

# THEOLOGY OF ENOUGH: AN AGENDA FOR THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE

BY

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## ABSTRACT

*Plutocracy is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century worldwide serious challenge facing most, if not all countries. Antonym to this challenge, there is biblical furore and protest on wanton wealth accumulation and ecosophy crisis. There is advocacy for equitable wealth distribution to humanity. It is crystal clear; however, that there must be some concealed rationale as to why this is favoured by the majority. Equitable distribution of wealth or theology of enough is proffered in as means for a just society through the moral, fairness, economic efficiency, social stability and democratic concepts, for this mother-earth to be peacefully inhabitable. Therefore, the theology of enough combat the death penalty passed to the poor masses in Zimbabwe and beyond. However, in other words, this is a theology of life antonym to the theology of death, poverty theology, and prosperity theology/Davidic royal ideology or theology (to rule forever or to stay in power/positions forever). Therefore, enoughism is an antonym of wanton wealth accumulation and consumerism. The conviction of enoughism or theology of enough is advocating for satiated humanity in societies. How much is enough of wealth? What is necessary for the society's salvation? Why are there 'filthy rich' people and 'filthy poor' people in Zimbabwe and beyond? Is it that the 'filthy rich' work very hard or they are more blessed by God? To the 'filthy poor', is it that they are too lazy or they are more cursed by God? Hence, it is from these critical questions that it shows that the Church has never had seriously considered 'theology of enough'. In this article the theology of enough advocates for equitable distribution of wealth. Therefore, this article explores possible ways of responding to those who are 'filthy rich' and 'filthy poor'. For, in Zimbabwe and beyond this scenario exists, it's a reality.*

## INTRODUCTION

Informed by the Bible and its tenets, it is the task of this chapter to remind the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church in Zimbabwe and beyond that for the Church to transform society, it must uphold and promote high ethical values. In particular, it must challenge greed and corruption in society.. The Church should seriously proclaim and teach the theology of enough. It has been from wanting more and more that humanity has caused more harm than good to humans and the environment. The Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) must engage theological institutions and the faith community to promote the theology of enough. This theology is critical for sustainable development to occur. The theology of enough is biblically based (although, admittedly, passages that promote excessive consumption are present). It means sufficiency, not less than required quantity, not what is more than needed, excessive, and profligate. This is exactly what is said by the following biblical texts among many others.

“The Lord said to Moses, I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This is what the Lord has commanded: “each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an *Omer* (about half a gallon) for each person you have in your tent” (Exodus 16: 4, 16). Also, “Give me neither poverty nor riches, for in my poverty I might be forced to steal and in my riches I might forget my God” (Proverbs 30: 8). The concept is against greed and selfishness. Enoughism is a theory propounded by John Naish in his book entitled *Enough: Breaking Free from the World of More* (2008). The main thrust is to unveil the theology of enough as a way to balance the equation and to develop a sustainable society – for this planet earth to be once more habitable mother-earth. To this effect, Mahatma Gandhi once said that “there is enough for everyone’s needs, but there is not enough for anyone’s greed” (Gandhi, 2008).

In the popular view, in what Paul Freire called “naïve consciousness”: the role of the Church in society is relegated to ‘spiritual matters’. Usually, these spiritual matters are understood to be the search for the ‘pie in the sky’ (Freire, 1970). In other words, the church is supposed to pursue matters which will have nothing to do with the day-to-day lives of real people and ecology in this world. Many colonial and post-colonial authorities have been happy with this idea of the Church’s role. Yet, the same authorities have been keen to invite the Church to build hospitals, schools, training institutions and other non-governmental institutions addressing issues of development and poverty eradication. The colonial settlers, for example, invited the Jesuits and Dominicans to accompany them, yet the government they established did not want the missionaries to genuinely bring the good news to the African/s. Describing this contradiction, Don Helder Camara, the Brazilian liberation theologian, observed in the 1970s, that, when “I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist” (Camara, 1970). It is against this backdrop that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church in Zimbabwe must have a paradigm shift within the systematic theology, by introducing seriously the theology of enough, to both Christians and non-Christians for this mother-earth to be inhabitable. In turn, this will inspire sustainable development.

