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The portrayal of Politics and Christianity by the Zimbabwean print media during the socio-economic and political crisis (2008–2013)



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Doctor of Philosophy

A Doctoral Thesis submitted to the School of Language, Literature and Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa; in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of PhD in Media Studies

2018

Declaration

I Beauty Muromo, declare that this thesis is my own original work. It is being submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Media Studies of the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. This work has not been, in substance, submitted previously nor concurrently, in candidature for any degree at any other University.

.....

This.....day of …….2018

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First and foremost, I thank the God Almighty who has taken me this far (Ebenezer). Through His grace which is sufficient for me, I managed to do this much. I worked with Jeremiah 29 verse 11 in mind. I owe this thesis to His protection. I also extend gratitude to my Pastor, Enios Musindo for your counselling and prayers.

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Dedication

To my late father, Edward Gwauya Chapwanya, I know you would have celebrated with me. To my mother, Lydia Chapwanya, your prayers and blessing made this possible.

Abstract

The use of Christian biblical discourses by the African ruling elite to negotiate hegemony remains a site of contention in African politics and the academic space. This study examines how the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government and politicians especially former president Robert Mugabe appropriated and deployed Christianity Biblical discourses to negotiate and renew a waning hegemony against a backdrop of rising political opposition, mainly from the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), in the post-2000 epoch. While significant studies have examined intersections of religion and politics in post-colonial Africa at large, studies employing a media studies approach in contemporary Zimbabwe are few and far between. This study employs an eclectic approach, drawing insights from Gramscian hegemony, Althusserian Ideology and Bateson's framing theory to examine the nexus of ZANU PF political discourse and Christianity religion as reflected in selected media. The study is qualitative employing an interpretive approach. A total of 79 purposively selected newspaper articles from both state controlled and privately owned media organisations published from 2008-2013, were subjected to Discourse Analysis in an attempt to gain insights on the relationship between Christianity and ZANU PF politics in Zimbabwe. The study shows that to save a dwindling hegemony, former president Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF government at large turned to the pulpit for political 'salvation' and legitimacy. In essence, the state controlled media portrayed Mugabe as a 'God-ordained' leader and a Messiah to Zimbabwe's economic, social and political problems.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Statement of the problem

The nexus of religion and politics in post-colonial Zimbabwe is strongly pronounced, as elsewhere (Chitando, 2005, Chimuka, 2013; Togarasei, 2013). Such incidents hardly evade the watchful eyes of the mass media. Using Zimbabwe as a case study, this study examines intersections between Christianity religion and the political discourse by the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government as reflected in selected media. The main argument advanced by this study is that ZANU PF appropriated the Christian religion to entrench its hold on power against the backdrop of waning support from the masses.

The bases of this research are how the mass media presented the alignment between religion and politics using frames like catchphrases (puppets, patriotism, regime change agenda, etc), metaphors (Canaan, Joshua, Messiah, etc) and visuals among others. These mass media frames were analysed to understand concepts of hegemony, ideology and discourse used in the study. It is through these frames and representations that this researcher learnt how politicians enlisted religion in their political addresses. The strand running through the study is that according to mass media reports, religion plays a crucial role in political spaces.

The study attempts to establish the extent to which the enlisting of religion by ZANU PF livened up the waning hegemony of the party. This guided the research to conclude that religion can be a strong factor in political endeavours. The questions raised in this study are worth asking as ZANU PF politicians used church gatherings as a strategy to lure people to vote for them. The findings indicate that divorcing religion from politics is almost impossible.

Geographically located in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe is a land locked country that was ruled by Robert Mugabe from 1980 to November 2017 when the military engineered a ‘soft power coup’ coded ‘Operation Restore legacy’ which forced him to resign paving way for his long term ally Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa to take over the presidency. ZANU PF, has been the ruling party since 1980, albeit between 2009 and

2013 they were forced into a Government of National Unity (GNU) with opposition Movement for Democratic Change[1] parties.

In 2000 the ZANU PF government embarked on a fast track land reform programme. The intention seems to have been to genuinely redress land ownership imbalances which were historically skewed in favour of the white minority while also, at the same time, entrenching themselves in power against the emerging trade-union opposition. Land reform 'coincided' with the emergence and rise of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), formed in late 1999 (Hammar and Raftopolous, 2002). The MDC presented the first major threat to ZANU PF's hegemony. From this period, the ZANU PF government faced international isolation and sanctions occasioned by Western nations unhappy at the nature of the land reform programme and, secondly, a legitimacy crisis at home (Tendi, 2013; Ranger, 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 2011). The post 2000 epoch was thus marked by disputed elections and unprecedented economic decline triggering a hyperinflationary environment especially from 2005-2008.

It is in this socio-political context that I examine how the ZANU PF government under Robert Mugabe appropriated and deployed Christianity to save a waning hegemony. This subject has not been extensively subjected to a systematic analysis although the writings of Chitando (2005, 2013); Chimuka (2013); Togarasei (2013); and Ndhlovu (2014) among others have done much to highlight the salient points on politics and religion in post-independence Zimbabwe. This analysis is necessary because the epic of Zimbabwe's poisoned political space is an interesting story worth telling. The lack of rule of law, declining economy, social and political ills, needed the government to seek assistance to restore order. In addition, the hegemony, ideology and power relationship in both religion and politics as presented in the media predominate in the events that unfolded during that time of economic and political crisis (2008 to 2013). A comprehensive understanding of the present political situation in Zimbabwe must

[1] The happenings of 2008 like the disputed elections, runoff that saw Tsvangirai withdrawing and Mugabe winning as the sole candidate, signing of Global Political Agreement (GPA) IN September among others led to the GNU.

therefore include an appreciation of the role played by the print media to retain ZANU PF in power.

Unlike in the early years of independence where the party used discourses of nationhood, patriotism and sovereignty (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009), there was a major shift during the 2008 to 2013. Selected newspaper articles from both the state controlled and privately owned press were critical sources of data for the study. The thesis demonstrates that religious and political fields became sites of shifting coalitions, thus suggesting some form of partnership between the two. Both are about people and numbers. I contend that religion is one of the crucial platforms for political communication in Zimbabwe. ZANU PF appropriates Christianity symbolism to save a dwindling hegemony in the wake of growing political opposition and resistance in Zimbabwe. For feasibility purposes, the study focuses on the period from 2008 and 2013.

1.2 Background of the study

ZANU PF has been at the helm of power in Zimbabwe since 1980. From 1980 ZANU PF, under the leadership of Robert Gabriel Mugabe, dominated the political landscape. The only sustained resistance to the ZANU PF hegemony during the first decade of independence came from the Zimbabwe African Patriotic Union Front (PF ZAPU) led by the late Vice President of Zimbabwe Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo. ZAPU's resistance, however, was neutralised by the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987 between the two parties (Waldahl, 2005). Mugabe and ZANU PF were now virtually in total control of the state apparatus, a situation lasting until the emergence of a strong political opposition-the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by the late former trade unionist Morgan Tsvangirai. The birth of (MDC) saw for once an opposition party in Zimbabwe that challenged and threatened ZANU PF. The fight to win elections since the birth of the strong opposition saw both ZANU PF and MDC parties turning to the pulpit to endear themselves to the electorate. In order to understand the move taken by ZANU PF as a political party to engage Christianity, there is need to trace the party's history and ideologies. It is also important to give the context of the rise of the MDC as the opposition party that instilled fear in ZANU PF.

1.2.1 History of ZANU PF

The formation of political parties in the country started in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) around 1919 with nationalist protests against oppression (Ruzivo, 2013:10). Blake (1977) records that the 1934 Industrial Conciliation Act prohibited the formation of workers' unions by Blacks though the whites were allowed to form their own labour unions. Black labour discontent rose in the 1940s as radical active resistance to colonialism. The colonial discriminatory system in the employment sector was whereby blacks were paid much lower wages than the whites despite performing similar duties. Prominent leaders of this struggle of labour discrimination included Benjamin Burombo, Masocha Ndlovu, Stanley Culverwell and Joshua Nkomo among others (Ranger, 1970; Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni, 1999) who later belonged to the two major political parties (ZANU and ZAPU) that participated in the liberation struggle. Nationalist movements of a political nature began in the late 1950s during the liberal territorial government of Sir Garfield Todd (1953 to 1958) (Blake, 1977). Todd's government among other liberal initiatives annulled the 1934 Industrial Conciliation Act that prohibited formation of trade unions by black employees, among other restrictive economic measures that targeted blacks. The nullification of that 1934 Act enabled Joshua Nkomo to form the National Youth League as a workers union for Rhodesia Railway workers. Out of this Youth League the first countrywide political party for blacks called the Southern Rhodesia African Nationalist Congress (SRANC) led by Joshua Nkomo was formed in 1957. Because of its capacity to mobilise both urban and rural support, the movement was banned in 1959 by the Rhodesia government following the passage of the Unlawful Organisations Act of 1958 (Blake, 1977) and most of its leadership was arrested. All this information highlights the conditions that led to the formation of political parties in the country, ZANU PF included.

African intellectual elites who included Herbert Chitepo (the first black lawyer in Rhodesia), Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe (both graduate teachers) among others who teamed up with SRANC leadership to form the National Democratic Party (NDP) in 1960 (Shamuyarira, 1965; Mlambo, 1972; Raftopoulos, 1995) were influential in the history of ZANU PF. This was the second political party for Africans after SRANC. It was immediately banned by the government (Blake, 1977) and its party leadership sent into detention through the Preventive Detention Act of 1959.

Undeterred by this latest setback, the nationalists then formed the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) in 1960 as a replacement for the banned party under the same leadership with Nkomo still the president (Clements, 1969). However, ZAPU was immediately banned through the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) of 1960.

Unfortunately, disagreements arose within ZAPU (then operating underground). While he was away, a vote of no confidence was passed in Joshua Nkomo and the splinter group in the leadership formed the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) on 8 August 1963 under Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, thus leaving Nkomo leading ZAPU. This marked the origin of ZANU as a political party of course noting that it was a splinter from ZAPU. Sithole remained in the country when some of the leaders went outside the country to Zambia and Mozambique to fight the Rhodesian colonialists. They could do this as they got support (training, equipment and military bases) from the governments they operated under. This led to the emergence of a military wing of ZANU-Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) which operated first from Zambia in the fight against the white minority government then later from Mozambique (Johnson and Martin, 1981; Ranger, 1995; Chung, 2006).

