

## A Nation In Crisis: The Implications Of Pro State And Resistance Theology On Religious Education In Zimbabwe

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### Abstract

*The article interrogates the two theologies that have emerged in Zimbabwe during the times of crisis and their implications to religious education. The article refers to the pro state theology as propounded by Andrew Wutawunashe and Nehemiah Mutendi and the resistance theology espoused within the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops conference entitled 'the march has not ended', The paper is couched in decoloniality, which calls for naming and challenging structures that undermine democracy and human rights. The article argues that in times of crisis, there is need for a theology that speaks to Keywords the political space to uphold humanity and promote democracy. I end the article by arguing that Religion in the political space cannot be a tool for Pro-State Theology authoritarianism and silencing dissenting voices calling for accountability and reforms as the only basis for democracy in Zimbabwe. Thus, religious education need to be reconstructed to reflect multicultural and religious ideologies centred on pacifism as alternative of ending the Zimbabwean crisis.*

### 1. Introduction

The second republic under the leadership of Emmerson Mnangagwa has experienced seemingly a false start with many pilling pressure on the need for genuine political reforms as the only way to revive the once assumed bread bucket of Africa. Since 2017, the second republic has been characterised by silencing the dissenting voices, abductions of political activists, and imprisonment of the activists opposed to the state. The COVID 19 has, unfortunately as a world pandemic become an opportunity to intensify the struggle against the people with different political ideology from the ruling party. The United Nations (2020) notes that there is ever disturbing "toxic lockdown culture" that has emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, and Zimbabwe has not been an exception. With this in mind, Ebrahim (2020) argues that there is shrinking democratic space and COVID 19 has somehow accelerated it. In this case as argued by Crisis in Zimbabwe (2019), the liberators' have turned 'Oppressors'. In support of the foregoing, Matthews (2019), argues that the COVID 19 has exposed governments that do not advance the interests of the majority of their citizens, which I refer to as crisis. To buttress the political, social and religious crisis, a twitter movement named #zimbabweanlivesmatters has emerged where various countries, political parties, individuals have expressed concern on the abuse of human rights in Zimbabwe. Failure by the state to address the lived realities of the people of Zimbabwe.

The movement was a response to "complex and protracted political crisis that has seen rising levels of human-rights violations, including kidnappings, disappearances, arbitrary detentions, torture, sexual violence and the forced recruitment of youths by armed groups, to name just a few" (Machakanja, 2010 p.2). Thus, I discuss the underrated narrative of the Zimbabwean crisis emanating from the abuse of religion within the political space. The understanding and addressing the Zimbabwean crisis cannot done without interrogating the role of religious leaders, and religious education in the political space. Religious leaders have influence; however, some of them have used their influence to undermine democracy and human rights. Thus, I agree with Magaisa (2019) who notes that religious leaders "start from the periphery wearing the label of technocrats but soon enough, they find themselves deep in the cesspool, wearing scarfs and chanting ridiculous slogans". Such type of leaders become regime enablers, who through their association with the politicians are muted, cannot name, oppose and challenge social injustice within the political space directed to the citizens.

Recently, there have been emerging and contrasting theologies within the political space of Zimbabwe seeking to reinvent a better Zimbabwe, however such theologies have been resisted by the state and religious leaders aligned to the regime. Cognisant of the foregoing, the paper discusses Zimbabwe as a nation in crisis from two contrasting theological spaces, which is the state theology premised within Wutawunashe and Mutendi and the Resistance theology premised on the letter by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference entitled "the march

has not ended". Based on the contradicting theologies and confusion they have come with, I submit that the issue of Religion has to be put on the table to buttress Beyers (2014) who argue that this is an urgent task especially when its praxis negatively affects democracy and violates human rights. Thus, the aim of the paper is to expose how religious leaders have to a certain extent, contributed to the crisis and resistance in Zimbabwe and how religious education should respond to the ambivalence within religion especially with the political space. The paper is arranged as follows, theoretical framing, which is decoloniality, state theology as presented by Wutawunashe and Mutendi, the resistance theology as presented by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop Conference, way forward on contradicting theologies and the implications on religious education.