This chapter seeks to explore some of the perspectives on what is ‘enough’ among the Zimbabweans. For instance, in Zimbabwe there are people who are ‘filthy rich’, while others are ‘filthy poor’. Consequently, the objectives of this chapter are: to investigate the theology of enough in Zimbabwe and to identify and examine biblical interpretations and theological position regarding the theology of enough with reference to key texts.

### **Is There a Theology of Enough in Zimbabwe?**

Since Zimbabwe attained political independence in 1980, an oligarchy or plutocracy of the black population has become ‘filthy rich’ whilst the masses are getting drowned in rivers of poverty. In another way, the masses became ‘filthy poor’. The first Chimurenga was from 1896-97 and the second Chimurenga was from the 1960s to the late 1970s. It led to the end of White minority rule in Rhodesia and to the *de jure* independence of Zimbabwe in 1980. The Land Reform Programme, undertaken by the government of Zimbabwe since 2000, is referred to as third Chimurenga. In a modern context, the word Chimurenga denotes a struggle for social justice, human rights, and political dignity (Zambuko, 1945). Furthermore,

it can be argued that taking over leadership from the colonialists has been used to justify the current patrimonialism and oligarchic control of wealth in a natural resources-rich country. Undisputedly, Zimbabwe's main challenge is a plutocracy, which has turned a blind eye to the 'filthy poor' masses.

The living standards deteriorated astronomically in Zimbabwe from late mid of the first decade. The economic crisis in Zimbabwe is a product of a nation's historical poor governance experience. Cnaan Banana once gave a seminar on socialism and religion. In his speech (Banana 1987), he described the people of Zimbabwe as a people with a fresh bleeding wound inflicted in the past and disturbed in the present, a people grappling with a not-so-easy, and a still nebulous present. People are anxious about the trajectory of their bleeding present, a present suffering the pangs of hostile and dehumanizing forces. The overwhelming majority of citizens face a gloomy future with no signs of an immediate end to their plight. It would be true to say that our present situation is that of severely colonized nation which has not overcome the psychological and behavioural effects of colonization (Banana 1987: 10).

In 1988-89, the Willovale scandal was unearthed by the *Bulawayo Chronicle* newspaper. It was a Zimbabwean political scandal in which *The Chronicle* Newspaper revealed that: there was an illegal resale of automobile purchases by various government officials. This scandal was later substantiated by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). Many government officials were found to have engaged actively in corruption by the Sandura Commission. However, the government exonerated those who were involved in corruptive activities. They protected the high-profile personalities and in some cases these individuals were proven to be corrupt. However, they went on to elevate them to higher positions and even declared them heroes (Moto Magazine 1997: 9).

Corruption is one of the factors which ruined the country's economy. In the same vein, Kurebwa (2002) explained that the level of corruption in Zimbabwe in both public and private sectors has risen to crisis levels since independence. Zimbabwe is known for her richness in natural resources, including diamonds, gold, asbestos, platinum etc. However, the extraction of diamonds in Chiadzwa, since 2006, has taken the centre stage because of the disappearing of the diamonds, without benefiting the Zimbabweans. However, the then Finance Minister Tendai Biti, submitted that the country was not benefiting from the diamonds and hints that proceeds were being diverted from the treasury (The Zimbabwe Situation 2012: 1-20). In March 2016, President Mugabe came out on national television, reporting that diamonds worth \$15 billion had disappeared after being looted by unknown thieves (The Standard, 2016). According to Kizito M. Yves, undoubtedly human beings depend on the available resources on earth, in order to meet their various needs. Currently, it is evident that most of these resources (earth capital) such as all minerals, water, plants, and animals, are neither inexhaustible nor renewable (Yves 2011: 333-352). Therefore, it is critical to curb the appetite to loot and plunder natural resources.

