

# Miroslav Volf's public theology in national healing and reconciliation in Zimbabwe

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Several individuals use Miroslav Volf's theology to understand the unity of systematic theology and biblical interpretation, as well as the relationship between church theology and political theology. As a result, his work is associated with politically engaged and well-known theologians such as David Tracy, Reinhold Niebuhr and Jurgen Moltmann. It would be more beneficial to interpret Miroslav Volf's critical work as an attempt to clarify terms such as 'common good', 'embracing' and 'justice'. In addition to examining the political and socioeconomic environment and social exclusion in Zimbabwe, this study encourages a 'historical-theological' critique of social justice and social injustice.

**Intradisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications:** This article will provide Miroslav Volf's public theology framework as a point of comparison and critique.

**Keywords:** public theology; common good; justice; national healing; reconciliation; Miroslav Volf.

## Introduction

This article argues that Zimbabwe must undertake more extensive and serious national healing and reconciliation initiatives. This is possible if all Zimbabweans' concerns are considered and the significance of the events in the impacted areas is better grasped in light of Volf's public theology. In Zimbabwe, Christians can contribute to the emergence of 'an approach to social justice, contested elections, land reform, and social injustice'. Social unrest is being caused by Zimbabwe's severe socioeconomic policies, particularly among its own citizens. The purpose of the research is to review and examine Miroslav Volf's public theology. The political, socioeconomic and social exclusion in Zimbabwe are also examined through the historical-theological study of national healing and reconciliation. The study is focussed on text analysis using Volf's writings about his social life analysis as well as words, affirmations and other literature.

Volf emphasises the significance of Christians participating in public life and addressing social and political challenges. The article will draw on the aspects of Volf's public theology. The component that applies public theology to the analysis, evaluation and critique of public policy and issues focusses on Zimbabwe's national healing initiatives. Priority will be given to those people who have impacted by injustice and unfairness. According to Volf (2010:82), 'Church enters into compromises with the world in order to try to shape it in accordance with God's will'. This study aims to encourage Zimbabwean Christians, leaders and institutions to develop spiritually by recognising God's desire for justice and wholeness and by disregarding anything that puts the lives of others in harm.

## The public theology of Miroslav Volf in promoting Zimbabwe's quest for national healing and reconciliation

Since 1980, Zimbabweans have suffered from social injustice. Some of the injustices to be addressed are the Gukurahundi (the genocide of the Ndebele people in Matabeleland) after independence, the *Hondo Yeminda* land reform programme in 2000, and Operation Murambatsvina (Restore Order) in 2005. These days, social injustice, political corruption and economic collapse are endemic in both developed and developing nations. Christians have faced challenges when addressing some public issues. Regardless of social status, gender, religion, ethnicity or political affiliation, Bakare (2008) notes that the church has a duty to remind those in positions of power of their

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obligation to respect and uphold the human rights of all of its citizens. In circumstances in which these rights are denied, the church takes on the role of the voiceless. But the church in Zimbabwe has not been vocal enough to denounce the corrupt system that our people live under on a daily basis. In order to examine ethical principles and behaviour concerns, the research makes perfect sense from the perspectives of Christian history, Volf's public theology and ethical African societal values. This is particularly relevant in light of developing a true theological programme for Zimbabwe's national healing and reconciliation as an example of working towards fairness and justice. By addressing national healing and reconciliation initiatives, this study seeks to enable Zimbabweans to come together and make amends with one another within the framework of equitable and fair resource distribution. In order to achieve this, it will begin with Miroslav Volf's public theology and extend an invitation to theologians, the general public and Christian institutions to engage in public issue resolution for the benefit of everyone.

## Public theology defined

Benington (2011:43) asserts that public is, a global network of places, organisations, laws, regulations, information and other cultural resources that individuals share through daily interactions and commitments and that the public institutions and government consider acceptable. The presumption that public theology is still not fully comprehended and accepted by Zimbabwean theologians and Christians exists.

