provides that a conference shall be summoned for the purpose of reviewing the Constitution. It has been agreed that that conference will be held towards the end of 1960 and that it will be its purpose to review the Constitution in the light of the experience gained since the inception of Federation and, in addition, to agree on the constitutional advances which may be made. In this latter context the conference will consider a programme for the attainment of such a status as would enable the Federation to become eligible for full membership of the Commonwealth (Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (WMA) Methodist House, (59) Letter from R Welensky to Rev. J Lawrence, 5 January, 1959).

A number of things were revealed by the quotation above. Even if tension was mounting in the relationship between Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe and the colonial government in terms of racial discrimination against blacks, a cordial relationship still existed on issues of governance. The resolution sent to the Federal Prime Minister encouraged the tightening of screws on the governance issue and ensuring that steps towards independence were delayed until a time when the federation gained confidence and blacks demonstrated that they were mature enough to participate in an independent state. That solicited an informative response from the



Federal Prime Minister, a response which would inspire Wesleyan Methodist leaders to motivate all members to rally behind their position in regards to the Federation. The Prime Minister's response was very cautious. He would not divulge anything regarding government strategies in terms of independence. Government was concerned with two critical issues; the constitutional review and full membership in the Commonwealth. Independence was from Britain which had to be attained through a constitutional process so that the new independent state would be accorded full member status in the Commonwealth. In all that process they never thought of affording blacks, within the so called federation, an opportunity for self expression and determining their destiny. Another important fact revealed in the quotation above is that the constitutional challenge has been a thorn in the flesh for Zimbabwe since 1890, when white settlers invaded the country. Even the 1980 independence was based on a makeshift constitution which was to be amended after ten years and the constitutional process has remained a monster that haunted Zimbabwe even in the independence era.

In an address to Synod in 1960 Rev. T. A. Beetham, the Africa Secretary in the Methodist Missionary Society, made a very significant observation. Commenting on systems of government in African states he said,

The more Africans work out their own way of doing things, the more whites in Africa may come to realise that methods and forms evolved in Europe and America are not necessarily the best for Africa, and that in Multiracial communities such as the Federation more experimentation and flexibility may well be needed (WMA MH, Address to the representative session of Synod by the Rev TA Beetham, Africa Secretary, Methodist Missionary Society, 9 January, 1960).

In simple terms Beetham discerned that any solution proposed to settle the Zimbabwean situation which was not worked out by blacks would not have any integrity. Proposals based on solutions which were cooked in foreign pots, such as European and American, would not work for the best interest of Africans because they ignored the realities of African life. Beetham saw a way forward in increasing the level of experimentation and flexibility which would afford blacks opportunities

to contribute freely to the process of nation building. The Federation was too rigid and exclusive. Blacks, even Wesleyan Methodists, could not accept it.

As the conference on constitutional review drew closer the District Chairman of the Wesleyan Methodist Synod seemed to have changed his mind. He asked a very pertinent question in his review of the church's work. He inquired,

It might well be asked whether the 1960 review of the working of Federation ought not to imply freedom for a Territory to leave the Federation if it wishes. If Territories are held in the Federation against the will of inhabitants is it not a local form of colonialism (WMA MH, Chairman's review, 8 January, 1960)?

Was that a real change of mind among Wesleyan Methodist leaders? What had dawned on their imagination was that Federation was doomed. The call was now for Zimbabwe to withdraw from the Federation and do so without any punitive measures from the administration of the Federation. They had realised that the Federation would not provide selective security for the minority white community. For that reason Zimbabwe was to withdraw from the federation. Denying Zimbabwean opportunity to withdraw from the federation amounted to internal colonialism. For the first time the Wesleyan Methodist leadership condemned the Federation, but in circumstances where rights of whites seemed to be at stake they opted for enforcement of colonial values. While church leaders aimed at protecting a white minority, black members of the church seized the opportunity and campaigned vigorously against the federation for the liberation of blacks.

The situation continued to deteriorate as the Federal Government grappled with maintaining peace and order while blacks in all the three territories of the Federation pressed for their freedom. In 1962 Synod suggested that the political arena needed to be more inclusive and allow blacks to play their part. A communiqué was sent to the Federal Government informing them that, "This Synod is convinced of the necessity for a further broadening of the franchise and urges European and African political leaders to enter into consultation with a view to a peaceful solution of the present impasse" (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 14 January, 1963). Wesleyan Methodist

leaders were convinced that the Federation was a web which needed to be unwoven. An increase in participation by black political leaders in negotiations on the future of the federation would untangle the country from the federal web. The nation became a furnace characterised by banning of African nationalist political parties, detentions without trial and intimidation.

In that context of uncertainty and confusion the white politicians in Zimbabwe mooted independence from Britain as the best solution for the country's woes. Wesleyan Methodists were quick to respond to voices that called for the UDI. White politicians in Zimbabwe became aware of the fact that they could not satisfy the demands and interests of either the British government or black Zimbabweans hence they opted for a lone journey through a unilateral declaration of independence. In 1964 the Standing Committee of Synod informed all Wesleyan Methodists and the nation that, "We (Wesleyan Methodists) regard any unilateral declaration of independence either now or in the future as morally wrong" (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 6 January, 1964, Minutes of Standing Committee). The church preferred independence which would be granted by the British voluntarily. They were not arguing for the good of the African cause but for Zimbabwe to continue to have a sound relationship with Britain and thereby remain under British influence. However most of the black Wesleyan Methodist politicians had taken the route towards Zimbabwean independence from both the colonial government and British influence. The UDI by the Rhodesia Front under Ian Smith in 1965 compelled most of the African nationalists in Zimbabwe to opt for armed struggle against colonialism and racial discrimination.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

The investigation above exposed how reactionary Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe drew from John Wesley's example in cases where they felt that his teaching would further their desires. In all the four areas delved into above, which are the politics of

land, race relationships, war and federation, Wesleyan Methodist missionaries chose to break ties with John Wesley's example whenever they interpreted John Wesley's teaching as influencing them to disregard British influence in Zimbabwe. They were committed to ensuring that both the BSAC and colonial government observed the superiority of the British government and operated within its political and legal confines. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist leaders' obsession with British superiority led the church to fall prey to racial discrimination against blacks in Zimbabwe which haunted the church up to 1980 when Zimbabwe became independent. Racial discrimination threatened to divide the church until 1980 when Zimbabwe attained independent political status. The obsession also blinded white retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist leaders from all pointers to political liberation of blacks from colonialism and the British hand behind the scene.

This study has exposed how Wesleyan Methodists behaved on the political arena during the colonial era in Zimbabwe. Cases in which there was continuity or discontinuity with John Wesley's example on politics were highlighted. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists' political activities were ambivalent as they struggled to balance their act in the face of diverging demands from ensuring that the colonial government remained within British dictates, they maintained sound relationships with colonisers, who were their kith and kin, while at the same time trying to deal with progressive voices which called the church to serve the interests of the exploited blacks. The voices of progressive Wesleyan Methodist ministers who challenged the retrogressive ministers and colonial officials' acts of injustice against Africans were loud. The behaviour portrayed calls for a comparison with the voices of African Wesleyan Methodist ministers dealt with in Chapter five and an interpretation so as to lay bare forces that motivated missionary Wesleyan Methodists' political activities in Zimbabwe. Chapter six is devoted to that task.

## **THE VOICES OF AFRICAN WESLEYAN METHODIST MINISTERS DURING THE COLONIAL ERA**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the political activities of African Wesleyan Methodist ministers during the colonial era in Zimbabwe. The chapter presents data gathered through interviews. The major aim of the chapter is twofold; to expose how audible the African ministers' voices on political issues were and to find out if the ministers were influenced by John Wesley's political teaching. The chapter also revealed how the ministers viewed the role of the church in political struggles in Zimbabwe. Interviewees were ten, seven African ministers and three ministers' widows. Four of the ministers are retired while three are still serving. The ministers were sampled because they served during the colonial period under review, while the ministers' widows were chosen because their husbands were assassinated.

### **5.2 Presentation of data from interviews**

Data collected through interviews was presented in diagrammatic form so as to capture all responses in a comprehensive summary. The presentation shown in table 3 below exposes that the land issue was a serious problem for the majority of African Wesleyan Methodist ministers. That was representative of African Wesleyan Methodists' sentiments on the issue. Even those who claimed that the land issue was an accepted problem (Kadenge, 15/3/11) agreed that it was a serious problem which most black Zimbabweans saw as an insurmountable challenge.

*Table 3 Perceptions on the land problem*

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage	Opinions/remarks
A serious problem	4	66	<p>-It was painful to remember we lost our homes and heritage in Nyamandhlovu through forced movements</p> <p>- It was a thorny issue; the whole struggle for independence was to recover our lost inheritance.</p> <p>- Africans were prohibited from purchasing/ and in the commercial regions 1 and 3 of agricultural land where there was adequate rainfall and fertile good soil.</p> <p>- Africans were squeezed in overpopulated Reserves.</p> <p>- Trespass was a very serious crime, back found on whiteman's land were treated assaulted treated brutally</p>
An accepted problem	1	17	<p>- Some people had accepted that the land problem was acceptable, so they were passive.</p> <p>- Many people were born in Reserves so life was just normal and the land problem was just one of the natural struggles in life.</p> <p>- Colonial government managed the land problem through a divide and rule policy as blanks in police force and army were used against follow blacks. So attention was focused on the police force and army rather than the land problem.</p>
Not a problem at all	1	17	<p>- I was not concerned about politics</p>
			-

The remarks in the table 3 revealed that Africans were aware that the areas they occupied were not their original homes. That awareness was a fertile ground for political activities which was utilised by some African ministers of various denominations including Wesleyan Methodists as shown below under the discussion of the data.

*Table 4 African Ministers' views on racism*

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage	Opinions/Remarks
A real problem	6	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All spheres of social life in the country operated in a racist system – separate residents, schools, hospitals, buses, sports facilities, church buildings and even drinks for blacks and whites.</li> <li>- Church operated in a racist environment while it preached the gospel of love and concern for the poor, the master and slave mentality was practised in the church.</li> <li>- Missionaries came to a country in which land was apportioned between blacks and whites; they accepted the status quo and operated in the same way so the church and state were together in perpetuating racism.</li> <li>- Both in church and state there were positions which could not be held by blacks.</li> <li>- Africans were treated as second class citizens.</li> </ul>

All African Wesleyan Methodists ministers were conscious that racism was a real problem as exposed by material presented in table 4 above. The remarks show that the ministers were aware of the implementation of a racist system in all spheres of



life including church life. The ways in which the ministers reacted to racism was discussed below under the discussion and analysis of the data from interviews.

*Table 5 Views on the formation of the federation*

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentages	Opinions/Remarks
Good	3	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accelerated the voice of African nationalists.</li> <li>- Provided a platform for ministers of religion to voice out in support of African nationalist politicians.</li> <li>- Reduced white extremism since it was based on the principle of partnership.</li> <li>- Provided for the fusion of ideas among politicians in the three territories that formed the Federation.</li> <li>- Many black Zimbabwean farmers migrated to Zambia and utilised commercial farms in the country</li> </ul>
Bad	1	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There were disparities, such as distribution of resources, in the federal arrangement.</li> <li>- White supremacy characterised the Federation.</li> <li>- It was formed on the bases of false, promises which were never fulfilled, which led to calls for independence by African politicians in Malawi and Zambia.</li> </ul>
Not clear	2	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I did not seek to understand the federation at all.</li> <li>- It was not an issue for me so I just brushed it aside.</li> </ul>

Table 5 presents how the ministers viewed the formation and implementation of the Federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The majority of the ministers, as shown by 50%, saw the formation of the Federation as a good thing. They saw it as a positive development because it provided a platform on which the African ministers' voice on political issues could be heard. The remarks also showed that the Federation created room for the fusion of ideas and strategies among politicians in the three territories.

The 17% who viewed the formation of the Federation as bad based their argument on the promises which were never fulfilled and the disparities in the distribution of resources in the federal arrangement. White supremacy over blacks that characterised the Federation contributed to that view. While the 33% represented those African ministers who did not take a keen interest on the federal developments.

When it came to the war of liberation in Zimbabwe there was a 100% affirmation by the African ministers as seen in Table 6. All the ministers interviewed participated in the war in various ways, ranging from fundraising, assisting those injured in the war, providing food, clothes and other supplies as well as moral support. The ministers' enthusiasm and obsession with the liberation war was analysed under the section on data discussion and analysis.

*Table 6 Views on the war of liberation*

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage	Opinions/Remarks
Participated actively	6	100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participated in fundraising ventures for liberation fighters who were based in Mozambique and Zambia</li> <li>- We were convinced that liberation would be achieved only through an armed struggle.</li> <li>- Saw armed struggle as a direct reaction to the white man's insistence on treating Africans as slaves on their land.</li> <li>- Used mission school truck to transport people and even some freedom fighters injured the war to hospital.</li> <li>- Provided food, clothes other supplies and moral support through attending pungwe (night campus).</li> <li>- Provided shelter for freedom fighters who spied in the area so as to plan for the next move.</li> </ul>

Table 7 shows how much African Wesleyan ministers were influenced by John Wesley's teaching. 83% were aware of Wesley's influence on their ministry and political activities. Their remarks showed that John Wesley's concern and teaching on social issues and politics propelled them into participating in the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. The remaining 17% was not aware of the influence John Wesley's teaching their political activities.

*Table 7 Interviewees' influence from John Wesley's teaching*

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Opinions/Remarks
Conscious of the influence	5	83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Until we are involved in the struggle in support of the poor, the sick, the oppressed and disadvantaged we are not true Christians.</li> <li>- We are called to holiness and there is no holiness without social holiness.</li> <li>- I am who I am because of John Wesley's teaching.</li> <li>- Wesley influenced me to speak out and act when I see the plight of the poor, needy, oppressed and marginalised.</li> <li>- John Wesley's teaching on social issues and politics propelled me into participation in struggle for independence in Zimbabwe.</li> </ul>
Unconscious of the influence	1	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I did not use John Wesley's teaching in all I did. I only did what my colleagues from other denominations did in the area we served together. If there was any influence I was unconscious of it.</li> </ul>

Table 8 presents voices of African ministers' widows on their husbands' participation in politics. The table shows that two of three widows interviewed were negative about their husbands' involvement in political activities. It is clear that they were not supportive of their husbands' political careers. However the information they provided was invaluable for this study. What disappointed them were the ministers' political activities and through their stories we hear their husbands' voices on the

political developments in colonial Zimbabwe.

One of the widows was very positive and supportive to her husband's political activities. Her remarks pointed out that her late husband shared with her that his political activities were based on the gospel. Even when her husband used family resources on political activities, she remained supportive. She was supportive to the extent of participating in political debates but at a lower level. The information she provided is important for this study in two ways. First, it provided her late husband's voice on politics during the colonial Zimbabwe. Second, it made the voice of African ministers' wives on political issues audible.

*Table 8 Voices of African ministers' widows on their husband's political careers.*

Name	Views on husband's participation in politics	Opinions on socio-political environment	Opinion on the role of the church	Remarks
E. Chombo	Negative	Negative	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not happy with husband's participation in politics, he confused politics and the ministry.</li> <li>- We did not enjoy the ministry because we did not have enough money for basic needs of the family.</li> <li>- We ended up as refugees at Epworth Mission.</li> </ul>
G. Kanodereka	Positive  Supportive	Positive	Negative (in relation to official position) Positive (in relation to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- My husband's political stance was based on the fact that Jesus had a distinctive concern for people.</li> <li>- Even when we were moved from town to remote rural areas twice, that did not dampen our spirits.</li> </ul>



			voice of black leaders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- We supplemented the stipend with business activities.</li><li>- Our resources were used to support freedom fighters.</li><li>- When my husband was arrested and detained a number of times, I looked after the children and organised prayer meetings for his safety.</li><li>- I joined my husband in the Moral Re-Armament programmes.</li><li>- We extended our house in 1977 and provided an office for the People's Movement, which was started after the Geneva talks.</li></ul>
G. Jaja	Negative	Negative	Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Was not happy with the husband's participation in politics.</li><li>- Husband active in politics but did not want me to know his activities.</li><li>- He was a best friend of Rev Kanodereka and both love politics.</li><li>- I did not support him in his political activities, for me it was queer for ministers to be involved in politics.</li><li>- Sometimes we went for three months without stipends.</li><li>- Church was supportive to those who did not participate in politics publicity.</li><li>- The church neglected my family when my husband went for further studies.</li></ul>

### 5.3 Discussion of data from interviews

Interview questions used in this research were based on the four themes pursued in the study, which are land politics, racism, Federation and war. The data exposed that the land problem was a thorny issue. Rev. F.J. Chirisa (Marondera 14/3/2011) referred to the land problem as follows;

The land problem was a thorny issue. The liberation struggle in Zimbabwe right from the early resistance war of 1896 and 1897 to the liberation war was to a greater extent meant to recover our lost inheritance – land. The missionary church which included all mainline churches, like Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodists, Lutheran and Dutch Reformed, were given farms by the white settlers and went on to purchase more land. The churches were led by whites and the purchase of mission farms was seen as another arm of dispossessing blacks. Most converts who came to stay on mission farms did so under a disguise of searching for a haven, an island or oasis of peace in a troubled land. Sooner than later, the voice of liberation reconverted the tenants as became aware that paying rent on farms was the same as paying tax to the colonial government.

The quotation shows that black ministers were aware of the fact that the church was involved negatively in the land politics.

The land problem had its roots in the disenfranchisement of African by the settler government in 1898 (Banana 1989:198). Some early missionaries, especially Rev. A. Cripps, an Anglican and Rev. J. White, a Wesleyan Methodist, advocated for African participation in political processes. Their work became a springboard from which early African activists became involved in national issues. One of the early leading African Methodist ministers who made the African voice heard on political issues including the land problem was Rev. T. Samkange (Banana 1996b :135). Samkange was a beacon of African participation in political processes in Zimbabwe as argued correctly by Ranger (1995:87-123). Ranger presented a well balanced account of Rev. Samkange's contribution to political and religious developments in Zimbabwe.

The land issue had a significant impact on African Wesleyan Methodist ministers.



Remarks as “The land problem fuelled Africans’ desire to go for war. All I did in supporting the liberation war was a result of my desire to see my people back on our fertile areas” (Magoronga, Harare, 16/3/11). Rev. C.Z. Mukandi (Kwe Kwe, 18/3/11) had this to say,

The land problem was a serious matter. As a BSA police officer I observed two things. The first was how Africans were ill-treated under trespass laws. The second was the torture Africans went through as a result of the forced movements. The Gairezi range issue which involved Chief Tangwena and his people happened when I was a police officer serving at Nyanga Police Station. A number of times we were sent to remove Chief Tangwena and his people forcefully. Chief Tangwena insisted that he wanted to stay at his ancestors’ heritage. When we tried to show him on a map the area which had been bought by the whites which included his territory he refused and insisted that he was prepared to show police officers his area physically while they rode on horses and he walked ahead of them. He lost the case in court but refused to abide by the ruling. I saw the brutality which he and his people were subjected to.