Lack of accountability and corruption, as well as greed, have gradually become endemic in Zimbabwean society. They mostly involve self-benefiting conduct by people or entities in positions of responsibility, both in the private and public sector. The elite has sought to gain

and keep economic enrichment at the expense of the common good of the populace (Tsvangirai 2011). Resources meant for the poor or for the common good have often been converted to personal use by individuals in positions of trust. These scandals have helped to derail the country's economic progress and produce social misery, accompanied by the progressive disintegration of the national morale (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006: 9). Members of the ruling elite began to earnestly enrich themselves and started losing touch with the traditional basis of support. Mugabe and ruling elite come to increasingly identify a lot with those of the economic elite, most of whom were whites (Dashwood, 2000). Further, cronyism has affected the national approach. Thus, "I am rich because I belong to ZANU-PF and if you want to be rich too, you must join ZANU-PF" boasted one of Robert Mugabe's nephews, Philip Chiyangwa, a multi-millionaire businessman (Meredith, 2002). Therefore, for the poor masses, it seemed the elite, the oligarchy, are not rich as a result of hard working or God's blessings, but by being connected to the patronage network of corruption.

The elite has built exquisite mansions. A typical house had six to ten bedrooms, two or more living rooms, two or more bathrooms, servants' quarters, spacious yards, high walls, and electric gates, and swimming pools and tennis courts. The homes they took over from the colonialists and white farmers also had ornamental gardens that many of the elite have grown to like. All of them have hired gardeners to tend their gardens (Belk 2000: 1-15). The rich few members of Zimbabwe's oligarchy owned different types of opulent mansions which had more than twenty-five bedrooms, whilst the people who elected them starve and living in one room some without electricity and water. Jodie Foster said that attacking the rich is not envy, it is self-defence. The hoarding of wealth is the cause of poverty. The rich are not just indifferent to poverty; they create it and maintain it (Foster, 2016). This is an unethical practice, considering the mission and aim of all the Chimurengas fought by those who are 'filthy poor.'

It is important to recognize that, the traditional African family structure is an extended, rather than just a nuclear, one. For the elite in Zimbabwe, this is a potential problem. Even when family members live in different places, more successful kin are expected to help less successful kin. This includes monetary support, as well as often housing and caring for nephews, cousins, and others for sometimes extended periods of time (Belk 2000: 1-15). The philosophy of *Ubuntu* is a source of the theology of enough, in African tradition. In the same vein, Tutu pointed out that:

*Ubuntu* is a concept that we have in our Bantu languages at home. *Ubuntu* is the essence of being a person. It means that we are people through other. We cannot be fully human alone. We are made for interdependence; we are made for the family. When you have *Ubuntu*, you embrace others. You are generous, compassionate. If the world had more *Ubuntu*, we would not have war and extreme poverty. We would not have this huge gap between the rich and the poor. You are rich so that you can make up what is lacking for others. You are powerful so that you can help the weak, just as a mother or father helps their children" (Tutu, 2000).

*Ubuntu* is against greed, corruption, self-centeredness and looting of wealth, as has been depicted in this section. Therefore, it is explained that servant leadership is no longer

embedded within the oligarchy in Zimbabwe because leadership in Africa as a whole should follow the pattern of 'Chiefs' who were the highest form of leadership in an ethnic group. Chiefs were meant to guarantee the well-being of all their citizens. Furthermore, the serving role of leadership has been generally lost in the attitude of selfishness, lack of empathy and care for the next person. African leaders usually work less and do not see themselves as 'servants,' but as big bosses (Moyo *et al.* 2012: 117-133). The elite in Zimbabwe has embraced a western culture of individualism, thereby abandoning *Ubuntu*.