### **Theoretical Framing: Decoloniality**

I interrogate pro state theology and resistance theology using decoloniality theory. The theory has roots in Latin America with leading scholars such as Walter Dignolo, Maldonado-Torres, Quijón, Dussel (Wanderley and Barros, 2018). In South Africa, decoloniality was championed by Sabelo Gatsheni Ndlovu who argued that decoloniality was "born out of realisation that ours is an asymmetrical sustained not only by colonial matrices of power but also by pedagogies and epistemologies of equilibrium that continue to produce alienated Africans" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013, p. 11). The theory represents a "commitment to challenging and reformulating the mediating power of the Eurocentric hegemonic thinking, to a native cultural paradigm" (Herrera, Cabarello and Rojas 2016, p. 78). In doing so, it "rejects modernity, which is located on the oppressed and exploited side of the colonial difference, in favour of a decolonial liberation struggle to achieve a world beyond Eurocentric modernity" (Grosfoguel, 2011, p. 21). I have chosen it for this paper because it "questions the legitimacy and sanity of celebrating postcolonial thinking, while the majority of Africans remain mentally colonised" (Kaunda, 2015, p. 77). Furthermore, as suggested by Ramón (2011, p. 7), decoloniality critiques "modernity towards a pluriversality trans-modern world of multiple and diverse ethico-political projects in which real horizontal dialogue and communication". Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015, p. 11), moreover sees decoloniality as "part of marginalised but persistent movements that merged from struggles against the slave trade, imperialism, colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, and underdevelopment as constitutive negative elements of Euro-North American-centric modernity. The theory is relevant for this study since it seeks to move the world towards a decolonial liberation struggle (Ramón 2011, p. 12) against structures and theologies that undermine the ontological density of the African people and suggests ways in which religious education can contribute to addressing the trajectories. This article takes decoloniality further from the struggle against Eurocentric structures that undermine African identity to Africans who have assumed the role of the oppressor against their own people through various systems such as Religion. Thus, decoloniality is a struggle against oppression, imposition and dehumanisation that is perpetrated against people whether from Europe or from Africa. As such, decoloniality in this article problematises a theology that does not liberate but complements politicians to dehumanise and contribute to the crisis. Cognisant of this thinking, I submit along with the thinking of Mashau (2018) that decoloniality is a project that African religious groups should embrace and attend to as a matter of urgency to address the crisis of nationalism and limitations of religious education.

### **Contradicting theologies in #zimbabweanlivematters**

In this section, I discuss the major assumptions of the Pro State Theology championed by Andrew Wutawunashe and Nehemiah Mutendi and reflect on religious education in Zimbabwe. Firstly, I discuss religious leaders as harbingers of skewed nationalism.

#### **Religious leaders become harbingers of skewed nationalism**

The pro state theology has one of its characteristics as promoting skewed nationalism towards the ZANU PF party. In this approach, any view not coming from the state is viewed as a regime change agenda. In skewed nationalism, religious leaders become harbingers who acknowledge the strengths of the present government, support, campaign for state and argue that there is no crisis in Zimbabwe. To show patriotism and love of nationalism, one has only to be loyal to the ZANU PF party and nothing else. Hence, Dube and Nkoane (2019, p. 229) argue that Religion in the context of the politics of ZANU PF has redefined democracy to be understood as supporting ZANU PF enthronement. Any other interpretation fails the political test and is punishable. To further illustrate this, Andrew Wutawunashe noted that "as the country waits for the next elections, it was best for the nation to rally behind the present government's vision of rebuilding the nation and its economy while pursuing a path of peace and unity in diversity (New Zimbabwe.com, 2020). In companying for the state, Mutendi argues that;

