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## Introduction

Personally I believe the European has a god in whom he believes and whom he is representing in his churches all over Africa. He believes in the god whose name is spelt Deceit. He believes in a god whose law is “ye strong, you must ‘civilise’ the ‘barbarous’ Africans with machine guns. Ye Christian Europeans you must ‘Christianize’ the pagan Africans with bombs, poison gases, etc!”

In the colonies the Europeans believe in the god that commands “Ye administrators, make Sedition Bill to keep the African gagged, make Deportation Ordinance to send the Africans to exile whenever they dare to question your authority make an ordinance to grab his money so that he cannot stand economically.<sup>1</sup>”

## Overall Field of Study

WRITTEN BY THE SIERRA Leonean journalist, activist and politician Isaac TA Wallace-Johnson (1895–1965) and published in Ghana’s *African Morning Post* in 1936 by Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904–1996), who would later become Nigeria’s first African President, the article led to the detention of both men by Ghana’s colonial government. In the cradle of African nationalism, this expression of African sociopolitical grievances depicted Christianity as expressly part of the colonial machinery. The stance of Wallace-Johnson and Azikiwe’s highlights the growing strength of African feeling in the

1. Azikiwe, “Has the African a God?” 22–23.

middle decades of the twentieth century about the relationship between Christianity and colonialism, which was shared by participants in movements for African independence, and was reflected in the work of later scholars.

This work explores the vexed relationship between Christianity and colonialism, especially in the last twenty years of white rule in what is now Zimbabwe.<sup>2</sup> The title, *The Bible, the Bullet and the Ballot*, captures the range of forces that were at work in the nationalist movement at the time. The book seeks to assess the justification of the negative evaluation of the influence of Christianity on Africans in the late colonial period in relation to Zimbabwe. In order to do this, a detailed exploration of the role of the Zimbabwean Christian community in the wider political engagement against colonialism between c. 1960 and 1980 is offered. The approach of the church<sup>3</sup>, and institutions to which Christians belonged, to the questions of universal suffrage and the armed struggle will be of particular concern. Between these three fundamental issues, the “Bible” representing Christianity, the “Bullet” representing the armed struggle, and the “Ballot” universal suffrage or the struggle for democracy, there was a complex interplay.

Christianity, together with its institutions and adherents, were an important part of the wider sociopolitical narrative in Zimbabwe of the struggle for the restitution of Africans’ political rights. The specific sociopolitical developments within the historical period under discussion will be explored, alongside the responses of representatives of the Christian community.

Colonialism has been identified as an aspect of imperialism, in which an imperial power imposes its control, and takes legal sovereignty, of a

2. Zimbabwe went through several name changes in the general period under the scope of this study. It was known as Rhodesia, then Southern Rhodesia, and the name was changed back to Rhodesia after the dissolution of the Federation in 1964. Briefly in 1979, after the Internal Settlement, its name became Zimbabwe-Rhodesia before Zimbabwe was adopted in 1980. In this work, it will generally be referred to by its current name but in exceptional cases where a point needs to be emphasised the old name will be used, but in inverted commas for example “Rhodesia.” Similarly names of places, towns, or cities that have changed will be referred to by their current names, e.g., Gwelo will be Gweru. An institution or organization will be referred to by the name by which it was known at the time of the events being referred. In direct quotations these names will be written as they appear in the quoted documents.

3. The term church will be used in its broader sense, when referring to Christian denominations. In cases where a specific denomination is meant it will be referred to by its specific name such as the Roman Catholic Church or the Anglican Church.

territory without a process of widespread settlement.<sup>4</sup> Although colonization can be part of the process of colonialism, such as the extensive white settlement in Kenya or Zimbabwe, it is not always a feature. The level of white settlement in places like Botswana, Malawi and Zambia was significantly lower than that of Zimbabwe.<sup>5</sup>

The attitudes of scholars to the role of Christianity in colonialism are considerably varied. In 1967 the Kenyan academic Ali Mazrui asserted, “Just as Augustine had allied Christianity with a concept of *Pax Romana*, so did Christianity later come to be linked to the whole vision of *Pax Britannica*. In Africa Christianity came to be particularly associated with colonization.”<sup>6</sup> In 1980, he went further, “The God of Love was mobilized behind the mask of ‘imperial pacification.’ The message of Christianity discouraged Africans not only from fighting each other but also from resisting the colonial presence.”<sup>7</sup>