This quotation shows that the two issues assisted him to realise that he was called to the ministry. Refusal to perpetuate inhuman treatment of Africans led him into abandoning the police force for the Christian ministry.

This discussion shows that the land issue made African ministers realise that the question of land dispossession was not only in the minds of those Africans who went out for the war of liberation but in all Africans’ minds. The realisation created an awareness of historical land injustice as all Africans were no longer living in their original places. The church was part and parcel of the colonial powers in dispossessing Africans of their inheritance. “We called for the church to retain the pieces of land only necessary schools activities on all mission farms and allocate the rest of the land to tenants but that was in vain” (Chirisa, Marondera, 14/3/11). It shows that the church was not able to redress the challenge. Also the colonial policies did not allow such a move to be taken. The discussion now focuses on racism.

The struggle against racism is one area in which the voice of African ministers was very loud. Racism was practised in both the church and public life. According to Rev.



F. J. Chirisa (Marondera, 14/3/11),

The church operated in a racist environment. Missionaries came to Zimbabwe from a foreign country which regarded itself as a Christian and civilised country. They regarded Africans as pagan and uncivilised. They came to a country that was colonised by people of their kind. While they preached the gospel of love and concern for the poor, the master and servant mentality was maintained in the Wesleyan Methodist Church and other mainline churches. Hence, because of that mentality of civilised and Christian master as opposed to the pagan and uncivilised servant the gospel of Christ was preached but denied in the actual practice.

The same view was echoed by Rev. W. P. Khiyaza (Bulawayo, 17/3/11) who said, “There was discrimination both in church and state, I hated it.” While Rev. E. Museka (Chitungwiza, 13/3/11) had this to say on the subject,

I suffered greatly under the Principal of Nyadiri (an Episcopal Methodist school) in 1961. I taught carpentry and one day the Principal gave me a task to repair some desks. He told me that I should use only twenty dollars to buy the required material and labour. I insisted that the task required thirty six dollars. I was give the thirty six dollars at last and carried out the task. Little did I know that I had angered the Principal? When the Inspector of schools visited the institution that year I had a very productive discussion with him. He put up at the Principal’s house. The following day I was called to the Principal’s office where I was told that I was disciplined. They informed me that I was expelled from the school with immediate effect and given a penalty of six years – during which I was not allowed to teach. A report was sent to the Ministry of Education. I could not ask for an explanation because of racism. I left the teaching field because of racism and worked as a boarding master while preparing to candidate for the ministry.

The quotations above confirm that African ministers were aware of the racial practices in both the church and state. The Wesleyan Methodist Church and other mainline churches like the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches had a dual mandate based on their dual constituencies of mission to Whites and mission to Africans, while churches like the Lutheran and United Congregational Church of Southern Africa had a single mandate (Banana 1996a:250). The concept of the double mandate undermined the unity of fellowship within the church and fuelled racism.

It is necessary to elucidate African ministers’ understanding of racism before

exploring what they said and did against it. According to Banana (1996b:39-40)

Racism refers to any theory or doctrine stating that inherited physical characteristics, such as skin colour, facial features, hair texture, and the like, determine behaviour patterns, personality traits or intellectual abilities. In practice, racism typically takes the form of a claim that some human “races” are superior to others. An abuse of the concept of differences among peoples, it has contributed to prejudice and discrimination among groups in many parts of the world.

Racism is that attitude of mind that basks in the illusion of perceived notions of self importance. It is inspired by one’s physical affinity, pays no regard to the essential value of human beings, which value must be based upon the individual’s character and capacity to exercise relations based upon shared common values.

That was a broad understanding which incorporated experiences of all marginalised people in the world. It showed that racism is a sin that erodes the human family.

Clear African voices against racism were heard in the following activities of some of the interviewees. One respondent said,

There was a time when Rev. J. Roberts proposed that all ministers demonstrate against Ian Smith’s discriminatory policies through a march from Beit Bridge to Salisbury (now Harare). I responded to his letter and speculated my response to colleagues. I stated that his idea of demonstrating against Smith was good but we needed to deal with racism within the church first, for instance disparities in means of travel, stipends, accommodation and others. I told him that unless we solved those issues first I was not prepared to participate in the march and encouraged others to follow suit (Khiyaza, Bulawayo, 17/3/11).

The other interviewee remarked, “I objected to the brutal treatment of Chief Tangwena and his people, just because they were blacks, so much that I left the police force” (Mukandi, Kwe Kwe, 18/3/11). Those were clear African ministers’ voices against racism.

Rev. F.J. Chirisa shared two incidents which exposed his voice against racism. The first one occurred when he was an assistant minister to Rev. J. Roberts in Chivero circuit. Rev. Roberts was a more progressive missionary. He narrated,

After Rev. Roberts had taken me to places which were exclusively for whites; a supermarket and the Post Office in Norton, he introduced me to the Post Master as his colleague who would do Sandringham mission business on his behalf and through the white men's section of the Post Office. He then assigned me the responsibility of being a schools manager for schools in the circuit which covered the whole of Mhondoro rural area. That was supposed to be done by a white minister according to Ministry of Education policies. I was responsible for compiling schools' reports and making requests for the schools to the Church and Ministry of Education. You see, I was thrown into the struggle by Roberts, I had to learn to speak boldly against racism and that I did. It was not easy but I made myself heard (Chirisa, Marondera, 14/3/11).

Here Rev. Chirisa was fortunate to have a mentor in his struggle against racism. Others had to go it without any mentor.

The second incident took place in Manchester when he and Rev. T. Clark were sent for further studies. According to his description Rev. Clark was a staunch supporter of Ian Smith. Rev. Chirisa (Marondera, 14/3/11) went on to say,

I remember when Clark and I were sent to Manchester University by the church one day we were asked to take part in a public debate at the institution. A question was asked, "Since both of you come from Southern Rhodesia how you view the question of equality between whites and blacks?" Clark was the first to respond and he said that for him the question of equality between blacks and whites was not to be thought of in any near future. If the Europeans took so much time to develop from savage to civilised people how much time do Africans need to reach the savage stage? They are too far from the savage stage while whites continue to develop. He said and I quote, "What I can say is that blacks are my brothers but not equal." A question was posed, here is Farai Chirisa what do you say about him? His reply was, "Farai is my brother but is never equal to me.

When it was my turn I said the bible I read and believe tells me that all people are created in the image of God, so both blacks and whites are created in the image of the same God. There is no room for racial discrimination in the image of God, neither is there any in the bible. I charged on, "Since Tony (Clark) has said it today that I am a brother but not equal to him, from now onwards he must stop calling me a brother. If he reads and believes the same bible as I read and believe, then we have a serious problem of interpretation and ministry. For he is moving towards a white heaven, where there is a white God, while my ministry is towards a heaven for all races, where there is God, the creator of all people." I tell you, there was commotion in the institution from that day. When

we return Rev. Clark served for one year and he resigned from the ministry and later migrated to Australia.

That was a clear African voice which could not be heard even from European soil. From this discussion it can be said safely that African Wesleyan Methodist ministers joined their counterparts in challenging racism both in church and state. Africans had activities against racism as depicted in this discussion it is worthy to note how the African voice was heard during the Federation of Southern and Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

The position taken in this study is that the Central African Federation was formed as a response to the African franchise question. Prior to the Federation the African voice against the nonparticipation of Africans in the political processes in Zimbabwe was heard through Rev. T. Samkange and his colleagues. Ranger (1995:88-94) traced Rev. Samkange's nationalist aspirations and developments which saw him assume the position of President for the Southern Rhodesia Bantu Congress in 1943. Rev. Samkange rose to that position because of his qualities which were identified by prominent members of the Congress at that time. The Congress leaders desired it to become a mass membership organisation, to shift from focusing on elitist issues to addressing concerns of all Africans who were marginalised and to have a national outlook (Ranger 1995: 93). What was needed was a suitable leader to take the Congress to the desired level and Rev. Samkange, a progressive African minister, was chosen to take up the task. Banana (1996b:137) describe Rev. Samkange as an outstanding African minister as shown in the quotation below.

Thompson (Samkange) had an expressed and patent radicalism that catapulted him into political power. He had expressed sentiments towards African nationalism even well before 1943 and his admirable record of organisation stood him in good stead when a leader was being sought after. Unlike most of other African ministers of his day, Samkange was a man of mettle, refusing to buckle down under the immense pressure of white missionary subjectivism.

The African voice was clear in Samkange's activities. His political awareness was influenced by Gandi and Albert Luthuli and through his efforts by the late 1950s

political awareness among the African Wesleyan Methodist Church had reached appreciable levels (Banana 1996b:137), thus increasing African voice.

According to Rev. Kiyaza (Bulawayo, 17/3/11) the formation of the Federation was a blessing to Africans. It was an official platform through which Africans were allowed to express themselves politically. The major problem about the Federation was that whites still maintained their superiority over Africans (Matemavi, Harare, 16/3/11). The insistence on white superiority hindered free participation by Africans. Rev. Z. Magoronga (Harare, 16/3/11) argued that the concept of white superiority over blacks and the denial of space for African participation in an official arrangement (Federation) accelerated revolutionary tendencies among Africans. From that point of view the Federation was a blessing in disguise for Africans. Through it they realised that their exploitation by whites could not be solved through a common understanding and arrangement, what they needed was independence from white rule.

Rev. Chirisa (Marondera, 14/3/11) pointed out that the central problem with the Federation was the disparities inherent in the system and continued discrimination against Africans. Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland realised that the disparity in distribution of resources benefited Southern Rhodesia, so African nationalists led by Kaunda and Banda respectively fought the Federation fearlessly (Chirisa, Marondera, 14/3/11). On this issue Kiyaza (Bulawayo, 17/3/11) added that even in Southern Rhodesia wealth accumulated through the Federation did not reach and improve Africans' lives, so the problem was with the whites more than with the system. Hence the calls for independence from white rule.

The voice of African ministers under discussion in this section revealed that the Federation provided a paradigm shift in the fight against racism in Zimbabwe. The earlier paradigm focused on fighting for African acceptance, integration and direct participation in socio-political and religious spheres. The new paradigm focused on independence from white rule and British influence. It is important to see how the



new paradigm propelled the armed struggle in Zimbabwe.

When the radical whites realised that the Federation had given Africans some courage and it was about to collapse, they framed a way forward. The Rhodesia Front, a white supremacist party was elected into power in 1962 and Ian Smith moved swiftly to replace Winston Field as the leader of the party because of his insistence on independence from Britain (Banana 1989:200). Their aim was to reverse the advances made by Africans and assert white supremacy more profoundly. Their move resulted in the UDI.

When the Federation collapsed and Smith was in power, he announced his UDI in 1965. African voices against the UDI led to the armed struggle against the white regime. Within the church there were three groups as a result of views on war. Some ministers, mainly whites were opposed to the armed struggle because they saw it as terrorism and retrogressive which would reverse progress made so far. For them the government's use of arms against African freedom fighters was justified as defending the nation from terrorism. Another group, mainly progressive black ministers supported the armed struggle because for them war was the only language the defiant colonial powers could hear. People had been pushed to the wall and there was no option but to take up arms. Armed struggle was a reaction to direct action that sought to keep Africans as slaves on their land. The third group, both white and black ministers felt that it was not right to support fighting because it involved killing and the church was not to be seen involved in violence whatever the circumstances. That group suggested negotiation as the way forward but it was too late (Chirisa, Marondera, 14/3/11).

It is clear from the quotation that Africans viewed the UDI as an attempt by whites to assert their dominance over blacks permanently. Africans had to develop a new strategy and armed struggle was the strategy. How the church reacted to the new strategy is what the discussion focuses on now.

One of the brave and loud African voices against the UDI came from Rev. Banana. He argued that the mainline churches, Wesleyan Methodists included, followed what they termed the moral opposition to the threats of UDI. In April 1964 the heads of denominations met to deliberate on the proposal for UDI and issued a statement which



was dismissed as “... strangely hypocritical in that it argues that the Smith regime was a legitimate and constitutional government, ignoring the fact that the vast majority of the governed had no part in the election of the regime”(Banana 1989:2001). The church was guilty of issuing mild and ambiguous responses to an act that was tragic because of their loyalty to the British crown as opposed to the Africans’ plight (Banana 1989:202). The tragic act had to be redressed through armed forces.

The armed struggle against colonialism vexed the Wesleyan Methodist church more than any other issue. While the official position of the church stated that Wesleyan Methodists should not support any violence that did not deter African ministers from participating in the armed struggle actively. As seen from the interview results Rev. J. Chirisa (Marondera ,14/3/11) participated in fundraising and mobilisation of resources for freedom fighters based in Mozambique when he was in Manchester in 1975. Rev. Matemavi (Harare, 16/3/11) provided food, clothes and moral support to freedom fighters, while Rev. Kadenge assisted those injured during the war, both civilians and freedom fighters, through ferrying them to hospital in a mission vehicle. On that subject Rev. Z. Magoronga (Harare, 16/3/11) said he was very happy with the war and although he did not get an opportunity to go and fight he supported freedom fighters with supplies.

There were three African Wesleyan Methodist ministers, Rev. G. Chombo, Rev. A.Kanodereka and Rev. E. Jaja, whose participation in the war of liberation surpassed others. The three were assassinated because of their political activities and involvement in the war. Rev. Chombo’s widow had this to say about his involvement in politics,

My husband was seriously involved in politics. He belonged to the United African National Congress (UANC) led by Bishop Muzorewa. I did not like it, for me he was confusing the ministry with politics. He refused to share with me their activities. He met with other politicians and freedom fighters. After the war in 1986 he was killed. I did not get information about his death and he never shared of any threats. I only heard people suggest that he was killed for his political activities (Chombo, Harare, 15/3/11).

Rev. Chombo was very active in politics especially activities bordering on liberation war (Khiyaza, 17/3/11). That was an African voice against colonialism.

Of the three ministers who were assassinated because of political activities, Rev. Kanoderaka was the most outstanding. His widow narrated,

My husband was politically minded and he put that into practice. When we were in Masvingo our superintendent, Rev. Right, was annoyed by his (Kanoderaka's) political stance and activities and pushed for his transfer to a very remote rural area where he could not meet with those Africans who were politically minded. Rev. Right was not happy with my husband and his friend Rev. Jiri of the Church of Christ, who was also stationed in Masvingo. The pair organised political meetings in the town and it was public knowledge. My husband had become the secretary of the UANC by that time. We were transferred to Mt. Darwin area at our superintendent's insistence (Kanoderaka, Harare, 15/3/11).

Rev. Magoronga (Harare, 16/3/11), Rev. Matemavi (Harare, 16/3/11) and Rev. Khiyaza (Bulawayo, 17/3/11) concurred with Mrs Kanoderaka that Rev. Kanoderaka was the national secretary of the UANC.

Rev. Kanoderaka saw political liberation as part of the ministry, hence his involvement in political activities directly. In a Masvingo Circuit Quarterly Meeting he was asked to stop the political activities by his superintendent and he responded, "... even Jesus had concerned for people and their liberation. Having a black skin does not mean one is inferior" (Kanoderaka, Harare, 15/3/11). In 1967 he managed to communicate with Mr R. Manyika who was in Mozambique. He attempted to crossover to Mozambique and failed. The reason is known. He was arrested by police and returned after two weeks. He shared with me that he had intended to go to Mozambique and was held and questioned by police about the matter. He said three things motivated him to think of going to war which are the colonial government was not treating us as human beings, the church was not fair on Africans and a desire to pray for preparations for war in Mozambique (Kanoderaka, Harare, 15/3/11).

Mrs Kanodereka went on to narrate,

He (Kanodereka) used to meet with top political figures in the likes of Josiah Tongogara. He transported a lot of those who crossed over to Mozambique from the Mt Darwin area as far as St Albert's School. He met with freedom fighters that had come to strategise and plan for the war. He also used profit from our butchery to provide for freedom fighters. He was reported to the police at Mt Darwin and he was arrested several times. One night our manse was surrounded by soldiers and we had a voice say, "Just fire" and another voice said, "There are innocent souls in there." It was Mr Starvos a white businessman who had accompanied them who saved us. They called my husband out and went with him to our car where they touched and felt the engine was cold. They asked him to report to the police station the following day. He did likewise but refused to tell me what went on at the police station. He only said, "I hate these whites, they took our land forcefully, reduced us to slaves and now they want to silence us." He was annoyed by being referred to as 'boy' by whites (Kanodereka, Harare, 15/3/11).

The quotation shows that Rev. Kanodereka was determined to see the colonial government overthrown. His passion for Africans' freedom was rooted in faith in Jesus who healed and liberated people. However, his political involvement started to be a threat to his family as his widow remembered,

One day he was summoned to the police station where he was asked to explain the origins and meaning of a paper which was in the hands of soldiers which stated that there were plans for our family to be helped to cross over to Mozambique. He later confessed to me that the plans were authentic, he had made arrangements but as to how the soldiers got the paper he did not know. From that time he was arrested and detained many times and our manse was monitored by police every day. Life became unbearable and I called Rev. Ndhlela requesting that we be moved with immediate effect if the church still cared for us. The same year, 1974, we were transferred to Mbare (Kanodereka, Harare, 15/3/11).

What happened in Mt Darwin shows that the church's desire to control and silence Rev. Kanodereka's political voice through sending him to a remote rural area yielded undesired results. His voice was heard even louder. He was moved to Harare and by 1975 freedom fighters had already traced him and started visiting his office at Mbare Methodist Church (Kanodereka, Harare, 15/3/11). Rev. Matemavi (Harare 16/3/11)

confirmed that freedom fighters visited Rev. Kanodereka in Mbare and supplies for freedom fighters were channelled through his office. It is important to note that while Rev. Kanodereka was the national secretary of UANC, he worked so well with the ZANLA freedom fighters. The UANC was led by Bishop Muzorewa while ZANLA was the armed force of Mugabe's ZANU.

In 1975 two critical things took place which made Rev. Kanodereka's voice against colonialism more audible.

The Wesleyan Methodist Salisbury Area Council met at Sandringham school. In that meeting there was a very hot debate on ministers' involvement in politics. The majority of white ministers argued that under no circumstances should ministers be involved in politics. Arthur (Rev, Kanodereka) stood up and said "You white ministers here present in your religious regalia, at night you put on camouflage and shoot us but you say blacks should not be involved in politics. We will not stop but from now we are going to do it in public." Rev. Rea was very angry and said Rev. Kanodereka needed to be cautioned. My husband charged and said blacks were not allowed in First Street, not allowed to buy what was deemed whites' preserve and blacks were segregated against by whites. Were Christians going to continue to keep quiet? He said the boundaries imposed on Africans by whites in our God given country were against God's plan. He was asked to withdraw his statement and apologise but he refused. It came as a surprise to me when it was time for elections my husband was elected to become the new chairman of the Area Council (Kanodereka, Harare, 15/3/11).