Most researchers believe that 'public theology' is broadly accepted in today's religious academic community and churches, while different views of what it entails vary. According to Forster (2022:3), the movement for public theology in South Africa is mostly the result of the work of academics at highly regarded institutions such as the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Pretoria. Theologians' definitions of public theology will enable Christian communities to better understand their roles and responsibilities when it comes to engaging in public issues. 'Public theology is the explanation of, witness to, and agency towards the vision that God intends for social life within the confines of the Christian tradition', according to Markham (2020:180). This clarifies how Christians in Zimbabwe are to be involved in God's fostering of social life, as the church's history demonstrates and has previously experienced. Kim and Day (2017:40) define public theology as the critical, reflective and reasoned application of theology in society with the goal of advancing God's kingdom, which is for the benefit of the poor and marginalised. Because the church is the voice of the marginalised, it is fundamental that it engage in public theology. Theology's engagement in the political and economic spheres gave rise to public theology, which was subsequently expanded to civil societies and other areas of public life. As defined by Dreyer (2004:919), 'public theology' is a relatively new term that describes a theology that critically reflects on social and political issues in addition to the Christian tradition. The purpose of this conversation is

to encourage the common good of the Zimbabwean people by bringing theology and society together.

Moltmann (1999:5–23) explains precisely what really public theology is supposed to do to human life and the church. It is the responsibility of the Christian community to uncomfortably remind the civic community of God's righteousness and justice as well as the impending arrival of his kingdom through speech, deed and presence. The church is not a separate group that exists for its own purposes. It is present in this earthly world for all people and for nature. As a result, the church cannot act politically just to further its own interests. The church has to keep in mind, it must stand up for justice, which embodies the spirit of Jesus and prioritises the weak and impoverished. The only 'public claim' the church has is that God oversees the coming kingdom of God. Although the church is different and set apart for God to prepare people for the heavenly future, it exists in a broken world and it is affected by the brokenness of the world. Therefore, while being heavenly focussed, it must still be actively involved in addressing the brokenness of the world by being the salt and light (Mt 5:13f).

The church needs to be involved in some political and public policy decisions similar to Resane (2022:1) sees public theology as the voice of theology in the public, in an attempt to define public theology. Given that civil religion deals with moral principles, public theology is a theological concept that has its roots in civil religion. As such, it is possible to argue that Christian ethics, public theology and public religion are related and sometimes used synonymously. It has grown to be the branch of religion that addresses all branches of science.

Therefore, when theology emerges from its framework of presenting the truth in authority and reveals itself in public, it plays a prophetic role in bringing justice out of disorderly activity. Volf (1996:10) aims at addressing the topic of conflict from a deeply human angle. His basic question is, 'How does one remain loyal to the gift of forgiveness that the Crucified offered the perpetrators and to the demand of the oppressed for justice?' Volf compares the actual circumstances to how Jesus dealt with various public issues and how he led his public life, which results in pure public theology. Seeking to define public theology brings Dreyer (2018:2) to conclude that most people would agree that public theology is social, political and practical in nature. As Volf (2015) states:

[P]ublic theology understands itself as an academic reflection of a Christianity that has become aware of its limitations and its particularity in the context of a pluralistic society and world and on this basis strives to contribute to the common good in dialogue and collaboration with others. (p. 72)

Volf emphasises that public theology does not advocate for one's personal benefit; rather, it seeks the common good of all. The idea expressed by Bongamba (2001) is similar to that of Volf in that it is crucial to provide an unbiased academic assessment of theological concepts in contemporary society

in order to preserve the discipline of theology's significance for those who are religious. Moreover, faith-based gospel churches usually run like the pastors' own enterprises, not like official governmental organisations. Without prejudice, the church must assess the community's problems and offer answers.

Tracy (1981:7) calls for theologians to engage 'three distinct and related social realities: the wider society, the academia, and the church'. Although he does not use the term 'public theology', it is obvious that he is following this trajectory. Tracy further splits the project into three when he describes what it means for a theologian to address a larger culture. The first area he claims that the organisation and distribution of commodities and services fall under the purview of the techno-economic system. The profession and stratification systems of the society are formed by this structure, which also makes use of contemporary technologies. The second area is the polity, which stresses reliable definitions of social justice and the use of power. To realise the specific ideas of justice embedded in a society's traditions or constitution, this involves controlling the legitimate use of force and regulating conflict. The third is the area of culture, which is primarily, but not exclusively, concerned with symbolic manifestations in art, religion and contemplation on it in various kinds of cultural criticism, philosophy and theology. Tracy, just as Miroslav Volf then, believes that public theology is a complete theological engagement with all of the major facets of society, including the economic, political and cultural ones.