Others share this wholly negative perspective on the involvement of Christianity in colonialism. Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* declared, “[W]e should place DDT, which destroys parasites, carriers of diseases, on the same level as Christianity . . . The church in the colonies is a white man’s church, a foreigners’ church. It does not call the colonized to ways of God, but to the ways of the white man, to the ways of the master, the ways of the oppressor.”<sup>8</sup>

Claire Robertson observes how agents of Christianity often preceded and encouraged colonial advance, “If they found their progress in making converts impeded on occasion, they sometimes promoted political control to put them in a better position to succeed. Thus the missionary played a critical role in perpetuating the idea of ‘the white man’s burden’ as a justification for European conquest.”<sup>9</sup>

Based on their researches of the interaction between colonialism and Christianity on the border of South Africa and Botswana John and Jean Comaroff have stressed the correspondence between Christian mission and secular colonialism, arguing that conversion and civilization were

4. Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, 34–35.

5. Fieldhouse, *Colonialism*, 4–6.

6. Mazrui, *Towards a Pax Africana*, 198.

7. Mazrui, *The African Condition*, 123–24.

8. Fanon, *Les Dames de la Terre*, 7; Fanon, *Nationalism*, 494.

9. Robertson, *Africa*, 314.

“two sides of the same coin.”<sup>10</sup> Although not all missionaries held the same view, missions were representative of colonial values, “From early on, the colonial evangelists gave up in practice, if not always in their public pronouncements, on the fragile distinction between salvation and civilization, between the theological and the worldly sides of their mission.”<sup>11</sup> So too Richard Gray in *The Colonial Moment* observes of missionaries in Southern Africa, “most missions with a few notable exceptions, welcomed the extension of colonial rule”<sup>12</sup> and “White supremacy . . . seemed to many missionaries working there almost to be part of God’s establishing order.”<sup>13</sup> On this construction, mission-founded churches, with vested interests in the colonial establishment, would be unlikely partners of movements for African independence. The Comaroffs’ view stands in contrast to the more nuanced approach of Norman Etherington, who contends that the relationship between empire, or colonialism, and Christianity was a complex one. He argued, “In some areas colonial officials fiercely resisted the admission of missionaries into lands already under imperial control, in others, missionaries resisted colonial schemes such as those in New Zealand and Malawi.”<sup>14</sup> Brian Stanley, in *The Bible and the Flag*, offers a similar conclusion about missions, “Their relationship to the diverse forces of British imperialism was complex and ambiguous. If it was fundamentally misguided, their error was not that they were indifferent to the cause of justice for the oppressed, but that their perceptions of the demands of justice were too easily molded to fit the contours of prevailing western ideologies.”<sup>15</sup>

Many scholars recognize the significant role played by missionaries in offering education in most colonial territories, although the nature and purpose of the education offered by missions is also another subject of intense debate among academics. Some see that it was only intended to serve colonial interests.<sup>16</sup> Walter Rodney, the Guyanese historian and political activist, believed that “colonial schooling was education for subordina-

10. Comaroff, *Revelation and Revolution*, 8.

11. *Ibid.*, 58

12. Gray, *The Colonial Moment*, 170.

13. *Ibid.*, 174

14. Etherington, *Missions and Empire*, 2; see also B. Stanley, ed., *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, 2003.

15. Stanley, *Bible and Flag*, 184.

16. Crowder, *West Africa*, 454–81; Stanley, *The World Missionary Conference*, 167–204.

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tion and exploitation.”<sup>17</sup> The influence of missionary education is amply evident in the biographies of many African nationalists. Kwame Nkrumah believed that the vice-principal, and the first African staff member, of the Methodist-founded Achimota College near Accra, Kwegyir Aggrey, was “the most remarkable man” he ever met. Aggrey stressed the promotion of co-operation and harmony between “black” and “white.”<sup>18</sup> He expressed this philosophy illustratively, “You can play a tune of sorts on the white keys and you can play a tune of sorts on the black keys but for harmony you must use both black and the white.”<sup>19</sup>

Also notable evidence of the pervasive influence of Christianity on African nationalists was their employment of Christian imagery in the liberation struggle, including messianic terminology. Nkrumah’s Convention People’s Party (CPP) challenged the colonial government in Ghana with imagery evoking the *Lord’s Prayer* (Matthew 6:9–11), “O imperialism which art in Gold Coast, Disgrace is thy name.”<sup>20</sup> Similarly, imagery from the beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–12) was drawn on, as CPP members encouraged their colleagues, “Blessed are they who are imprisoned for self-government’s sake; for theirs is the freedom of this land.”<sup>21</sup> In response to this use of imagery, CLR James commented, “The pious held up their hands in horror.”<sup>22</sup>

In Kenya Jomo Kenyatta, a product of the Scottish Thogoto Mission,<sup>23</sup> took a critical view of Christianity which he viewed as cultural imperialism against Kenya’s traditional religions.<sup>24</sup> Kenyatta famously depicted the mutual cooperation between Christianity and colonialism: “The white man came and asked us to shut our eyes and pray. When we opened our eyes it

17. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 264.