Rev. Kanodereka's brevity earned him two things; increased hatred by extremist white missionaries and confidence and trust from those who were sympathetic to the African cause. He was elected to be chairman of the Area Council because of the confidence and trust from the majority.

Another important development in 1975 was Rev. Kanodereka's involvement in the Moral Re-Armament of Southern Rhodesia. Through that he got an opportunity to interact with Ian Smith, Eric Smith and other white politicians (Kanodereka, Harare, 15/3/11). His participation in the Moral Re-Armament was confirmed by Rev. W.P. Khinyaza (Bulawayo, 17/3/11) who was introduced to the organisation by Rev. Kanodereka.

Our participation in the Moral Re-Armament exposed my husband. He tried to convince Ian Smith that the colonial regime's way of addressing the political crisis would not work. At that time my husband introduced evening prayers at Mbare and invited colleagues in the Moral Re-Armament. We prayed for the country. The prayer meetings were ecumenical and at times freedom fighters attended the prayer meetings.

The involvement of many of the diverse groups at that time was a great risk.

However, Rev. Kanodereka's organising skills helped him to contain the pressure exerted on him. Things went well for him and in 1976 he was among the UANC's delegation to the Geneva talks.

At the Geneva talks he (Rev. Kanodereka) met most of the leaders of the armed struggle for Zimbabwe. He realised that there problems in terms of how to reach a settlement. Rev. Banana and he crossed over from Bishop Muzorewa to Robert Mugabe's camp. In addition to that he joined Rev. Chigwida, Mrs Sabina Mugabe and Rev. Banana in forming the People's Movement, which aimed at uniting the various political groups. Muzorewa was angered by the developments. In 1977 we provided an office for the People's Movement in our house (Kanodereka, Harare, 15/3/11).

The quotation shows that Rev. Kanodereka was deeply involved in politics and did not allow anything to silence his voice. He wanted the African voice to be one in order to overthrow colonialism. A serious blow came with the Chimoi bombing.

Rev Kanodereka went with Mr Byron Hove to the scene. He spoke through Radio Mozambique and denounced the activity. He said, "I don't want to be led by a blind man (Muzorewa) who does not realise that these children are fighting for their country." While he was on his way back Evelyn Kawonza (Muzorewa's secretary) advised me to meet my husband in South Africa and give him money so that he would go to London instead of coming back home. There were threats on his life because of what he said through Radio Mozambique. When he called I told him about the threats but he was adamant. He returned home and continued with his political activities (Kanodereka, Harare, 15/3/11).

Rev. Kanodereka met his death in a dramatic way. On 15 December 1978 he met Ian Smith and discussed proposals for the political settlement. He tried to convince Smith that Mugabe was a Christian and the following day Smith was on air saying he had been informed by a reliable source that Robert Mugabe was a Christian. On the 18<sup>th</sup>

of December 1978 he was assassinated by Smith's agents. In that way the illustrious son of the soil met his death. The day he was assassinated he was supposed to meet with Bishop Muzorewa to explain why he decided to cross the floor to Mugabe's side (Kanoderka, Harare, 15/3/11).

Another African Wesleyan Methodist minister who was assassinated because of political activities was Rev. E. Jaja (Kadenge, Harare, 15/3/11). The same was confirmed by Rev. Matemavi (Harare, 16/3/11) and Mrs Jaja (Chitungwiza, 21/3/11). According to his widow he was very political,

My husband was very active in politics but he did not want me to know about the actual activities. He told me that his theological training introduced him to politics. He was a close friend of Rev. Kanoderka and both used to say the bible was full of politics. He was killed in Masvingo. He told me that he was invited by Christians at Mapanzure Church in Masvingo. The next thing I was told is that he was killed by freedom fighters but the reasons were not unveiled to me (Jaja, Chitungwiza, 21/3.11).

The above testimony shows that Rev. Jaja voiced against colonialism. Rev. Matemavi (Harare, 16/3/11) added that Rev. Jaja died in Masvingo when he was sent by Bishop Muzorewa to go round the country announcing a cease fire and calling freedom fighters to come back home after Muzorewa and Ian Smith agreed on an internal settlement of 1978. Rev. Jaja had not read the changing situation properly. Most of his colleagues, including Rev. Kanoderka, had realised that the negotiation between Muzorewa and Smith was not recognised by African nationalists who were on the war front.

A very vivid and audible African voice against colonialism and in support of the liberation war came from Rev. C. S. Banana (1996b:206-233) who devoted a chapter on the church's response to the liberation war under a suggestive chapter title, 'The traumatic issue of the programme to combat racism' which is very informative. In that chapter Banana discussed extensively responses from the mainline churches, the Wesleyan Methodist Church included, and from the ecumenical movement to the WCC Programme to Combat Racism. What is important is to note that Banana lamented the blunt statements from the ecumenical movement, failure by the church



to reflect theologically on the programme and the Wesleyan Methodist Synod's vote against the programme. To that end Banana (1996b:219) was disappointed by the church's resolution and wrote,

... resolution of Synod is a clear case of a church that missed a grand opportunity that had presented itself in the WCC/PCR issue. The points of divergence were pointedly conspicuous and all who were politically conscious endured excruciating crises of conscience. Among those who felt dismayed by the official Methodist stance was myself. So deeply was I affected by what I perceived as the undermining of the chances of the struggle for Zimbabwe, that I felt driven to resign from my Methodist Church. My letter, written in a painful frame of mind, addressed to Ndhlela ...

The above exposes how much Banana was prepared to say and do for the success of the struggle for Zimbabwe. He resigned from the Wesleyan Methodist Church as a result of his stance as opposed to that of the church. The resignation in 1971 was confirmed by Rev. F. Chirisa (Marondera, 14/3/11) and Rev. W.P. Khiyaza (Bulawayo, 17/3/11). It is clear that Banana spoke, wrote and acted against colonial repression.

Before focusing on findings from the interview and other primary data which were discussed above it is necessary to consider data provided through a questionnaire. The aim is to find out how Wesleyan Methodist leaders in 2008 viewed the role of the church during the colonial era. As pointed above in the section on methodology, the study assumed that the leaders' responses were affected by political developments in the independent Zimbabwe.

#### **5.4 Findings from data on African ministers' participation in politics**

Oral data as well as other primary sources discussed in this chapter have revealed the following findings. The land problem was a very serious issue for African ministers. They used their theological training, influential positions in areas they served and trust from communities to spread awareness on the problem and to challenge colonial land policies. African ministers encountered racism in church and the community at



large. They became aware of the fact that Christian ministry was not just about worshipping but it meant improving people's lives, being involved in people's struggles, being brave and standing against the tide as well as having the mind that was in Christ. From that awareness African Wesleyan Methodist ministers joined forces with their counterparts from other denominations and a few missionaries, who had the African cause at heart, in fighting racism.

On the Federation of Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland African ministers were divided. Some saw the Federation as a positive development because of its acceleration of the spread and fusion of African nationalistic ideas and strategies. The other group saw it as a negative development because of the perpetration of white dominance over blacks and the unfair distribution of resources during the period.

The data show that African Wesleyan Methodist ministers had a lot of activities related to the liberation war. They supported the war through fundraising, supplying food, clothes and other necessities, caring for the wounded freedom fighters, participating in strategic planning, and providing transport for those who were crossing over to neighbouring countries to be trained as freedom fighters as well as providing moral support. Most of these activities were done with the full knowledge of the church. The ministers on the other hand were aware of the official stance of the church. Their conviction that the war was justifiable theologically propelled them into the activities. The ministers were prepared to face any consequence as some were hated and tortured by conservative missionaries, resigned temporarily from the Wesleyan Methodist Church while others were assassinated.

Involvement in the political activities in support of freedom fighters was a risky business. Progressive Wesleyan Methodists were committed to the liberation of the Africans so much that not to be involved was more risky than being involved. Freedom fighters needed their assistance seriously.

Freedom fighters needed supplies. It was the man of the church who had the means for going to town. He had transport, he could be trusted. There was a lot of cooperation between freedom fighters, local people and the church. That is how the churches got involved, but I do not want to give you the impression that every church person had a similar mentality (Mutume 1991:144).

The quotation shows that progressive Wesleyan Methodists and their counterparts in other denominations had no option besides providing freedom fighters with supplies for the struggle for independence to be successful.

These findings point out that the African Wesleyan Methodist ministers' voice in the Zimbabwean colonial era was very loud. The voice was influenced by John Wesley's political teaching. It is necessary to compare how the Africa voice was heard through the archival material and oral sources. The next chapter focuses on the issue as the study analyses the two sets of data.

## AN ANALYSIS OF ZIMBABWEAN WESLEYAN METHODISTS' POLITICAL PRAXIS

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter analyses the Wesleyan Methodists' political activities as they are presented in chapters four and five above. The analysis starts with a general overview of the period under study before analysing the four themes explored in this study and finally focusing on a theological evaluation of the political praxis.

### **6.2 Insights from Zimbabwean colonial context**

There are seven important points revealed through the above (in chapter two) discussion on the Zimbabwean colonial context. The conquest of Zimbabwe by the BSAC and the subsequent annexation of the country led to the demarcation of land and the displacement of blacks which was accompanied by violence in some cases. Black Zimbabweans lost their right to land in that process as farms and land holdings were introduced. They were squeezed into reserves which were over populated and that became a thorn in the flesh for Africans in Zimbabwe. The voices of progressive ministers, both missionaries and Africans, like John White, Arthur Shearly Cripps (Andrews 1935:14&121), Matthew Zvimba (Ranger 1995:27) and Thompson Samkange (Ranger 1995:26) helped shape the history of the church in the country in relation to politics of land.

The second point is that retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists collaborated with the colonial regime in Zimbabwe in usurping kings, chiefs and other traditional leaders' legitimate authority and power. It called for combined efforts from religious and political imperialists to transform the Zimbabwean socio-political landscape in favour of white settlers. Progressive Wesleyan Methodists challenged the collaboration and

called for equality.

The third issue is that for more than fifty years in Zimbabwe retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis provided moral justification for British imperialism in the country. Their dual goal of converting Africans to Christianity and social change was exploited by colonialists as a vital means of exerting power over black Zimbabweans. Their role in the enactment of laws to govern the country, support for repressive legislation and enforcement of colonial policies in church business and mission farms demonstrated their moral justification of the whole imperial enterprise. Their justification programme did not go on unchallenged. They were always at pains to try to explain or suppress the voices of progressive ministers. As shown in chapter four the official stance of the church ignored the voices of progressive ministers. However, that did not quench the zeal and determination of the progressive ministers.

The fourth point is that Wesleyan Methodists collaborated with colonialists in relegating black Zimbabweans into subjects rather than remaining as citizens in their own country. That led to terrible discrimination against blacks both in church and society at large. Africans in Zimbabwe were reduced to the level of minors as paternalism and authoritarianism took their toll on Africans' rights and self-determination. That led some blacks to be compelled into forced labour on farms, mines and other sectors. The discrimination against Africans was denounced first by progressive missionaries from various denominations with Rev. John White and Rev. Arthur Shearly Cripps (Andrews 1935:41&118) leading the way.

Formal education which was introduced by Wesleyan Methodists and other denominations proved to be a valuable way of accompanying blacks in Zimbabwe towards political emancipation. Through formal education Africans acquired important knowledge which enabled them to expose evil principles that underpinned discrimination against blacks in Zimbabwe. Formal education gave birth to a mission-educated elite which comprised of groups such as clergy as Rev. Matthew

Zvimba (Ranger 1995:27), Rev. Thompson Samkange (Ranger 1995:74), Rev. Esau Nemapare (Ranger 1995:25) and Rev, Matthew Rusike (Banana 1996a: 125) , civil servants, politicians, African nationalists and trade unionists. The mission-educated elite, which included African ministers whose voice was clearly heard as shown in chapter five above while suppressed in official stance of the church, were responsible and active participants in the Zimbabwean political arena. Their involvement was rewarded with the elimination of discrimination against blacks and colonialism in 1980.

The sixth point is that there was serious deliberate cultural imperialism employed by both colonialists and retrogressive missionaries to suffocate African cultures in Zimbabwe. Their aim was to replace Zimbabwean cultures with a British variety of modern culture. Major targets of cultural imperialism were family life, roles between women and men, marriage customs, burial of the dead and African communalism among others. The official position of retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists spread cultural imperialism in Zimbabwe while progressive missionaries and African ministers laboured against that development. The African voice prevailed and Zimbabwe finally achieved independence in 1980.

The seventh point is that there existed a relationship between religious and political-ideological beliefs which were knit closely in the imperial strategies of political supremacy, imperial rule, cultural displacement, economic plundering and religious superiority (Roberts 2008:4). That resulted in the centralisation of worship, led by whites and white trained clergy or evangelists. The displacement of an African traditional way of worship with Christianity had far reaching political implications. It compelled Africans to adjust their world view which led to an identity crisis for most black Christians in Zimbabwe. The voice of African ministers targeted the marriage between retrogressive missionaries and colonisers, and they succeeded in conquering them through a similar strategy. As seen in chapter five above, African ministers joined forces with African nationalists and participated in the liberation struggle in

various ways.

After this general view on the political arena in Zimbabwe during the colonial era the study now focuses on the analysis the Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis in terms of the themes explored in the study. The analysis was based on a comparison of chapters four and five.

### **6.3 Politics of land in Zimbabwe**

We began the analysis of Wesleyan Methodist political praxis with a consideration of factors related to the politics of land in Zimbabwe. This analysis was based on the assertion of the clash of rights. According to this assertion whenever two races or more meet and claims of legitimacy are made there is a clash of rights. The manner in which one race cherishes and exploits resources at the disposal of all races claiming a legitimate right to the same resources differ. In such situations clashes are bound to characterise race relationships. The clash of rights emerges as a result of a conflict between legality and justice. So questions such as who has a legal right to the claim being disputed arise. How is the process of demanding that right related to the justice issue when compared to claims of others groups? Important to note is that something may be legal but also unjust. In this concept legality is based on legal systems while justice on fairness and obligation. Claims to legitimacy are linked to issues of existence and survival closely. The clash of rights was used in an interpretation of Wesleyan Methodist political teaching in relation to politics of land in Zimbabwe.

When the Rudd Concession (Davidson 1984:138) was signed on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1888, the BSAC aimed at prospecting for gold in Zimbabwe. After realising that there were difficulties in prospecting gold they turned to making wealth through land. The conquest and annexation of Zimbabwe first as a British protectorate and later as a colony ushered in a new dispensation on land ownership and use. As a protectorate

Zimbabwean land became British property. There was no consent from Zimbabweans and no transaction entered into between Zimbabweans and British. It was a unilateral takeover of ownership by the British and in 1923 the ownership was transferred to a settler government in Zimbabwe. With that a stage was set for a clash of rights to land. Whites used legal justification for their claim to land ownership and use. The legal system employed was British. The Africans' claim to land ownership and use was based on justice. Whites found blacks living on the land and using it for survival. The conquest of Zimbabwe was violent so the whites' claim to land was unfair, thus unjust.

The tension which characterised the Wesleyan Methodist witness in the country was largely based on the concept of clash of rights. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists based their position and activities on the BSAC and colonial legal system. They pushed for the implementation of the legal system to the spirit of the letter regardless of its negative impact on Africans. Africans were expected to be passive spectators as whites dictated the developments. On the other hand progressive Wesleyan Methodists, as we have seen in both chapters four and five, based their voices on the question of fairness and justice. Africans were supposed to be treated justly in whatever the nation did. The two positions were irreconcilable and the two wings of Wesleyan Methodism ran parallel to each other until the country got its independence in 1980.

Once in control, from 1930 onwards, the colonial government in Zimbabwe became obsessed with efforts to expropriate the vast majority of land in the country for ownership and use by the white minority. The colonial government's central aim was to secure for a minority white community exclusive ownership and use of most of the valuable land in the country such as what happened in South Africa (Gibson 2009:11). Pieces of legislation aimed at dispossessing blacks of their land were adopted by the BSAC and then colonial government. For example in 1894 the Gwai and Shangani reserves were created, in 1905 sixty reserves were established



throughout the country by the BSAC, and in 1922 the BSAC compelled sixty four percent of Africans in Zimbabwe to live in reserves (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009:66).

Examples of legislation by the colonial government are the Land Apportionment Act 1930 (Alexander 2006:32-33, 73-74), Maize Control Act 1931 (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 14 January, 1932) and Cattle Levy Act 1934 (Alexander 2006:24).

Progressive Wesleyan Methodists opposed these pieces of legislation and pushed for better treatment and more arable land for Africans.

A comparison between the South African developments and Zimbabwean situation exposed interesting facts. According to Berglund (1991:43-44) the South African Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 asserted that South Africa was primarily a white man's country. Hence the concerted effort "...to restrict land ownership possibilities in order to avoid African possession of it...With the Nationalist Party in power, land ownership issues were articulated further and subsequently developed into the Homeland policies" (Berglund 1991:44). The Zimbabwean land politics, as seen from the Land Apportionment Act 1930, Maize Control Act 1931, Cattle Levy Act 1934 and Land Tenure Act 1969 as discussed in chapter four, followed the South African style to a greater extent. First the country was made a white man's property and then the land was designated as European and African. Africans were squeeze into reserves a concept which was similar to Homelands in South Africa.

Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists assisted in the endeavour through participation in enactment of segregate laws, enforcement of colonial policies on land especially on their mission farms and encouraging their converts to abide by colonial rules. The legal system which was enacted by whites without any contribution from Africans in Zimbabwe was used to justify the minority whites' claim on land and its use. When retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists started to call for land reconciliation from the late 1930s, for instance a call for government to increase the area for reserves (Hre, WMA SM 1935), they had realised that black Zimbabweans were treated unfairly. However, the calls were not implemented as such calls were just an attempt to show Africans

that they cared for them.

Land allocations marginalised blacks and pushed them into overcrowded reserves. The mission-educated elite in Zimbabwe contended that there was no fairness in land ownership and use between blacks and whites. Whites were a minority yet they owned and used the majority of land in Zimbabwe while the black majority owned and used a minority of the land. The mission-educated elite pointed out that the competing claims to land were grounded in competing concepts of legality and justice. For instance, whites used legal concepts like rule of law, due process and property rights among others, while blacks pointed out to injustices of colonialism such as racial discrimination, restrictions and the unfairness of legal systems which were used to force blacks off their land into reserves. In church circles the dichotomy was represented by retrogressive ministers and progressive ministers respectively. So the problem of land reconciliation during colonialism in Zimbabwe was a conflict between legality and justice, thus a clash of rights.