Public theology sees the Christian life as a way of being a part of humanity that is oppressed by secular and unjust systems. Kusmierz's (2016:5) definition of public theology is highlighted and encapsulates its function in the African setting as a discipline that endeavours to interact with current socio-political challenges critically and productively in the public sphere. It critically examines the public function of churches in a democratic society on a meta-theoretical level. It investigates the means, conditions and limitations of such involvement in a democratic, secular, and at the same time, multi-religious, multicultural setting as it examines possible contributions of churches to the improvement of democracy and common life. It assumes that this interaction with the secular world is a crucial component of Christian theology and religion.

Forrester (2014:6) asserts that public theology puts the welfare of the city ahead of the church's right to spread the gospel and celebrate its sacrament. In addition to seeking to provide the means of faith to support the development of a decent society, the repression of evil, the reduction of violence, the fostering of national unity and public reconciliation, public theology often embraces 'the world's agenda' or portions of it as its own agenda. Stackhouse (2004:277) claims that public theology looks at and modifies the tenets of civic religion while rejecting the utopian perspectives of political theology. It adopts this position because it recognises the potential for reform in addition to the exploitation of power and the development of self-

interest. Public theology may incorporate political and social concepts, but these ideas should serve society, not the other way around. In the context of the church, state public society, industry and academia, public theology's primary goal is to communicate the profundities and wisdom of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that is both credible and intelligible to a variety of groups.

Markham (2020:180) defines public theology as 'the explication of witness to and agency towards the vision that God intends for social life within the parameters of the Christian tradition'. This study explains why people in Zimbabwe want justice in their lives and how social order can be established by presenting an explanation of authentic Christian doctrine and having a conversation about the truth. People who have seen injustices and those who are fighting for justice must express their common understanding of the social structure in public. A few institutions are required to help people navigate the environment and create social order. In line with Rubio (2013:774), Volf argues that Christians cannot and do not need to win in the competition of public life. Instead, Christians should play the game as best they can, even though they may lose.

Based on Volf (2010:6-9), Christians have an obligation and a right to share with society a prophetic and historically grounded vision of human flourishing. Catholic social doctrine also affirms the inevitable social ramifications of the Christian religion. Christians who choose to pursue this calling should be accepted at the political table with everyone else, as stated by Volf (2010:15), and they should not be required to reinterpret their beliefs in terms of something secular. Volf advocates a faith-based approach that respects other people's political decisions and acknowledges the crucial part religion can play in promoting human flourishing. Politicians and Christians together must refrain from divisive sermons and statements that polarise the populace. Speaking in public and addressing public issues for the benefit of or in the interest of the public is always public theology, as we can see from various theologians attempting to define public theology. On the issue of how theology and social realities should coexist, Volf (2010:37) effectively addresses the claim that 'religion is very much alive today and it is a force not only in the private but also in the public lives of people in the world'. Any social or economic system that sees wealth accumulation as something that is very desirable must be criticised by Christianity, especially in the case of people who are forced to not only accept its objectives but actively work towards them. According to Breitenberg (2003:66), public theology is the theologically informed discussion of matters that are directed to the public, as well as the church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other religious entity. It is presented in a manner that can be analysed and judged by the public using public justification and standards. Public theology needs to engage with social reality and make an effort to address some of the challenging problems facing communities. In the view of Volf, Krieg and Kucharz (1996:113), Volf's theory of public theology is like a vision of public theology for a public gospel: by viewing the city

through the perspective of its own culture, it perceives the builder and architect as occupying multiple power relations, and it promotes the weakness of the Crucified as a new form of power. Living on the periphery, it endeavours to bring the reign of the triune God to bear on all spheres of life.

As noted by Benington (2011:43), the public is something that is continually being created and constructed; therefore, a part of what the government does is to take the initiative in forming and responding to people's ideas and perceptions of the public domain at this time and place, as well as what adds to and subtracts from public value. This holds true in Zimbabwe, where the public sphere is hotly contested because of competing interests and ideologies. Doehring (2015:190) offers a precise definition of public theology, stating that public theologies are historical and modern theologies created in specific contexts to establish religious accountability in public settings and make sense of public situations. She considers the societal, related to one another, community and personal impacts of the terrible development regarding how and why it happened, using a prayer session or memorial ceremony as an example.