18. Although this work employs the racial categories of “black and white” the author does not ascribe to artificial and non-scientific classification of the human race based on skin colour.

19. Nkrumah, *The Autobiography*, 4.

20. James, *Nkrumah*, 108.

21. *Ibid.*; Kedourie, *Nationalism*, 128.

22. James, *Nkrumah*, 108.

23. Murray-Brown, *Kenyatta*, 40ff.

24. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya*, 269ff. The term African Traditional Religions (ATR) will be used to refer to the religions of Africa whose beliefs and practices are distinct from other world religions and have been passed down from generation to generation from time immemorial.

was too late—our land was gone.”<sup>25</sup> Julius Nyerere, who became the first African President of Tanzania and was supported and encouraged by the Catholic Maryknoll Fathers, took a different view of Christianity during the colonial period. Roman Catholic support in Tanzania, as with that offered to nationalist groups by other denominations, as will be seen in Zimbabwe, was not without self-interest. A Catholic leader would be likely to prove a help to the Catholic Church. Nyerere, guided by his strong Christian faith, distinguished colonialism from Christianity, believing only the former, and not the latter, was problematic. Philosophically he regarded “the democratic system” as the “application of Christian principles to politics,” and Christianity as an aid to the African nationalist cause.<sup>26</sup>

In response to the caricature of Christianity advancing “with the sword, a case of gin or paper treaties in one hand and the Bible in the other,” HS Meebelo wrote, “This does not seem to be the case in Zambia . . . there was hardly any occasion when they (missionaries) established a mission by use of force . . . Nor do they seem to have distributed spirituous liquors or to have waved paper treaties in face of African traditional rulers in order to establish themselves.”<sup>27</sup>

Albert Luthuli, of the African National Congress (ANC), and also a devout Christian, commented on the general African perception of colonialists and agents of Christianity in South Africa, “The average African says the white man is the cause of all his troubles. He does not discriminate between white men and see that some come here for material gain and others come with the message of God.”<sup>28</sup> His compatriot Bishop Desmond Tutu modified Kenyatta’s illustrative imagery, but offered a positive twist, “When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said, ‘let’s pray.’ We closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had the Bible and they had the land. In the long run perhaps we got the better end of the deal.”<sup>29</sup> African non-Christians might not have agreed,

25. “Lancaster Conference,” *The Guardian*, 30 January 1962. Kenyatta believed that Christianity as propagated by Europeans was calculated to vindicate the superiority of whiteness over blackness. He questioned why the forces of evil in Christianity were viewed as “black” and angels as “white.” Kenyatta called for a reinterpretation of Christianity and a reversal of symbolism especially between the colors “black” and “white.”

26. Listowel, *The Making of Tanganyika*, 168.

27. Meebelo, *Reaction to Colonialism*, 26–27.

28. Mazrui, *Pax Africana*, 198.

29. Massaquoi, Desmond Tutu, 168.

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and maybe many Christians also, since now in the postcolonial era the call for land redistribution can be heard in several countries.

The debate on the role played by Christianity during the colonial era raises key questions relating to colonial Zimbabwe. Was it a conservative force, resisting African aspirations for political independence? Or was it a positive sociopolitical force towards Africans' ideological and practical initiatives to ending colonialism? Was the significant role of church leaders like Tutu and Allan Boesak in challenging white rule in South Africa preceded by earlier examples in other African contexts?

In studies of the struggle leading to independence in Zimbabwe, the role of churches and Christian individuals has received less attention. In *Our War of Liberation*, Robert Mugabe notes that Roman Catholic involvement in the liberation struggle was "a belated one."<sup>30</sup> Canaan Banana in *The Church and the Struggle for Zimbabwe*, argued that the Protestant voice was "silent" and Protestant efforts toward the end of war in fact served the colonialists' cause.<sup>31</sup>

This work will seek to examine the extent to which Christian involvement was a factor in helping decolonization in Zimbabwe. The central argument of this book is that the role of the Christian church, especially the Protestant church, was highly significant in the struggle against colonialism in Zimbabwe although it has been underestimated. This challenges a number of accounts of the events of the independence struggle.