The land question in Zimbabwe was more than just an important policy issue. It encompassed land justice issues that stemmed from historical injustice. Historical injustice refers,

... to injustices committed in a setting that has become historical by virtue of some fundamental and lasting change in socio-political structure such as the end of slavery, colonial rule, or non-representative government. Because of the break in continuity all these situations raise the question of how political institutions should deal with injustices that are not their own making (Du Bois 2008:116).

The quotation which refers to the South African context is also reflective of the Zimbabwean situation. Colonialism left a profound legacy of unrequited demands for land justice. That occurred through its system of forced removal of blacks, restrictions on occupied land and creation of reserves which saw millions of blacks dispossessed of their land and land rights. For progressive Wesleyan Methodist ministers land issues exposed the existence of a profound racial difference and whites

owned land illegitimately. So while retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist missionaries later advocated in favour of land reconciliation, progressive Wesleyan Methodists called for a reversal of the whole enterprise.

For progressive ministers land was one of the most pressing issues in the country throughout the colonial era. While land was important for both whites and blacks, the scale tilted in favour of blacks. A black person having no land to settle on and use was viewed as incomplete. He felt a special attachment to sacred places like locations where elders of the family were buried, ancestral sites and communal worship sites. For him land was dear, having it was more important than having money (Gibson 2009:38). In reality land was a symbol of all that blacks were robbed of through colonialism. That propelled progressive Wesleyan Methodists to participate actively in political activities through advocacy and later protests, party politics and the war of liberation as exposed in chapters four and five above.

An interpretation of Wesleyan Methodists' political involvement in politics of land in Zimbabwe using the clash of rights exposed important aspects of land ownership and use. At this point it is worthwhile to delineate the implications of these findings. Conclusions unearthed from both archival and oral sources are to a large extent similar to what Gibson (2009:83-84) uncovered for the South African context which are as follows;

(1) Land ownership and use was one of the most pressing issues for Zimbabweans, both blacks and whites. Wesleyan Methodists were aware of it and attempted to persuade the colonial government to implement land reconciliation in vain.

(2) Africans in Zimbabwe assigned a deep symbolic significance to land. They had strong attachments to land and land was more than just a simple economic issue. This was not comprehended by whites whose attitudes to land were defined through economic advantages to a large extent. Missionaries, including Wesleyan Methodists,



were not spared from such attitudes.

(3) Blacks' views of causes of their contemporary land inequality were simply white invasion, conquest and colonialism. For whites the inequality was based on blacks' shortcomings and immaturity. Wesleyan Methodists laboured to convince the white minority to accept that from the 1930s onwards blacks demonstrated a level of maturity which proved that they could be treated as citizens rather than subjects. They challenged blacks to embrace co-existence as a strategy for redressing land imbalances. Blacks were focused on a reversal of colonialism which made the Wesleyan Methodists' task impossible.

(4) Whites were insensitive to the land crimes of their time. Whenever they negotiated with blacks both parties were reminded of justice, whites claimed that the past was of less significance and solutions sought were to concentrate on their present and future. Blacks claimed that justice implicated both the past and present. The feuding parties' positions on land were rooted deeply in conflicting value systems so much that reconciliation was impossible. That explains why Wesleyan Methodists failed to avoid war when they mediated between blacks and whites.

(5) Blacks were concerned with historical land injustices because of displacements, restrictions and overcrowding in reserves. They held a land grievance which was rooted in discrimination against blacks. The number of those aggrieved swelled rather than decreased as more blacks came to realise that their appalling conditions resulted from colonialism and discrimination against blacks.

(6) Land issues were powerful motivators for blacks' involvement in political activities in Zimbabwe.

(7) Whites refused to acknowledge the magnitude of the land injustices they committed against blacks throughout the colonial era in Zimbabwe. They lent a deaf

ear to Africans' claims which declared that land had a symbolic meaning for blacks, so land issues had to go beyond material considerations.

What all this amounts to is that land issues triggered fierce tension which was volatile and threatened to destabilise the church throughout the period under study as progressive and retrogressive ministers fought in Synods, meetings and service. Proactive and effective political leaders who could address the discontentment among Africans were needed. Each camp laboured for such leadership as Africans' expectations escalated. Unsatisfied expectations based on land injustice were cancerous to national security and resulted in the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. Let us now focus on the analysis of race relationships.

#### **6.4 Race relationships**

It is the contention of this study that during the colonial era in Zimbabwe race was understood as a collection of people who shared a common genetic inheritance and were distinguished from others by biological factors. Race relationships were based on racism, a belief that political or social conclusions can be derived from an idea that people are divided into distinct races biologically. According to Heywood (2007:221) racist theories are based on two assumptions; there are fundamental genetic or species-type differences among human beings and that the genetic categories are reflected in intellectual, cultural and moral differences which make them politically or socially important. As seen from chapters four and five political and social racism were practised in colonial Zimbabwe as government and churches sponsored white superiority over Africans. It was unfortunate that a systematic and well developed form of racism which was based on assumptions about nature, capacities and destinies of different racial groups was employed in colonial Zimbabwe. The assumptions had religious justification, for instance whites' attitudes towards blacks were justified by the alleged superiority of the Christian European people over the Africans. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist missionaries were

caught up in that web.

It is important to note that religion should not be abused for political power.

According to Modise (1991:19) the apartheid system in South Africa abused religion for political power which he pointed out rightly that it was wrong. He was speaking on the role of the church in South Africa during the struggle for independence and after the struggle. Modise (1991:18) contended that the role of the church does not stem from “special rights for churches” but from its involvement in the struggle against colonialism and the oppressive forces it employs against the marginalised. In Zimbabwe retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists and their counterparts in other denominations abused religion for political power but to a lesser degree than the apartheid system in South Africa. Progressive Wesleyan Methodists were correct when they fought against colonialism and racial discrimination, for that defined the role of the church as a liberating force.

Race relationships during colonial Zimbabwe can be interpreted comprehensively through two models. The first one is that government exists to protect its citizens' rights (Van Vuuren 1983:143). From both religious and non-religious perspectives every government has an absolute obligation to protect its citizens. Governments fulfil that obligation through making collective decisions for their respective nations and communities that comprise the nation. Decisions made are enforced for the benefit of the nation. A central concept in this model is that government is concerned mainly with political activity (Van Vuuren 1983:143) which is in two categories, process type, that deals with substance or character of decisions to be made and procedural type that deals with ways or procedures by which issues are to be resolved. The conditions under which a government can fulfil its absolute obligation exist when there are democratic structures (De Gruchy 1995:22-23), such institutions as legislature, executive, judiciary, political parties, business sector, trade unions, religious bodies, and other interest groups (Blondel 1973:17). Each structure should be given space to contribute to the political activity. The outcome expected is the

well-being of a nation which is measured by the degree to which citizens experience justice, peace, stability and prosperity. In terms of this model how much did the Zimbabwean colonial government achieve for their citizens in terms of race relationships? It is also important to explore how much Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe achieved through their political teaching as they addressed race relationships during the colonial period.

Here the study begins with laws enacted and enforced during Zimbabwe's colonial era, such as the Maize Control Act 1931, Land Apportionment Act 1931, Native Land Husbandry Act 1951 and Land Tenure Act 1969, among others. In a government which exists to protect its citizens laws are very important. Government was expected to focus on protecting individual and group rights; it needed to ensure that nobody violated others' rights. The BSAC and colonial government fell short of the expected. Their laws segregated Africans as we saw in chapters four and five. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists also fell short of the expectation as they paid lip service to Africans and enforced the colonial discriminative laws and policies. That became virgin land for progressive Wesleyan Methodists' activities.

The government is supposed to come up with specification of what kind of actions ought not to be done through laws. Those who break the laws are punished through retaliatory force. Laws that were enacted and enforced by the BSAC and colonial government in Zimbabwe were discriminatory against Africans so they failed to serve the nation. In that sense the colonial government initiated force against black Zimbabweans. Whites were justified by laws in acting against blacks, without blacks' consent which was immoral and infringed their human rights. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists were found wanting in the same manner as they segregated against African ministers in church affairs and promoted implementation of discriminatory colonial rules.

For progressive Wesleyan Methodists the laws of the land during colonial Zimbabwe



fell short of national expectations. Laws are written to make rules and regulations explicit and verify that they are predefined. They serve the following:

- (1) They inform people of what actions will bring about retaliatory force thereby facilitate protection of rights as people are enabled to know beforehand what is forbidden or not.
- (2) They enable citizens to act appropriately hence removing the need for retaliatory force and increasing the ability to avoid violating others' rights.
- (3) They make the rules of the country explicit, which eliminates confusion in what is legal or not.
- (4) Laws limit the power of government officials through requiring them to act according to predefined methods thereby safeguarding people from their own representatives.

According to progressive Wesleyan Methodists the colonial government in Zimbabwe failed dismally to enact laws which were representative. They enacted laws which violated rather than protected black Zimbabweans' rights. Through their laws they enslaved most of the Africans in Zimbabwe hence the need to be resisted and dealt with through retaliatory force. Rev. John White (Andrews 1935:50-56) and Banana (1996b:206-233) justified the Africans' participation in armed conflict during the war of resistance and liberation war respectively because that was retaliatory force. Whenever progressive Wesleyan Methodists became aware of ill treatment of blacks by whites in Zimbabwe they challenged them to abandon their path of initiating force against blacks. At first they sought to address the race relationships issues through non-violent means but the colonial government was intransigent. Africans aimed at claiming their rights by whatever means, which compounded retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists' efforts in addressing race relationship issues.

It is necessary to consider briefly rights in the context of this study. By rights I refer to the fact that every person has a property in her or his own person, an intrinsic value that nobody else has any right to but herself or himself. “A right is a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man's freedom of action in a social context” (Namwambah 2003:241). According to this quotation rights state requirements for a person or group of people to benefit from rather than suffer from living and participating in a community. So society or nation can be beneficial to individuals or groups of people where there is no mutual protection of rights. Protection of black Zimbabweans' rights during colonial Zimbabwe fell too far below acceptable levels for them to exist as normal human beings. In other words the colonial Zimbabwean context did not benefit black Zimbabweans in terms of race relationships and rights in particular, instead they suffered. The voices of progressive Wesleyan Methodist ministers were audible and charged that the colonial government in Zimbabwe violated Africans' rights to life, property, liberty, free expression and association, political expression and economic development, grossly.

When the colonial government in Zimbabwe initiated force against Africans through discriminatory strategies survival became harder and harder for blacks until it became unbearable. That led to the liberation war. Important to note is that whites found Africans on the land, they needed the co-operation of blacks for their survival while blacks did not need whites in the same way. Through initiating force against blacks whites did not just give Africans reasons to retaliate but they also forfeited their own ability to survive through becoming dependent on blacks who became their victims. Whatever whites decided to do was dependent on their calculation of Africans' reactions. White politicians demonstrated that the white community in colonial Zimbabwe did not value survival by means of reason as they relied on force and intimidation. They viewed force as a proper means of relating with people of other races, thus they declared that they were not worthy dealing with in the realm of morality. African nationalists, progressive Wesleyan Methodists included, realised

that the only way white racism could be dealt with was through retaliatory force, hence the war of liberation. Wesleyan Methodists, at the official level, still hoped that a settlement could be reached through peaceful negotiation, but their efforts hit against a concrete wall. On the one hand the whites were determined to maintain the status quo while on the other hand blacks, including the majority of Wesleyan Methodists, were resolute in their determination to obtain their goal of defeating the colonial government. The ideal situation should have been a nation where all citizens were shielded from any form of coercion of or from others; government was instituted to fulfil that function. The colonial government failed dismally in that respect. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists failed to monitor the situation effectively, even if they laboured tirelessly against the war they failed to avoid it.

Another way of comprehending race relationships during the colonial period in Zimbabwe in relation to human rights is through the “... principle of the overriding right,” (Hurley 1997:79). According to this principle whenever a duty and right clash the right predominates. In other words the principle is based on the understanding that in practical life situations whenever the exercise of a right involves the infringement of an obligation, the obligation ceases. Hurley used this principle in the moral debate about technological development in health issues like sterilisation, transplant of organisms from human beings and birth control. However, the principle can shed more light on race relationships in colonial Zimbabwe. Africans had a moral obligation to welcome and provide hospitality to strangers (whites), to obey government authorities when the colonial government was enthroned in 1923, to abide by the laws of the land and to contribute to national peace. When Africans eventually moved out of the freezing state, a response to colonialism characterised by shock, non-action and reflection, to the engaging stage, where they explored the best ways of dealing with conflicts emanating from colonialism, they found themselves confronted by the dilemma of reconciling duty and rights. Wesleyan Methodists taught that all citizens were to abide by the dictates of the government which black Wesleyan Methodists accepted. The problem was, how were Africans supposed to

respond to abuses they suffered under the colonial government? Africans were assisted by progressive missionaries to realise that on one hand there was the obligation to abide by the laws of the land and on the other hand there were their rights which were being violated by the colonial government and white communities in the country. As the African voices tried to redress the situation the principle of overriding right was at play, and their reactions were justifiable morally on the basis of that principle.

What this study has unearthed through this analysis of progressive and retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist ministers is that;

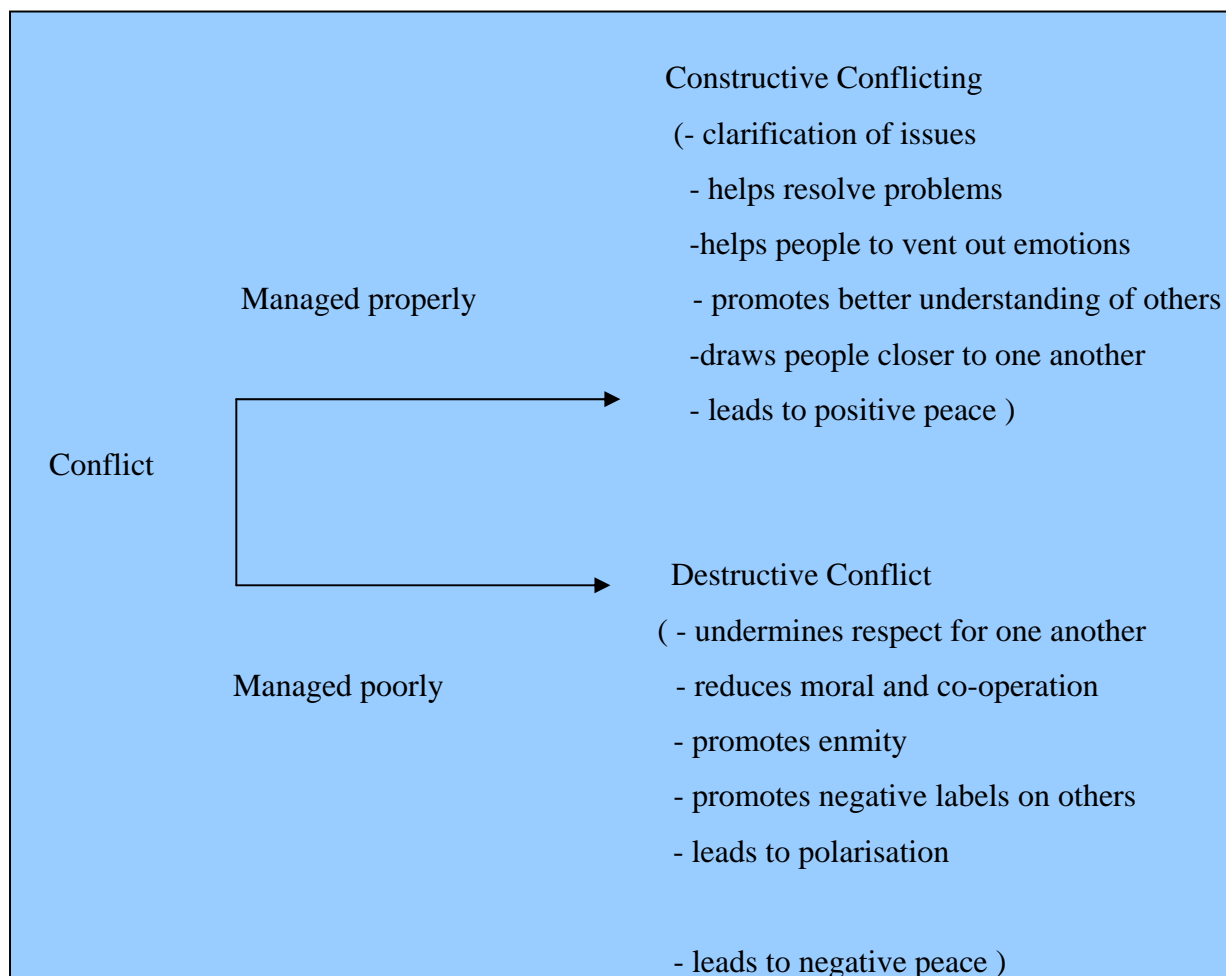
- (1) Each person survives by reasoning. Human nature requires ability for one to act on her or his reasoning capacity. Force destroys that ability to exercise one's capacity to reason, thereby destroying the person's ability to survive. An individual or group's ability to survive in a community or nation suffers to the extent that force is employed.
- (2) Each person or group of people must enjoy protection of individual or group rights. Society flourishes or prospers to the degree that rights are promoted and protected.
- (3) Government must be proper for all those governed; it should protect rights of all citizens for members to benefit from society. Government is the immediate guardian of people's rights; people immigrate into or emigrate from a community or nation on the basis of how government protects human rights.
- (4) A credible government enables citizens to live according to their nature, as rational beings, through observing, promoting and protecting rather than violating their rights.

(5) government is concerned with making decisions for the benefit of communities governed, when it forfeits that function citizens may use the principle of overriding right to redress the situation.

That was advocated for by progressive Wesleyan Methodists.

The second model through which to interpret race relationships during colonial Zimbabwe is the conflict transformation model. In this model conflict is understood as energy that emanates when two or more people compete for the same interest or need. In life individuals or groups of people compete for the same interests thereby rendering conflicts a normal and inevitable part of life. It is how people manage conflicts which may lead either to positive or negative conflict. The model can be presented in a diagram as the table below.

**Table 9 Conflict transformation model**



Conflict can manifest itself in intra-personal, interpersonal, intra-group and intergroup forms. When people are faced with conflicts they normally use force to coerce others, rights to achieve their demands or attempt to cater for the needs or interests of the other parties. Whichever way people respond to conflicts the result is either positive peace or negative peace. Positive peace is a social framework whereby structural systems work for the common good of all and where there is restoration of relationships. In such a framework there is openness, transformation of relationships and structures which work for everyone without fear or favour. On the other hand negative peace is a social framework characterised by the absence of open violence. In most cases this state of negative peace is maintained through a heavy presence of armed forces. That is a dangerous state of peace.