Robert Mugabe became the leader of the externally based ZANU after the death of Hebert Chitepo in 1975 while Sithole was the leader of the internally based ZANU that denounced the violent struggle. The Mugabe-led ZANU took part in the liberation struggle which culminated in the Lancaster House negotiations with the colonialists that led to the country's independence in 1980. Lancaster House was the venue for the 1979 negotiations that brought together the leadership of the combatants of the Zimbabwe liberation war namely, on the one hand, Douglas Ian Smith, leading the Rhodesia Front and Abel Muzorewa leading United African National Congress (UANC), and on the other hand, Joshua Nkomo leading ZAPU and Robert Gabriel Mugabe leading ZANU. Contestations for the name ZANU between the Sithole-led party and Mugabe's ZANU led to the addition of the abbreviation of Patriotic Front (PF) by Mugabe and other leaders of his party to their party name in order to differentiate it from Sithole's party especially on the ballot for purposes of voting (Chung, 2006). The Mugabe-led party became known as ZANU PF ahead of the 1980 general elections and this acronym was retained after the merger with Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU on 22 December 1987. This is how ZANU PF came into being and has been at the helm of power since 1980.

1.2.2 ZANU PF ideologies and formation of MDC

The ZANU PF party's ideologies include no repetition of colonialism, no reversal of the gains of the country's independence, control over means of production, equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, upholding of democracy and protection of culture and heritage (ZANU PF Manifesto, 2013). Nevertheless, the post-2000 Zimbabwe saw ZANU PF losing its hegemony in a significant way (Hammar and Raftopolous, 2003; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). There was support from the Zimbabwean masses both at home and abroad for a complete reform in terms of political leadership. Men and women who had participated in the liberation struggle (war veterans) were also unhappy about not being given land (see Chapter 6) and other benefits to appreciate their efforts in the war. The period of the late 1990s saw the war veterans being given compensation in the form of hefty packages of fifty thousand dollars each for the role they had played in the liberation of the country (Avis Noel, 2014). Raftopoulos and Savage (2004:71) explain that Mugabe was pressured by the war veterans' demands and "without consulting Cabinet or considering the budgetary and economic repercussions, the President unilaterally offered the approximately 50 000 war veterans cash gratuities of $50 000 each." This marked the beginning of the dwindling of the country's economy (Moss and Patrick, 2006; Phimister and Raftopoulos, 2004). People wanted change and a revival of their economy.

Describing the Zimbabwean crisis, Makumbe (2009: vii-viii) points out that "the violent farm invasions that were initiated and strongly supported by the Zanu PF government effectively resulted in the collapse of the agricultural sector." This had an impact on Zimbabwe as the country is an agro-based economy. The crisis had negative impacts on the social sector. The education and health sectors were the hardest hit (Makumbe, 2009) and unemployment was rife. For the generality of people in Zimbabwe life became unbearable. There were mass stay-aways where people protested against the ZANU PF-led government. This led to the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). It is the major opposition party in the country. ZANU PF who had dominated the political landscape since 1980, found themselves in a political dilemma as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formed on 26 February 1999 at a National Working People's Convention (Raftopoulos, 2009) under the

leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai threatened to send the Robert Mugabe-led party to political oblivion (Chuma, 2004). MDC was a product of civil society, trade unions and student movements (Chuma, 2008). Since its emergence, the MDC threatened to send ZANU PF rule to political dustbins.

Due to this magnitude of threat to its hegemony, ZANU PF government turned to Christianity religion for political salvation and legitimacy. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009:70) argues that the 1990s radicalism by the ZANU PF government could be explained as the bedrock on which the MDC was formed with "its agenda being democratisation, human rights and good governance." Its support base consisted of disgruntled workers and tertiary students who wanted change from the ZANU PF-led government. The party was mostly popular in urban areas. The party had the agenda of a struggle for food, jobs, peace, dignity, decency and democracy (KuvakaZim, 2014) as well as justice, transparency and equality of all Zimbabweans. ZANU PF started facing extreme legitimacy challenges as MDC challenged their leadership and offered to change people's lives. Kalaora (2011:784) contends that this establishment was seriously "threatening the influence of R. Mugabe's ruling party". Since the birth of Zimbabwe, ZANU PF has been known as the ruling party. However, the year 2008 saw them for once failing to be the 'ruling party'. The MDC nearly won the 2008 election, winning more seats in parliament (96) than rivals ZANU PF (94) (*The Guardian*, 2 April 2008).

In fact, after a contested ballot counting process that took over two months election results were announced without a clear winner. The MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai reportedly won the first round, albeit failing to garner the required 50 plus one vote needed to be duly declared winner (Kobayashi, 2008). This stalemate resulted in a run-off, set for June 27 2008 that never happened. Tsvangirai withdrew from the race in the face of alleged violence, intimidation, on his supporters by ZANU PF militia and state security organs. This political crisis which also degenerated into an economic crisis culminated into formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) which included ZANU PF and MDC parties after the signing of the Global Political Agreement in September 2008. The GNU started operating in February 2009.

Since its formation, MDC has been challenging ZANU PF in the elections and has won several seats in parliament. For instance, in 2000 the MDC mobilised against the ZANU PF sponsored constitutional referendum, urging a successful 'No' vote and nearly won a closely contested 2000 parliamentary election with ZANU PF 62 and MDC 57 seats (Historical Archive, 2000).Elections of 2002 saw MDC-T's Tsvangirai losing to Mugabe with a thin margin (42.10 to 56.6%) in a disputed presidential vote (Registrar General of Elections, 2002).The MDC won 41 seats in 2005 and ZANU PF won 78 (Volan, 2005:18). This had never happened since 1980. Harmonised elections, a first of this kind, of voting for president, parliamentarians, senators and local governance in one day were held in the country in 2008. According to the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) 2013 report, harmonised elections are done for the Presidency, the National Assembly, the Senate and local authorities.

The harmonised elections failed to result in a ZANU PF victory. This development led to ZANUPF being reduced from the ruling party to the level of sharing power with the two MDC formations in a Government of National Unity (GNU). MDC had split votes in the elections (the party had split before elections) and one was MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai while the other was just MDC led by Arthur Mutambara. The party then started to vigorously work towards reinventing itself in a bid to counter the growing MDC hegemony as well as regain lost pride. It adopted the strategy of embracing church visitations among many others.

The period of the late 1990s also coincided with ZANU PF's chaotic land reform programme. Although the programme may have been a populist move aimed at keeping ZANU PF in power and/or redressing land inequities created by the colonial system, the exercise invited mixed reactions especially from the international community and the privately owned press in Zimbabwe (Hammar and Raftopolous, 2003; Mugari, 2010). Land reform prompted America to pass the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act S. 494 (ZIDERA) in 2001 and Britain to also flex her muscle putting Zimbabwe under sanctions. ZIDERA was the US Bill which compels the companies of that country not to conduct businesses with Zimbabwe. Hove (2012) writes extensively on the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe which included suspended structural adjustment loans, denial to accessing international loans and suspension of all forms of lending among others. The sanctions were imposed by the West which accused the Zimbabwean government of human rights violations. A hyper

inflationary environment, disputed elections, political violence, media polarisation among other challenges summed up a chaotic state of things presided over by ZANU PF. Smillie (2009) adds visible economic challenges and high levels of unemployment to these challenges. Chenga (2009) argues that this period also witnessed a severe decline in the quality of education as well as a sharp fall in the value of the Zimbabwean dollar.

Religion was appropriated into politics because of its popularity. Churches like Zion[2] and Johanne Masowe (Chitando et al., 2014) have become a permanent feature at ZANUPF functions such as the party's annual congress, the 21st February Movement,[3] burial of national heroes at the national shrine,[4] musical galas, among other state functions. They are also ever-present at Harare International Airport to send off or welcome the President whenever he travels or returns from abroad. Chitando, Gunda and Kuegler (2014:9) note "After 2000, African Initiated Churches (AIC) began to feature more prominently in national political gatherings, particularly at Independence festivities, or at the burial of heroes at the National Heroes Acre."

The AICs were established and are led by Africans. This brings out the kind of Christianity which was revolutionary in a political sense as the leaders who founded them had liberated themselves from the colonially founded mainline churches. "African Initiated Churches (AIC) are believed to have been established for the following reasons: to protest colonialism, to respond to poverty among the Black population, to respond to traditional African cultures, and to provide a somewhat positive response to modernity and modern religion."(Dodo, Banda and Dodo, 2014:3).

It was not only Mugabe but other leaders in Africa also turned to the church for support. At that time of the GNU, the President and Prime Minister seemed to be doing the same as the former South African President, Jacob Zuma, who spent time attending services at popular congregations such as Shembe and Universal Churches during his campaign for the presidency in 2008 (*Daily Maverick*, 9 October 2013). Mugabe used religion and churches as campaign tools as evidenced by Marlon Zakeyo (2015:13) who argues, "President Mugabe, his deputy Joice Mujuru and other

[2] Zion is one of the oldest African independent churches in Zimbabwe formed by Reverend Samuel Mutendi in 1913 (Daneel, 1971; Pindula, 2016).
[3] President Mugabe's annual birthday commemoration
[4] National Heroes Acre in Harare where liberation war heroes and heroines are interred.

politicians have also courted the support of grassroots African Initiated Churches such as the VaPostori." A pre-2008 government calendar showed Mugabe at a *sowe* (place of prayer) dressed in flowing white robes and holding a long walking stuff typical of the 'mapostori' sects. This suggests that donning these garments would enable him to give the impression to the vapostori congregants of being one of them. Mlambo (2013) wrote an article which quoted Johannes Ndanga, leader of AICs in Zimbabwe saying, "Mugabe is our King. Kings are not elected, they are installed by God so I urge you to register as voters and show the nation that as Vapostori we are very powerful." The sentiments raised by Ndanga seemed to suggest that registering to vote meant voting for ZANU PF. This may not necessarily be the case as people's votes are confidential. According to Ndanga, fraternising with these churches would therefore help raise the party's support base. It is not because religious people have no agency and would just blindly follow what they are told but it helped the party entrench itself with the electorate.

1.3 Study aim

The study examines how selected media as power sites portrayed the interface that existed between Christianity and political discourses during the Zimbabwean crisis from 2008 to 2013.

1.3.1 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study were to:

- Explore the relationship between Christian religion and party politics as espoused by the media.
- Examine how the media portrayed the way the ZANU PF party appropriated Christian religion to entrench its hold on power against the backdrop of waning support from the masses.

1.3.2 Research questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

- Which Christian discourses, according to some selected newspaper stories, were used by ZANU PF politicians from 2008-2013 to capture popular political imagination?
- How did the ZANU PF politicians use religious symbolism to win back their waning popularity in selected news stories?