In David Lan's significant study, *Guns and Rain*, he has remarkably little to say about the role of Christianity in the independence movement. He argues that it depended on a complex interplay of forces from the past (spirit mediums speaking the words of their ancestors), and the present (the guerrillas, with their political aims and socialist ideals). Lan builds, from the fruits of his local study, the case that African religion was highly significant in Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union Patriotic Front's (ZANU PF) part in the liberation struggle. This was true of "the majority of guerrillas [who] observed most if not all of these ritual prohibitions," and leaders who claim to have been helped by *mhondoro* (royal ancestor spirits), including Robert Mugabe.<sup>32</sup> Reference in Independence Day celebrations to the legendary anti-settlers spirit medium Ambuya Nehanda, leads to Lan's striking view, "With Nehanda established as the *mhondoro*, who

30. Mugabe, *Our War of Liberation*, 153ff.

31. Banana, *The Church and the Struggle*, 256–59.

32. Tekere, *Lifetime of Struggle*, 73.

protects the whole of the new nation state, it is almost as if Zimbabwe had become to be regarded as a single spirit province.”<sup>33</sup> So too in Fay Chung’s *Re-living the Second Chimurenga* “One of the most striking characteristics of the liberation struggle was the power of the traditional religious leaders, the *vana sekuru*.” Chung argued, “They held a special position in the psyche of the freedom fighters.”<sup>34</sup>

Chung also emphasizes the significant role of communism in the liberation struggle. Some young radical ZANU guerrillas sold out for a “socialist revolution” and were skeptical of both Zimbabwean “nationalism” and its older leadership that comprised of Ndabaningi Sithole, Joshua Nkomo and Mugabe. The pro-Communists, led by Wilfred Mhanda, were particularly opposed to Mugabe “whom they had judged as an old-style nationalist who would create in Zimbabwe a neo-colonial regime” and also “feared would become a fascist dictator.”<sup>35</sup>

Whilst some sideline the role of Christianity in the movement for Zimbabwean independence, others see its contribution in a wholly negative light. J.A.C Mutambirwa in *Journal of Southern Africa Studies* follows the line of scholars who saw Christianity as detrimental to independence movements, “Christianity was cultural imperialism which sought to liquidate African culture . . . educational activities of the missionaries were the dosage that white settler and British South Africa Company imperialism required to produce the ‘literate’ industrial black army that was needed to exploit the mineral wealth of the country . . . Furthermore, Christianity will be exposed as an ideology that encouraged the African to accept his defeat and humiliation.”<sup>36</sup>

Mutambirwa argues that mission education was tailored to an agenda of social control, to serve the labor needs of white settlers.<sup>37</sup> The credibility of such claims find support in the testimony of Ethel Tawse Jollie, the first woman in the Southern Rhodesian government of 1923 who wrote, “As a matter of fact, the education obtained in missions is only part of the training the native has been getting, for the railway, the mine, the house, the store.”<sup>38</sup> Mutambirwa contended that the key issues which gave rise to

33. Lan, *Guns and Rain*, xvii and 218.

34. Chung, *Second Chimurenga*, 197ff.

35. *Ibid.*, 174

36. Mutambirwa, “The Impact of Christianity,” 69.

37. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 54.

38. Jollie, *The Real Rhodesia*, 268.

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African nationalism were the need for the franchise, land allocation, racial and economic discrimination, and African culture. On these issues the missionaries were on the side of settlers.<sup>39</sup> He also highlights the continuing invocation of Nehanda in the liberation struggle, even by those professing Christianity.<sup>40</sup> To Mutambirwa, “The answer is clear: The Bible had no influence on African nationalism.”<sup>41</sup> Christianity did not play a significant role in the nationalist struggle for the restitution of Africans’ political rights.