The study used approaches to conflict which are employed by people in addressing conflicts. The approaches are based on power, rights and interests. Whenever people are in a conflict they tend to use one of these approaches. The approaches are presented diagrammatically for easy comprehension and comparison in table 5.

The table of approaches to conflict shows that relationships deteriorate when conflict resolution process moves from an interest based approach to power based one and they are improved as the process moves from power based to interests based approach. Whenever conflicting parties opt for either a power or rights based approach they result in damaged relationships. Only when conflicting parties are helped to take the interests based approach that relationships are potentially enhanced

**Table 10 Approaches to conflict**

Approach	Strategy	Key Skills	Outcome	Ownership	Relationships
Power	Coercion	Control of Instruments of power	Win – Lose	Low for loser	Damaging
Rights	Adjudication	Knowledge of the law	Win – Lose	Low for loser	Damaging
	Arbitration	Knowledge of the law	Win – Lose	Low for loser	Potentially damaging
Interests	Negotiation	Communication	Win – Win	High	Potentially Enhancing
	Conciliation	Communication	Win – Win	High	Potentially Enhancing
	Facilitation	Communication	Win – Win	High	Potentially Enhancing
	Mediation	Communication	Win – Win	High	Potentially Enhancing

and positive peace is assured. Both the retrogressive and progressive Wesleyan Methodists failed to assist both the colonisers and the colonised to approach the conflict they were in from an interests approach. As a result the conflicting parties used the power approach which led to negative peace at the country's independence.



During the colonial era in Zimbabwe all forms of conflict, intra-personal, interpersonal, intra-group and intergroup, were experienced. Government managed the conflicts poorly which resulted in destructive conflict. Wesleyan Methodists' laborious efforts through their political praxis failed to achieve positive peace. When they mediated for detainees and those restricted their labours were in vain. Their encouragement of negotiations did not yield the desired results as there was one deadlock after another. Africans who had realised that their needs, interests and rights were at stake were convinced that the whole scenario could only be redressed through force, thereby following the route of poor management of conflicts as well. They did not control the instruments of power in the nation so they used subversive power under, which was characterised by riots, strikes and eventually the war of liberation. Power under is referred here as opposed to power over, an exercise of power based on the control of instruments of power and the assumption that those who control national instruments of power are always correct.

The analysis now focuses on the question of the Federation.

## **6.5 Wesleyan Methodists and Central African Federation**

What then shall we say about the Central African Federation of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi)? At this stage it is important to expose what was there for both white and black communities who comprised territories that formed the Federation. The researcher will begin with perceived benefits for the white population. The Federation would provide the following:

- Advantage of an enlarged African labour market.
- Removal of trade barriers within the territories.
- Securing Rhodesian interests in Central Africa.
- Creating a bigger market for British goods in Central Africa.
- Southern Rhodesia's (Zimbabwe) access to foreign currency through copper

exports.

- Countering Afrikaner political influence which was rising in South Africa.
- A check on the growth rate of African nationalism in the region.

The voices of progressive Wesleyan Methodists were clear that the Federation had a lot of perceived benefits for whites. They were the sponsors of the federal programme. On the other hand Africans had to respond to the proposal and implementation of the federal project. One major difference between Zimbabwe on one side and Zambia and Malawi on the other was that Zimbabwe was self-governing while Zambia and Malawi were governed by the Secretary of Colonies (Smith & Nothling 1993:402-403). Hence their responses were bound to differ. Responses from Zambia and Malawi included the following:

- Opposition based on the fact that policies used in Zimbabwe were not favourable to Africans.
- Fears that the racist and discriminatory culture in Zimbabwe would be imported into their countries.
- Fears that promises made by Britain would not be fulfilled.
- Fears that Africans would not attain their goal of self-government.
- Rejection based on viewing federation as an act of injustice against Africans, which would undermine their security in land ownership and threatened Africans' political and economic development.

With such levels of resentment towards federation from Africans in two of the key stakeholders of the federal states the union was based on shaky ground. The federal project was forced down their throats and they were determined to see it collapse. However, in Zimbabwe Africans' responses to federation fell into two broad categories. Some responded with misplaced optimism as they regarded federation as a step towards independence. The establishment of federation was thus,

... regarded by some Southern Rhodesian Africans as full of promise: the new policy of partnership, which was to be inscribed in the federal constitution, would bring to a speedy end the segregation, humiliation and indignation

which we had suffered for 40 years ... the Northern territories would help to break down the racial barriers and Southern Rhodesian whites would even of their own accord, inspired by partnership, pass laws which would let us share political power and economic privileges and enjoys social justice, (Shamuyarira 1965:15 -16).

The optimism expressed in the quotation was misplaced. The African voice as discussed in chapter five proved that the majority of Africans were not happy with the Federation because of the continued dominance of whites. Progressive Wesleyan Methodists opposed it and encouraged African nationalists to fight it. When the federation was implemented there was little improvement in the African cause. Other Africans opposed federation categorically (Mlambo 2009: 90). For them the presence of the white community in the political arena was a stumbling block to their freedom, as they compared their situation with fellow Africans in other parts of the continent whose independence had already been granted.

In the three countries progressive Africans interpreted the federation as a hindrance to their political progress. That intensified hostility towards the federal government. The aim was to do away with the Federation as soon as possible. As Zambia and Malawi moved into independence, Zimbabwe drifted towards the UDI. The white community in Zimbabwe expected to be treated by Britain in the same way Malawi and Zambia were treated so as to gain independence. African nationalists in Zimbabwe, under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo a Wesleyan Methodist preacher, refused to cooperate (Smith & Nothing 1993:402). A new political party for whites, the Rhodesia Front, was formed and most of the white Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe became members of the party. It was under the Rhodesia Front that the UDI was made. That compounded the situation. What role did Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching play in that scenario? The African voice was loud and clear on the issue of the UDI, it was a monster which had to be fought and destroyed by whatever means. It led to the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. The official stance of the Wesleyan Methodists was to use negotiation in redressing to situation while progressive African ministers in the church were convinced that time for negotiation was over and it was time for an

armed struggle against colonialism. The awareness propelled them into active participation in the war.

In spite of warnings from their British counterparts that the Federation would not work (WMA MH, Synod Minutes, 3 January, 1954) retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists were convinced that federation was the best way forward. They encouraged the governments of the three countries and politicians to commit the federal process under the guidance of God and to be diligent in implementation of the enterprise (WMA M, Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1959). On the other hand they implored Christians to pray for the Federation, encourage people to participate in the franchise positively and refrain from disruptive activities as we saw in chapter four. The retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists turned a blind eye to all injustices committed against Africans and a deaf ear to African voices against injustices of their time. Through that Wesleyan Methodists rendered their political teaching irrelevant. Therefore their facilitation of negotiations was biased towards whites heavily. In terms of the conflict transformation model they failed to assist both the whites and Africans to manage the conflict properly, hence the federation collapsed.

In comparison to John Wesley's example on politics, as discussed in chapter three, retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists deviated from it greatly as they failed to implement the principle of equality of people of all races before God. So there was discontinuity rather than continuity with John Wesley's political teaching. On the other hand progressive Wesleyan Methodists continued with John Wesley's example. The difference in contexts was at play. John Wesley could challenge injustices against the vulnerable in his society as well as African slaves who had been uprooted from their communities and taken to Europe or America without any fear. Wesleyan Methodist missionaries were part of the white community in Zimbabwe. Whenever the church challenged the colonisers, retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists felt that their actions had ripple effects against themselves as either they were accused of compromising the whites' values too much or viewed by Africans as attempting to

soften them. What they taught and practised amounted to a survival strategy. The analysis turns on to the views on war.

## **6.6 Wesleyan Methodists and war in Zimbabwe**

As we seek to interpret Wesleyan Methodist teaching on war it is necessary to consider how religion influenced politics and even war in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Religion legitimised the political order, provided supernatural powers deemed necessary in daily life, limited, confronted and challenged political power. The role played by ancestors, spirits, spirit mediums and ritual experts impacted heavily on political activities. For instance, spirits did not automatically support a chief, king or elders, the ruler as well as his subjects were confined to taboos, the power and efficacy of rulers were dependent on services of ritual experts and religion had a critical prophetic dimension (Gray 1990:3).

Important for this study is the fact that religion had a prophetic potential. Religion could express or legitimise a radical critique. A rebellion could be initiated under a religious banner and weapons could be supplied in the name of religion as well as providing a base from which an attack is launched. African ministers employed that understanding in their struggle against colonialism as seen in Chapter five. Such activities were carried out on a very low scale as compared to the wide range of our contemporary wars and weapons of mass destruction. In situations where religion was used to legitimise a revolution, a political order would be provided. It is clear therefore, that African traditional religions, among the Shona and Ndebele specifically, were adaptive to an extent that rebellions and revolutions were clothed with respectability. That process was enabled by African traditional religions' flexibility and accommodative character in assimilating new insights and rituals as people addressed new situations. Zimbabweans' approach towards supernatural powers was pragmatic and experiential; hence the shrines, ritual practices and religious beliefs formed a basis for legitimising political order.

It was into such a context that Christianity was to be introduced. Missionaries sooner than later realised that African traditional religions were used to legitimise the political order of the Ndebele kingdom. Even if permission to carry out mission work within the kingdom was granted there were no converts. Wesleyan Methodist missionaries were frustrated by delays in getting responses from chiefs who had to consult first. They concluded that it was Lobengula who attempted to deny them permission to open mission stations. So the Ndebele kingdom had to go, for the sake of the gospel.

On the other hand, the Ndebele king and his elders (*izinduna*) viewed intruders, who included missionaries, as agents of western technology and material influence. For King Lobengula missionaries provided a potential alternative source of supernatural powers which was to be warded off by any means including suspicion and hostility. The missionaries' alternative source of supernatural powers was not tolerable because it was linked to a formidable industrial and military technology. The Ndebele had a better appreciation of whites and their ambitions than their Shona counterparts. With such an understanding Lobengula restricted mission work and in the final crises between the Ndebele and Cecil John Rhodes' emissaries missionaries sided with the invading settlers. Missionaries, Wesleyan Methodists included, called for and justified a war against Zimbabweans on the basis of spreading the gospel. However, that was wrong since the gospel should not be spread through a sword.

This study needs to explore further the concept that religion legitimises the political order among African communities, during the early colonial period in Zimbabwe. After the conquest of Zimbabwe Africans were thrown into a difficult situation. There was a new political order which their traditional religions needed to legitimise or refute. Many Africans accepted Christianity for a number of benefits which included a desire to acquire secrets of the conqueror's power and modern skills and techniques which were promoted by the new religion. Communities which formed around mission stations seized the initiative of evangelising fellow Africans, thus Christianity

spread like veld fire. As time went by two groups of African Christians emerged, a mission educated elite and villagers. Mission educated elites responded to the political and economic segregation they suffered at the hand of whites with disappointment and delusion because their acquired skills, academic achievements and laborious apprenticeship did not open the door for them into the secret circle of power. They also realised that while the gospel proclaimed that before God all people are equal, missionaries were conscious of racial differentials.

On another front, villagers, both young and old, regardless of gender, embraced the new religion for the benefits they anticipated from it. They used their African heritage and started to test the new religion. Their desire was to explore how the new rituals and mode of communicating with the supernatural would provide them with access to power which they could use to solve their problems in daily life. Problems included diseases, poverty and new harsh tribulations which emanated from colonialism. When progressive Wesleyan Methodists, especially African ministers, got involved in political activities as well as war, as we have seen in chapter five, and while the church condemned war officially, they tapped from the African concept that religion legitimises the political order and John Wesley's example on politics. From that perspective they were justified.

An interpretation of Wesleyan Methodists' teaching on war during the colonial era in Zimbabwe using the conflict transformation model referred to above provides new insights on the subject. First, let us examine Wesleyan Methodist missionaries' views on the 1896 and 1897 war of resistance. Rev. John Wesley surpassed all other missionaries as he stood firm in support of Africans and in true Christian witness at a time when most missionaries stood by their fellow countrymen. Retrogressive missionaries fell short of John Wesley's example.

We now turn to Wesleyan Methodists' views on the first and second world wars. As pointed out in Chapter four, retrogressive Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' claims



on the two world wars were at variance with John Wesley's example on war, while progressive ministers used the example. It is worthwhile to point out that Africans' involvement in the Second World War had a profound impact on their views about colonialism. For example, "... Africans were struck by the contradiction of their defending their colonisers from German and Italian tyranny while they themselves continued to labour under the tyranny of Western colonialism" (Mlambo 2009:78). Wesleyan Methodists were not aware of that. If we consider the two wars on the basis of the conflict transformation model, the conflict was based on European interests, European nations were the primary parties in the conflict while their colonies in Africa, Asia and South America, were secondary parties. Colonies did not have interests to compete for in the conflicts which led to the wars. In fact they were an interest to European nations which were in conflict. European nations dragged Africans, in this case Zimbabweans, dubiously into the wars for their benefit, such as boosting their troops and protecting their sources of raw materials. Wesleyan Methodist leaders were caught up in that web and thus retrogressive ministers diverged from John Wesley's example on war.

An interesting scenario was when war broke out in Zimbabwe between the colonisers and colonised. An important question to address is why there was a sudden change by retrogressive white Wesleyan Methodists leadership from supporting war to opposing it categorically. From a conflict transformation point of view various races in Zimbabwe competed for the same interests; land, rights, political power and opportunities. The government failed to manage the conflict properly and that resulted in destructive conflict. In that scenario demands from other races were regarded as counter development and signs of lack of gratitude to the generosity of whites. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist leaders, who were whites for a greater part of the colonial period, interpreted the situation through the racist lenses of the minority white community in the country. In the interpretation of the context blood was thicker than water for white Wesleyan Methodists. That led the majority of white Wesleyan Methodists to condemn the war of liberation as a rebellion and justified

whites' involvement. The voices of progressive ministers employed the concept of none condemnation of participation in armed conflict and throwing one's lot on the expected side. For them the expected side was in favour of Africans.

Failure to manage the conflicts in Zimbabwe led to destructive conflict which then resulted in war. The colonial government was responsible for the deterioration of the situation to the level of war. Wesleyan Methodist leadership failed to monitor the situation effectively because of retrogressive ministers' sympathy and alignment with whites. However, they made sporadic attempts to challenge the colonial government to manage the conflict properly. According to the conflict transformation model black Zimbabweans were justified in taking arms against white domination but the result would be negative peace. The situation needed mediation which would ensure that positive peace would be achieved. According to John Wesley's example blacks were justified in waging war against their colonisers because of the principle of self preservation but as I have argued already that led to negative peace. It is therefore clear that settling conflicts using war or any form of coercion leads to negative peace and it is not recommended.

The official stance exposed in chapter four above shows similarities with what happened in South Africa. The official stance of English speaking churches in South Africa during the colonial and apartheid era was characterised by unity and collaboration with the British Empire and their missionary societies which enabled the spread of colonialism and enhanced consolidation of imperial power (De Gruchy 1997:156). While in South Africa 'loyal messages' were sent to the British monarch's representative and the General- Governor from synods and conferences (De Gruchy 1997:156), in Zimbabwe the practice was maintained up to 1965 when the UDI was announced and the church viewed it as a violation of the British legal system and values. This study concluded that what was happening in South Africa influenced developments in Zimbabwe. In all mainline churches, Wesleyan Methodists included, control of church activities remained in the hands of the white

membership and the churches were unwilling and unable to act in concert with African members in the struggle for equality, justice and independence. The African ministers' voices were suppressed or ignored in the official church stance. However, the voices were louder and louder as exposed in chapter five.

The effects of the UDI need to be explored in this analysis. When the UDI was announced progressive Christians opposed it. The Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Rhodesia Christian Council, to which the Wesleyan Methodists belonged, rejected it (Hallencrutz 1991:161). There was an ecumenical effort to challenge the UDI but Smith's government went on to introduce amendments to the Land Apportionment Act aiming at implementing registration of land tenure along racist lines. According to Hallencrutz (1991:161) that move led to dramatic developments which culminated in the war of liberation. When Smith realised that a way forward was needed to rescue the country from total collapse he proposed for a settlement which led to further confrontation in the country (Hallencrutz 1991:162). As seen from chapters four and five progressive Wesleyan Methodists like Rev. Banana opposed Smith's proposal for the settlement categorically.

The Wesleyan Methodists' response to the effects of the UDI and Smith's proposal for settlement were mainly through the Rhodesia Christian Council which led an active support for the UANC which was led by Bishop Muzorewa and Rev. Banana. On the other hand the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference employed a different strategy from the Rhodesia Christian Council.

The (Roman Catholic) Bishops' Conference continued to give priority to a continued critical interaction with the Government in office. In 1972 it established the Catholic Commission on Justice and Peace (CCJP) as an additional and very active means of disclosing the atrocities of the security forces and to counteract the official propaganda. The (Rhodesia) Christian Council on the other hand, gave particular attention to interactions with the internal wing of the nationalist movement in the form of the (U) ANC (Hallencrutz 1991:162).

When compared to the Roman Catholic the Church Wesleyan Methodists lagged behind in the area of critical interaction with the colonial government and disclosing of atrocities committed by security forces. Even though a few atrocities were reported to the Synod, there was no arm of the church in the likes of the CCJP to analyse and publish the atrocities. As a result of that Retrogressive and progressive Wesleyan Methodists ended up locked in internal fighting and thereby diluting their contribution to the political development during the liberation war.

A theological evaluation of the Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis was carried out for further analysis. The next section of the chapter dealt with the theological evaluation.

## **6.7 Theological evaluation of Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis**

In order to interpret Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and praxis from a theological perspective the study once again used the translation model of contextual theology. The same model was used to interpret John Wesley's example on politics in chapter three. It is necessary to remind ourselves that according to the model translation refers to meanings rather than words and language. The Christian message is supra-contextual; it can be separated from a mode of expression that is bound contextually. Also important to remember is that the context plays an ancillary role. That is not to suggest that the context is not important, but that it is never as important as the supra-cultural and never changing gospel message.

According to Bevans (2007:40) there are four basic doctrines which are critical for the translation model. The four are that humanity is fallen and in need of salvation and healing, God's revelation occurs within human history, the doctrine of trinity articulates adequately what God is like and what faith in God means in daily life and finally, that Jesus is the Christ, in him people find the true meaning of life. These basic doctrines are significant for this analysis as I shall refer to them. However, it is important for me to delineate a Christian understanding of political order for this

study from the perspective of the translation model.