In order to provide a Christian and moral perspective to the conversation, public theology will be used as a tool to help create standards for public discourse and to advance societal well-being. Public theology can be discerned in Zimbabwe from the early days of missionary work that engaged with the social and economic sphere. Human rights, education, health, economic prosperity, good governance and interfaith harmony are a few of the issues that have aroused the interest of religious viewpoints in public life, according to Opuni-Frimpong (2021:193). Public theology is one way that the church's broad mission is expressed. When pastors are assigned the responsibility of building constructive relationships with the public, it is thought that many African Christian leaders utilise their religious perspectives to address public problems. Moltmann (1999:5–23) points out that theology has a responsibility to support the concerns of God's future kingdom in a way that is 'public, critical, and prophetic by presenting its reflections as a reasoned position'. This research attempts to contribute to the theological development of public theology in Zimbabwe and African Christian theology by using Miroslav Volf's public theology and national healing and reconciliation as an example of public concern.

We try to describe these four basic cultural components of the Christian religion as follows, which Volf (2013:815) tries to explain. Firstly, Christianity is a prophetic religion based on the belief that Christ holds the key to both creation and humanity. We need to build a prophetic theology that is essential to humanity and creation in order to understand Zimbabwe's social situation. Secondly, the characteristic of the Christian faith is its insistence on universal truths regarding what is true and right for every individual. In Zimbabwe, research on a true theology of social justice must be conducted fairly and truthfully for both those who have been mistreated and those who have been brought to justice.

Thirdly, in Zimbabwe, where transnational religious groups are embodied, the message at hand needs to be embraced and accepted from all points of view respecting people's ideas and religious beliefs. This acceptance needs to be focussed on the person rather than on groups, and it ought to support people's right to accept or reject their way of life. Fourthly, the feature involves conducting research that adheres to the core ethical principle of the biblical golden rule, which is reversibility.

## Reconciliation, national healing and doing justice: Miroslav Volf and public theology

Because Miroslav Volf is a native of Croatia, he studied in Germany and the United States of America. With the highest honours, he earned his doctorate and post-doctoral degrees from the University of Tübingen in Germany. He has written or edited more than 20 books and more than 90 academic articles. The book reviewers at Bob on Book (2019) describe Volf as a public theologian who 'lived theology' which means that his writing demonstrates his commitment to theology as a way of life with all of its traditions and practices. In the words of Volf, it is an addition to a Christian's daily life. Theology is, in many respects, both a way of life and a means of obtaining a way of life. As stated by Davila (2013:759), he found Volf's work to be stimulating and demanding when it came to answering these problems brought up by societal issues. Volf's proposal, according to Davila, reorients the discussion about religion's valuable influence on the political debates and towards a more communal and democratic context by defining the ideal life based on a supernaturally rooted understanding of the human being. Davila claims, however, that Volf offers the most significant contribution that a variety of religious traditions can offer to public discourse: the fundamental understanding that a community's well-being depends on how it handles both its most marginalised members and those who are perceived as outsiders. Because of the privileged position of the weak and those in need, as well as other aspects of Christian ethics, Christians feel compelled to engage in the public sphere with the appropriate Christian imaginary, which attempts to provide as comprehensive and broad an understanding of what is good for everyone as possible. From the perspective of an ethicist committed to the country of social diversity, cultural plurality and religious pluralism, Volf wrote all about it.

Volf also wrote about the idea of giving the poor preferential treatment, which is seen by all Christians as a basic component of Christianity and other traditions that enhances the quality of human existence in society. Within African theological communities, social injustice over God's created resources, such as land, has moved from the periphery to the core. To calm the fears of Christians who are unsure about some political issues, public issues and the respect of religious pluralism in the public domain, Volf makes it very clear how Christians should handle their faith in the public sphere.

Volf has written many books, including *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (1996), *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of Trinity* (1998), *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World* (2006), *A Public Faith: How Followers of Christ Should Serve the Common Good* (2011), *Flourishing: Why we need religion in a globalized World* (2015) and *Public Faith in Action: How to Engage with Commitment, Conviction, and Courage* (2016). These are excellent books that can be used to develop good theology. By combining the Christian faith with contemporary issues, Volf hopes to elevate the ideas of forgiving, embracing and inclusion. He provides a list of several forums where Christians can talk about their issues and try to come up with answers in public. Volf proposes that everyone utilise their knowledge and religious convictions and practices while participating in public life on an equal basis and for the good of society at large, regardless of their membership with any religion. The golden rule is to treat others as you would like to be treated, and it must be followed in public. In all his publications, he emphasises how Christianity is prophetic. With respect to him, Christianity influences every aspect of life.

