

Original Paper

The Cross and Land Politics in Zimbabwe: The Forgotten Side of the Church

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Received: July 29, 2022

Accepted: August 28, 2022

Online Published: September 4, 2022

doi:10.22158/assc.v4n4p1

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/assc.v4n4p1>

Abstract

Since 1500, Christianity is the major and official religion in Zimbabwe while African Traditional Religion remains the popular religion among Zimbabweans. Such a scenario is comparable to the ancient Israelite religion; Yahweism (monotheism) being the official religion while Polytheism being the popular religion amongst the Israelites. Christianity as a religion did not bring with it land to Zimbabwe. This study will explore the position of Christianity in relation to land and land politics in Zimbabwe. Christianity is a foreign religious ideology to Zimbabwe. The advent of Christianity does not mean that Zimbabweans were short of religion. African Traditional Religion (ATR) is the indigenous religion to Africans including Zimbabweans. Christianity is of great interest in this study because it is embraced by the majority of Zimbabweans (Ruzivo, 2008, p. 28). The arrival of Christianity dates back to the 14th century. It was introduced to Zimbabwe by the missionaries. The article highlights and chronicles the less emphasized issue of religion and land politics in Zimbabwe. In this case, the religion in question is Christianity and land politics or politics of land in Zimbabwe.

1. Introduction

The paper discusses the position and contribution of Christianity to land politics in Zimbabwe since the arrival of the Abrahamic faiths. The article does not trivialise the contributions of Christianity to Zimbabwe. Much has been written on the contribution of Christianity to Zimbabwe especially on healthy, social amenities and education but rarely on land. This is despite the centrality of land in any real development the world over. The article is premised on the following questions. Was Christianity for evangelism, imperialism or both? Is Christianity imperial or not? Did Christianity/ the church/ the cross grabbed land or not? Whose interests was Christianity representing? Did Christianity place land (in relation to the Zimbabwean) at the centre or at the periphery? Was Christianity a separate entity from the empire? Was it a burden or a solution to Zimbabwe? Christianity in Zimbabwean can only be

understood in relation to a proper analysis of its agents; the missionaries and its major religious arsenal; the Bible. Missionaries and the Bible are the faces and centers of Christianity in Zimbabwe.

2. The Primordial Land Ownership and Utilizations

Zimbabweans conceive of land as something that determines their identity, history and livelihood. It is a repository of family ties between the living and the living-dead. Land is sacred. The sacredness of land is that it belongs to the whole community. An individual cannot own what is sacred. Africans and Zimbabweans in particular, regard the earth as some kind of womb (Bakare, 1993, p. 47). It is where life comes from and as such, land is synonymous with life. The earth is the source of life. The sacredness of land is also symbolized by the burying of the umbilical cord after the birth of a child. This also shows the symbiotic relationship between humanity and nature. The Bible is also a witness to the sacredness of land for Adam and Eve are products of land and they depended on it land for survival (Gen 1-2). It has broader implications that each and everyone have land as birthright (Weinburg & Weinburg, 1996, p. 39).

The African worldview considers land sacred because it belongs to the earth spirit as well as to the ancestors and the living community. For Africans it is the basis of their God-given self-respect and dignity as beings. African Traditional Religion is imbued with life on the land, reflecting traditions such as planting time and harvest festivals. Land has the greatest moral and spiritual significance and constitutes the way of life (Guma & Milton, 1997, pp. 42-56). Land is a source of livelihood and is aptly called mother-earth. No individual owns the land; instead it is owned collectively for the benefit of each and every member of the community. Such a system of land ownership and use ensures that no member is destitute and without land because each member of the community is attached to one of the land allocations. Land did not have a commercial value. It could not be sold. It is an inheritance. Land was a means of production to all Zimbabweans and without land one was in abject poverty and without any dignity at all. Wealthy depended on how much land one had. It is Africa's rallying point (Mararike, 2001). Having provided the status, ownership and value of land to Africans before the advent of Christianity, it would be logical to give a historical background of how Christianity came to be one of the religions in Zimbabwe and its relation to land.