Lawrence Vambe, a Zimbabwean social historian, though not wholly negative about the role played by Christianity in colonialism, in *An Ill-Fated People* argued, “I think that every honest African will say that the Christian church has failed as a symbol of peace, understanding and brotherhood among men and needs to re-examine its position seriously.”<sup>42</sup> A similar pattern of identifying Christianity with colonialism was continually expressed in postcolonial Zimbabwe. “*Varungu vakatigarira pasi vakatirongera*” (whites sat down and plotted against us) was the notable sentiment of Professor Claude Mararike of the University of Zimbabwe Sociology Department to his students in 2004.<sup>43</sup> If one is to take into cognizance the she-nanigans of the Berlin Conference of 1884 Mararike’s claim seem to have some credence. A similar view continues to be expressed by Zimbabwe’s nationalist politicians, especially those of ZANU PF. In this “colonial chicanery” Christianity is identified as part of the “colonial machinery” that helped to perpetuate the subjugation of Africans and played no significant role in the Africans’ struggle for independence.<sup>44</sup>

An early positive assessment of the contribution of Christianity to the struggle for independence was offered by an active participant. In *African Nationalism*,<sup>45</sup> Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole, a key player in the nationalist struggle, described “the role the Christian church has played in the forging of African nationalism on the anvil of history,” and argued that African nationalism in Zimbabwe rose as a result of the influence of Christianity.<sup>46</sup> Sit-

39. Ibid. 76

40. Ibid., 77

41. Ibid.

42. Vambe, *An Ill-fated People*, 234.

43. Professor Cl Mararike, to a University of Zimbabwe masters research student, the author was present at the time of the interview.

44. Ibid.; see also, Bulhan, *Frantz Fanon*, 40–43.

45. Sithole, *African Nationalism*, 51–74.

46. Ibid., 51.

hole contended that Christian ideas spurred African nationalism, though they were “unwittingly” transmitted by missionaries who themselves were supporters of colonial rule. He asserted, “Christian and non-Christian Africans have reaped, in varying degrees, the blessings of the Christian faith, and this is as it should be since God himself sends rain on the just and the unjust.”<sup>47</sup>

Other studies by participant observers offer positive assessments of the role of the Zimbabwean churches in relation to ending colonialism. Sister Janice McLaughlin’s *On the Frontline* focuses on the contributions of four rural Roman Catholic mission stations, Avilla, Mutero, St Albert’s and St Paul’s Musami to the efforts of ZANU PF in the armed struggle. She argued that the experiences and attitudes of these missions reflected the wider willingness of the rural Roman Catholic Church to identify with the nationalists and their openness to radical changes. The rural Roman Catholic Church offered substantial help to ZANU nationalists.<sup>48</sup>

Ian Linden’s *The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Zimbabwe* gives Roman Catholic theology a prominent place in the struggle against colonialism.<sup>49</sup> He presents the Roman Catholic Church in Zimbabwe as divided in its support for African nationalism, with the rural church largely behind the nationalists and the urban church propagating a message that was not relevant to the aspirations of nationalists and Africans in general. Linden and McLaughlin’s accounts, whilst at times critical of aspects of the Catholic tradition, have little to say of the political involvement of Protestant churches, a dimension this work seeks to highlight.

Ranger and Ncube’s study of south-west Zimbabwe in *Religion in the Guerrilla War* highlights the need for an approach that demonstrates both chronological and geographical awareness. They note regional differences, from the “religious” northern Zimbabwe, where Lan’s study was undertaken, to the “secular” southwest, where traditional religion played little part in the war. The approach of African religion also differed across the country: in Dande, spirit mediums tended to encourage war, but in the *Mwali/Mlimu* cult, peace and fertility was promoted. So too, Christianity was well rooted and “popular” in some areas, but less so in southwest Matebeleland. Ranger and Ncube also stress the need to recognize how the church contribution varied over time. In the 1950s protests against threats of eviction,

47. *Ibid.*, 57.

48. McLaughlin, *On the Frontline*.

49. Linden, *The Catholic Church*.

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destocking, agricultural rules, and forced labor were led by progressive African Christian leaders and a mission educated elite. In the 1970s some Christian leaders dismissed guerrillas as terrorists with a secular ideology. The backlash against mission stations and schools brought the closure of some missions and the killing of some missionaries.<sup>50</sup>

This research focuses on the role of Christians at national political level, unlike that of Lan and McLaughlin, which were local level studies. That Christians believed that they had a role to play across Africa in movements for independence is seen in the declaration of the All African Council of Churches—in 1963, “We identify ourselves with the aspirations of our people towards the development of dignity and mature personality in Christ and we exhort the churches in this nation to participate wholeheartedly in the building of the African nation.”<sup>51</sup> The materials explored for this research suggest that there is evidence to support this perspective and challenge the strongly held viewpoint that Christianity was an entirely conservative force in Zimbabwe’s colonial history, and to demonstrate that the significant influence of Christianity in the struggle of Africans to attain their political rights needs to be acknowledged. In doing this attention will be paid to the activities of the mainline churches in general and in particular those of the Protestant churches, who have been less studied than those of Roman Catholic Church.