In his discussion of human flourishing, Volf also defines himself as someone who loves both God and his neighbour and has been accepted by God as a beloved child. Treating everyone with respect, including those who are drastically different from you, is something Volf strongly advocates. He urges the church to stay away from an untrue harmony that accepts disagreement in public. Public disagreements, conflicts and altercation are unacceptable. When it comes to church being involved with politics and elections, the church should not get passive in its quest for common ground and the good for all. Volf urges Christians to cherish and beware of their differences. Volf (2006:26) writes on memory as well, because it is central to the struggle. Volf instructs communities on how to remember the violence they have witnessed in the right way. Volf wants theology to look at today's urgent issues within the framework of the gospel. Theology should encourage understanding of and love for God and neighbour to truly contribute to the advancement of humanity.

The more Christians who engage with others in a genuine and truthful way, the better the public perceives the present scenario. Volf teaches the church how to engage in debate while honouring the right to hear the other side out and to convey one's own position while taking the audience's hopes, fears and aspirations into consideration. Searching for common ground, which is an expression of truth-seeking, is the cornerstone of Volf's public theology (Volf & Ryan 2016:88). Institutions such as the government and the church ought to celebrate any truth that is found and openly declare their commitment to spirituality. People have experienced injustice; some have triumphed, while others have been left behind. Zimbabweans need to develop the ability to lead their communities towards a better future. After miscommunication and the crushing of our social interests, how are we going to get along with one another? Is there a

more equitable way to live than Zimbabwe's unjust land reform scheme? Is it possible to move past the Gukurahundi carnage in Matabeleland? Given these conditions and the historical background of the nation, Zimbabwe has seen an increase in the need for social justice and public theology. Particularly in Zimbabwe and other areas of the world, the Christian community may find a particular theologian lacking and replace him with a new public theologian who addresses social justice: Miroslav Volf.

## Miroslav Volf's 'theology of embrace' as a theological model for Zimbabwe's reconciliation and healing

The definition of 'embrace' in the Cambridge Dictionary is 'to accept or continue in a difficult or unpleasant situation.' Our attention is initially drawn to an embrace because it denotes a close encounter and relational commitment. Embrace can be depicted or communicated in a variety of ways, as when you greet someone or say goodbye, or when you tightly hug someone in both arms to demonstrate affection, preference or sympathy. Embrace is seen by Volf (1996:40) as a solution to the issue of identities based on exclusion. The theological concept of embrace is crucial because it explains how humans are made in relation to one another. According to Volf, the act of embrace signifies human involvement in God's existence and mission, whereas exclusion is seen as a sin. Rather than providing the narrative in which human interactions and relationships are meant to be, Volf's concept of the human embrace focusses on what they should be. It is evident that the practice of embracing needs to be shaped by an individual's identity and social connections. Based on Volf's and Gundry-Volf definition (1997:10), embrace means more than reconciliation; in fact, it goes beyond just giving 'others' credit. Embrace is 'reaching out to others' and making room 'inside ourselves as individuals and civilizations for others' while remaining true to ourselves. The theology of embrace is centred on theological reflection on otherness, as defined by Volf and Gundry-Volf (1997:40). This attempt would be a betrayal of God and the oppressed people if it were carried out in a way that neglected the themes of oppression and liberation. Releasing individuals from oppression and letting them be themselves is necessary to embrace them for who they are in their otherness.