3. The Advent of the Cross-in Zimbabwe

Christianity found its way to Zimbabwe through a Portuguese Catholic Jesuit missionary Gonzalo da Silveira in 1560 (Mudenge, 1986; Zvobgo, 1996; Kapungu, 1974; Bhila, 1977). This was the early phase of Christianity to enter Zimbabwe. Silveira is the earliest recorded missionary to visit Mutapa. He "evangelized" the Mutapa shortly before his assassination in 1561 after the Mutapa functionaries saw a mercenary than a missionary in him. From the death of Silveira there was a break in missionary work in Zimbabwe until the second phase of the missionaries, that is the 19th century. Gonzalo's efforts were followed by those of the Dominicans and Jesuits. According to Bhebe (1999, p. 122), a new

missionary venture was initiated by Robert Moffat of the London Missionary Society who visited Mzilikazi. The second attempt of Christianity in Zimbabwe started with Robert Moffat in 1836. He was a representative of the London Missionary Society (LMS). He felt the need to “evangelise” the Matabele tribe under the kingship of Mzilikazi. The king received Moffat and the king showed interest in what Moffat had to say. As a result, the king offered Moffat permission to establish a mission at Inyati in 1859 (Zvobgo, 1996, p. 1; Bhebhe, 1999, p. 122). The pioneers of the missionary enterprise in Matabeleland were missionaries of the LMS who started their first mission at Inyati (1859) and the second one at Hope Fountain in 1870. Inyati mission covered 8000 acres and Hope Fountain 6000 acres of land. This paved way for an influx of mission churches, Anglicans, Methodists (British and American), the Salvation Army and the Dutch reformed church to Zimbabwe. This is how Christianity began in Zimbabwe. 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” (Bhebhe, 1999, p. 122).

4. Christianity and the Rise of Capitalism

In order to understand the rise of Christianity in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular, it should be noted in the light of the resolutions made at the Berlin conference in 1884. The Berlin conference was a unilateral decision by fourteen European powers to carve up Africa for their convenience and benefit, a decision in which the mission (Christianity) functioned as a support mechanism for white social control and domination of Africans. Rhodes desired to use the Christian message to pacify Africans (Bhebhe, 1999, p. 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, p. 3). The task of this conference was to ensure that each European country that claimed possession over a part of Africa must bring “civilization” in the form of Christianity and trade to each region it would have occupied. Also a country’s claim over a territory was only valid only if it informed other European powers and established some occupying force on the ground. The occupying force among other agents was the missionaries (Tiberondwa, 1998; Zvobgo, 1996; Vengeyi, 2013, pp. 186-230; Banana, 1996). Specific lands were obtained by having African indigenous rulers being forced or duped to sign an “x” to a general agreement for ‘protection’ by a European power (Bakare, 1993, p. 84; Vambe, 1972, p. xv). Often these rulers had no idea what they were signing since most could not read, write, or understand European languages. Fourteen nations signed the agreement to “gang-rape” Africa. The conference affirmed the political, economic and religious alliance that existed between colonialists and missionaries-the linking of the cross and the crown provided a link of law and order for missionary work in Africa.

The rise of capitalism in Zimbabwe is inseparable from colonialism and Christianity. The earliest attempt at establishing capitalism and Christianity was executed by the Portuguese through Gonzalo da

Silveira. Land was not owned by individuals neither did it had a commercial value (Bakare, 1993, p. 47; Mararike, 2011, pp. 78-79). However, Christianity brought a new world order of capitalism. Capitalism is a model whereby the original producers and owners of the means of production are dispossessed and transformed into possessors of marketable labour power. Capitalism is the new form of slavery. It can also be referred to as a phase of substitution by elimination, since this historical phase, the interest is at transforming or reordering the society through destruction and reconstruction to fit the model favourable for capitalism to flourish unhindered (Vengeyi, 2013, p. 188). It is has to be noted that every religion is embodied with economic, political, social and cultural values. In this case capitalism is an integral economic value of Christianity; a value which is diametrically opposed to communalism, an integral value of ATR. During the 19th century colonial invaders at the Cape were joined into the interior and further north by fellow Europeans who presented themselves as man of God on a mission to spread the Gospel and thereby introduce Christianity and civilisation to the natives of Zimbabwe. Christianity became a superior religion to African Traditional Religion as it despised the African Indigenous religion as well as its culture. Christianity became an imperial religion to ATR.