### Sources and Methodology

The principal sources for this research are materials held in the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ) in Harare and at the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe archives in Harare (MCZA).<sup>52</sup> The documentary evidence tended to consist of public pronouncements by the church or political leaderships, which yield broad insights, but personal perspectives tend to be necessarily excluded. Alongside these, more than fifty letters, some personal and others official, by church leaders were also consulted.

The focus of this study is primarily the activities of mainstream denominations. Attempts were made by the author to access evidence from

50. Ncube and Ranger, “Religion,” 35–37, 52–55.

51. All Africa Conference of Churches, *Drumbeats from Kampala*, 15–16; Koschorke et al., *A History of Christianity*, 246–47.

52. The author gratefully acknowledges the help of the staff of these libraries in the completion of this research.

African Independent or Initiated Churches (AICs), but these did not prove fruitful. Their theological tradition made them reluctant to offer pronouncements of a political nature at the time under primary investigation, c.1960–1980. Documents or manuscripts from the AICs during the period under study were not found, although in recent years some AICs have come out in support of the current Zimbabwean political establishment.

In the archival material relating to the early sixties, and before, the African voice from the leadership of the church is largely silent since the leadership was primarily white, as was African church historiography during the sixties.<sup>53</sup> Most documents on public record come from the church leadership who were viewed as representing the voice and interest of those they led. This explains why the section in this book covering the 1960s the missionary voice tends to predominate. The distance of time also means fewer interview sources are available for the earlier periods of this study. As the church leadership gradually Africanized by the mid to late sixties, the African voice became clearer, and by the seventies the African voice in the church's public pronouncements became the dominant one.

Although this work is primarily based on archival research it is supplemented by interviews. According to Oppenheim, interviews have the advantages of reproducing the words of the interviewed activists in a direct and striking manner as they are presented in excerpts and also help to highlight the factors and events that the participants believed to have been significant.<sup>54</sup> A range of thirty open-structure interviews were conducted in Zimbabwe from across ethnic regions and with individuals from different denominations and political affiliations.<sup>55</sup> Most of the interviewees were former or current political activists; and others were in church or political leadership during the sixties or seventies. Interviewees in Zimbabwe appeared to feel free to express their views, even though most did not come from within the political establishment. The political tensions prevailing in Zimbabwe during the time of the archival research from 2005 to 2008, created further difficulties in accessing sources from libraries, with a reluctance to release manuscripts that might be seen to be unfavorable to the political establishment of the time. Despite persistent attempts to overcome

53. Hastings, "African Church Studies."

54. Oppenheim, *Questionnaire Design*, 81–82; on advantages of interviews, see also McNiff, *You and Your Action*, 124; David & Sutton, *Social Research*, 160ff.

55. Interviews offer important details on events that the interviewee may not have revealed in public and provide richer information as a result of being able to probe further.

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this difficulty, it may be that not all the relevant sources were disclosed. Certainly some materials listed in the catalogues were not available to the public. A range of secondary material was also accessed. Zimbabwean material tends to be written from a perspective favorable to the political establishment at the time of writing, creating significant challenges when trying to harmonize divergent perspectives.

The primary focus of this work is not to examine the wider issues of international colonialism,<sup>56</sup> but to examine the experience of Zimbabwe. However, the conclusions have implications for the wider debate. From the key question relating to the role of the mainline churches in ending colonialism, a series of others flow. Was independence in Zimbabwe a triumph of Nehanda and Africa Traditional Religion? Were other widespread religious forces at work? Was Christianity able to break free of its colonial past and connections? Were the efforts of churches in Zimbabwe genuinely African, or merely a local reflection of wider international trends and pressures? Were factors such as the willingness of Christian leaders to compromise, or equivocate over the resort to violence, a help or a hindrance to the cause of independence? Did Zimbabwean mainline churches, with different trajectories, play a significant, if not critical, role in the fight for Africans political rights especially in the critical years of c.1960 to 1980? Was it the Bible, or the Bullet, or secular political pressures, the Ballot, which were of greatest significance in ending colonial rule?

56. On Africa alone, without focusing on other colonized territories elsewhere, the scope of this subject can be observed in the following selection of works: Gifford & Roger-Louis, *Decolonization*; Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*; Sartre, *Colonialism and Neo-colonialism*; Wilson, *African Decolonization*; Christopher, *Colonial Africa*; Howe, *Anticolonialism*.