1.4 Rationale

This study was carried out to demonstrate that ZANU PF's political discourse borrows heavily from biblical discourse. The post 2000 era was the focus of study as that was when the politics of the country drastically changed and the economy was very unstable. Chitando (2005; 2013) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2009) write extensively about politics and religion in Zimbabwe. This study's contribution to the existing body of literature is that the Zimbabwean political leadership's appeal to the electorate's religious consciousness is part of the way they are wooed. The study confirms that politics and religion are inseparable. Both are social institutions which work to serve the needs of society. Its potential power to influence explains why politicians incorporate religion in their functions in order to strengthen their legitimacy and sanitise their activities. All this brings out the marriage between religion and politics which cannot be ignored. Many scholars have written on the intersection of issues to do with religion, ideology, hegemony in Africa but there is little written on Zimbabwe. This study thus offers a valuable contribution to the literature.

1.5 Scope of study

This study explores the complex and intricate relationship between the media, Christian religion and politics in post-independent Zimbabwe. It is the responsibility of the media to bring politicians' campaign activities to the people. The focus of this thesis is on how this is done in relation to issues of the Christian religion. The study incorporates voices of politicians as well as religious leaders to clarify issues under discussion. Where relevant, reference is made to their direct quotes captured in newspaper articles as well as the framing done by the newspapers to get insight on arguments that can be raised. From the publicly owned stable, the newspapers utilised are *The Sunday Mail, The Herald, The Star, Chronicle, Sunday News* and *Manica Post*. The *Zimbabwe Independent, Financial Gazette, Daily News, NewsDay* and *The*

Standard are the newspapers from the privately owned newspapers. The newspapers which carried stories that dealt with Christianity and ZANU PF were all taken as part of the corpus. The study is limited to the period from 2008 when ZANU PF was forced to share power with the main opposition party, MDC, in a Government of National Unity to 2013 when the party regained its hegemony when it won general elections resoundingly.

1.6 Limitations

This study is on a single case study which means it cannot necessarily draw widely applicable conclusions. Mainstream media that have supplied the bulk of newspaper articles used in this study are either pro-ZANU PF or anti-ZANU PF, hence taking different stances in their reportage leading to them being so polarised to the extent of distorting the events through either overly praising or criticising political or religious leaders. It became a limitation as media polarisation was evident from how one event was reported differently from state controlled and privately owned media making it difficult to draw the line on what was represented in the media. If a story appeared in the two stables, one story was used to triangulate the other to arrive at a middle path.

1.7 Chapter outline

The chapters are organised as follows: Chapter 2 explores literature related to religion, politics and the media. It aims to bring up the gap in terms of what has been studied concerning religion, politics and the media. The theoretical and conceptual framework discusses concepts of discourse, ideology and hegemony. It also discusses the framing theory as the media framed religious and political stories.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methods and methodology of the study. Limits and strengths of the methods employed are also discussed.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are the research findings which are presented thematically. Chapter 4 presents and discusses on prophetic issues. It explores the Africanness and indigeneity of African Independent Churches so as to ground prophecy at the centre of politics. In this chapter the findings are threefold. The chapter explores how Mugabe is framed as a God-given leader, how prophecy was a strategy used to appeal for votes and how prophecy was used as an endorsement for political leadership.

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to show how the Christian religion was the breeding ground for the implementation of ZANU PF/Government policies. The chapter dwells on the importance of peace in the country so as to foster trust in government initiated policies. Unifying a fragmented Zimbabwe society through Christian discourse; church key in political stability; and peace breeds tolerance and acceptance are the key issues under discussion. What is pertinent in the chapter is how the policy of economic empowerment and indigenization was framed in relation to Christianity.

The final chapter on findings is on religion and land politics. It discusses the centrality of land in relation to Christianity in Zimbabwe. The analysis of newspapers focuses on how land is framed as a tool for self-reliance. The chapter explores the relationship between different forms of leadership and land. Lastly, the chapter seeks to establish how ZANU PF used the exercise of land reform in campaigning for Mugabe during elections.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis. A summary of findings is given as well as an evaluation of the study.

1.8 Conclusion

This introductory chapter has attempted to show the complex relationship that exists between Christian religions in particular and party politics. There has been a paradigm in how ZANU PF related to Christianity in the early years of independence to the crisis period under study. The origins of ZANU PF are given as well as highlighting the party's ideology to give insight into how the party operated during the crisis. The opposition party MDC has also been discussed as it is the only party that successfully threatened the ZANU PF hegemony since 1980.

Chapter 2: Literature review and conceptual framework

2.1 Introduction

In examining the interface between Christianity and political discourses, this chapter reviews literature falling under two broad categories namely: the media and politics as well as politics and religion. These two categories are further discussed under five sub themes namely spirituality in Zimbabwe; religion, politics and power; missionary press and colonial politics in Zimbabwe; operations of the media after independence; and the connection between religion and politics. The first theme entails how spirituality has been always at the centre of party politics. Both religion and politics as having influential power over the audience is the second theme. How the media operated during colonial times and the work of the missionary press is the focus of the third theme. The fourth theme discusses the centrality of media in religion and politics after political independence in Zimbabwe. The connection between religion and politics is traced to colonial Zimbabwe in the fifth theme. The chapter also discusses the conceptual framework that informs this study and this is twofold. First is the concept of framing and second part is divided into hegemony, ideology and discourse.

The relationship between religion and the media has been largely portrayed through the media although media and religion are regarded as “two different fields of inquiry” (White, 2000:3). Sometimes, these two fields are referred to as wide cultural gaps of misunderstanding (Hoover, 1997; Clark and Hoover, 1997 and Clark, 2004). This study therefore attempts to highlight the compatible relationship between the two and how the media present politics as closely linked to religious issues. It is the contention of this study that the Zimbabwe print media have portrayed how politicians have turned to the pulpit to justify their stay in power. Although the above-mentioned scholars refer to politics and religion as belonging to ‘different’ domains, this study argues that they may not be that different as both are about power and belief. The commonality reflects why politicians use religion to advance their cause when in crisis thereby confirming some undisputed marriage of convenience between religion and politics.

The study illustrates how politicians in modern day Zimbabwe have systematically appropriated and deployed Christian discourse in order to protect their hegemony. Presently, politics in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular is taken so seriously that people lose lives if found to belong to the ‘wrong’ party (Raftopoulos and Mlambo,

2009). All the fabrics of life (i.e. socio, economic and political) are affected in one way or the other by politics. The relationship between politics and Christianity has been quite complex from the time of colonisation to the post-colonial era and therefore needs unpacking particularly the post 2008 to present Zimbabwean epoch.

The relationship between the two became more vibrant due to the proliferation of a number of churches during the post 2000 era (Chitando, 2013; Togarasei, 2013). This era which was characterised by social, political and economic upheavals could fit into what Mugo (2014:1) explains, "…modern-day religion peddles hope in what many see as a hopeless world". The church became a beam of hope which motivated many people to follow it. However, it should be noted that the power of religion predates and outlasts specific political events. Because of the hope offered by the Christian ideology, churches attracted huge followings that turned to them for salvation from their deteriorating socioeconomic conditions. As such, they became hunting grounds for politicians who were in need of political votes (Chitando, 2012).

2.2 Literature review

The following sections look at documented critical areas surrounding politics, religion and the media. Literature review involves existing knowledge (Greenfield, 2002) and justifies why the research is necessary (Tuckman, 1994). This literature therefore helped me to discuss what has been covered in the triadic relationship of politics, religion and the media. It also enabled me to identify a gap and what this study can add to the existing body of knowledge. Above all, the literature was of great help in pointing out relevant techniques for collecting data (Schaefer, 2006).

2.2.1 Spirituality in Zimbabwe

Abundant literature on religion and politics in Africa show that African political parties resorted to religion during the struggle against colonialism (Clements, 1969; Ranger, 1985; Chitando, 2005; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011). For instance, in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), ZANU PF also reverted to religion and spirituality in an attempt to subvert colonialism (Ranger 1985; Moyo 2013).

All Sub-Saharan countries, Zimbabwe included, relate actively to a spiritual world (Harbitz, 1996). People seek spiritual explanations to their everyday experiences; be it from traditional religion or churches. In Zimbabwe, politics and religion (particularly

biblical prophecy) have been intricately intertwined from the colonial era to the post-colonial period. In the colonial era, biblical prophecy was appropriated by the African Initiated Churches to foretell the future as well as instilling hope to the oppressed black people.

ZANU PF as a party's involvement with issues of religion and spirituality predates the issues discussed in my findings. In Southern Rhodesia, the party worked together with spiritual leadership in this fight against colonialism. Spiritual leadership included spirit mediums. These were people through which ancestors communicated with the living. Harbitz (1996) notes that spirit mediums are real people who are used by spirits to voice advice to a family or community. These spirit mediums played a significant political role in the mobilisation of people during the struggle. Moyo (2013:342) notes:

> The first war of liberation in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodhesia) was led by Mbuya Nehanda, a spirit medium who was eventually hanged by the colonial regime. During the time of the second war of liberation, her mediums as well as other spirit mediums worked very closely with the freedom fighters by mobilizing the people and sanctioning the war.

This is reiterated by Ranger (1985) who notes that freedom fighters had discovered the futility of waging the war without the support of spirit mediums as the population who believed in the mediums believed that they would never be successful.

The spirit mediums were spiritual custodians of land and prime guardians of tradition (Harbitz, 1996). Makamure and Chimininge (2015:7) note that to the Zimbabwean people "land is sacred because it belongs to ancestors." The land was sanctified so it was therefore believed that ancestors looked after the land. In Zimbabwe, it is a belief that when someone dies his or her spirit comes back through someone to guide the living (Bourdillion, 1987). This is known as '*mudzimu*' (ancestral spirit) which is a family spirit and takes care of particular families. There are other spirits which are not confined to families but are known as guides for the land (*mhondoro*). These spirits are intermediaries between the living and the dead (Chavunduka, 1978).

To portray the significance of ancestral spirits to Zimbabweans, Vera (1994:27) notes, "The dead are not dead. They are always around us, protecting us. There is no living person who is stronger than the departed." Ancestral spirits communicate with the living through '*svikiro*' (spirit mediums). Moyo (1987) argues that in Zimbabwe, these are responsible for both good as well as misfortunes. While they could provide health

and wealth, the ancestral spirits could also bring diseases and misfortunes like plague and floods (Shoko, 2013). For example, *The Herald* (27 September, 2013) wrote, "It is the ancestors of this land of Munhumutapa, Lobengula, Mzilikazi, Mapondera, Nehanda and Kaguvi who were so infuriated to the point of turning and twisting in their graves with anger and disgust by the political circus that docked our country during the four years of the inclusive Government." Some legends from the first Chimurenga like Chaminuka and Nehanda are Shona spirit mediums. They are always quoted by ZANU PF which is spirit veneration (Bosman, undated) to legitimise the existence of the party and the reason why it should remain supreme.