5. Christianity and Land Politics in Zimbabwe

Having discussed the entry of Christianity in Zimbabwe from 1500AD, it should be noted that Christianity and its relations to land became very clear from 1890 to the present. Zimbabwe was colonised by Britain in 1890 through the British South Africa Company (BSAC) led by Cecil John Rhodes. Colonialism was all about grabbing land and all the downstream resources including people by force. Colonialism can be understood as forced reordering or transformation of societal realities such as religion, culture, political and the economic systems. Rhodes managed to usurp Zimbabwe with the aid of the cross or the cross managed to have land with the aid of the crown. Zimbabwe was colonised with the spiritual blessings of Christianity (Ruzivo, 2012, p. 360; Gundani, 2002, p. 156). Land has a central place in the history of Christianity. The church is a major land owner to date in Zimbabwe (Chitando, 2005, pp. 182-199). In addition, between 1890 and 1900, ten denominations were operating in Zimbabwe and 325 730 acres were given to missionary societies in land grants (Bhebhe, 1999, p. 123). The quotation below bares it out clearly that Christianity was another form of land conquest responsible for mass dispossession of Africans.

This was one of the aspects of the close association of the Christian Missions with the rest of the colonial forces with 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 the 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 (land included), which clashed with the customs and traditions and restricted the economic advancement of their tenants so that the later 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 (Bhebhe, 1999, p. 123).

The church owning land may not be a problem, however, the question is how did it come to own such vast pieces of land? The church only bought a few farms, while the majority of the farms were gifts from Cecil John Rhodes, the architect of colonialism. The churches' acceptance of land forcibly disposed of blacks confirms the missionaries' collusion with colonialism. This is the context in which the introduction of western values couched as Christianity among Africans was described as a mission to "civilize" or bring light to the world of darkness.

Lobengula could not give ground despite Rhodes' grandiose schemes of his envoys Messrs Thomas R. Maguire, Frank R. Thompson and Charles D. Rudd (Vambe, 1972, p. 74). Lobengula firmly resisted until reverend Charles David Helm, a Catholic missionary, duped him through an assurance that by signing the document he was not giving away his land. Helm of the LMS was acting in concert with Rhodes in the BSAC, fuelling the claim that missionaries were the spiritual wing of colonialism. Helm had been sent by Rhodes to execute this plan in return for a salary of 200 pounds a year. Through Lobengula's trust of the "man of God", R.C.D Helm, Lobengula signed the Rudd Concession on 30 October 1888. On this note Thorpe argues that after Lobengula 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, p. 32).

This was the death warrant to Zimbabwe as a sovereign state initiated by the missionary. A man of God cheated Lobengula of his land. This paved way not only for capitalism but colonisation as well. When the pioneer column made its maiden trip north of the Limpopo, invading Zimbabwe which they achieved in 1890, it was well represented by two missionaries; a Roman Catholic and an Anglican priest whose main roles was to give spiritual and moral sanction to the colonisation and massacre of natives. It is clear from the argument above that Christianity played a pivotal role in ensuring the success of the colonisation of Zimbabwe. One Douglas Pelly shows that by 1892 he was already tired of carrying out orders of Knight Bruce, the Anglican Bishop of Mashonaland to acquire vast tracts of land on his behalf, dispossessing African owners. Pelly wrote in a letter to his parents in Europe that, 'The one thing I strongly object to is to go looking for more farms,...He already has more than 40!! All over 3000 acres! And not one of them is being worked, either as farm or station as far as I can discover (Palmer, 1977, p. 37).

When the pioneer column set off to Mashonaland in 1890, the Jesuit missionary Andrew Hartmann accompanied it as a chaplain and Canon Balfour of the Anglican Diocese of Bloemfontein also accompanied the pioneer column as a chaplain. The majority of missions in Zimbabwe are built on land that was donated to them by Rhodes as per their agreement. In 1891 the company parceled out land to various missionary bodies. The Administrator Leander Star Jameson promised the Anglicans 3000 acres of land whenever they set a mission. Each of the 196 pioneers were promised verbally a free farm of 1500 morgen (3 175 acres) and 15 reef claims of 400 by 150 feet (Palmer, 1977, p. 26). All the