*The people of Zimbabwe know that MDC is a project of the West, which is why they fail to win elections. The people do not want Chamisa to rule the country because they know the whites will come back and occupy our land (New Zimbabwe.com, 2018).*

The indication here is that religious leaders become campaign managers for a political party by demonising opposition party. In so doing, the pro state theology castigates and labels the rivals as Western-sponsored and without any relevance to the Zimbabwean context. In addition to the above, Share (2020), notes Mutendi saying; "Do not be afraid, President, we are with you. Some people say we are ruled by soldiers, which is false. We are being led by mature people who and tell our people on the Who are still in the army are not here. What is left is for us to go the direction you want us to follow"

In this case, religious leaders in enacting skewed nationalism sing praise texts to the politicians and are unable to confront them in any violation of human rights. To this end, religious leaders contribute to the crisis through skewed nationalism and by using Religion as a weapon of repression. Furthermore, the use of Religion as a weapon of repression indicates that religious education in Zimbabwe has not been able to create tolerance among people that appreciate diversity in culture, Religion and politics, which is a recipe for disaster. Informed by the foregoing discussion, I agree with the observation by Bottoms et al. (1995:109) that "in the long run, society [scholars, religious leaders] should find ways to protect people [against] religion-related abuse, and help religion evolve in the direction of the better treatment of people". In essence, skewed nationalism as propagated by the state segregates people, undermines voices of difference and emancipates the religious leaders to be harbingers of a political party, thus in a decoloniality lens, this must be challenged since it dehumanises people with a different ideology from the state and its theology. The second tenet I discuss on pro state theology is that it encourages people to bear hardship.

### **Encourages people to bear hardships**

Pro state theology is strategically designed to ensure that people bear hardship, corruption and mismanagement. Often this happens as Walsh (2007, p. 79), suggests through strategies of manipulation, co-optation, division, and control' to subdue people and force them into a certain ideology. Furthermore, as stated by Damiani (2002, p.45) Religion infiltrated with politics "destroy[s] people's personality and replace(s) the void with a regime personality that no longer questions, thinks critically or feels the impact of an abusive system". It also entails that religious education in Zimbabwe has not been able to emancipate people to challenge morally, accepted issues such as corruption, social injustice and mismanagement of resources. This, of course, does not produce a world order where everyone can participate in a democratic society free from any form of manipulation especially when democracy is undermined. Thus, instead of calling the state to address people's concern, they encourage people to bear with the state. To further illustrate this point, I refer to Bulawayo24, (2020) that cited Mutendi saying;

*"We must survive the hardships we are experiencing. This is a passing phase. Wake up! This is your country. Do not give false information to the outside world but seek solutions from the Lord. We want to use the gift of God to enhance and firmly embrace the President's Vision 2030 Empowerment Agenda. We applaud the work our President is doing in uplifting our souls in prayer. We appreciate his work".*

Regarding Mutendi, it is clear that pro state theology strives through encouraging people to accept the status quo especially when it is presented by the state. Through supporting such an agenda, religious leaders are rewarded by the state to control religious constituency. Hence, Moyo (2014) argues that in the midst of an economic crisis, Zimbabwean preachers' influence continue to grow, especially regarding their involvement in partisan political matters. I agree with Magaisa (2019) in that the regime is always ahead [of people and their religious leaders], profiting immeasurable ways from them. Thus, Mutendi responding to the Bishop's letter (as will be discussed below) believes that; "this is the time to preach hope that God has given us this land and boundaries, we live here, we have a past, bad things have happened, and we are correcting it through prayer" (New Zimbabwe.com. 2020).