The study's point of departure for a Christian understanding of political order, which is based on the translation model, is a belief in radical monotheism of the Christian faith. There is one God who is the creator of everything, who rules over nations and is the active Lord of history. It is a Christian conviction that God demands justice and righteousness from humanity in their dealings with each other in all spheres of life, such as, exercise of authority by leaders, economic affairs and dispensing of justice in internal as well as international affairs. The progressive Wesleyan Methodist ministers employed the conviction effectively, while the retrogressive ministers violated it.

The main message of prophets to rulers of Israel was centred on God's demand for justice, (Isaiah 1:17, Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8). Rulers and their nations were blessed or cursed by God depending on how justice was executed. The New Testament writers' message in this regard was that the political order Christians found themselves in was supposed to be accepted as divine providence, so rulers were to be obeyed. Due to such a message there is little, if any, motivation to reform the political order or to have an impact on policies of governing authorities. There was a sharp difference between the message of Old Testament prophets and New Testament writers on political order. The difference in attitude displayed vividly dissimilarity between contexts which prophets and New Testament writers addressed. The Israelite state was theocratic. Israel's religious leaders exercised political authority as well. They had the opportunity and responsibility to rule over the internal and foreign affairs of the Israelite state according to God's will. During New Testament times Christians were subjected to non-Christian rulers. In such a context New Testament writers had to assume a different approach towards political leaders from that of prophets. Prophets challenged rulers of their time on the basis of the covenant, which could not work in New Testament times. The question of contexts is very important in the history of the church. Whenever church leaders read their context correctly the

church's witness became relevant and yielded positive contributions to the nation. Progressive Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe achieved this task better than the retrogressive group.

A characteristic attitude exhibited by New Testament writers towards political rulers was one of acceptance and obedience, (Mark 12: 17, Romans 13:1-2, 1Peter 2:13-14). Jesus' words, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (Mark 12:17) formed the foundation of the New Testament attitude towards political order. The same words of Jesus were used to develop another New Testament attitude towards rulers - rejection. In Revelation 13, the Roman Empire was depicted as a blaspheming beast, since the Emperor demanded to be worshipped. Christians were encouraged to reject Caesar's claims since they amounted to usurping God's sole right to be worshipped. Rejection, as a Christian attitude to political order, was not in terms of formal political resistance. It was a non-violent spiritual resistance, which called for faithful endurance under persecution.

There were valid reasons which led Christians in the Early Church to embrace an attitude of acceptance and obedience, with rejection in cases of emperor worship. Christians formed a very tiny minority in the empire which could not have any political power or chance to impact on political authorities. Another factor was a belief in the imminent return of Jesus which would usher in the eschatological destruction of all evil forces and the establishment of God's kingdom. With that belief political issues and activities were viewed as peripheral. Early Christians had a strong belief that civil authorities had divine origins since they represented God's will for the preservation of order in society. Civil authorities employed the coercive power of the state to suppress sinful people's blatant forms of evil and injustice.

It is clear from all this is that a Christian understanding of political order should be based on the word of God. The Old Testament's insistence on justice before God and the New Testament's call for acceptance, obedience and rejection inform Christian's

participation in or response to political activities. So God demands justice, acceptance, obedience and rejection of evil forces in a biblical understanding of the political arena. This was executed effectively by progressive Wesleyan Methodist ministers in Zimbabwe. From this perspective the primary purpose of government is to protect its citizens from crime, external aggression and unfair business practice. Protection is provided through security forces, favourable legislation and structures.

After saying all this about the biblical contexts, there is need to come closer to our times. Difference of contexts in biblical attitudes towards political order compels each generation to define its context. The biblical contexts differ fundamentally from what has prevailed in various periods in democratic as well as undemocratic countries. In democratic countries civil authorities are responsible to people and Christian citizens have political rights and power. In such democratic systems of governance the attitude of acceptance and obedience towards rulers is inadequate. Government may be perceived as existing as a result of divine providence and the democratic process is provided as providential as well, but people are responsible to some degree for a specific government which gets into power at a particular time. When progressive ministers engaged in civic education and encouraged Africans who qualified as voters to register, their aim was to improve people's responsibility in governance issues. So it is worthwhile to recognise differences of contexts in various periods of church history, as it avoids a fallacy that views political problems as alien to Christian faith. It is important to note the two contexts under examination in this study, which are eighteenth century British and twentieth century Zimbabwean contexts.

What is the basis for Christian participation in political activities according to this study? Motivation for engaging in political activities should not be sought in few isolated pieces of political counsel in the New Testament, but in the faith that underpinned the teaching and practice of Jesus. The same faith was at play in the teaching of New Testament writers. Jesus directed people to God, who is the Lord of



heaven and earth, he taught them to pray for God's will to be done on earth and to love God as well as one's neighbours. It is clear that behind Jesus' actions and teaching on political order was his faith in God. The implication of that faith in God is that a Christian orientation towards political order starts with a contemplation of the meaning of responsible execution of political power before a universal and righteous God. With mushrooming growth of democracy in many countries, the attitude of acceptance, obedience and rejection of civil authorities needs to be buttressed with new concepts that are more realistic and relevant to obtaining relationships between people and civil authorities. The concepts of active participation and responsibility seem appropriate for our context.

Active participation and responsibility mean that a Christian must recognise and put into action his or her political obligation, not just for electing governing authorities or for upholding the sanctity of law, but to take part in policy formulation. If a Christian is convinced that a law is unjust he or she has an obligation to do whatever is possible to change it through participation in legal processes in which laws are made, amended and repealed. Thus obedience to God in a democratic context is different from mere submission to civil authorities. It includes assisting those in power as they perform their allotted tasks through support, constructive criticism and preparing for replacement of governing authorities themselves when it is deemed necessary to do so in the interest of better government. The concept of active participation and responsibility was used to assess Wesleyan Methodists' political activities in Zimbabwe during the colonial era.

Wesleyan Methodists' involvement in political activities in Zimbabwe from the beginning of their mission work to 1980 was commendable. The concept of participation and responsibility justified their political praxis. However, when we examine the same political activities through the translation model of contextual theology, the official position of the church fell short of expectations because of activities of retrogressive missionaries. From 1891 to 1923 they promoted annexation

and forceful displacement of Africans by white settlers; they even displaced some blacks as they established mission farms. From 1923 to 1950 they participated in the enactment of discriminative legislation, promoted implementation of segregation policies and upheld racial discrimination against Africans. That was not congruent with the unchanging supra-cultural Christian message. They failed to separate the imperial agenda from evangelism for the sake of their African converts. Wesleyan Methodist missionaries accompanied administrators, traders, miners and other colonial service providers to an extent that in the eyes of Africans they were indistinguishable from other aliens whose efforts amounted to challenging and changing African values and way of life. Instead of allowing the gospel message to transform the African context retrogressive Wesleyan Methodists collaborated with the colonisers in paralysing African society in Zimbabwe. However, the voices of progressive ministers were so forceful so much that without them the history of the country would have been different. In areas like education, health, agriculture and modern skills the church scored a first, although these areas also impacted negatively on Africans.

From 1951 to 1980 Wesleyan Methodists shifted their stance a little as they used the Christian message to challenge discrimination against Africans. However their political stance and treatment of Africans in the church remained the same. The Wesleyan Methodists' declaration on race relationships (NAZ Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on race relationships, 1951) and their statement on race relations (NAZ Statements, Statement on race relations, 1951) demonstrated how the church's racial teaching and activities were supposed to be rooted in the Christian message. According to the translation model they did the correct thing but failed to put it into practise. It is necessary to point out that while church leaders and some mission educated elite used the Christian message to call for peaceful negotiations in resolving the Zimbabwean problem, progressive African ministers and ordinary members, referred to as villagers, sought to use the African concept that religion legitimises the political order and employed Christianity in

addressing their challenges and toppling the colonial regime which had exerted unbearable suffering on Africans.

## 6.8 Conclusion

The analysis of Wesleyan Methodist political teaching and activities revealed a number of enlightening issues for this study. Retrogressive Wesleyan Methodist missionaries' political teaching and activities amounted to provision of moral justification of imperialism during the period 1891 to late 1940s. During that period Wesleyan Methodists' mission work and British imperial expansion were hand in glove with one another in spite of the voices of progressive ministers like John White, Matthew Zvimba and Matthew Rusike. The era beginning in 1951 saw the influence of progressive Wesleyan Methodist ministers in Zimbabwe alter a little the imperial agenda of the church and started to take the colonial government to task as they challenged colonialist policies. Also important to note is that the Zimbabwean socio-political context and African voices influenced those Wesleyan Methodist missionaries' vision. The new situation compelled them to abandon the concept of collaboration with government and adopt one of justice and accountability but the conservative missionaries clung on to the principle of acceptance and collaboration. The result was a Wesleyan Methodists' dual response to the colonial challenge, peaceful negotiation and forceful confrontation.

We have demonstrated how an interpretation of Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and activities through the translation model of contextual theology condemns the activities during the years 1891 to 1949 and justified some of their activities for the period 1950 to 1980. Their task was complex as they had to balance their activities in view of influence from the British government, hard heartedness of the colonisers, demands from hard-line white Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe and mounting pressure from ordinary African Wesleyan Methodists. In spite of all that pressure Wesleyan Methodists contributed immensely to Zimbabwe's political



journey from the time the country was annexed to its independence in 1980.

## CONCLUSIONS

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary of findings and future prospects of Wesleyan Methodist political teaching in Zimbabwe. The independence of Zimbabwe provided new challenges in the Zimbabwean political arena which could demand new approaches. That fact became the basis of pointing out the future prospects of Wesleyan Methodist political teaching in Zimbabwe.

### 7.2 Summary

While acknowledging the invaluable contribution of Wesleyan Methodists to the development of Zimbabwean Africans' modern political appreciation it is clear from this study that their official political teaching and practice were influenced heavily by an invitation to participate in the Pioneer Column. That invitation created a characteristic of mutual relationship between Wesleyan Methodist missionaries and white settlers in Zimbabwe. That relationship raised challenges for Wesleyan Methodist missionaries as they were supposed to employ John Wesley's political teaching and practice in their alliance with white settlers. Another challenge stemmed from how they could be faithful to the Christian message and at the same time maintains a sound relationship with the settler government. As we have seen right from the beginning of Wesleyan Methodist mission work in Zimbabwe to 1950, the close alliance was enforced and Wesleyan Methodists' behaviour amounted to collaboration with colonial administrative officers. However there were sporadic criticisms of some colonial policies which the church deemed as resulting in too much suffering for Africans. During that time the official position of the church ignored the African voice completely. Wesleyan Methodists were too keen to employ most of the colonial policies during the first fifty years of colonialism in Zimbabwe which was not justified by any biblical principle.

Wesleyan Methodists joined forces with other missionary groups in calling for the destruction of the Ndebele kingdom. An important question here is why missionaries, who were supposed to evangelise Africans, called for the destruction of their would-be converts' political order first. A desire for the fall of the African political order in the first decade of an alliance between colonialists and missionaries in Zimbabwe was shared across the divide of missionaries operating in the country. That was evidenced by remarks made by the London Missionary Society in 1895 in their centenary report,

... the only way to get a just estimate of the missionary history of the past century is to read with it the story of material progress and territorial expansion. ... The extension of trade, the facility of colonialism, the enlargement of territory the scientific knowledge of the world and its peoples, the suppression of international wrong, the possibility of free and useful intercourse between the different races, have been largely helped by the earnest labours of the band of unassuming missionaries (Bhebe 1973:62).

The quotation confirms what this study revealed that Christianity was abused in British imperialist programmes. Missionaries, Wesleyan Methodists included, cannot be let off the hook; they misrepresented the Christian message and collaborated with white settlers and then colonisers in destroying the African political order. They did so by introducing a western type political order without attempts to afford African voices a chance up to 1950s. Missionaries, as agents of the gospel, were supposed to comprehend the African political order first, in which they were to operate, then share the gospel accordingly. Instead of a positive comprehension of the Ndebele political order there were a number of misrepresentations. The following is a good example of the misrepresentation of the description of the Ndebele kingdom,

... a patched-up combination of heathen laws and customs, of self-conceitedness, pride and arrogance and ignorance, upheld by fear and terror, guarded by jealousy and revenge, and the frequent sacrifice of human life (Carnegie 1894:18).

That was a clearly misguided interpretation of the Ndebele political order with an intention to stir up negative sentiments against the Ndebele kingdom and its

subsequent destruction. Such quotations reveal that missionaries at that time had shifted their efforts from evangelising Africans to destroying their political order which was presented as the stumbling block to the gospel.

Another important fact the study revealed was the multi-faceted nature of European interests in Zimbabwe. While missionaries aimed at evangelism and civilisation, others were focusing on mineral wealth and imperial expansion. Cecil John Rhodes made his calculations perfectly as he outwitted other Europeans in the rush for control of Zimbabwe. In 1889 his company, the BSAC, was granted permission by the British government to annex Zimbabwe. Permission was granted after his company pledged to undertake the following:

- (1) to extend the railway and telegraph northwards towards the Zambezi; (2) to encourage emigration and colonization; (3) to promote trade and commerce; (4) to develop minerals and other concessions under one powerful organisation, so as to avoid conflicts between competing interests (Davidson 1988:170).

It was clear that Rhodes had decided beforehand on the colonisation of Zimbabwe and when he sent his emissaries to King Lobengula for a mining concession that was just an entry point. When his emissaries negotiated with Lobengula, the king did not know about the undertakings which Rhodes had made to the British government. Lobengula understood the agreement he signed with Rhodes' emissaries to mean that a few gold prospectors would enter into his land and mine gold. Although Lobengula expected something worse than the white men's request he never thought of a Pioneer Column of 180 settlers and 500 members of the British South Africa Police. To his astonishment in September 1890 a British flag was mounted in Fort Salisbury, now Harare. Lobengula was furious when he realised that he had been tricked and that whites intended to settle in Zimbabwe permanently. His efforts to reverse the Rudd Concession were futile because Rhodes had already acquired a charter for the BSAC.

It is also interesting to note that,

... the fall of the Ndebele kingdom in 1893, the suppression of the 1896-7 rising, as well as the subsequent rapid development of a western economy,



created a congenial ground for the growth of Christianity among the Ndebele. These cataclysmic events not only stimulated fresh interests among the missionaries already labouring in the Ndebele dominions, but they also lured new evangelical societies and organisations from Mashonaland, South Africa and overseas. The avidity with which missionaries availed themselves of the new opportunities was shown by the fact that by 1900 no fewer than eight powerful societies had carved out for themselves spheres of operation in Ndebeleland (Bhebe 1973:41).

The above quotation confirms the assertion that the political order of the Ndebele kingdom succeeded in repelling Christian influence. The Ndebele king was afraid of an alternative supernatural power provided by the new religion. Another fact to note is that the fall of the Ndebele kingdom was waited for keenly by many missionary societies as evidenced by the influx of such societies after the kingdom's fall. With the fall of the Ndebele kingdom and the subsequent collaboration between missionaries and colonisers we can safely say that the success of mission work in Zimbabwe was dependent heavily on the establishment of colonialism. As we saw in chapter five a partitioning model similar to political partitioning of Africa was employed by missionary societies as they demarcated among themselves spheres of operation.

The close link between Wesleyan Methodists and colonisers provided a threshold for a new Zimbabwean political order. The combination of missionary and imperialist effort compelled the African political order to succumb to a western type order. Africans who were converted to Christianity were de-constructed and then reconstructed according to ideological values of western Christian civilisation and British imperialism. The African political order which had constructed individuals politically was the target of the unholy alliance between missionaries and colonisers. That alliance led to the enactment of discriminatory legislation between 1923 and 1950. Zimbabwe was divided into state land, comprising of safari areas, forests and national parks, urban areas, large scale commercial farming areas, small scale commercial areas and Tribal Trust lands (Derman & Hellum 2007:162). After 1950 Wesleyan Methodists realised a mistake by collaborating with the colonisers and

started to criticise the discriminatory colonial laws. It is my contention that from 1891 to 1950 the official Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe's political stance did not pay attention to John Wesley's political teaching and practices because of their close alliance with colonisers. That alliance compelled them to neglect gospel demands on their mission work. From 1951 to 1980 they returned to John Wesley's example and gospel values but struggled to implement any of the values and principles expounded. The African ministers' voice was loud during that time and the church tried in vain to quieten the African voice. However, the white Wesleyan Methodist community was divided sharply between those who wanted the church to uphold colonial segregation legislation and some who were a little moderate.

This study has also shown that mission-educated elite in Zimbabwe, among who were African ministers, were pivotal in the new political order. In the beginning they were viewed as social misfits. From the African traditional point of view they were seen as dissenters who forsook their African heritage to take up whites' values. For the colonisers they were seen as a nefarious group who were unwilling to comply with colonial policies. So they were alienated from their own people and unacceptable to colonisers yet they were beacons of African political emancipation. A major reason for mission-educated elite to be treated with suspicion by white settlers was the fact that they were products of missionaries who could not be trusted wholeheartedly by colonisers. Hence the claim,

... at the beginning of the century the missionary societies could still command powerful lobbies to agitate against settler practices and Chartered Company policies. A more fundamental reason was that in a society that from the very beginning was segregated, educated Africans presented a real threat to settler dominance and since all education was in the hands of the missionaries they were regarded with suspicion (Chennells 1977:43).

Most of the African politicians passed through missionary education. Later on it was from that group that African nationalists emerged. The Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe had their share as its institutions like Waddilove, Kwenda, Epworth, Thekwane and Sandringham, among others nurtured Africans into political maturity.

The thesis has revealed that westernisation of Africans was viewed mistakenly as an important stage to be attained by every African who was about to reach conversion. So Wesleyan Methodists and other missionary societies embarked on educational, medical, commercial and other secular missions which they saw as essential for their communities. In those mission activities they either promoted or got into direct contact with racism. On one hand missionaries found themselves obliged to provide Africans with essential services and aspirations which colonisers were unwilling to satisfy, while on the other they were bound by imperial sentiments that gripped them as British citizens.

On a daily basis the imperialistic colonial pattern in Zimbabwe had its ecclesiastical replica in the Wesleyan Methodist Church and other white controlled churches. In church Africans were dominated by a minority whites, a missionary lived in a house of better quality and earned a higher stipend than his African co-workers. The same obtained in the larger society. In other words, racial arrogance and discrimination against Africans which existed in society was manifested in church under ecclesiastical structures. However, in spite of the discriminatory ecclesiastical structures, progressive Wesleyan Methodist missionaries' and African ministers' political teaching and practices inspired many Africans to claim their rightful place in the new political order. While those in leadership struggled to restrain Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe from participating in violent resistance to colonialism, the inspiration from progressive political teaching was more forceful than the calls to desist from participation. Their participation was justified using the translation model of contextual theology.

African Wesleyan Methodist ministers' political teaching and participation against unjust practices and imbalances in land distribution and use during colonialism and racial discrimination against Africans was commendable. However, the church leadership's insistence on the Federation as the best solution and peaceful

negotiations as opposed to liberation war was futile. Even the appointment of an African as leader of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe, Rev. A. Ndlela, could not suppress the political enthusiasm which had been generated among Africa Wesleyan Methodists.