above arguments point to one issue; the land. Christianity to take root it needed land to set missions. Anywhere a mission was placed the natives were dispossessed of their land as no mission station was set on a vacant piece of land. Christianity changed the entire way of life of the natives by bringing in a new world order which was completely foreign to the natives. Natives lost their land and they were moved to reserves; Gwayi, Shangani and Chikukwa which were later known as Tribal Trust Lands. These were poor, waterless and tsetse infested pieces of land. These were the places natives were dumped as settlers and missionaries settled on fertile pieces of land from whom natives used to live. Wesleyan Methodist pioneer missionaries Owen Watkins and Isaac Shimmin later joined earlier missionaries. Shimmin was offered (by Rhodes) 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 cities in various parts of the country if Methodism would help pioneer the way to civilisation in Rhodesia (NAZ). One of the Methodist Missionary Society documents reads; "...in 1891 the BSAC offered our society land, and 100 pounds a year towards the cost of a mission station in southern Rhodesia". The Methodists were given land by Rhodes, including five stands in the Salisbury Township, four stands in Umtali Township and three farms of 3000 acres each.

Pioneer missionaries of the Salvation Army in 1891 also settled on 3000 acres in Mazowe Valley. Missionary bodies were indeed in a scramble for land in Zimbabwe, with the Catholics dispossessing the Chishawasha people on a farm of 12000 acres in 1892 (Vambe, 1972, p. xv; Zvobgo, 1996, pp. 3-5). The Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa led by A. A Louw settled at Morgenster after they had been granted a farm of 6000 morgen. On 19 October 1893, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions settled at Mount Selinda and set their mission before opening another at Chikore in Chipinge. The Seventh Day Adventists also settled on 12000 acres of land at Solusi. There was a stampede for land by the church in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe was partitioned between settlers and missionaries. The partition of Zimbabwe was a replay of the partition of Africa at the Berlin Conference in 1884. In short, what was partitioned is nothing else other than the land, and all mission stations were set where Zimbabweans lived. From the above description, the entire Zimbabwe was scrambled upon by the various Christian denominations. The Methodists, Baptists, Anglicans and American Board of Missions concentrated mainly in Manicaland province, the Salvation Army concentrated in Mashonaland Central, the Lutherans in Mashava-Zvishavane belt; The Dutch concentrated in Masvingo province.

6. Manufacturing Consent: The Cross, the Law and Conquest

As said earlier, the church did not come to liberate us or take us to heaven! It came as a colonizer to take our land and heritage from us, just like Rhodes. When the missionaries realized they could not make converts under Lobengula's regime, they invited Rhodes to overthrow him to pave the way for Christianity. In order for the Christianity to succeed on its mission it has to manufacture consent of the blacks. Manufacturing consent is a strategy employed by powerful elites to undermine democracy and

erode freedom in democratic societies. It is a subtle, insidious way of oppressing the majority where more overt means—like violence or terror—just will not do. “Manufacturing consent” means doing what you want and getting away with it by creating the impression that it’s what everybody wants you to do in the first place. A number of strategies were employed and celebrated by the missionaries to fulfill their mission to “civilize” blacks. They made use of the Bible, the law and the sword to manufacture consent of the blacks.

The Bible was the most deadly arsenal that Christianity employed to utterly destroy Africans. Christianity as a “Weapon of Mass Destruction and Deception” deployed the Bible. Its main mission was to prepare the ground for colonization and exploitation of Africans. In fact serving capitalists was interpreted as serving God. The Bible was invoked to maintain a pacifist mentality and status quo (Bhebhe, 1999, p. 122). This was echoed by Mugabe who said that:

If you study the history of the church in South Africa, Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa you will discover that originally the church tended to side with the colonial authorities. Colonialism itself was completely wrong and unchristian but the churches at first held it as justified. Missionaries came to Africa to spread the gospel but in the process opening the way for colonialism. Society became organized on the basis of race and the churches supported the racist and oppressive legislation which exposed the majority to hunger (Mugabe, 1983, p. 153).

The oppressed were made to love and endure suffering and being oppressed would make them closer to God. Texts that victimized Africans were employed to indoctrinate Africans. Matthew 5:39 was meant to pacify Africans from resisting thereby making it easier for Christianity through its agents the missionaries to usurp African resources without any fear or remorse. Missionaries cited Luke 6:20-22 as lullabies for those in poverty. Parables of the Prodigal son (Luke, 15, pp. 11-32), Richman and Lazarus (Luke, 16, pp. 19-31) were recited by missionaries. Africans were thus encouraged to aspire to be like Lazarus rather than to be the Rich man/white men, who get every kind of wealth on earth; land, food, clothes, money and every necessity. The reading narratives used emanated from those in power and was meant to make poverty and hunger acceptable to the disempowered masses.