Chitando (2005: 226) notes, "During the liberation struggle in the 1970s, ZANU PF nationalists had maintained that the war was a fulfilment of the spirit medium Nehanda's prophecy that her bones would rise and defeat the whites." ZANU PF and Mugabe are viewed as reincarnations of Nehanda (Mhiripiri, 2008). The quotation implied that even Nehanda, Kaguvi and Mukwati[5] were ZANU PF members which is a fallacy because how can a party formed in 1963 have been 'fighting since time immemorial' for land? Propaganda was at play here. Such statements are rarely fully analysed or criticised to get to the bottom of their actual or implied meaning. Quite often, such statements are taken at face value. Rather than looking at the bigger picture, focus is only concentrated on the visible. As a result ZANU PF has utilised this weakness and used the long dead but well remembered legends to build its political rhetoric.

Spirituality was practised by people in the choice of chiefs before and during colonial Rhodesia. Historically, Zimbabwean Kings like Nyatsimba Mutota, Mzilikazi and Lobengula ruled by divine right and were accepted by the ruled (Moyo, 2013). The belief was that God known as *Samasimba* (Almighty) was "not only the most powerful being, but also the source and owner of all power" (Moyo, 2013:337). This line of preaching is evident in African Initiated Churches, which are churches founded by Africans like Mwazha's African Apostolic Church[6], Johanne Masowe[7] of Masowe

[5]These are spirit mediums who were Zimbabwean ancestors who fought in the first Chimurenga and were caught and decapitated by the British.
[6]Paul Mwazha is the founder and leader of African Apostolic Church (1959) referred to as *Mutumwa* (messenger) by his followers or Mwazha weAfrica (Onward Christian, 2015).
[7]Johane Masowe or Shonhiwa Masedza is the founder of the Gospel of God Church (1931) popularly known as Johane Masowe Chishanu (Dillon-Malone, 1978)

eChishanu and others, who believe that leaders are put in power by God as He is all powerful. Lovemore Ndlovu in Chitando et al. (2014:57) notes that in Paul Mwazha's sect "men wear white tunics" and "all believers go barefoot at service and take off their shoes because the ground where worship takes place is seen as holy". The doctrines these churches follow are powerful and the leaders actively participate in these churches thus highlighting this spirituality.

The Apostolic movement in Zimbabwe comprises hundreds of Apostolic faiths (UNICEF, 2011) who are followers of apostles and regard themselves as spirit-driven (*chechi dzeMweya*) (Gregson et al., 1999) as their religious beliefs and practices are primarily based on '*mweya*' (spirit). The people who belong to these sects call themselves Vapostori, after the apostles of Jesus Christ. UNICEF (2011:3) note that the Holy Spirit that these faith-driven churches believe in "serve as the divine force that guides the church, and equips prophets and some church members with special prophetic and healing powers." According to UNICEF (2011:3), these sects attract a lot of followership "estimated to be over 2.5 million members" while Mlambo (2013) writes of 9 million congregants. The bare feet of a prime minister as well as the wearing of the Vapostori regalia by a head of state showed the extent to which politicians went in order for the church leaders and their followers to accept them. The representation by the media showed how political gurus had taken the fight for political supremacy to the pulpit. This suggests that Christianity has taken centre stage in political struggles.

Chitando (n.d.) argues that religion has always been at the site of the struggle. White missionaries who came to Zimbabwe in 1890 did not only bring religion but colonialism. From the days of colonisation, the imperialists were accused by the locals of carrying the Bible in one hand and the gun in the other (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2011; Jomo Kenyatta, 1952). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2011:94) notes that in colonial Rhodesia, "missionaries were not only harbingers of a new religion but were also carriers of Victorian values that were consonant with the imperatives of industrial capitalist culture" Politicians in both colonial times and post-independence have always wanted to identify with popular movements so as to make claim of the larger following thereof and win the "battle for minds of the people" a catch phrase of the 1950s and 1960s describing the struggle politicians fought on the battlefield of the mass media to win support of the masses (Clements, 1969; Parker, 1972:110).

During the liberation struggle, ZANU PF relied on African traditional religion for guidance on how to operate epitomised by the presence of traditional healers such as Rekai Tangwena and spirit mediums among their ranks (Bhebe and Ranger, 1995). These people were believed to protect the freedom fighters from the Smith soldiers as well as provide them with food and information about the whereabouts of soldiers. Chung (2006:82) points out that an army of freedom fighters from ZANU who were called ZANLA forces "claimed to have the support of the ancestral spirits, in particular the powerful spirits of Nehanda and Kaguvi". Nehanda and Kaguvi had participated in the first Chimurenga and were murdered by the Smith regime. They then participated in the second Chimurenga as spirit mediums. Chung goes further to say "the liberation struggle saw a revitalisation of traditional religion" (2006:82).

According to Ndlovu-Gastheni (2011:94), Christianity is "symbolic and economic" as well as "theological and political". It is after the coming of this Christian civilisation that some scholars write of a shift from spirit mediums to Christianity (McLaughlin, 1995). Bhebe and Ranger 1995:13) note:

> The perception by some guerrilla elites of the strength of popular Christianity caused them to take up Christianity idioms in order to mobilize support. In areas where the brokers of popular religion were Christian, guerrillas were forced to seek legitimacy from priests and Black pastors rather than spirit mediums.

This shows how politicians embraced the Christian religion to further their cause. After independence, the church was also used by the new government to reconcile people to the new political dispensation. Chitando (n.d.) confirms this when he posits, "It would be folly to marginalise religious perspectives from the discourse of peace, development and reconstruction in Zimbabwe for religion was very much part and parcel of the struggle that facilitated the emergence of the Zimbabwean nation." Although during colonialism ZANU PF seemed to disapprove of Christian religion as a foreign import (Bhebe and Ranger, 1995; Chung, 2006), the church was used to canvass for support and legitimate the revolutionaries during the crisis (Ndlovu-Gastheni, 2009; Chitando, 2013).

To black Zimbabweans, during the colonial era politics was a preserve of the whites and black people resorted to religion as a panacea to their oppression. Likewise, biblical prophecy and messages have also been employed in post-colonial Zimbabwe

particularly during the politico-economic crises period of 2008 to 2013 to provide answers and solutions to a myriad of problems as well as justifying the ruling party's (ZANU PF) hold onto power. Biblical and prophetic messages became part of the strategies used by party politicians to woo the electorate.

Desperation emanating from the economic, social and political turmoil in the country by both citizens and politicians led them to seek answers from the supernatural world particularly the Christian religion. Traditionally, in difficult times people consult soothsayers to get an explanation of what is happening in their lives (Shoko, 2007). However, Chavunduka (1994) suggests a paradigm shift as a result of the degradation placed on the consultation of traditional diviners by missionaries. This led people to shift from soothsayers and diviners to prophecy. In this modern day "the desire to get divine guidance continues," (Biri and Togarasei, 2013:81).

Biri and Togarasei (2013:79) aver that over 80% of Zimbabweans profess to be Christians, hence, the popularity of prophets during the crisis years as people sought guidance and explanations. Chitando, Gunda and Kugler (2013:10) state that most Christians in Zimbabwe believe in the Bible which is "one of Zimbabwe's most popular texts". They further note, "Its value can be seen in how some people swear by it in ordinary conversation; '*Bhaibheri kudai!*' (I swear by the Bible!)" During these politically turbulent times people turned to the church. Chitando et al. (2013:10) go on to state, "When the Bible speaks, Zimbabwean Christians listen intently." There were similarities between the prevailing crisis and the Israelites in exile in Babylon where prophets like Jeremiah spoke about God's plans (Jeremiah 29:11). Vengeyi (2013:34) argues, "…most of the great prophets of Israel always connected their predictions of doom and gloom with hope and chance to repentance. They always wanted people to repent so as to avoid consequences which they predicted." This prophecy instilled hope in Israelites just as much as it was instilling hope in Zimbabweans. Christianity helped people understand their predicaments as biblical explanations and assurances were given through prophecy. This relationship is described by Grzymala-Busse (2012:412) as mutual in that "religion influences political attitudes and institutions, and politics affects religious practice and political activity."

Of interest to the study is the way the prophetic messages in relation to party politics were presented during the crisis. This is the era in which some church leaders gained

popularity as they used prophecy to endorse the political leadership. However, some resisted the urge to be seen to be political and as a result were castigated by ZANUPF as purveyors of western ideologies. Even churches became polarised or divided as they (because of the prophecy they pushed) seemed to belong to different political camps.

This literature is critical as it examines intersections of African political parties and religion in colonial and post-colonial times. However, studies on African parties or movements and religion in modern times are scarce. It is also critical to note that this literature shows ZANU PF resorting to religion when they were still an underdog attempting to subvert the status quo. This research becomes critical as it examines ZANU PF in contemporary times as a ruling African party facing opposition and resistance. It is critical to explore how it deploys Christianity, the most popular religion to save a waning hegemony.

2.2.2 Religion, politics and power

People's way of thinking or attitude and behaviour is greatly influenced by how they were socialised. These can be changed by religion and politics as both are socialisation aspects of people (Leasteam, 2005). This potential characteristic of religion to influence people is what gives power to religion. The malleable nature of religion is discussed using ideas from different scholars including Ezra Chitando, Shagor, Andrew Heywood and Karl Marx. The study borrows from Marxian ideas.

Chitando (2013:vii) points out that both religion and politics are "fundamental systems of survival". Religion is also "a faith based activity" (Nyabuezwe, 2009:247), thus the power of religion is not physical but mythical, spiritual or grounded in supernatural beliefs. It is invisible power (Heywood, 1994) but can be effective. It plays on the minds of people. Fear of what is not physical, that is the unknown, sacred or supernatural renders power to religion. Redekop (1967:150) notes, "Religion or faith-based organisations pose a threat to politicians because it appeals to the deepest and most profound of human passions in the process of creating its institutions, something which the state can never do.", thus indicating that religion is more powerful than politics. Chimuka (2013:20) refers to Finney (1978) and Levin (1979) who both concur that

these “animated passions animate believers into a formidable force capable of doing anything.” The phrase ‘formidable force’ describes the power of religion. Politicians are portrayed as people who are scared of the unity of purpose (intent or one accord) through which religious groups can wield power. This fear however can be turned into an advantage as people also fear the unknown and tend to abide by the rules of their religion. It is this power of religion that actually brings out the relationship between politics and religion.