There is one school of thought I need to dialogue with before moving on to the future prospects of Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice. This school of thought suggested that as Zimbabwe moved towards its independence the political role of churches in the country was supposed to decline rather than increase. The following quotation was written three years before Zimbabwe's independence,

We live in an age of quest for the new order and the new man through political reform or revolution. For centuries this quest has been the special province of religion, but in our time the initiative has passed into the hands of those representing ideologies, programmes, and organisations bearing a pronouncedly secular character. ... With the arrival of Zimbabwe, it seems more probable that Christianity will once again retreat into a more confined core domain. The link between the church and secular influence or power may well become more attenuated. Under such circumstances the churches' continuing role will depend more on their spiritual impact on individuals, their moral hold on the community, and the dedication and quality of their leadership (Brand 1977:83).

The quotation exposed the failure of missionary Christianity to accommodate the role of African politicians in the new political order. The school of thought did not address fundamental issues at stake. Missionary Christianity in Zimbabwe had an ambivalent character. Missionaries desired to go by the dictates of British imperialism as well as to accompany Africans to political maturity in terms of modern politics. Often the scale tilted in favour of British imperial values. Within that context missionary Christianity erred through promoting colonial values while on the other hand they attempted to champion the Africans' political cause. It was the failure of missionary Christianity to utilise the Christian message in addressing colonial inhuman policies and practices which led scholars like Brand to call for the church's withdrawal from the political arena in Zimbabwe's future.

The fall of the colonial regime in Zimbabwe should not be interpreted as a failure of Christian influence in politics. Christianity played a pivotal role because all African political leaders in Zimbabwe during the period under study were direct products of mission schools or institutions. It is my contention that Christianity should not retreat to the core domain as suggested above in Brand's quotation but it should permeate all spheres of life especially politics so that the political order will provide checks and balances for holding politicians accountable to God and electorate as well as for political institutions to serve people rather than enslave them.

### **7.3 Future prospects of Wesleyan Methodist political teaching and practice in Zimbabwe**

From the point of view of this study, were there any future prospects for Wesleyan Methodists' political praxis in independent Zimbabwe? The study revealed that there was a vivid portrayal of historical land injustices which occurred in Zimbabwe during the colonial period. The political independence of the country ushered in a new political dispensation in which the church had to contribute to the processes of land reconciliation. Many Africans had historical land grievances by independence time so much that the church had opportunities to assist in national healing and reconciliation. This point shows that the role of the church is not yet over.

Discriminatory policies in colonial Zimbabwe were designed to deprive Africans of their citizenship, human rights and enslave them in their homeland. Even when the country became independent in 1980 the nation could not wish away or simply forget effects of colonial policies. That became virgin ground for Wesleyan Methodist political teaching and practice. The church had a serious task of dealing with reconciliation within its structures first, as Wesleyan Methodists untangled the vices of separate development. After that then it was called upon to liberate the former colonisers and the colonised. The programme to liberate the two parties needed a sound theological foundation so that a simple reversal of the colonial experience,

where the colonised becomes the coloniser, would not occur to avoid perpetuation of violence.

It is important to acknowledge that the new political order required input from the church. In an evaluation of carried out by Mugambi (2003:42-43), it was pointed out that there is a serious challenge in our contemporary African political order. A lot has been said or written about democracy in our contemporary African political order but there is little or no improvement at all. Mugambi puts the challenge as follows,

It appears that many of these (democratic) campaigns are following the Westminster model of 'democracy', in which adversarial politics through political parties is the norm of political relations. Such politics, no matter how refined, cannot resonate with the African cultural and religious heritage (Mugambi 2003:43).

While Mugambi was addressing Africa in general, his evaluation enlightened the Zimbabwean situation. As has been alluded to in chapter five above in an African world view religion legitimises the political order. Any democratic campaign that ignores or undermines religion will not succeed in delivering the desired goal. Therefore Wesleyan Methodist political teaching was posed for bright future prospects at independence time. It is necessary to explore Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice in independent Zimbabwe. However, that task falls outside the scope of this study. Mugambi observed correctly that,

... in many African countries the electorate has returned to power the same leaders whom the opposition has portrayed as negatively as language could allow. Wherever the opposition has come to power, stability has not been assured, largely because this model of political engineering, in which, 'winner-takes-all' and 'loser-breaks-all' is culturally unrealistic (Mugambi2003:43).

The quotation above exposes a crisis in African political order in the independence era of the continent. The situation in Africa called for and continues to call for the church and other religious groups to serve as mediators between antagonistic political parties in our contemporary African political order. The church is also called upon to contribute to a process of addressing the political crisis referred to. The researcher contends that the invitation is based on the African world view where spirit mediums

served as mediators between adversaries.

Religion should not be relegated to the peripheries of society but allowed to permeate all spheres of life for justice to flow like a river in political, economic and social domains. What is needed is to structure the religious domain in such a manner that church leaders or Christians who mediate in the political order remain apolitical. That involvement is in line with the concept of active participation and responsibility which was used in chapter five to justify Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching and practice in Zimbabwe. With such a concept Wesleyan Methodists would hold politicians accountable to God and their constituencies.

For the Church to perform the role of mediation effectively and efficiently ecumenical co-operation was supposed to be considered seriously. Wesleyan Methodists had an opportunity to contribute to an African political order which was based on an African world view and ecumenical theological precepts. That would be achieved through contextualising the Christian message and John Wesley's political teaching. The aim of such a task would be to legitimise the political order with religion so that peace is restored and maintained for the prosperity of Zimbabwe.

Another fact which showed that Wesleyan Methodists' political teaching had bright prospects in independent Zimbabwe was the role played by missionaries. We have seen that some missionaries were racial bigots and colonial bullies but others were excellent shepherds, counsellors and teachers. Both positive and negative influences from missionaries were acknowledged in the analysis of Wesleyan Methodist missionaries' political teaching and practice. They held trump cards in the shaping of political and economic destiny of the colonial state. Zimbabwean Wesleyan Methodists, led by Africans who were the majority, needed to contextualise John Wesley's political teaching and provide a Wesleyan Methodist niche in the new political order.



The end of colonialism in Zimbabwe in 1980 was an important historical moment appropriate for opportunities and challenges for the church to develop a new political order. It was also time to create strategies for dealing with legacies of colonialism. The church in Zimbabwe, Wesleyan Methodists included, needed to take an active role in responding to cultural, economic and political challenges ushered in by the end of colonialism. The end of colonialism in Zimbabwe should be interpreted as an entry point into Zimbabwe's social transformation, using religious and socio-political awakening to assert Zimbabweans' position in the global village. In such a process the Christian message had a pivotal role in aiding Africans in Zimbabwe to break the circle of crises through promoting more conducive conditions for national and social harmony. In that perspective the church becomes agents of reconciliation and not promoters of social strife.

The independence of Zimbabwe provided an opportunity for Wesleyan Methodists and other Christians to accompany political institutions in a commitment to democratic values. The opportunity would be seized adequately through co-existence based on respect and appreciation of one another. The church and state had a common goal of serving Zimbabweans which compelled them to employ a spirit of mutual understanding and willingness to dialogue. From that perspective the church was called upon to facilitate the restoration and sustenance of peace and stability. When Zimbabwe was moving from an undemocratic political order into a democratic one the church had an important role in the democratisation process. The coming of multi-party politics meant that the church had to participate actively in the political arena, but at the same time maintain a critical distance which would enable them to critique politicians whenever injustice, violation of human rights lack of transparency and accountability in dealing with national issues surfaced. So Wesleyan Methodist political teaching had its place in post-colonial Zimbabwe.

At independence Zimbabwe was rolling from a political order which was anchored in an adversarial approach where government authorities and white politicians viewed

criticisms from the church and other religious groups as direct confrontation. That strained the relationship between the church and government authorities with each party accusing the other. Wesleyan Methodists needed to re-think the mission of the church in terms of political involvement that would enable them to identify an appropriate approach to political issues. In that way realistic strategies would be formulated resulting in better working relationships with government institutions. In my view the church had an obligation to contribute to re-building the nation using the principles of genuine freedom, justice, peace and reconciliation. The task before the church was not to raise public emotions, but to understand and help others to comprehend the national situation in order to work towards changing it for the better. The church's role in that regard would be modelled on Jesus' teaching on service to human kind.

The church had an opportunity to impart a clear and motivating social conscience to its members, laying out the socio-political implications of its teaching. Methodism was born in music and social gospel. The end of colonialism in Zimbabwe provided Wesleyan Methodists with a perfect arena to employ the fundamentals of Methodism.

The social gospel always has been the concern of at least some people in the Church. What could be new is the proclamation of the social gospel as standard practice, the integration of the social gospel into the day-by-day preaching and catechising of the Church. It would not be a new gospel. It would simply be the drawing out and application to present-day social, economic and political conditions of the values inherent in the eternal gospel – justice, love, respect for human dignity, concern for the common good, compassion for the less fortunate members of society. This programme of moral education would be tantamount to promoting and intensifying the moral resources necessary for sound social and political action ... is the responsibility of Church members to carry their moral teaching into social, economic and political life (Hurley 1997:108 &109)

Hurley addressed the South African Context however; his argument suited the Zimbabwean situation very well at the time of independence. Responsible political involvement required a strong moral base. Wesleyan Methodists and other denominations had virgin ground to work on.

Lastly the study used three biblical metaphors, leaven (Matt. 13:33; 1Cor. 5:6), salt (Matt. 5:14-15) and light (Matt. 5:14-16), (Chepkwony 2003:252-256), according to the translation model of contextual theology to demonstrate further the prospects of Wesleyan Methodist political teaching in independent Zimbabwe. The metaphor of leaven unveils that it is the task of the Church to transform government structures from within. The Church, Wesleyan Methodists included, was called upon to work within national institutions in independent Zimbabwe in order to transform them towards God's intended purpose. That task would be impossible in a context of polarisation. The Wesleyan Methodist Church in Zimbabwe needed to display maturity and to be in good standing in the eyes of the nation in order to accomplish that task. The major factor of the task was to be reconciling agents within a nation whose citizens were separated by mistrust, adversity, animosity fear and discrimination. Wesleyan Methodists were compelled to lead by example if that task was to be achieved. They were supposed to carry out a self-examination exercise and confess the role they played in contributing to injustice, suffering and conflict among church members as well as in the nation. As Zimbabwe was preparing to undergo serious changes and political adjustments Wesleyan Methodists and other churches in the country were challenged to leave the emerging national and social institutions.

The metaphor of the Church as salt spells out the Church's role of preserving national and social structures in a bid to enable them to perform their God-given functions. Salt has two critical functions, preserving things from decay and bringing out food's flavour (Chepkwony 2003:254). The Church had a task of enabling national and social institutions in Zimbabwe, from her independence onwards, to deliver expected basic needs of citizens and to preserve the institutions from decay. That would happen through promoting and maintaining peace, order and positive attitudes among citizens. In the process the church had to guard against a temptation of usurping the power of national and social institutions instead of being salt to the institutions. The church could also be salt through the influence of its members who permeated the

institutions as employees. The Church, Wesleyan Methodists included, was challenged by the new political dispensation in Zimbabwe to contribute constructively in re-shaping national institutions and making them serve their essential purpose.

The metaphor of viewing the Church as the light of the world means that the Church must be a model to be emulated by all citizens. It should demonstrate to national institutions how to fulfil God's plan for human kind. In that perspective Wesleyan Methodists had a challenge and opportunity at the same time to provide people with light and enable them to see the goodness of living in harmony and peace with each other as well as guiding them to the goodness of God. During early colonial Zimbabwe Wesleyan Methodists failed to be a light of the nation. They fell victim to the political tactics of the colonisers and succumbed to political manipulation when they promoted colonial policies. At independence an opportunity presented itself for Wesleyan Methodists to amend their ways and position themselves as a light of the nation.

The study pointed out the prospects of Wesleyan Methodist teaching and practice in post-colonial Zimbabwe. A harmonious approach in dealing with a multi-party political order was proposed which would foster a smooth transition into a just and humane political order. The church would achieve that through encouraging dialogue instead of coercion, co-operation and not unhealthy competition, avoiding blaming others and accepting responsibility. The church has bright prospects in contributing to national integration and development. A study on how Wesleyan Methodists in Zimbabwe seized and utilised the opportunities and challenges provided by the independence of the country is yet to be undertaken.

## Bibliography

- Ajayi, J FA 2008. A new Christian politics? The mission-educated elite in West African politics, in Robert, D L ed., *Converting colonialism, visions and realities in mission history 1706-1914*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:242-264.
- Alexander, J 2006. *The unsettled land, state-making & the politics of land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003*, Harare: Weaver Press.
- Andrews, C F 1935. *John White of Mashonaland*, London: Hodder & Stoughton Publishers.
- Andrews, G J 2005. Wesley and war, in Malinga, P & Richardson, N ed., *Rediscovering Wesley for Africa, themes from John Wesley for Africa today*, Pretoria: MCSA Education for Ministry and Mission Unit:29-40.
- Banana, C S 1989. The role of the Church in the struggle for liberation in Zimbabwe, in Banana, C S ed., *Turmoil and tenacity, Zimbabwe 1890-1980*, Harare: The College Press:197-201.
- Banana, C S 1991. The politics of the Methodist Church, in Banana, C S ed., *A century of Methodism in Zimbabwe 1891 -1991*, Harare: Methodist Church in Zimbabwe:123-148.
- Banana, C S 1996a. *Politics of repression and resistance, face to face with combat theology*, Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Banana, C S 1996b. *The Church and the struggle for Zimbabwe, from the Programme to Combat Racism to combat theology*, Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Bank, A 1997. The great debate and the origins of South African historiography, in *Journal of African History*, 1997, vol. 38:261-281.
- Barry, S & Vorster, J M 2003. A Wesleyan methodology for effecting political and social transformation, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* XIX, No 2:263-279.
- Bebbington, D 1979. *Patterns in history, a Christian perspective on historical thought*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Becken, H 1993. The use of oral tradition in historiography, some pitfalls and challenges, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* XIX No.1:81-88.
- Berglund, A I 1991. Has apartheid gone? Hallencreutz, C F & Palmberg, M ed., *Religion and politics in Southern Africa*, Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of

African Studies : 41-47.

Bevans, S B 2007. *Models of contextual theology*, (revised and expanded edition), Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Bhebe, N M B 1973. Missionary activity among the Ndebele and Kalanga, a survey, in Dachs A J ed., *Christianity south of the Zambezi*, Gweru: Mambo Press:41-52.

Bhebe, N 1999. *The ZAPU and ZANU guerrilla warfare and the Evangelical Luthren Church in Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press.

Bhila, H 1977. Trade and early missionaries in Southern Zambezia, in Bourdillon, M F C S.J. ed., *Christianity south of the Zambezi*, Vol. 2, Gweru: Mambo Press: 25-42.

Bloch, M 1954. *The historian's craft*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Blondel, J 1973. *Comparing political systems*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Bosch, D J 2004. *Transforming mission, paradigm shifts in theology of mission*, 19<sup>th</sup> print, Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Bourdillon, M F C 1993. *Where are the ancestors? Changing culture in Zimbabwe*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Bourdillon, M 1990. *Religion and society: A text for Africa*, Gweru: Mambo Press.

Bowden, H W 1991. *Church history in an age of uncertainty: historiographical patterns in the United States, 1906-1990*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Bowen, M 1937. *Wrestling Jacob, a study of John Wesley and some members of the family*, London: William Heinemann Ltd.

Bradley, J E & Muller, R A 1995. *Church history, an introduction to research, reference works, and methods*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Brand, C M 1977. African nationalists and the missionaries in Rhodesia, in Bourdillon, M F C ed., *Christianity south of the Zambezi*, vol. 2, Gweru: Mambo Press:69-85.

Broad, C D 1923. *Scientific thought*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.

Bridges, R 2008. The Christian vision and secular imperialism: missionaries, geography, and the approach to East Africa c. 1844-1890, in Robert, D L ed., *Converting colonialism, visions and realities in mission history 1706-1914*,



Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:43-59.

Burke, P 1991. Overture, the new history: its past and its future, in Burke, P ed., 1991, *New perspectives on historical writing* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge: Polity Press:1-24.

Cairns, E E 1996. *Christianity through the centuries, a history of the Christian church*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Michigan: Zondervan.

Cameron, R 1990. Wesley the reformer, in Olsen, G W ed., *Religion and revolution in early-industrial England, the Halevy thesis and its critics*, New York: University Press of America:49-55.

Carino, F V 2005. Religious, politics and the state: some revisions and discordant notes, in de Santa Ana J ed., *Religions today their challenge to the ecumenical movement*, Geneva: World Council of Churches Publication:105-113

Carnegie, D 1894. *Among the Matabele*, London: R.T.S.

Carr, E H 1987. *What is history?* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London: Penguin books Ltd.

Chennells, A 1977. The image of the Ndebele and nineteenth-century missionary tradition, in Bourdillon, M F C ed., *Christianity south of the Zambezi*, vol.2, Gweru: Mambo Press:43-68.

Chepkwony, A 2003. Political pluralism in Africa, in Getui M N & Obeng, A( ed.), *Theology of reconstruction, exploratory essays*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers:243-257.

Collingwood, RG 1946. *The idea of history*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Collins, K J 1999. *A real Christian, the life of John Wesley*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Currie, R 1990. Wesley the authoritarian, in Olsen, G W ed., *Religion and revelation in early-industrial England, the Halevy thesis and its critics*, New York: University Press of America:43-49.

Davidson, A 1988. *Cecil Rhodes and his time*, Moscow: Progress Publishers.

De Gruchy, J W 1983. *Christianity and democracy*, Johannesburg: David Phillip.

De Gruchy, J W 1997. Grappling with a colonial heritage: the English speaking churches under Imperialism and Apartheid, in Elphick, R & Davenport, R ed., *Christianity in South Africa, a political, social & cultural history*, Cape Town: David Philip:155-172.