Sentiments above indicate that pro state theology safeguard the state, and to achieve this, they refuse people to look at the past mistakes of the politicians; rather people should devout to prayer. In this essence, I agree with Magaisa (2019), that some religious leaders, instead of serving the state, they serve the ruling party. Instead of safeguarding the integrity of institutions, they manipulate and abuse them for the benefit of the ruling party. Unfortunately, under such circumstances the people become powerless to name, expose and challenge a state theology that undermines democracy. The problem which makes people unable to name evil perhaps, emanates from the observation by Larsen (2010, p.17) that African people designate to religious leaders such as 'Father' or 'Daddy', Bishop; Apostle;-Doctor and Professor, making them untouchable even in the context where they contribute to social injustice and violation of human rights. In addition, Sanni (2016, p.12) argues that the problem in Africa is that we have given religious leaders unquestionable power; thus, the challenge is to reclaim

the power and distribute it to all, in order to ensure sustainable development. It is then the duty of Religious Education to assist learners in questioning practices, which do not resonate well with democracy and social justice. By arguing this, I do not call for civil disobedience but ignite the need for a population that questions respectfully structures in society that undermine democracy with the intention of rehumanising everyone even the perpetrators of social injustice especially as espoused in Religion.

### **The silence of state-sanctioned violence**

The other tenet of the pro state theology is that it muted state-sanctioned violence. It cannot name and shame violence and as such, the Pro State theology is trapped by the regime. Instead of speaking of injustice, religious leaders such as Wutawunashe is cited saying, "I appeal that we make today to governments as well as international and other organisations who are stakeholders in the journey of this nation; it is time to help the Government and People of Zimbabwe to move forward" (New Zimbabwe.com, 2020). It is not wrong for Wutawunashe to explore people to help the state, but equally, so he should ask the state to assist people, shun violence and corruption. By so doing, his prophetic voice in politics becomes balanced. However, balancing the prophetic message, Wutawunashe sings praise texts to politicians. For examples, in one of these praise texts, Mugabe (2019) quotes Wutawunashe saying;

*To this end, we as the indigenous (church) leaders, we are also saying there cannot be genuine dialogue based on trying to determine whether you are the President of Zimbabwe; you are the President of Zimbabwe...as church leaders who represent millions of people, to recognise the President of Zimbabwe openly.*

Bourdillon (1984) notes that politicians will always be ready to use such powerful tools as religion to further their own interest and reward them. To this end, Religion creates a sectarian tendency that cause some religious figures to do anything in the name of Religion to ensure that their adherents gain positions or offices (Afolabi, 2015). As such, some church leaders have been seen to revert to corruption and a search for material goods, and, above all, ethnicity and favouritism has entered these institutions (Gumo, Akuloba & Omare, 2012, p. 34). Cognisant of this and arguing from decoloniality, there is need for religious education that emancipate learners to balance the religious narratives in the political space as counter-strategy against the use of Religion for oppression, sidelining people of different political, cultural and religious ideology. Thus, curriculum planners need to rethink religious education which does not contribute to crisis but, assists in addressing it.

### **Reciprocity frames relations**

The Pro state theology has survived in Zimbabwe due to reciprocal relations the state and religious leaders establish formally or informally. Dube and Hlalele (2018) argue that trajectory of our time is that religious leaders have entered into the politics of reciprocity with the politicians at the expense of their congregants who look upto them for guidance and direction. I agree with Cesaire (2000, p. 32) observation that religion and politics of reciprocity is "disruptive, decivilising, dehumanising and exploitative". In the role of being regime enabler, Mutendi and Wutawunashe were revealed as religious leaders that benefitted from scandalous farm mechanisation deals, which deprived the taxpayers' thousands of dollars (Magaisa, 2020), perhaps as a reward for being loyal to the state. Magaisa further poses a critical question; such as why certain members of the clergy seem to take sides with an incompetent and corrupt regime? Do they have something on them, people often ask? The answer to this question lies in the reciprocity relations, which the religious leaders have enacted with the politicians. As the saying goes, the dog that has a bone in its mouth cannot bark; thus, politicians who have benefitted from the state become harbingers, political mobilisers, and regime defenders against theologies that may think otherwise on the regime as will be discussed below. With reference to Mutendi and Wutawunashe, they are ever ready to defend the regime and become silent on human rights violation by the state. According to Zimunya and Gwara (2013, p. 191), reciprocal relations "has created more confusion than it has provided solutions for the role and effectiveness of religion under the auspices of constructing sustainable solutions for the Zimbabwean problem of use of religion for oppression". Cognisant of the discussion; I see the implication of the pro state theology as "bourgeois, liberal and not zealously committed to dealing with structural challenges in society that demanded social and ecclesiological transformation" (Velle, 2010, p. 4). Education, from a religious space, has a role in ensuring that learners understand that reciprocal relationship based on oppression and sidelining other people is an act on injustice and corruption, which must be challenged in every possible space, including curriculum.