### **The Biblical Position on the Theology of Enough**

Christianity and other religions, as well as atheists, have never agreed on the position of their religious faiths on the theology of enough. This section intends to explore the position of Christianity and other religions on the subject matter, through selected biblical texts and other sources from different scholars. The following passage, cited in the introduction, provides valuable insights into the theology of enough. Thus:

The Lord said to Moses, I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This is what the Lord has commanded: Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer (about half a gallon) for each person you have in your tent. However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them. Each morning everyone gathered as much as he needed (Exodus 16: 4, 16, 20-21).

What can humankind learn from this biblical narrative? In fact, the whole of Exodus Chapter 16 is committed to manna and quail and for the Israelites to follow instructions of God through Moses. What can the 21<sup>st</sup> century Church draw from this important passage? The aforesaid biblical quotation's key phrases in this chapter must catch humankind's attention. In the midst of greed, corruption, egocentrism, and wanton accumulation of wealth, shortages of money, and other challenges in Zimbabwe, enoughism has no meaning to the filthy rich.

The biblical passage cited above is pregnant with the theology of enough. It is concerned with humankind sharing equally the food and the riches of their countries. This is, however, a moral obligation for all humankind. The passage calls for 'high standard' of honesty and compassion, as well as love to one another. Greedy peoples who tried to hoard food were reprimanded by making the stored food filled with maggots and began to smell. The decaying of the extra food stored (hoarded) should be a great lesson for the humankind. Humanity must desist from wanting more. This is what John Naish explained as follows, "human beings should be called '*Homo Expetens*' – wanting man; instead of '*Homo Sapiens*' – wise man or thinking man" (Naish, 2008). To this end, he is emphasizing that humankind is prone to wanting more and more and more, especially the filthy rich. Enough of everything makes this mother-earth inhabitable. Accumulation tendencies are against God's governance, the owner of everything on this earth including the enslaved poor masses. Therefore, the poor masses are in that state, not by the will of God, but by the social creation of the few filthy rich.

Humanity must gather as much as they need, not too much or extra. This seems too difficult in the age of 'progressive development' because humankind is stereotyped as 'wanting more'. This wanting more stereotype cycle can be broken from a moral, fairness, democracy, economic efficiency, and social stability concepts. By not getting enough of everything found on this mother-earth, the world is experiencing more unsolved socio-economic, and religiopolitical challenges, for example, climate change, unending civil wars in Africa, Asia, etc., HIV and AIDS, corruption, poor governance, and social stratification – in other countries there are no middle classes, the filthy rich are at the apex whilst the filthy poor are at the bottom, a big sign of ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor. Gathering of as much as a person needs thus the instruction. The instruction did not say humanity must live like monks and hermits, no, but people must 'gather as much as [you] need' (Killinger 1988: 42-51). There is need for 'filthy rich' individuals who recognize that what they have comes or belongs to God; hence, they must give back to God by giving to the 'filthy poor'. Thus, they must use their riches in a moral and fair way, through service to the poor.

A liturgy of enough is based on Psalms 23. The Lord is our shepherd; we have all that we need, God created the green fields of this earth, life-giving waters and pure, clean air. The Lord is our shepherd; we follow where God leads. But earth itself needs reviving, and we are called as stewards to its care. The earth is God's table; everyone is called to the feast. We see, there are enough resources for all when the distribution is equitable and fair. The goodness and mercy of God fill all of the creation. For God created this planet as humanity's home; it is for humankind to enjoy, but also to share (Sletton, 2011). Sletton's ideas are crystal clear to foster the fact that although the theology of enough does not exist to the economists, and capitalists, etc., the bible is clear that all the resources on earth are meant for equitable distribution or are enough for everyone, but not enough for the greedy (Cobb 2011).