- De Jong, A 2000. *Mission and politics in Eastern Africa, Dutch Missionaries and African nationalism in Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi 1945 – 1965*, Nairobi : Paulines Publications.
- Derman, B & Hellum, A 2007. Land, identity and violence in Zimbabwe, in Derman, B, Odgaard, R & Sjaastad, E, ed., *Conflicts over land and water in Africa*, Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu Natal Press:161-186.
- Dray, W H 1964. *Philosophy of history*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Du Bois, F 2008. Reparation and forms of justice, in Du Bois F & Du Bois-Pedain A, ed., *Justice and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa*, New York: Cambridge University Press:116-143.
- Edwards, M 1938. *This Methodism*, London: The Epworth Press.
- Edwards, M 1990. Wesley and early Methodism, in Olsen, G W ed., *Religion and revelation in early-industrial England, the Halevy thesis and its critics*, New York: University Press of America:33-42.
- Elton, G R 1970. *Political history, principles and practice*, London: Allen Lane.
- Gaskell, I 1991. Visual history, in Burke, P ed., 1991, *New perspectives on historical writing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge: Polity Press:187-217.
- Gibson, J L 2009. *Overcoming historical injustices, land reconciliation in South Africa*, Cambridge: University Press.
- Gillispie, C C 1990. A criticism of Halevy's works, in Olsen, G W ed., *Religion and revolution in early-industrial England, the Halevy thesis and its critics*, New York: University Press of America:16-26.
- Grassow, P S 2005. John Wesley: salvation and political activism, in Malinga, P & Richardson, N ed., *Rediscovering Wesley for Africa, themes from John Wesley for Africa today*, Pretoria: MCSA education for ministry and mission unit:87-95.
- Gray, R 1990. *Black Christians and white missionaries*, London: Yale University Press.
- Gundani P H 2004, Christian historiography and the Africa woman : a critical examination of the place of Felicity, Wallatta Pietros and Kimpa Vita in Africa Christian historiography, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, XXX, No.1:75-89.
- Gundani, P H 2002. The land crisis in Zimbabwe and the role of the churches towards

its resolution, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* XXVIII No. 2:122-169.

Gundani, P H 2001. Christian healing ministry among the Shona of Zimbabwe (the Roman Catholic Church among the Shona), *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* XXVI, No. 1:21-36.

Gundani, P H 2002. The inimitable Ruth : the heroic exploits of Mrs Ruth Chinamano in the Zimbabwean political and ecclesiastical jungle, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, XXIX, No. 2:144-159.

Gundani, P H 2003. Teaching Christian history from an African perspective, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, XXIX. No. 2:1-15.

Halevy, E 1990. The birth of Methodism and England in 1815, in Olsen, G W (ed.), *Religion and revelation in early-industrial England, the Halevy thesis and its critics*, New York: University Press of America:3-15.

Hallencreutz, C F 1991. Church and state in Zimbabwe and South Africa, in Hallencreutz, C F & Palmberg, M ed., *Religion and politics in Southern Africa*, Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies: 159-168.

Hallencreutz, C F 1996. Foreword, in Banana, C S *The church and the struggle for Zimbabwe from the programme to combat racism to combat theology*, Gweru: Mambo Press:1-18.

Harrison, A W 1932. Wesleyan Methodism, in Harrison, A W et. al., *The Methodist Church, its origins, divisions and reunion*, London: Methodist Publishing House:7-46.

Heitzenrater, R P 1995. *Wesley and the people called Methodists*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Heywood, A 2007. *Political ideologies, an introduction*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Hoornaert, E 1988. *The memory of the Christian people*, New York: Orbis Books.

Hulley, L D 2006. *Wesley, plain man for plain people*, revised edition, Cape Town: Salty Print.

Hurley D E 1997. The role of religion in politics [1971], in Denis, P ed., *Facing the crisis, selected texts of Archbishop D. E. Hurley*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications:104-112.

Hurley, D E 1997. A new moral principle: when right and duty clash [1966], in Denis

P ed., *Facing the crisis, selected texts of Archbishop D. E. Hurley*, Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications:77-80.

Isichei, E 1997. *A history of African societies to 1870*, Cambridge: University Press.

Jennings, T W Jr. 1990. *Good news to the poor, John Wesley's evangelical economics*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Kadenge, L T C 1991. Leaders: past and present 1891-1991, in Banana, C S ed., *A century of Methodism in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Methodist Church in Zimbabwe:111-122.

Kalu, O U 1981. Doing church history in Africa today, in Vischer, L ed., *Church history in an ecumenical perspective, papers and reports of an international ecumenical consultation held in Basle October 112-17, 1981*, Bern : Evangelische Arbeitsstelle Oekumene Schweiz:77-91.

Kalu, O U 2005. The shape and flow of African church historiography, in Kalu, O U ed., *African Christianity, an African story*, Pretoria: University of Pretoria:1-23.

Kathari, CR 2004. *Research Methodology, methods and techniques* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Delhi; Dharmesh Printers.

Ki- Zerbo, J 1989. Introduction, in Ki-Zerbo, J ed., *General history of Africa*, abridged edition, Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation:1-9.

Kraft, C H 1979. *Christianity in culture: a study in dynamic biblical theologizing in cross-cultural perspective*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Le Roux, J 1993. The nature of historical understanding (or: Hermeneutics and history), *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, Vol. X1X, No.1:35-63.

Maddox, R L 2002. "Visit the poor": John Wesley, the poor and sanctification of believers, in Heitzenrater, R P (ed.), *The poor and the people called Methodists 1729-1999*, Nashville: Abingdon Press:59-81.

Maluleke, T S 1994. Book review: Bevans, Stephen B. Models of contextual theology. Maryknoll: Orbis. 1992, *Missionalia*, Vol. 22, no. 2, August:177-178.

Marquardt, M 1992. *John Wesley's social ethics, praxis and principles*, Nashville: Abingdon Press.

Marwick, A 2001. *The new nature of history, knowledge, evidence, language*, Hampshire: Palgrave.

- Mazobere, C C G 1991. Christian Theology of mission, in Banana, C S ed., *A century of Methodism in Zimbabwe 1891-1991*, Harare: Methodist church in Zimbabwe:149-174.
- Mlambo, A S 2009. From the second world war to UDI- 1965, in Raftopoulos, B & Modise, B 1991. The call of the ANC, in Hallencreutz, C F & Palmberg, M ed., *Religion and politics in Southern Africa*, Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies : 15-22.
- Mlambo, A S ed., *Becoming Zimbabwe, a history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*, Johannesburg: Weaver Press: 75-114.
- Mugambi, J N K 2003. *Christian theology and social reconstruction*, Nairobi: Acton Publishers.
- Mutume, P 1991. Insights from the Second Chimurenga, in Hallencreutz, C F & Palmberg, M ed., *Religion and politics in Southern Africa*, Uppsala: The Institute of African Studies : 143-149.
- Namwambah, T N 2003. *Essentials of critical and creative thinking, a teach yourself handbook*, Nairobi: Didaxis Resources and Services.
- Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S J 2009. Mapping cultural and colonial encounters, 1880s-1930s, in Raftopoulos, B & Mlambo, A S ed., *Becoming Zimbabwe, a history from pre-colonial to 2008*, Johannesburg: Weaver Press:39-74.
- Obenga, T 1989. Sources and specific techniques used in Africa history: a general outline, in Ki-Zerbo, J ed., *General history of Africa*, abridged edition, Paris: United Nations Education, Scientific and cultural Organisation:29-33.
- Outler, A C 1964. Preface, in Outler, A C ed., *John Wesley*, New York: Oxford University Press INC:vii-xii.
- Palmer, R 1977. *Land and racial domination in Rhodesia*, London: Heinemann.
- Palmer, R 1977. The agricultural history of Rhodesia, in Palmer, R & Parsons, N ed., *The roots of rural poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, London : Heinemann.
- Pannenberg, W 1976. *Theology and the philosophy of science*, Philadelphia: Westminster.
- Peadar, R 1984. From mission to church, (a) The Roman Catholics in Zimbabwe, (b) The Anglicans in Zimbabwe, (c) The Methodists in Zimbabwe, in Weller, J & Linden, J ed., *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Gweru:

Mambo Press:52-100.

Pillay GJ 1994. The Relation between Church History and General History: reflections on Adolf von Harnack's view, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* XX (no.2) 156-168.

Porter, A 2008. Evangelicalism, Islam, and millennial expectation in the nineteenth century, in Robert, D L ed., *Converting colonialism, visions and realities in mission history 1706-1914*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:60-85.

Prins, G 1991. Oral history, in Burke, P ed., *New perspectives on historical writing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge: Polity Press:120-156.

Rack, H D 2002. *Reasonable enthusiast, John Wesley and the rise of Methodism*, London: Epworth Press.

Ranger, T 1995. *Are we not also men? The Samkange family and African politics in Zimbabwe 1920-64*, Harare: Baobab.

Rea, W F 1977. The economics of the Zambezi missions 1580- 1759, in Bourdillon, M F C S.J. ed., *Christianity south of the Zambezi Vol.2*, Gweru: Mambo Press: 13-24.

Renier, G J 1950. *History: its purpose and method*, New York: Harper & Row.

Robert, D L 2008. Introduction, in Robert D L, ed., *Converting colonialism, visions and realities in mission history 1706-1914*, Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:1-20.

Samudzimu, D A 1991. Methodist Church and education, in Banana, C S ed., *A century of Methodism in Zimbabwe*, Harare: Methodist Church in Zimbabwe:79-110.

Sanneh L, 1989. *Translating the message: the missionary impact on culture*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Scheffler, E 2001. *Politics in ancient Israel*, Pretoria: Biblia Publishers.

Schreiter, R J 2002. *Constructing local theologies*, MaryKnoll: Orbis Books.

Shamuyarira, N 1965. *Crisis in Rhodesia*, London: Andre Deutsch.

Sharpe, J 1991. History from below, in Burke, P ed., *New perspectives on historical writing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge: Polity Press:25-42.

Smith, K & Nothling, F J 1993. *North of the Limpopo, Africa since 1800*, Pretoria: University of South Africa.

Sobel, L A 1978. *Rhodesia / Zimbabwe 1971-77*, New York: Fact on File Inc.

Thorpe, C 1951, *Limpopo to Zambezi, sixty years of Methodism in Southern Rhodesia*, London: The Cargate Pres

Tosh, J 1984. *The pursuit of history, aims methods and new directions in the study of modern history*, 2nd ed., London: Longman.

Tuck, R 1991. History of political thought, in Burke, P ed., *New perspectives on historical writing*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Cambridge: Polity Press:218-232.

Tuttle, R G 1978. *John Wesley: his life and theology*, Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press.

Van Vuuren, D J 1983. The unitary state, in Van Vuuren D J & Kriek D J ed., *Political alternatives for Southern Africa principles and perspectives*, Durban: Butterworths:141-168.

Vansina, J 1985. *Oral tradition as history*, Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Verstraelen – Gihuis, G 1992. *A new look at Christianity in Africa, essays on apartheid, African education and a new history*, Gweru: Mambo Press.

Verstraelen, F J 2002. *History of Christianity in Africa in the context of Africa history, a comparative assessment of four recent historiographical contributions*, Gweru: Mambo Press.

Weller, J & Linden, J 1984. *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press.

Wesley, J 1872a. A calm address to our American colonies, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*, vol. X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 80-90.

Wesley, J 1872b. A calm address to the inhabitants of England, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*, vol. X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 129-140.

Wesley, J 1872c. A farther appeal to men of reason and religion, part 11, in *The works of John Wesley, addresses, essays, letters*, vol. V11, London: Wesleyan Conference: 136-200.

Wesley, J 1872d. A seasonable address to the more serious part of the inhabitants of



Great Britain, respecting the unhappy contest between us and our American brethren: with an occasional word interspersed it those of a different complexion, by a lover of peace, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*, vol. X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 119-128.

Wesley, J 1872e. A word to a Freeholder, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*, vol. X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 196-198.

Wesley, J 1872f. Free thoughts on the present state of public affairs, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*, vol. X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 14-33.

Wesley, J 1872g. How far is it the duty of a Christian minister to preach politics, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*. Vol.X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 154-155.

Wesley, J 1872h. Letter to Walter Churchey, in *The works of John Wesley*, vol. X11, London: Wesleyan Conference.

Wesley, J 1872i. Some observations on liberty occasioned by a late tract, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*, vol. X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 90-118.

Wesley, J 1872j. The doctrine of original sin, part 1, in *The works of John Wesley, letters and essays*, vol. 1X, London: Wesleyan Conference: 196-238.

Wesley, J 1872k. Thoughts concerning the origin of power, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*, vol. X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 46-53.

Wesley, J 1872l. Thoughts upon liberty, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*, vol. X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 34-46.

Wesley, J 1872m. Thoughts upon slavery, in *The works of John Wesley, thoughts, addresses, prayers, letters*, vol. X1, London: Wesleyan Conference: 59-79.

Wesley, J 1872n. Sermon C11, Of former times, in *The works of John Wesley, second series of sermons concluded*, vol. V11, London, Wesleyan Conference: 157-160.

Wesley, J 1872o. Sermon CV11, On God's vineyard, in *The works of John Wesley, second series of sermons concluded*, vol. V11, London: Wesleyan Conference: 202-213.

Wesley, J 1931a. Letter to a friend, in Telford, J ed., *The letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, vol. V, London: The Epworth Press: 370-388.



Wesley, J 1931b. Letter to Henry Brooke, in Telford, J ed., *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, vol. V11, London: The Epworth Press: 331-334.

Wesley, J 1931c. Letter to Lord North, first Lord of the treasury, in Telford, J ed., *The letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, vol. V1, London: The Epworth Press:160-164.

Wesley, J 1931d. Letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, in Telford, J ed., *The letters of the Rev. John Wesley*, vol. V1, London: The Epworth Press: 155-160.

Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 1914. *One hundredth report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, an account of the work done and the contributions received for the year 1913*, London: Methodist Missionary Society.

Whiteside, J 1906. *History of the Wesleyan Methodists Church of South Africa*, Cape Town: Juta & Co.

Zvobgo, C J M 1973. The influence of the Wesleyan Methodist missions in Southern Rhodesia, 1891-1923, in Dachs, J A ed., *Christianity South of the Zambezi*, Gweru: Mambo Press:63-70.

Zvobgo, C J M 1991. *The Wesleyan Methodist missions in Zimbabwe 1891-1945*, Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications.

## **Church documents**

The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia, 1951, Handbook

The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia, 1956, Handbook

The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia, 1961, Handbook

## **Archival sources**

### **National Archives of Zimbabwe**

National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (MET 1/11-12) A short summary of the history of Methodism in Southern Rhodesia, 1898.

National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (6 3 /4 IN) 50 years: the story of the growth of Methodism in Bulawayo 1895 – 1945, October, 1945.

National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (MET 1/1/5) Statements, Statement on race relations, 1951.

National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (MET 1/1/5) Statements, The Methodist Church in Southern Rhodesia declaration on race relationships, 1951.

National Archives of Zimbabwe, Harare (SH 1/1) The Mashonaland Mission, 1982.

### **Wesleyan Methodist Archives**

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (18-24) Letter from D Gray to Secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 17 January, 1923.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (18-24) Letter to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Committee, 16 January, 1919.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (18-24) Rhodesia District report, 11 January, 1922.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (18-24) Rules on mission farms, 11 January, 1922.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (18-24) Synod minutes, 3 January, 1920.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (18-24) Synod Minutes, 17 January 1923.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (18-24) Synod Minutes, 9 January, 1924.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (18-24) Wesleyan Methodist Church annual report, 9 January, 1924.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (18-24) Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society letter to Rhodesian Synod, 29 November, 1918.  
Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (29-30) Letter from HM Jackson Chief Native Commissioner to F Noble, 31 January, 1929.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (31-32) Synod, 14 January, 1932.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (35) Synod minutes, 4 January, 1935.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (36) Synod minutes, 14 January, 1936.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (41) Chairman's address, 8 January 1941.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (44) Synod minutes, 8 January, 1944.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (45) Chairman's address to representative session of Synod, 11 January, 1945.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (54) Synod minutes, 3 January, 1954.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (59) Letter from R Welensky to J Lawrence, 5 January, 1959.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (59) Synod minutes, 13 January, 1959.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (60) Address to the representative session of Synod by Rev TA Beetham, Africa Secretary, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, 9 January, 1960.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (60) Chairman's review, 8 January, 1960.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (60) Synod minutes, 13 January, 1960.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (61) Chairman's review, 11 January, 1961.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (61) Synod minutes, 12 January 1961.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House (62) Synod minutes, 7 January, 1962.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (63) Chairman's review, 14 January, 1963.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (63) Christian Citizenship Committee Minutes, 13 January, 1963.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare (63) Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1963.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (64) Synod Minutes, 6 January, 1964.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House (65) Christian Citizenship Committee Minutes, 10 January, 1965.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (65) Resolution on the work of God, 10 January, 1965.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (65) Synod Minutes. 10 January, 1965.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House (66) Minutes of Marandellas Area Council, 3 January, 1966.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (67) Synod Minutes, 7 January, 1967.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (68) An address to the people of Methodism in Rhodesia from the Synod, 15 January, 1968.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (68) Chairman's review, 13 January, 1968.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (68) Synod minutes, 13 January, 1968.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (69) Christian Citizenship Committee Minutes, 4 November, 1969.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (69) Synod Minutes, 12 January, 1969.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (70) Minutes of the Salisbury Area Council, 30 August, 1970.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (70) Synod Minutes, 9 January, 1970.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (71) Synod Minutes, 13 January, 1971.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (72) Synod Minutes, 17 January, 1972.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (73) Christian Citizenship Committee Minutes, 6 January, 1973

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (74) Chairman's review, 10 January, 1974.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (74) Synod Minutes, 10 January, 1974.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (75) Chairman's review, 12 January, 1975.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (75) Synod Minutes, 12 January, 1975.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (76) Chairman's review, 18 January, 1976.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (76) Resolutions, 18 January, 1976.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (76) Synod Minutes, 18 January, 1976.

Wesleyan Methodist Archives, Harare Methodist House, (77) Chairman's review, 16 October, 1977.



## **Oral sources**

### **Interviews**

#### **Ministers**

Chirisa, F.J. Marondera, 14/3/11.  
Kadenge, L.T.C. Harare, 15/3/11.  
Khiyaza, W.P. Bulawayo, 17/3/11.  
Magoronga, Z. Harare, 16/3/11.  
Matemavi, S. Harare, 16/3/11.  
Mukandi, C.Z. Kwe Kwe, 18/3/11  
Museka, E. Chitungwiza, 13/3/11.

#### **Ministers' widows**

Chombo, E. Harare, 15/3/11.  
Jaja, G. Chitungwiza, 21/3/11.  
Kanodereka, G. Harare, 15/3/11.

## **Appendix 1 Interview questions for ministers**

How was the land problem an issue in your ministry during the colonial era in Zimbabwe?

How did you understand racism and what impact did that view have on your ministry?

How did you view the formation of the Federation and what impact did the Federation have on the Wesleyan Methodist Church's ministry?

What were your views on the war of liberation in Zimbabwe and the Wesleyan Methodist Church's stance?

How did John Wesley's teaching on politics influence your ministry?

In summary, how would you describe what it was like to serve during the colonial period?





## **Appendix 2 Interview questions for ministers' widows**

Would you like to describe the political environment in which you and your husband served?

How did you learn about your husband's participation in politics during his ministry?

How did you view the role of the church in the political arena?