Such scriptures were meant to make Africans docile and regard their fate as divinely ordained. They also intended to make Africans accept exploitation and domination, in the vain hope that questioning the status-quo and resisting colonization would inhibit one’s chances of entering the kingdom of heaven. Even as the blacks labored in the farms, mines and homes of white people at close to nothing, they were expected to know that their reward was in heaven and not on earth! This was scandalous. It was the main goal of all colonial apparatus even missionary schools and hospitals to create a bunch of people loyal to their masters in all circumstances.

King Leopold II’s charge in 1883 to the Belgian missionaries in the Congo laid the plan bare for all to see. Christianity served the Belgian economic interests and nothing more. The missionaries were couched to interpret the Bible to achieve these interests. He said:

“Reverends, Fathers and Dear Compatriots: The task that is given to fulfill is very delicate and requires

much tact. You will go certainly to evangelize, but your evangelization must inspire above all Belgium interests. Your principal objective in our mission in the Congo is never to teach the niggers to know God, this they know already. They speak and submit to a Mungu, one Nzambi, one Nzakomba, and what else I don't know. They know that to kill, to sleep with someone else's wife, to lie and to insult is bad. Have courage to admit it; you are not going to teach them what they know already. Your essential role is to facilitate the task of administrators and industrialists, which means you will go to interpret the gospel in the way it will be the best to protect your interests in that part of the world. For these things, you have to keep watch on disinteresting our savages from the richness that is plenty [in their underground. To avoid that, they get interested in it, and make you murderous] competition and dream one day to overthrow you. Your knowledge of the gospel will allow you to find texts ordering, and encouraging your followers to love poverty, like "Happier are the poor because they will inherit the heaven" and, "It's very difficult for the rich to enter the kingdom of God." You have to detach from them and make them disrespect everything which gives courage to affront us. I make reference to their Mystic System and their war fetish—warfare protection—which they pretend not to want to abandon, and you must do everything in your power to make it disappear.

Your action will be directed essentially to the younger ones, for they won't revolt when the recommendation of the priest is contradictory to their parent's teachings. The children have to learn to obey what the missionary recommends, who is the father of their soul. You must singularly insist on their total submission and obedience, avoid developing the spirit in the schools, teach students to read and not to reason. There, dear patriots, are some of the principles that you must apply. You will find many other books, which will be given to you at the end of this conference.

Evangelize the niggers so that they stay forever in submission to the white colonialists, so they never revolt against the restraints they are undergoing. Recite every day—"Happy are those who are weeping because the kingdom of God is for them." Letter from King Leopold II of Belgium to Colonial Missionaries, 1883 2 Convert always the blacks by using the whip. Keep their women in nine months of submission to work freely for us. Force them to pay you in sign of recognition-goats, chicken or eggs-every time you visit their villages. And make sure that niggers never become rich. Sing every day that it's impossible for the rich to enter heaven. Make them pay tax each week at Sunday mass. Use the money supposed for the poor, to build flourishing business centers. Institute a confessional system, which allows you to be good detectives denouncing any black that has a different consciousness contrary to that of the decision-maker. Teach the niggers to forget their heroes and to adore only ours. Never present a chair to a black that comes to visit you. Don't give him more than one cigarette. Never invite him for dinner even if he gives you a chicken every time you arrive at his house" (Letter from King Leopold, 1883).

King Leopold's letter bares it all that missionaries had other agendas other than preaching.

Having realized they failed to use persuasive measures to turn people against their history, religion and culture the missionaries insisted on the use of force. Father Prestage (Roman Catholic Jesuit) wrote on

29 May 1883, “Until the Matabele are put down by brute force, they will never be any progress in missionary work. Our failure at Empandeni was not owing to the unwillingness of the natives to become Christians. It was due to the overwhelming terror engendered by Lobengula’s pagan system of government. I trust the Matabele Kingdom will be smashed up. Leander S. Jameson asked whether the clergy would approve the chastisement of the Ndebele, Prestage said there was just cause for the company to destroy the Ndebele’ in a telegraph Prestage said the Ndebele should be punished at once. ‘No settlement can be durable or satisfactory which fails to insure security of life and property to whites’ (Linden, 1980, p. 9).