The ideas from Cobb depict the complexity of the theology of enough between Christians' tenets and economist professionals. In addition, Cobbian philosophy is espoused as follows, a theology of enough calls directly for personal decisions. He believes there are millions of them, perhaps tens of millions, who are quite sure they have enough of the things that money buys (Anielski, 2000). Unfortunately, the theology of enough is not taken seriously by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church. Humankind by nature will continue to crave for more and more and more. They cannot control their intrinsic wants – thereby lack sufficiency skills. The need for ecological rehabilitation is evidenced by several books and papers, which have been published and continue to be published on environmental issues (see for example, Gitau 2000).

The theology of enough is not confined to socio-economic and religiopolitical issues only, but it embraces ecology and there is a biblical mandate for environmental stewardship by humankind. To this end, it is noted thus, in the African perspective, the destruction of creation means the destruction of humanity and vice versa. The African worldview recognizes an uninterrupted interaction between human persons and the cosmos, and this goes on to such an extent that they cannot exist without this interpenetration and

interdependence (Yves 2011) Therefore, lacking the theology of enough causes a chain reaction with negative ripples such as the plundering of national resources. However, the effects of wanting more and more lacking the word enough engaging in the aforesaid enterprises led to climate change a world crisis currently experienced, which calls for humankind to exercise checks and balances on their spacious appetite in wealth accumulation. Humankind should move from being “*homo expetens*” – wanting man, to “*homo sapiens*” – wise man or thinking man, as noted by John Naish (2008), for this mother-earth to be habitable by the current generation and the posterity.

### **Christianity and Other Religions on the Theology of Enough or Equitable Distribution of Wealth**

Most religions are seriously concerned with socio-economic and religiopolitical challenges, in favour of the preservation of human life and development as well as the conservation of the environment. Therefore, religious bodies or institutions combat wanton accumulation of wealth in relation to their respective convictions for in these religious institutions is where the poor masses are, bitten by extreme poverty. In Zimbabwe, Christian bodies such as Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC), Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ZCBC), and Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) have expressed their convictions pertaining to the theology of enough or equitable distribution of wealth in Zimbabwe (The Zimbabwe We Want 2006: 12).

It is, however, refreshing that the Christian institutions in Zimbabwe have engaged the government on critical issues that resonate with the biblical protests for the poor to be part of the historical narrative by raising and advocating for their concerns. This was long overdue considering that the above voice (Church) of the voiceless (poor masses) engaged the government in 2006, 26 years after the country attained political independence in 1980. The unbearable state to be pointed out is that during these 26 years the Christian bodies in Zimbabwe were divided. They could not work together to combat for the filthy poor masses in the country. To this end, they admitted that they were truly a sleeping giant and a disjointed body of Christ by admitting that: the socio-economic and religiopolitical situation in Zimbabwe degenerated to this alarming level, despite the fact that more than 80% of the population is Christian, including many of these in political leadership positions. Such are the results when the Church ceases to be prophetic and combative.

To date, (2017) that is, ten years after the three umbrella bodies produced the document ‘the Zimbabwe We Want’ in 2006 and from independence 1980, it is now 36 years, the poor masses who are voiceless are still wallowing in extreme poverty. What happened to the document? Did the government take heed of the contents of the document? It seems that the oligarchy or the plutocracy has intensified means and ways of wealth accumulation, instead of adopting an equitable distribution of wealth to the poor masses. This is evidenced by the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor in Zimbabwe. For this reason, it is argued by the Africa Wealth Report that, “the rich get richer even as poverty and inequality deepen. In Zimbabwe the worst performing country, wealth per capita dropped seriously. Most people live for less than a dollar per day, especially in rural areas where over 60% Zimbabweans people live (The Guardian 2015: 1ff). In such a situation, the Church must be found to be the voice for the voiceless, heralding the theology of enough or equitable

distribution of wealth not to conform to the deeds and ways of the plutocracy. The Church should stay truthful to the biblical protest against the concentration of wealth among the few. In the same vein, Feiman (2005/6: 1 f) argues for a new approach to economic justice.