In the following section, I discuss an alternative theology in the Zimbabwean politics, which of course is contrary to the pro-state theology and is met with resistance by the state, and religious leader's pro state theology.

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\* This was the government program where individuals associated with the ruling party benefitted from the state through farm equipment and never paid back the money

## The Catholic Bishops Conference theology as resistance theology

The catholic bishop penned a letter directed to the Zimbabwean government on the plights faced by the Zimbabweans, which has resulted in the suffering of many people expressed by the #zimbabweanlivematters movement. The letter was entitled "The March is not ended" taken from the late John Robert Lewis, an American politician and civic rights leader. I analyse the letter to deduce the Catholic theology within political space and in times of crisis, which I refer the tenets of resistance theology as espoused in the letter below.

### Rejection of Suppression of dissenting voices

The resistance theology as articulated by the bishops' letter rejects state sponsored suppression of the dissenting voices, which they regard as tantamount to the violation of the human rights as enshrined by the Zimbabwean constitution. According to the bishops, "the suppression of people's anger can only serve to deepen the crisis and take the nation into deeper crisis" (ZCBC 2020, p. 1). According to the resistance theology, disagreement on issues of national interest should not form the basis of repression or silencing those with a different political ideology. As such they argue, "the crackdown of dissent in unprecedented. They ask Is this the Zimbabwe we want? To have a different opinion does not mean one has to be an enemy" (ZCBC 2020, p. 1)". To this end, the resistance theology as shown by the ZCBC is in "itself the duty to voice out the cries of the parched throats of the poor, dying and miserable of the society" (Wiryadinata, 2018). The resistance theology appreciates that people are different, and from time to time disagreement can emerge, but that does not ignite the need for suppression of the voices of the people who are different. As such, this is an act of democracy and produces a world order where everyone can participate freely in modernity. A relevant religious education thus should engage learners in conversations that enact appreciation of diversity as normal and should be cultivated in every social and political space to mitigate crisis.

### Condemnation of corruption

The resistance theology, as presented by the Catholic bishops castigates corruption, which they argue as very rampant within the government, affecting the general populace who suffer from the consequences of corruption. In opening this point, the catholic bishops refer to Micah 7: 3 "the ruler demands gifts, judges accept bribes, and the powerful dictate what they desire". As such, it means those without money, cannot get justice, and accountability from the government, which then undermine any efforts to enact democracy in Zimbabwe. In expounding more on this problem, the ZCBC (2020, p. 2) notes that "the corruption level in this country has reached alarming levels ...there have been a serious demonstration by the government to rid the country of this scourge". The catch and release approach makes the ordinary man in the street question the sincerity of the government to deal with corruption. In this regard, I agree with the observation by Dube (2006) that the church in Zimbabwe has not been prophetic enough in challenging the elite and standing with the excluded. However, the letter by the bishops perhaps presents a new dawn for Zimbabwe to reinvent democracy in Zimbabwe. As such, religious education should complete efforts that ignite the condemnation of corruptions, which is an immoral fiber, that undermine efforts to enact democratic space in Zimbabwe. Currently, the subject is silent on corruption despite that it has destroyed the once assumed breadbasket of Africa