In July 1893, Shimmin of the Methodist Episcopal Church said missionary progress would be severely handicapped as long as the Ndebele question remains unsettled. “On this point the clergy, the English and the colonial are at one” (Zvobgo, 1996, p. 8). G.W H Knight-Bruce advocated the establishment of an English protectorate over the Shona with him in charge. It was perfectly clear that the main motive behind all the attack on the Ndebele, for the whites involved in fighting, was economic, cattle, labour and land.

Following the victory by the settlers a number of legal instruments were put in place to legitimate the Europeans (settlers and missionaries) hold to African natural resources chief among them being land. Most of the legal instruments were enacted with the church’s approval or conspiracy. This is not surprising as both were emissaries of the empire and were both answerable to the crown. Racism became one of the guiding philosophies, with many believing that whites constituted the superior race. Through colonialism and Christianity land was integrated into the global capitalist economy. Settler colonialism involved the alienation and concentration of land in the hands of settlers and the restructuring of the indigenous tenure systems. The establishment of the Land Commission under Morris Carter (1925) and the Land Apportionment Act (LAA) of 1930 brought the maximum satisfaction to Rhodesia and British politicians as well as to missionary bodies (Mlambo, 1972, p. 35). Various individuals, organizations (churches included) offered their supporting views to the commission. The Morris Carter Commission was designed to limit the points of contact between blacks and whites (Banana, 1996, p. 153). The main aim of the LAA was to end African occupation of what was declared European land, in so doing, it affected the relations between the European settlers and the African tenants. Tshuma (1998) argues that the Act caused land shortages and the deterioration of African agriculture, reduced the agricultural economy of the Shona and Ndebele to subsistence levels and reduced the variety of crops grown thereby negatively affecting the volume of trade involving black people. There was overcrowding and overstocking in reserves, a fact that was acknowledged in the Southern Rhodesia Government Gazette No. 52 in 1944. The LAA (1930) which was made into law in 1931 divided the country into black and white areas which is aptly referred to as ‘Land Apartheid’ (Hanlon, Smart, & Manjengwa, 2013, p. 31). It reserved fertile land for the white minority and facilitated the forced removal of blacks to the sandy and barren Native Reserves (Gundani, 2002, p. 130).

Other oppressive pieces of legislation were also brought on board like the Maize Control Act (1934), Land Husbandry Act (1951) and the Land Tenure Act of (1969). Land was distributed in favour of the white minority and this was never challenged by the church for obvious reasons. Frans (1998, pp. 102-103) noted that, “during the time of imperial/colonial white minority rule (1890-1980) 181, 424 sq. km were apportioned to whites, and 182, 099 sq.km to Blacks”. The whites were a tiny minority, about 300 000, while blacks were about 12 million. This land tenure system inspired the peasants to take up arms in order to overthrow capitalism and colonialism. All these pieces of legislation were systematically set to manufacture abundant poverty. As such, it should be noted that poverty in Africa (Zimbabwe included) is a direct product of land dispossession during the colonial era. Therefore, poverty in Zimbabwe and Africa in general is man-made! The Cross, the Sword and conquest were systematically deployed to persuade, negotiate and also force blacks to give in to the demands of the white capital, missionaries included.

Despite all this gruesome treatment of Africans by the settlers the church remained silent. Therefore, affirming the words of Amos, the eighth century BC prophet that can two walk together unless they agree (Amos, 3, 3)? Even in ancient Israel, many a times, the temple and the palace were in agreement. For evil to triumph it is enough at good man to do nothing! From 1890 evil triumphed in Rhodesia and the church was silent. The church did not begin to criticize the Rhodesian political system until their interests were at stake in the late sixties. They neither protested against the BSAC, the LAA, the Maize Act, Land Husbandry Act nor the establishment of two voters’ rolls, one for the Europeans and the other for the Africans. They supported the 1961 “Apartheid” constitution which had two rolls. This shows how Christianity represented the settlers’ interests at the expense of the peasants or the autochthons.