Religion is deemed to thrive in times “of great social, economic and political disruption” (The Trumpet, 2001:1). When people are in a state of hopelessness as the situation was during the Zimbabwean political and economic crisis, they turn to religion for salvation. Gifford (2001:26) notes that religion “offers a reading of the world, of history, of society, of time, of space, of power, of authority, of justice and of ultimate truth.” This also portrays the power of religion as some spheres of life can be explained through it. The value put in the role of religion in explaining these spheres portrays the power of religion. In as much as religion has power, politics also has power.

On one hand Lawrence Falkowski (1996:1) implies that politics the “authoritative allocation of value” while on the other hand Ellis and ter Haar (1998:178) point out that it is concerned with “the distribution of power”. The politically muscled or those who have political power assume the power of dictating how society moves. The power of religion is in its ability to explain a lot about life and after life and many people turn to it when confronted with challenges; politics fulfils people’s physical or material needs through allocation of resources thereby giving it power. Both religion and politics wield power. Casanova (2001:424) notes that both religion and politics are “territorially oriented and monopolistic, one over the means of salvation, the other over the means of power.” This is confirmed by Chitando (2013:vii) who notes, “Religion is a system of survival that tends to place emphasis on external (non-human) support to thrive, while politics is a system of survival that tends to emphasise personal calculations and human support to access or retain power.” However, to some extent, churches often get human support from the state and donors among others and seeking personal benefits can be used by religious groups while politicians also allow spiritual support. In both religion and politics there is power (spiritual and physical respectively) and one can be utilised to maintain the other. They can be dependent on each other for enforcement and legitimation purposes (Casanova et al, 2001).

Religion has power to give moral support as well as counselling to followers. It also helps to mould and make people accept their situation without complaint because of their beliefs and doctrines. Marx was of the belief that religion is the opium of the people as they get solace and comfort from it spiritually but suffer physically. McKinnon (2005:1-2) quote Marx (1844) in his critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, stating "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people." (Also see Shagor, 2010; Mannis, 2012) An opium serves to numb or stupefy. The implication is that although religion influences societal operations, it negatively impacts on people.

Marx was against religion and dismissed it as it was used by the ruling class then to manipulate people into being docile and satisfied with the life they led. This was just an assumption as resistance movements by the working class proved that they were not happy with the system. To Marx religion provided people with artificial happiness which was illusory (Shagor, 2010). The reality around people of hopelessness can make people turn to religion. According to Mugo (2014:85) "During economic strain there are certain things that people can do without and certain things they cannot and whatever the church is selling, people are buying." The church offers ideological services meant to appeal to the soul. The Biblical allusion of people suffering on earth in order to be rewarded in heaven makes people have hope that their situation is not dire as long as there is a God above who would eventually free them from their problems. Christianity in a way numbs the pain of accepting reality in its raw form (Blau, 2013).

Ramirez quoted in Valle (1992) argues that the most subtle form of dominance is that of the mind. Once people are convinced by their church doctrine, it is hard (although not impossible) to change them. Cline (n.d.) further notes that "The religious world is but the reflex of the real world." What is happening in church is reflective of what is happening in the world and so can be explained by the bible. The implication in this case is that religion provides solace to distressed people socially and politically. Religion is like an addictive and soothing drug (opium) which does not heal but just dulls the pain. Socially, people accept their situation and pin their hopes on the imaginary future where there is no pain (after death).

Although Marx criticised religion, he was “not without sympathy: people are in distress and religion provides solace, just as people who are physically injured receive relief from opiate-based drugs” (Shagor, 2010:1). These drugs may not heal the wound but help ease the pain and allow the wounded to adjust and accept his/her fate. Although religion can be used to manipulate people, it was accepted as people embraced it as a solution to their problems. Religion was used by elites or dominant/ruling class for purposes of manipulating the proletariat (that is, the subordinates) who were poor (Shagor, 2010). Marx looked at religion from two strands: “1. Religion as an illusory protest, whispering false hopes and eternal forgetfulness against the actual and exploited conditions of life, and 2. Religion as ideology, where religion distorts and masks the socio-economic reality of the world” (Shagor, 2010:7). Distortion and masking reality renders religion temporary power as it does not offer permanent solutions to real life challenges. It means that religion can be used to explain a situation so that people accept it as it is written in the bible.

Politically, this study speculates that the consequences of religion are that it can lull people into subservience so that they accept their leaders as God-given or natural, therefore, should be supported rather than opposed. However, the study acknowledges that religion can be used as ammunition for resistance. Heywood (1994:100) writes of the “third face of power” or invisible power” which is rooted in how the dominant class uses the pervasive power of ideology together with values and beliefs “in reproducing class relations and concealing class relations” so as to win over people. The dominant class then rules by common consent. This idea of rule by common consent is in line with Gramsci (2000) who argues that cultural hegemony is about how the dominant group in society wield power over their subordinates. They do it in a way that makes their way seem natural or common sensical. The politicians from the ruling party have power to use different communication tools to express and explain their policies unlike those from opposition parties. As a result, people get exposed to the campaign of one party and it may appear natural to support such a party.

Austin Cline (2017:1) makes an analysis of Karl Marx, religion and economics, noting:

> According to Marx, religion is an expression of material realities and economic injustice. Thus, problems in religion are ultimately problems in society. Religion is not the disease, but merely

> a symptom. It is used by oppressors to make people feel better about the distress they experience due to being poor and exploited.

Social effects of religion can be understood differently in different contexts. Illusory fantasies and happiness are created by religion so that people are less critical of the reality. Manyonganise and Museka (2015:139) also bring out the interface between religion and politics in Zimbabwe when they note "…due to the turbulent economic and political situation, the country became a nation of churches and prayerful citizens…Through prayer, the defenceless members of society implored God to intercede since the regime had failed." In this era, politicians and church leaders sought to pacify people through biblical and mythical explanations (Chitando, 2002) as the government had failed to correct political and economic upheavals in the country. The church claims to represent people and for example the Zimbabwe Council of Churches[8] (ZCC)'s mission states "As the custodians and facilitators of God's mission, we are obliged to 'stand up and proclaim' the will of God, whenever His people are faced with difficult situations that seem to deny them fullness of life (Luke 4: 18-19)" (Munemo and Nciizah, 2014:66). However, Marx's ideas that religion makes people less critical can be criticised as religious leaders have been known to actively fight and topple undemocratic governments. In South Africa, church leaders like Desmond Tutu fought against the apartheid regime and won. Gifford (1995:1) explains that in Kenya "the most articulate criticism of President Moi came from individual Anglican bishops and later from the National Council of Churches of Kenya". In Malawi, Catholic bishops started the opposition to President Banda's despotic rule. In Zambia, the transition to democracy involved the church among prominent local bodies (Gifford, 1995). Recently, Father Fidelis Mukonori negotiated with the former president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe to resign (BBC NEWS, 21 November 2017; CNN, 21 November 2017; *The Guardian*, 22 November 2017) after 37 years as Zimbabwe's leader. In whatever circumstance, the church has a role to play. The church leaders have power to fight for the people. The people's move to be prayerful also made political parties follow people to church because they thought it could give them power.

[8] An ecumenical institution representing various Christian church groups.

Religion can wield unquestioned power (McKinnon, 2005). Stoddart (2007:192) argues that there is need to question "why those who lack economic power consent to hierarchies of social power that privilege some while exploiting others." When people do not possess material wealth and are dependent on those who are economically powerful, they tend to conform to whatever limitations are set before them so that they benefit something. Even churches which depend on donor funds can be manipulated to support their sources of income or recognition. This explains a nature of religion which is dependent on material and economic bases of society; consequently, it can be taken advantage of in order to lull people into a consenting lot. Marx's perspective is based on religion as the ideology of false consciousness which implies people react by reflex action.

More so, according to Cline (n.d.), "religion does not fix the underlying causes of people's pain and suffering – instead, it helps them forget why they are suffering and causes them to look forward to an imaginary future when the pain will cease instead of working to change circumstances now". Religion has the power to keep people quiet in terrible situations which is an advantage to the oppressors. Although the Marxian perspective is based on the fact that religion is bad for the proletariat, the oppressed who are not in open revolution seem to have 'spiritual' satisfaction through either supporting or praying for their oppressors or doing both. This however does not necessarily mean the proletariat are not aware of the existence of inequality. In as much as religion can be used to maintain the status quo and social transformation, it can also be used to challenge power. Grassie (2011:4) postulates that religions "can also be one of the social institutions, which checks and limits Big Man rulers and tyrannical majorities. Religion, at its best, is always oppositional to the values and appetites of the many and the powerful." Although politicians can manipulate people through the use of religion, the same religion has the potential to resist the seemingly 'magical' effects imposed by the powerful political elites. The magical effects include recognition from the state, assistance in terms of property or land acquisition among other benefits which most of the time remain unfulfilled (Grassie, 2011). This suggests that religion is double-edged as it can be effective for both supporting as well as offering resistance to the rulers. However, Gifford (1995:5) contends that "In general it is the mainline churches that have challenged Africa's dictators". Mainline churches do not rely on the state for survival and hence can point out the weaknesses of the

dictators without fear of closure. However, because AICs were founded by indigenous leaders with the support of political leaders, this means that AICs may find it difficult to go against the ruling party in Zimbabwe as their existence is dependent on the government.

This is crucial to this study as the study attempts to demonstrate how politicians try to use religion to maintain the status quo through pacifying both church leaders and members and sometimes they succeed but sometimes find challenges as people become critical of this kind of religion. However, not in-keeping with the Marxian argument that is critical of religion, religion is malleable and can be used to resist hegemony. The malleability of religion is that while it can be used to express real suffering it can also be used as a protest measure against suffering. Religion can be subversive (Jensen, 2014; Cavey and Petersen, 2007). These are both positive and progressive possibilities of religion which divert from the Marxian argument; either way, religion has power.

The power of religion can be closely linked to politics. In defining politics, van Dijk (2000:31) says it "is a matter of verbal skills, management capacities and the art of negotiation". The power of politics is vested in talking and organisation. This can incorporate religion to meet desired goals. Emilio Gentile (2006:79) argues:

> Politics over the past two centuries has often taken on the features of religion, claiming as its own the prerogative of defining the fundamental purpose and meaning of human life. Secular political entities such as the nation, the state, race, class, and the party became the focus of myths, rituals, and commandments and gradually became objects of faith, loyalty, and reverence.

This indicates how politics borrows from religion. It suggests that religious symbolism helps to explain and give meaning to human life. Religion has the power to make people have faith or remain loyal and respectful of political parties and politicians. Gentile (2006) further discusses the 'sacralisation of politics', thus showing how politics depend on things like religions on issues to do with faith, myths and symbols. This sacralised politics in a modern society is different from politicisation of religion as it may be democratic, in the form of a civil religion, or it may be totalitarian, in the form of a political religion (Gentile, 2006:79).