### Quest for a united Zimbabwe

The resistance theology as reflected by the bishop's letter indicates the need for a united Zimbabwe, which is not divided on political and religious lines as the only alternative for a democratic society. To expand this, I cite the Bishops letter that argue "we want our politics to build a united nation and not to divide us, turning the military who ought to continue the memory of the late heroes against the people who fed and clothed .them ...some of our vocal political leaders are busy re-creating the war situation of us and them " (ZCBC, 2020, 2). The sentiments by the bishops indicate that, instead of the state, to work towards the unity of all people, it divides them according to party lines. In this case, anyone who does not subscribe to the ideology of the state is treated as an enemy with a regime change agenda that seeks to displace constitutional elected government as in the case with journalists Hopewell and Jacob Ngarivhume. These two political activists have tasted what it means to be on the wrong side of political ideology in a country that is divided according to party lines. My submission is that unity is a "cornerstone for the success of the country in managing the ethnic relations, positive virtues and cooperation are in calculated (Gill, Talib, & Jawan, 2012). In light of the sentiments by the Catholic Bishops, there is need to rethink religious education towards instilling, among the people, a pacifist attitude centred on unity despite being diverse religiously, culturally and politically. Religious Education is a pivotal space to emancipate people with crisis to negotiate an alternative to avert crisis.

### Poor neglected by the politicians

The letter also referred to the politicians failing the poor members of the society and which according to the Catholic Bishops, must be challenged by calling the government to take responsibility to address the lived realities of the poor people. The Catholic Church worldwide is guided by the principle of Preferential Option for the Poor, which is pivotal to the Catholic Social thought, it is a perspective which is widely accepted in the teaching of the universal Church (Buffel, 2015; Jorgenson, 2019). The Catholic bishops noted, "It feels the poor have no one to defend them. They do not seem to feature on the national agenda. Their cry for an improved health system goes unheeded. Their plea for a transport system that meets their transport blues is met with promises and more promises and no action" (ZCBC 2020, p. 3). In light of the foregoing, I agree with Antonia (2009), who charges that Zimbabwean leaders have failed to live up their role as good shepherds and now forcing their sheep to scatter. I submit that any relevant theology in the times of crisis should not "dominate and undermine the interest of the poor since it is a constant attack to the witness [and relevance] of the church (Wellem, 2010, p. 5). Religious education informed by decoloniality thinking has a responsibility to ignite among learners the need to take care of the suffering masses as an act of humanity, which must not be comprised in any space including in politics.

### **Take accountability for failure**

The resistance theology, as reflected by the catholic bishops' letters also requested that politicians should take responsibility for their failure. This comes against the background that the Zimbabwean government has accused different people who they term as the 'third force', sanctions, climate change, drought, opposition and some European countries except themselves for the crisis in Zimbabwe. However, the catholic bishops noted that there is need for the regime to be responsible and accountable for their action. To further illustrate this, the bishops noted; "All we hear from them is the blame of our woes on foreigners, colonialism, white settlers and the so-called internal detractors. When are you going to take responsibility for your own affairs? When are we going to submit to the requirements for national dialogue?" (ZCBC, 2020, p. 2). In advancing their argument, the bishops seem to suggest that national dialogue with the dissenting voices is one of the alternatives that can address the crisis in Zimbabwe and taking full responsibility for their failures rather pointing at different people as distractors of the national agenda. However, Mutendi responding to the concern of the bishops denotes that there is no need for political leaders to take responsibility for their actions since all people have a bad past (New Zimbabwe.com, 2020). However, this is tantamount to disaster when people cannot reflect on their past in-order to reinvent a better future for all the people. The past serves as lessons for the present and future. Religious education informed by the foregoing presents an opportunity for learners to reflect on the past with an intention to reconstruct a better Zimbabwe where everyone can live together without being segregated on political, cultural and religious as it is currently happening in Zimbabwe.