The church only protested the 1969 Land Tenure Act which had placed the interests of the church at stake (Kapungu, 1974, p. 19). In 1969 the Rhodesian government enacted the Land Tenure Act. There is little difference between the Land apportionment Act (1930) and the Land Tenure Act (1969) but that little difference is what affected the churches and they pointed out their outcry against the Rhodesian political system. All along Christianity benefited from the legal framework that impoverished Africans until late in 1969. This was the period in which Christianity began to shift its allegiance from supporting the settlers to supporting the Africans through selected individuals (missionaries) among them Ralph Dodge and Rev John White of the Methodists, Bishop Lamont of the Roman Catholic, Arthur Shearly Cripps and Bishop Skelton of the Anglican Church. These missionaries were involved in class suicide through siding with the peasants.

7. Christianity and Social Amenities

The advent of Christianity is credited with the creation of various social amenities in Zimbabwe such as schools, hospitals and churches. “Civilisation” was associated with writing reading, astronomy and other ‘academic’ subjects. Zvobgo wrote and extensively appreciated the missionary contribution to

African education (Zvobgo, 1980). Among the mission hospitals are Mount Selinda, Morgenster, Nyadiri, Mnene and Mutambara. The question which quickly comes to mind is; Did Africans lack any of these amenities? When the missionaries arrived in Zimbabwe they found out that the indigenous people had their own form of education based on family, clan and tribal units. Africans had their own form of medical institutions, units and professional medical practitioners typically involving midwives, herbalists and *n'anga/Inyanga*.

Missionary facilities (schools, hospitals and churches) were primarily for conversion of indigenous people to Christianity (Tiberondwa, 1998, p. vii). "Most churches made it part of their explicit mission policy to build hospitals with the specific aim of 'winning souls'...(and) for many years the only purpose for erecting mission schools was that they could help people to read the Bible,"and nothing more (Daneel, 1987, p. 78). The whole curriculum was designed to preserve and protect "Christianity", Capitalism and the Victorian culture awkwardly called "Civilisation," almost making the learners neglect and abandon their own language, culture, religion, social and political heritage. All these institutions had a net effect of making African students, clergy and patients to admire Christianity and concede that indigenous religion, cultures and languages were inferior and primitive to Western culture and language. To colonise people forever the empire realized the importance of schools, hospitals and churches. All these institutions were concentration camps meant for the falsification of African consciousness and or the importance of African values and ethos. All these Christian institutions worked on changing the brains or perspective of the African so that Africans may embrace things of no value at the expense of their birthright; the land. There is need to control the mind of the subject in order to subdue him/her forever.

These were centers of western ideologies and worldview, which was completely divorced from the African worldview. Missionary education falsified African history, ideology, worldview and conscience. Vengeyi observed that the attack on the culture, religion and history of the people is an important phase and very tactical move to conquer the people especially considering that these are the weapons of the struggle. This is why always when people became naked of their culture, history and religion they follow anything and is easy to control (Vengeyi, 2013, p. 214). Missionary education, healthy and religion was meant to manufacture docility and destroying African history, cultural values and traditions so as to make them useful tools of the capitalist economy. Religion, education were potent weapons in the hands of the empire to control the mind of the oppressed. Missionary education and religion culminated in the divisions in the African society between the "civilized" and the indigenous members. In this regard, missionaries by commission or omission contributed directly and indirectly to the destruction of the indigenous African values using education and Christianity as their main weapons of mass destruction. Thereby warranting the designation of the church/the cross in Zimbabwe as a robber of Zimbabwe's means of production: the land.

8. Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that valuable lessons can be drawn from Christianity's relation to Zimbabwe's means of production, the land. The Abrahamic religion defiled the spirituality attached to African land and its people. It dislodged land from being at the centre of life to the periphery. It bolstered the interests of the colonialists and was a willing participant of mass suffering of Zimbabweans to date. Christianity overtly and covertly transformed the land tenure system of Zimbabweans through various means among them persuasion and force. Christianity with the aid of the missionaries sided with the imperial states in mass dispossession of Africans from their birthright. Missionaries fully and willingly participated in the exploitation and oppression of the black people in Africa, through biblical interpretation, translation, biased education, targeted at manufacturing docility and destroying African history, cultural values and traditions so as to make them useful tools in capitalist economy. Their conception of land ownership and utilisation was radically opposed to the African system. The religion of the empire brought with it capitalism and individualistic economic system to bulldoze the communal mode of production. Christianity should identify with the struggles of the peasants over the land. The church instead of siding with the underclasses over land, it became or still is a weapon of mass destruction in Zimbabwe!

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