Religious power is subtle. Religion, like folktales, music rituals and other elements can be a hidden transcript of real-life situations. Scott (1997:12) states that religion "becomes part of a political struggle to establish a particular view of the world, one which challenges the conventions of the dominant common sense". Religion is an ideology taught to people and appeals to the mind. Religion helps people understand their environment and accept or deny their situation. Religion is not just a way of worship but it can play a complex role as it is used as a defining model of existence. This kind of thinking is what William Grassie (2011) explains when he notes that the best and the worst things that people decide to do are motivated by religion. Accepting and retaining political leaders is serious business in which the guidance from religious beliefs is important. Grassie (2011:4) further states that it is unfortunate that religion is easily harnessed by 'political chauvinism' because it is one of the social institutions that mark cultural and national identity.

The power of religion can also be portrayed in societal transformation. Religion may be used to measure societal development. Hence, the researcher considers the literature that discusses the role of religion as a marker and cause of social transformation. Gifford (2001:26) points out that religion can "legitimize new aspirations, new forms of organisation, new relations and a new social order." This suggests how key religion can be to social transformation. The ways in which different Christian groups in Zimbabwe accept or reject developmental policies clearly spell out how a society may be transformed. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

This section highlighted the power that can be wielded by religion in relation to political power. The power of religion can be both subversive and manipulative. Religion as an ideology as well as how it can be used through biblical discourse is explained in relation to politics in the conceptual framework. Religion as one institution that belongs to civic society, is "responsible for producing and disseminating hegemonic power" (Gramsci, 1994:91). Religion is double-edged as it can be used to manipulate as well as to resist manipulation. In one way or the other, there is power in religion.

2.2.3 Missionary press and colonial politics in Zimbabwe

It is not only spirituality that changed from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe but also the operations of the media. Besides religion playing a pivotal role in society, there is the media who are disseminators of both religious and political information. The press are

crucial to society as they are there to inform, educate and entertain. They keep the nation up-to-date in terms of information. According to Max Weber, media content is a means of monitoring "the cultural temperature of society" (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold, 1998:92). Windrich (1980) exposes how the media are crucial in the curtailment of democracy. Zaffiro (2002) on media and democratisation discusses how different regimes since the 1930s used the media to rule the country. This is because the press brings in news and is a platform for disseminating information. However, Gramsci (1996:53) notes, "The press is the most dynamic part of ideological structure, but not the only one." This section discusses the role of the media and missionary press in colonial politics in Zimbabwe, then Southern Rhodesia.

Colonial media was not really indicative of mass opinion as they paid no attention to African issues and these were the majority. Todd (1982) and Frederiske (1982) discuss the performance of the media in the country from colonial Rhodesia to independent Zimbabwe. The operations of the media from the colonial era to independence were as volatile as the country's economic and political landscape. In Rhodesia, especially during the Unilateral Declaration of Independence[9] (UDI) period (1965 to 1979) the media, particularly radio and television were state controlled. They operated more like mouthpieces of the Rhodesia Front (RF), the ruling party at the time. Press Reference (n.d.) notes, "The media in Rhodesia catered to the needs of white settlers by ignoring news of interest to the African majority." These media channels carried RF propaganda that negatively portrayed the nationalists as communists whose economic policies would ruin private enterprises if they took over the reigns of government. Whereas the hopes and aspirations of the African people were never published by the media then, news about crime by blacks received prominent coverage (Good, 1973). Mukasa (2003:172) explains that the stories that were published about Africans were "largely, if not exclusively, negative and demeaning." On the other hand, the press during that period while predominantly privately owned, was entirely in white hands (Rusike, 1990). In those years Rhodesian whites considered the prospects of a black government as most unacceptable. Therefore, the editorials of the press almost always had a slant in favour of the ruling party policies and propaganda, thus, published negative reports about the nationalists,

[9]This was when Ian Smith severed links of Rhodesia with the British Crown and declared itself independent with a few white men with political and economic power running the country (Jakobsen, 2012).

especially that they were communists, terrorists, murderers (Parker, 2006) and rapists as well as violations of every human right. Dzimbanhete (2013:3) note:

> Newspapers and magazines…….were awash with reports on the glowing and successful military successes of the Rhodesian army forces. These reports compiled by white Rhodesian journalists exaggerated the numbers of liberation fighters that were killed in encounters between the warring parties and also understated the figures of the Rhodesian soldiers who died in the same encounters. The hope was that the black population of Rhodesia, especially those who resided in the rural areas, would realise that it was futile to back a losing side.

This showed how the print media were used during the colonial era to denigrate enemies of the state.

During the colonial era, Mukasa (2003) notes that whereas the culture and politics of Africans was denigrated, the press promoted the European culture. The press during the Smith regime made use of smear campaigns to sway people from voting for Robert Mugabe as he was regarded as a Communist unlike Joshua Nkomo, a capitalist. Baxter (2014:61) notes:

> One of a number of exceedingly unpalatable aspects of Operation Hectic involved a smear campaign against Mugabe and ZANU, with attempts to blow up churches in and around Salisbury for the purpose of blaming guerrilla elements and their atavistic, anti-Christian-Marxist ideological leanings."

Operation Hectic was done by the military to force churches to conform and support the regime rather than the nationalists. In the same vein *the African Times* of 17 November 1976 carried an article with the headline "Mugabe: an evil influence" based on Geneva where the talks to end the war were held which in part read "Of all the nationalists at Geneva, Mr Mugabe is the most extreme and war-like." This painted a picture of Mugabe as a violent and dangerous man who had bad influence on the other nationalists. The nationalists' leadership, especially Robert Mugabe, were portrayed as bad influence in the sense that they represented the communist approach to the arrangement of the economy and society in general. Communism was perceived by the Western democracies in those years as representing the worst form of a government in any country. Robert Mugabe was considered to be the strongest and most eloquent proponent of the nationalist cause (Parker, 1973). Mugabe was referred to as the black Hitler (Frederiske 1982; Moyo 1996: vii). This portrayal of Mugabe showed characteristics of violence and danger.

The press has (to a certain extent) the power to make or destroy a profile by insinuating who is fit to rule or not. The power of the press is in framing (see conceptual framework). However, the power of the press was diluted by the fact that Mugabe went on to win the 1980 elections despite the negative reportage showing that it is not a foregone conclusion that when the media speak people listen and acquiesce. People are not agency-less voters who are easily manipulated by the adoption of Christian discourse and imagery. The bad publicity may help people to scrutinise the profile and see beyond the reportage. Bad publicity does not always translate to audiences shunning or hating the profile as depicted by the media. Instead this may draw the attention of the readers.

The reportage made by the media during the colonial era portrayed them as sites of contestation (Mazango, 2005). Religion can also be a site for manipulation through indoctrination. However, religion can also serve as resistance (Bhebe and Ranger, 1995) not just manipulation. Mukasa (1990) indicates that in this era the press mirrored the settler-colonial ideology of the state and social polarisation along racial lines. Mukasa (1990:172) adds that during the colonial era a type of press emerged which included the *Rhodesia Herald* and the Bulawayo-based *Chronicle* which was "clearly aligned with the ideology and interests of the white ruling elite in Rhodesia". The press positively represented the white regime. "The journalistic ethos of the time was to promote European cultural standards while denigrating African culture and political agitation as the nemesis of western civilisation and Christianity" (Mukasa, 2003:172).

Stories about Africans were largely, if not entirely, negative and demeaning. This led to Windrich (1981:68) postulating that, "a multitude of sins of omission or commission could be concealed" during that era. Windrich's assertion indicates that instead of exposing the ills of the ruling government, the media supported its corruption and lack of transparency which in a way aided the ruling party to remain in power. McChesney (2000) contends that political economy affects production and distribution of media content. Political economy refers to ownership and control patterns of a media organisation. Besides ownership and control, coverage of news and the producer's mind-set is influenced by a wider ideological climate (MacGregor, 1997). The government (media regulation) as well as media owners (editorial policy) largely influence these aspects.

In Rhodesia, the colonial government used the strategy of suppressing unwanted information in the media but the church press helped to overcome this through publications like *Moto* (Catholic) and *Umbowo* (Methodist). These published counter messages to the state media. While the mainstream press of the era demonised African nationalist leaders in the then Southern Africa, the 'alternative' press especially the missionary press provided a podium for the subaltern identities (Touwen, 2011; Magaqa, 2009; also see Chapter 1). The missionary press went political and this helped people get a platform to criticise the government which they could not do in the mainstream media as well as express views that were different from those known political leaders among others. Again, the nationalists had their own press. Mukasa (2003:173) explains, "The nationalist movements, Zimbabwe African Nationalist Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) each had its own publications based outside Rhodesia." According to Mukasa (2003:173), both the church and nationalist presses grew as a "reaction to the injustice, racism and exploitation that characterised settler colonialism."

Engaging with this literature is crucial as it examines the role of the press during the colonial era in Zimbabwe. It helps draw parallels with how the press operated in the crisis era. Again the literature on how the missionary press came in to counter the state controlled press provides interesting lenses through which to view operations of the privately owned press.

2.2.4 Operations of the media after independence

The media in Zimbabwe can best be explained by looking at the media in general. Blumler and Gurevitch (2000) note that the media are at the centre of political contestations. Chitando (2005:220–1) explains that ZANU-PF nationalists, like their predecessors wanted to harness the media "as popular discontent threatened the nationalists grip on power." Sanson et al. (2000:9) opine that "The media play an indispensable role in modern life, providing information, education and entertainment." It has been asserted that the media in their holistic form are the conduits between the governors and the governed (Habermas, 1962, 1989; Fraser, 1991; Chuma, 2005).

In Habermasian terms, the press can aptly be described as a public sphere (Habermas, 1962) although this may be disputed. Habermas (1962:230) argues, “The public sphere is the arena where citizens and citizen based associations discuss state authorities, political accountability and representation.” The discursive arena is where important issues of the day (especially of a political nature) are debated. In the eighteenth century, middle class white men met in coffee shops and salons to discuss pertinent societal issues; when newspapers came in they enhanced this public sphere as sources of topical issues. Now, these newspapers are somewhat public spheres as everyone can participate in debates. However, the question of inclusion and exclusion arises as anyone who is not literate is automatically excluded. Habermas (1962) goes on to argue that the media are expected to be a forum for public debate where the generality of the populace are availed a platform where they could articulate their opinions without fear. According to Habermas (1989:82–3), “public debate was supposed to transform *voluntas* [the will of one or many] into a ratio [rationale-universal] that in the public competition of private arguments came into being as the consensus about what was practically necessary in the interest of all.” Although the media in this case assume the role of ‘market place of ideas’ the will of ZANU PF was being pushed into a universal debate. Although the public sphere concept has gone through many contestations, it enables one to understand how the print media in Zimbabwe operate and whether they allow voices of readers to be heard or not and why. It does this through framing.