The steps of embracing are described by Volf (1996:140). He describes the 'drama of embrace' as consisting of four 'acts,' which we shall refer to as steps in this article. As Volf reiterated 'I do not want to be myself only, I want to be part of the other', the first step is about opening the arms, the most vulnerable action that someone may choose to do. Volf (1996:141) recommends that one must possess a desire for the others. Open arms must be the first step in the offer to embrace to convey our desire to interact with the other person in a constructive and pleasant manner. Also, the invitation to embrace must be unrestricted and unselfish. As stated by Volf (1996:141), 'the pain of absence and the joy of

anticipated presence that underscores the fact even before the self opens its arm the other is in a sense already part of it'. Volf's theory on the concept of identity is based on this idea of the self. A feeling that one is incomplete without the other also supports Volf's theory of desire for the other. All people were intended to be included in Zimbabwe's New Dispensation government. Reaching out to all, accepting everything that comes from the past, facing them head-on, admitting their errors and appealing to people who were impacted by Gukurahundi, the Land Reform of 2000 and Murambatsvina for forgiveness. All these things are within the power of the government and the church. The political organisations that the government was supposed to support included the opposition party, civil society organisations and farmers who lost their land because of land reform. Zimbabwe's church has a history of welcoming people and opening arms of love because they are taught to view all aspects of their lives, happy or sad, through the lens of their relationship with God. The people and government of Zimbabwe must realise that relationships define who they are as individuals and their communities and churches serve as their neighbours, trusted individuals, accountability system and lifelong friends. Volf's 'embracing' work can be utilised to promote harmony in politics, religion and society at large. The idea of 'embracing' captures the essence of God's relationship with humans, calling, loving and welcoming everyone while also 'embracing' humanness. 'No one should ever be excluded from the will to embrace,' stresses Volf (1996:85), 'because at its core, a person's relationship with another does not depend on their moral performance and cannot be undone by a lack of it'. Volf's (1996:100) claim that 'God's reception of hostile humanity into divine communion is a model for how human beings should relate to the other' resonates with us in Zimbabwe. It suggests that when we use God's embrace as our model for embracing, we are acknowledging that the horizontal viewpoint of action which is comparable to the embrave measurements between myself and the other must be rooted in the vertical dimension of God's transforming embrace because God seems to have accepted an antagonistic humanity into his divine communion.

Volf (1996:145) identifies four criteria that set an effective 'embrace' in hostile conditions apart. 'Fluidity of identities' is a quality, according to Volf. Realising that 'all culture is hybrid' in Zimbabwe, where Ndebele, Shona and white people coexist, is imperative for the people of Zimbabwe and all of Africa. Although everyone in the country is a citizen, each person is intrinsically unique because of the different roles they play, the ways in which they interact and the communities they connect with. In any social circle, there will always be outsiders in the countries and societies that grow the people's economies, cultures and ways of life. People in the nation still refer to other people as colonisers and landowners, both as groupings and as individuals. Africa must realise that social domains are interconnected, that leaving home alters a person permanently, and that experiences outside the house become a part of one's 'inside'. Diversity is always important in all facets of life. Zimbabwe's

ruling party is running under the slogan 'Nyika inovakwa nevene vayo, ilizwe lakhwiwa ngabanikazi balo' [A nation is constructed by its owners] in the run-up to the harmonised elections in 2023. The country must realise that other people are the reason it exists in the first place and that diversity and international cooperation could bring Zimbabwe's glory back to the attention of those outside its borders.

## Conclusion

The church must act in the public sphere and refrain from believing that the government is responsible for national healing and reconciliation. The church must understand that God's purpose is to initiate the worldly people to come back to him. For the world to have peace and harmony, the church and government must work together. The theology of embracing everyone is crucial, regardless of differences in politics, beliefs and practices. According to Volf (1996:196), social order is threatened by disorder, violence undermines peace, and meaning could give away to absurdity in the absence of justice. In Zimbabwe, the church needs to proclaim the truth to the public, which can inspire others to do so the same and believe morally, encouraging them to take constructive actions in their communities.

Campaigns, workshops and seminars are necessary for Zimbabwe's Christian communities to establish an effective local government and practise godly, intelligent politics. When it comes to confronting and acting upon the public life of people to preach and have the spirit of forgiveness, since Volf (2005:125) asserts that 'there is no future without forgiveness,' as a theological and ethical reflection on generosity and the common good for all, the church must examine the nature of national healing and reconciliation in human relationships.

The Zimbabwean church needs to recognise right away that part of the Christian calling for churches, Christian organisations and Christian people overall is to promote national healing and reconciliation. This study concludes that, to ensure national healing, reconciliation and equitable opportunity for all citizens, the theology of embrace of Miroslav Volf in Zimbabwe can be used to address the historical injustice and social injustice. People must work together, refrain from hurtful speech and be united to accept one another in all spheres of life for the common good.

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## Authors' contributions

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## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

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