### **The Way Forward: Towards a Social Just theology of crisis**

In light of the two theologies stated above, I suggest the way forward in the nexus of Religion and politics in Zimbabwe. In times of crisis, there is need for theologies that give people hope, but the hope must not be based on false assumption and exploitation of people. Religious leaders under normal circumstances are the locus and the keepers of hope (Regan, 2019) and as such, they have a duty to configure narratives that support democracy. In addition, there is a need for theologies that can free individuals and groups from social and ideological suppression of human situations (Alvesson (1992, p. 432). To this end, I problematise the pro state theology since it does not emancipate people towards their own liberation but subjects them to oppressive systems and structures that undermine human rights. My submission is that there is need for a religion and an education in the political space that continually questions, teases a pro state theology to contribute to 'democratising democracy', and 'humanising human rights' (Suarez-Krabble, 2013, p. 333). To me, resistance theology by the catholic bishops presents an ideal theology needed in times of crisis, a theology that does not promote dehumanising but exposes not in a violent manner, injustice, but with aim to reconstructing a better future for all Zimbabweans including the oppressors. I argue that Religion cannot be part of people's oppression, which is irrelevant to usher sustainable development and democracy respect of human rights and democracy (Mpfu 2017, p. 4). Informed by decoloniality thinking, I agree with Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) that we need theology in contemporary Zimbabwe that fights "against invisible vampirism of imperialism technologies and colonial matrices of power (coloniality) that continue to exist in the minds, lives, languages, dreams, imaginations, religion and epistemologies of modern subjects in Africa and the entire global South". (p. 11). The struggle can also be won if the people of Zimbabwe re-think Religion, especially within the political space to transform how Religion is used and perceived in the political space. Thus, I agree with Hooks (1992) that; unless the people transform the way they perceive Religion, no fundamental interventions that will fundamentally alter the [Zimbabwean] situation. Failure to do so, Zimbabwe is recreating colonisation through the nexus of Religion and politics, not from white missionary perspective as in the days of colonial regime, but from black people against their own. Informed with decoloniality, this must be negated, resisted and challenged since it does not

produce a world order where everyone can freely participate in modernity and post modernity centred on the respect of people's ontological density thus religious education must begin such conversations.

### Implications to Religious Educations in Zimbabwe

The conflict between theologies in Zimbabwe in the context of politics has various implications on education. Firstly, religious education in Zimbabwe should evoke the need for tolerance among people in the face of crisis. The two theologies indicate that education has failed to assist people in engaging in peaceful dialogue in times of crisis. Thus, it is critical that a multicultural and religious curriculum should emerge as an alternative to ensure there is peace, which is essential in addressing the crisis. Another implication is that religious education has a role in the pacification of the nation, which is, haunted by different theologies competing for space with the political space. Education has the potential to evoke pacifism philosophy, which can contribute to addressing the crisis in Zimbabwe. Lastly, religious education has a role to ignite among learners that being a regime enabler has serious consequences; especially social justice and equality are undermined. As Magaisa (2019) argues that the “would-be enablers must know that there is a prize to pay for being a regime enabler”, and the payment can be a loss of status, democracy and justice. In essence, I argue that religious education should sensitize learners about the dangers of participating in political activities that undermine social justice and human rights. In short, Religious education in Zimbabwe should enable learners to observe, educate and normalise structures that promote democracy in society (Demirović 2013, p. 10) from multicultural, political and religious dimension.

### Conclusion

The paper discussed two conflicting theologies that have emerged in Zimbabwe during the time of crisis. These theologies are state theology promoted by Mutendi and Wutawunashe, and resistance theology enshrined in the letter entitled 'the march has not ended' by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference. The paper went further to suggest a way forward in the context of conflicting theologies. I ended the paper by outlining the implications of religious education as a way to reconstruct peace in Zimbabwe in the context of crisis and conflicting theology within the political space.

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