Grisprud (2002) argues of the seizure of the same public sphere by political and economic interests. The media are then reduced to instruments of manipulation by those who wield both political and economic power. This is explained by Muchena (2013:67) who notes, “Although the ruling elite have always claimed the media to be neutral, those in power in Rhodesia and now Zimbabwe used the media as a weapon to manipulate and politically control those under them.” Mutsvairo (2016) writes of how *The Herald* is used by ZANU PF as its mouthpiece. This scenario could be described as the ‘refuedalisation’ of the public sphere which results from the intrusion of market forces (Habermas, 1998). These market forces are both economic and political. Blumler and Gurevitch (2000) postulate that the media have become the dominant arena for political contestations.

The media as conduits of communication are crucial to any sitting government. Ideally, the media should be the fourth estate where they keep checks and balances on the executive, legislature and judiciary (Saunders, 1999; Hondora, 2003; MISA, 2010). They are supposed to be the watchdog rather than be 'lapdogs' of the government thereby implying that the media have the potential to make or break a government through their reportage. Edmund Burke coined the term 'fourth estate' in the late eighteenth century in England to describe the "press' role in being a 'watchdog' that will control the government" (Ibrahim, 2007:136). However, the media are expected to work under the realm of authority (Siebert et al, 1956) which is a weak analysis as argued by Hallin and Mancini (2004:2) who try to address the question raised by Siebert et al, "Why are the media as they are?" Hallin and Mancini (2004:8) note:

> We will argue that one cannot understand the news media without understanding the nature of the state, the system of political parties, the pattern of relations between economic and political interests, and the development of civil society, among other elements of social structure.

Hallin and Mancini differ from Siebert et al who focused on the ideologies or philosophies of the press and regarded the media as being dependent on the system of social control which they represented or reflected. These scholars argue that the press have the ability to make their own impact on other social structures. They talk of media systems as not homogenous and McQuail (1994:133) concurs, "In most countries, the media do not constitute any single 'system' with a single purpose or philosophy." In Zimbabwe, the press are not a single structure but fall under the state controlled and privately owned stables hence the way they represent the ZANU PF-church relationship is different. The differences are a result of ownership and control patterns. The researcher contends with Hallin and Mancini (2004) when they argue that media institutions evolve over time and their evolution put together with what they inherited goes on to determine the reflections they make at particular times. The operations of the press in colonial Rhodesia has some influence on the direction taken by the current press (Gastheni-Ndhlovu, 2009; Moyo, 2004; Moyo, 2010).

What transpired in Rhodesia in terms of media reportage also happened in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean context is where the public media are state controlled and fall directly under the Ministry of Media, Information and Broadcasting Services currently headed by Christopher Mushohwe. The state controlled media

therefore take a slant in their reportage which is favourable to the state. Mutsvairo (2016:157) using the case of *The Herald* argues that ownership structure of the newspaper "presumably forces editors to pointedly paint a positive picture on stories involving ZANU PF officials even when unprejudiced scrutiny is needed". Mukasa (1990:172) notes that this "blatant control of the press is a defining characteristic of the legacy of colonialism in the post-colonial state in Africa." This is also applicable to the era under study (2008-2013) as the media were used to justify or explain some actions done by politicians to religious groups. The press in the post-colonial transitional era depicted the revolutionary fervour of the emergent black political regime whose stated ideology of socialism regimented Zimbabweans under an authoritarian state.

The media as hegemonic struggle sites increased in the Zimbabwean crisis since 2000, when ZANU-PF's hold on the masses through discourses of nationalism and anti-racism waned and it began to face stiff competition from the opposition. Kevin Williams (2003: 150) posits that the media "do not simply reproduce the views and beliefs of the ruling class but are crucial sites for struggle between competing ideas and beliefs, between rival worldviews and ideologies." It is against this backdrop that this project seeks to interrogate how the media represented ideologies of the ruling class through both publicly owned (but state controlled) and privately owned printed information. Media representations of political and Christianity discourses were analysed to determine how they were used to appeal and hegemonise people into believing these ideologies again for the legitimation of political elites. This move to engage the church by party politicians clarifies the relationship between state, party politics and religion during the crisis years in relation to the broader issues of democratisation. These issues include elections and government policies on land redistribution and economic empowerment.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) discuss political parallelism that is when religious organisations in their sermons include advocacy in support of particular political figureheads or parties. Instead of being apolitical, some church organisations claim to be supportive of some politicians or political parties (see findings chapters). One of the five indicators which measure political parallelism is organisational connections between the media and political organisations.

Another role of the media applicable to Zimbabwe is to augment government's developmental policies as implied by media development theory (McQuail, 1984). This is taken into consideration when analysing articles dealing with developmental issues like education, small scale businesses among others which ZANU PF politicians advocated for in their policies when addressing churches (Chapter 5).

The representation of reality through the media or press is greatly influenced by the state (Curran and Gurevitch, 1997). The state is responsible for the enactment of laws that regulate the operations of the media (Saunders, 1999; Hondora, 2002; Chakaodza, 2003). The regulation of the media is indicative of their significance to society. It is the realisation of this significance that the Zimbabwe government exercise its power in the media. This was adopted after the ZANU PF government got into power. This was done through enforcing media regulations that force the media to conform in order to remain viable or survive against market forces (Saunders, 2003). This has seen the enactments of laws by the Mugabe led government in 2002 such as Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) and Official Secrets Act (OSA) among others. These in one way or the other restrict the operations of the press. The acts criminalised reportage that was "likely to cause alarm, fear or despondency among readers" (Harold, 1983: 211) as well as put the head of state's name into disrepute. However, publicly owned media seemed to have more freedom of expression than those from the private stable (Hondora, 2002). Muchena (2013:67) adds that these laws "instead of improving the situation, compound the freedom of expression dilemma." In Zimbabwe this contributed to the polarisation of the media where the government controlled media are pro-ZANU PF and the privately owned media are critical of the government. Dissenting voices are never covered in the state controlled media (Muchena, 2013).

The post independent Zimbabwe saw the transfer of ownership of the privately owned press to the ZANU PF government (Moyo, 1996; Mukasa, 2003; Muchena, 2013). The editorial policy also changed and the views and perceptions of the new owners were then projected in their reportage. The then president received positive coverage from the state controlled media. The nationalists were now being referred to as 'gallant' heroes who liberated the country from the shackles of colonialism. Throughout the 1990s after the unity accord between ZANU PF and ZAPU, the private media that

reported negatively faced closure (Hondora, 2002; Saunders, 2003). In the post 2000 era the media then played a role in negatively framing the operations of the main opposition party (MDC) in the country. In Zimbabwe, the opposition political parties are regarded as enemies of the state who work with foreigners to topple the sitting government. Mutsvairo (2016:157) avers that "anything that seeks to dehumanise, discredit or demonize the opposition attracts instant attention and is decidedly disseminated at whatever cost." Chitando (2005) notes that MDC was referred to as a puppet of the West. Chitando (2005:223) explains the puppet issue by saying that the public media "projected the MDC and other civil society groups as British puppets who wanted to reverse the gains of the revolution." This name calling captured and publicised by the media suggested the re-emergence of colonisation and its traumas (Chitando, 2005). It suggested that by supporting MDC people would be advocating for the return of whites. It also suggested that MDC was not an autonomous political party but was there to propagate the ideologies of Zimbabwe's former colonisers. In a way the MDC were presented through the media to be advocating for the recolonisation of the country.

Chitando (2005) further states that the ZANU PF party which over the years was always known as a revolutionary party resumed with vigour to call itself the nationalist or revolutionary party bringing in a 'new' meaning which was reminiscent of the liberation struggle that freed Zimbabweans from the colonialists. This was captured in all the state controlled media. To secure a political future, ZANU-PF employed memories of the struggle (Ranger, 2005; Waldahl, 2005 and Chuma, 2008) like Nehanda's claim in the first Chimurenga that her bones would rise. Nehanda (as explained in Chapter 1) is regarded as a legend who vowed to continue fighting spiritually after she was murdered by the Smith regime.

The above cited studies adequately address the role of the media in society. They also bring out the complexity of the relationship that existed between the press and democracy in Zimbabwe before and post-independence. The above studies have clearly demonstrated that the media are the nerve centre in the quest for democracy as both the colonial and ZANU PF governments made all efforts to control them. Denying people press freedom in a way is denying them democracy. In the post-colonial times in Zimbabwe the government also continue trying to manipulate and control the media for their benefit.

Studies exploring the interface between political discourse and Christianity in contemporary Zimbabwe particularly during the crisis period have been few and far between (Chitando, 2005, 2009, 2013; Chimuka, 2013; Togarasei, 2013). A gap thus remains. The section looked at the operations of the media in society in general and tried to link it to how the media in Zimbabwe operated after independence.

Polarisation of the media in the context of political parties is where media organisations take partisan positions in their reportage. Bias towards a certain party or candidate is evident in the reportage leading to different newspaper organisations covering the same event from different standpoints. With polarisation of the media in mind, it is pertinent to analyse how the print media in Zimbabwe operate from different stances as Nyathi (2005:29) argues that the media are "purveyors and shapers of opinion". This research used both publicly owned but state controlled media as well as privately owned media because of the effects of polarisation. These media houses provide counter narratives.

The first Minister of Information, Post and Telecommunications in the 1980s, Dr Nathan Shamuyarira, declared, "Government remains committed to the freedom of the press as stated in its election manifesto. We will neither publish nor edit any newspapers" (Nyahunzvi, 2001:15). This declaration was meant to give the press freedom of expression. However, strict media regulation in the country forced the media houses to either toe the line or defy it hence polarisation. Nyamnjoh (2005:40) contends that restrictions on administrative control and censorship hampered the press from thriving in Anglophone Africa. Polarisation is therefore not peculiar to Zimbabwe. Moyo (2010) notes the existence of positional and unbalanced reporting of Zimbabwe's crisis which results in the reportage being "propagandistic, boring, uninformative and predictable" (Dombo, 2014:16). The way religious stories were reported differed depending on whether the media organisation was pro or anti government. This research mainly used stories from the public print media and a few from the privately owned media to analyse and compare, where necessary, the different positions taken by different media houses.