Furthermore, African traditional religions have reverence to the environment and sustainable consumption. Therefore, it is observed that African traditional religions know what it means to reverence nature as sacred. This concern is evident in their attitudes towards earth and all its contents. They believe that human beings live in a religious universe so that natural phenomena and objects are intimately associated with God (Okonkwo 2011). A fundamental conviction that must propel the contemporary Church to seriously talk and act against environmental degradation, teaming up with traditional institutions in Zimbabwe and other bodies, for example, the Environmental Management Agency (EMA).

In the same vein, liberation theology seems to advocate for the theology of enough when it demands the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church to be seriously become politically involved with the poor and with their struggles to liberate themselves from extreme poverty and oppression (McGovern 1989: 197). In such a situation, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Church cannot choose to be silent or neutral, for if it chooses to be silent or neutral whilst the poor masses are wallowing in absolute poverty, the Church would have chosen the side of the plutocracy and their coterie of friends in Zimbabwe. To this effect, Tutu Desmond observed that: "If you are in a situation of injustice and you decide to be silent, it means you have chosen the side of the oppressor, and if an elephant has his foot on the tail of the mouse, and you say, you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality"(SABC News, 2005). However, the poor masses belong to a social group, class, culture and sex. They are a product or by-product of an economic and social system fashioned by the few for their own benefit. The unity of the Church and the poor would achieve social transformation (Torres *et al.* 1981: 108), – whereby the plutocracy and their coterie of friends embrace the theology of enough as a means for a democratic society. Therefore, extreme poverty is solvable.

Although the theme is beyond the scope of this chapter, the Church in Zimbabwe will need to reflect on the prosperity gospel (Marongwe and Maposa 2015; Zindoga 2016) as it tends to promote insatiable appetite among Christians and other members of society. Further, the Church must critique problematic ideologies (Vengeyi 2013) that can be deployed to prevent individuals from having had enough of staying in power. There is need to read the Bible in ways that enable people to recognize that God provided for everyone and continues to do so for humanity today (Fynn 2007: 37-39). However, the theology of enough or equitable distribution of wealth, coupled with fairness, economic efficiency, social stability, and democracy argued for in this chapter contends that the poor masses that are in absolute poverty can enjoy abundant life here and now, in Zimbabwe and beyond.

### **Conclusion**

The chapter has argued for the theology of enough or equitable distribution of wealth can serve as a corrective paradigm against corruption and wastefulness by the elite in Zimbabwe. Although the Bible has been appealed to in order to justify looting and

plundering national resources, in this chapter I have argued that it can inform the theology of enough. In Zimbabwe belief in religions has grown stronger than confidence in government. Religion has become the safe haven for many troubled minds, largely on the assumption that prayers and miracles will deliver people from their earthly troubles and usher them into the next life. On account of that narrative, religious institutions are thriving more than, and in some cases usurping, the power and role of the governments. While African governments have a lot to do to clear their images on why their countries have lagged behind in development, it cannot be disputed that the fraction of money that goes into the pockets of religious leaders would help address some of the problems the masses are facing today if that money had gone into government's coffers. If only that money could be used to buy medicines, build schools, and clinics, roads and energy, the masses would be in a better place (Gomo, 2015). To this end, and in view of the above factors, it is strategic for the ZCC to promote the theology of enough in order to create social stability with an economic efficiency that is centered on masses rather than on the oligarchy. Therefore, enoughism contends that "the earth provides enough resources for every man, woman, and child to live comfortably. However, there are people in power that choose to hoard it all. When people have more than what they need, they must build longer tables, rather than a higher fence"(Chaplin, 2016). Ultimately, greedy people who plunder natural resources and reserve wealth for themselves and their coterie of friends for self-satiation should be prosecuted. They are not working for a just society and equitable distribution of wealth. The theology of enough is a concept to reckon with in this time of unprecedented inequality between the filthy rich and the 'filthy poor' masses in Zimbabwe and beyond. Churches must be promoting the theology of enough for sustainable development to be achieved.

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