2.2.5. The connections between Christianity and politics

Christianity has played a crucial role in paving way for colonial domination in Africa (Clements, 1969; Mazikana and Johnson, 1984; Ward, 1984; Thomas, 1985;

McLaughlin, 1996; Binsbergen, 1999). The coming in of Christianity heralded the coming in of colonialism. Some colonialists who advocated for missionary work and were not really part of the colonial civilising mission were in between the colonialists and the colonised so they had to choose sides (Daneel, 1987; Gifford, 1988). On one hand, colonialists wanted missionaries to propagate their ideologies in their teachings and sermons. On the other hand, the colonised may have believed in the gospel of Christianity brought by the missionaries as indicated by the shift from traditional religion (Daneel, 1987) through repentance to the new religion and baptism. This placed the missionaries in a precarious position. As already alluded to in earlier themes, there is an interface between religion and political discourse which can be traced back to colonial Rhodesia.

Exploring how Christianity came to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) is important. This helps to contextualise this study. According to Ambrose Moyo (2013), religion permeates all aspects of life. Bolaji Idowu (1973) states that there is no specific date or period when Christianity came to Africa. Before the advent of Christianity, people in Zimbabwe had traditional beliefs that guided their way of life.

During the partition of Africa or scramble for Africa which started in the 1880s, missionaries came from all over the European countries to Africa to 'spread the word' (Binsbergen, 1999). Thomas (1985:113–133) states that colonialism came to Africa disguised as religion. Father Goncalo da Silveira led a group of Portuguese Jesuit missionaries from Mozambique in 1560 to the Mwenemutapa empire (now Zimbabwe) (Moyo, 2013:347) to preach the word and convert people to Christianity, as they were perceived as 'sinners'. Frank Clements (1969:48) notes:

> The missionaries were from the beginning much more than prophets, spreading the word of their God among the unenlightened and leaving it to the faithful to interpret the message in their own way. They sought to impose on the Africans the ethical behaviour which derived from their own Christian culture.

According to Kevin Ward (1984:19), "Missionaries supplied information to the colonialists which they utilized to plan how to effectively impose their colonial rule on how to crash the African resistance." In the pre-colonial era most people in Southern Rhodesia like in some other African countries believed in *Mwari* or their own gods or deities, as the source of all power, and in their ancestral spirits. In Rhodesia they

believed that Mwari was *Musikavanhu* which means creator of man. Robert Blake (1977) reports that the Shona people who lived between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers, worshipped the *Mwari* or *Mlimo* who resided in the Matopo Hills. The Ndebele, later arrivals to this region, were reported to have adopted *Mlimo* with his shrine in the Matopos as their god as well. People were bound together by their beliefs which were in sync with their norms and values. This helped the people to have a common way of life which identified them with their religion (Geertz, 1973; Padget, 1998). People given the status of prophets or who gave prophetic messages were held in high esteem. Although pre-colonial prophets are different from contemporary prophets and do not perform the same social function, their functionality and importance has been passed down from generation to generation. The contemporary prophets are the people who today claim to say what God is saying and who the media selectively quote to authenticate their biblical reports. They are then taken by society as opinion leaders.

Although missionaries had the purpose of converting people, they were also political and when they came to Africa, they got caught up in political issues in their endeavours. Moyo (2013:347) notes that, “The missionaries arrived in most countries before the colonialists and learned the language of the local people. They helped the colonialists negotiate and draft agreements that cheated African chiefs out of their land and its resources.” Learning the local language helped entrench the missionaries into the livelihoods of the local people. The church was therefore instrumental in the colonisation of Africa. Kenya is another country which was colonised by the British like Zimbabwe and to some extent, share the history of how missionaries helped to colonise Africa. Mazrui (1986:149–150) writes about the role of Christian missionaries in the colonization of Africa by describing what the Kenyan nationalist leader who was also Kenya’s first president, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta (1963–1970) said, “When the missionaries came the Africans had the land and the Christians had the Bible. They taught us to pray with our eyes closed. When we opened them they had the land and we had the Bible.” The quotation describes how Africans in general were cheated out of their fertile lands. Blake (1977), for example, illustrates how the London Missionary Society priests John Smith Moffat and Charles Helm played a decisive role in persuading King Lobengula to grant mineral rights to Cecil Rhodes’ emissaries through the historic October 1888 Rudd Concession. This agreement was signed in Bulawayo and was about exclusive mining rights in Rhodesia. After discovering that

he had been tricked, Lobengula cancelled the concession but it was already too late, thus leading to white settlement in Rhodesia named after Rhodes.

According to Bhebe (1988:325), “The Rhodesian government was presented as a Christian government that merited the support of all Christians. Prayers were made for the destruction of the ‘terrorists’ and safety of the security forces.” Christianity played a dual job, on the one hand to perpetrate the ideologies of the ruling government while on the other hand to assist the freedom fighters in their war against the Smith regime. Thus, one can conclude that the people who led these prayers were Christians so they were involved in both sides of the situation revealing the two sides to which religion can be used. For example, Clements (1969) writes about how European employers or supervisors had no knowledge at all of how and where their native employees lived so they did not understand the abject poverty these employees suffered. They were quite indifferent, unlike the missionaries who were closer to the workers. According to Clements (1969:102), “A mere handful of Europeans, church people or administrators, lived or worked in the African enclosures in close enough communication with the inhabitants to be aware of their distress”. As a result, locals seemed to associate more with the missionaries than with their employers. Again it shows why Christianity in general was accepted by the people as it understood them better than the politicians, so as much as this religion was an instrument of colonial oppression, it also equipped some of the people with knowledge (through education).

Missionaries built schools wherever they went (Moyo, 2013; Bhebe, McLaughlin, 1996). It is in these schools that the first generation of African leaders was educated. Clements (1969) says that the missionaries introduced schools and English as a medium of instruction and translated the Bible into local languages for the benefit of the blacks. “For many years the provision of education in Zimbabwe was a preserve of the Church within missionary established schools which were centres for evangelisation, a place where they could convert those perceived as “pagans” to a hegemonic religion, Christianity” (Shizha and Kariwo, 2011:16). Education was used to dominate the local people as it was meant to make them feel intellectually inferior. Segregation was evident in the education system. Shizha and Kariwo (2011:13) note:

> Racial discrimination in colonial Zimbabwe was so ubiquitous that no African was allowed to enrol in Whites-only schools. A handful of private schools owned by the Church would enrol one or two token Blacks each year, if they showed “outstanding” academic performance, had

> influential and wealthy parents, or if they belonged to the same religious denomination (e.g. Catholic Church) as the educational institutions.

Nherera (2000) notes that the colonial government, through restriction and limitation, controlled the numbers of indigenous people educated by missionaries so that they would not be over educated. Some of the few educated became critical of their situation leading to the liberation struggles known as Chimurenga 1 and 2. These were two separate struggle where Nehanda and Kaguvi amongst others fought the colonialists without guns in the first war and the second which involved ZANLA and ZIPRA forces. The European education that came through the church as well as injustices in treatment between the local people and the colonialists among other factors led to the liberation struggle, as enlightened Zimbabweans realised their plight and took the decision to liberate themselves. Moyo (2013:348) notes, “These institutions helped create awareness among oppressed black people that before God they were of equal value as their oppressors, and this inspired many to rise in defence of their freedom or to liberate themselves”. Knut Lundby (1997), in a comparison between Zimbabwe and Norway, in issues to do with media, religion and democratic participation, notes that organised religion influences people to act or remain docile in political issues. Schools helped the missionaries to manipulate organised religion which, to a great extent, empowered the majority of the people. The distress of the locals caused by injustices and ill treatment levelled against them by their colonisers escalated their discontent and consequently this led to the war that eventually liberated them. All this brings out the nexus between Christianity and politics.

Christianity as a religion was also embraced by the leaders in the villages including political leaders. Phiri, (2001:79) notes, “In the 1930s, schools for Africans were church-run.” Political leaders like Robert Mugabe, Joshua Nkomo, Abel Muzorewa and Canaan Banana among others, were Christians and this also strengthened the existing relationship between the church and politics. Mugabe, the former president of Zimbabwe was educated at Catholic mission schools. The “founder of Zimbabwean nationalism itself (Father Zimbabwe)” (Ndhlovu-Gatsheni, 2017:1) and leader of ZAPU which in 1987 merged with ZANU PF, Nkomo, like Mugabe, received his elementary education at Catholic mission schools. Later, during his studies in South Africa, he interacted with Nelson Mandela and Sir Seretse Khama with whom at one time, they were leaders of South Africa and Botswana respectively (Ndhlovu-Gastheni, 2017).

Abel Muzorewa who led Zimbabwe–Rhodesia in 1979 and was leader of African Nationalist Congress (ANC) got his education from United Methodist Church while Cannan Banana, the first president of Zimbabwe got education from the Methodist Church (Lentz III, 1994; Kunter and Schjorring, 2008). This western education from churches oriented most African leaders.

At the time Ian Smith, was fighting the black majority in Southern Africa (from around mid-1960s to 1979), the church was caught between the colonialists and the guerrillas. This was the period of the second Chimurenga in which Mugabe and other contemporary politicians participated. Different churches actually sided against one another where some churches rallied behind Smith and his allies whilst other churches supported the fighting Zimbabweans and offered material assistance. For example, Chimininge in Chitando, Gunda and Kugler (2014:37) explain how one church fought against others in Bikita in Masvingo province:

> Mutendi and his followers were persecuted every day from the Dutch Reformed Church, Roman Catholic Church members and African traditional leaders. They charged him with false accusations since they were so jealous about his church which was growing so fast. One day the DRC minister in Bikita District reported to the police that Mutendi was organising bands of terrorists against the government. This resulted in the imprisonment of Mutendi and his colleagues.

Some adopted an indifferent approach meaning they were neutral with both parties for them to continue their stay in the country without attracting the wrath of either side (Clements, 1969; McLaughlin, 1996). Janice McLaughlin (1996:6) notes that during this period the Catholic Church "served both the majority African population and the European settler community." Such a scenario made the church assume a double mandate as it "became a source of tension during the war" (McLaughlin, 1996:6) which created divisions among the church personnel. Frank Clements (1969:50) writes:

> Missionary opinion was divided but some of the most vocal churchmen sided with the paternalists in the Native Affairs Department who felt that it could only be to the benefit of the Africans to have tracts of land where the corrupting influence of white civilisation would not prevail.

This was in line with the Land Apportionment Act whereby in 1930 31 million acres were owned by white settlers or companies while Africans had 45 thousand acres in their possession (Clements 1969: 50). Todd (1982) notes this was the structure upon

which the greater part of the country's segregationist policies were based. Todd (1982:41) further explains that this structure "divided the country into African, European, Unreserved and Crown Land, and the extent of this Act has resulted in the creation of numerous dual services- separate schools, hospitals, churches, residential and business areas and even cemeteries." Segregation between whites and blacks was born and festered over the years. Some missionaries were on the side of the black majority, believing that all the land was rightfully theirs and they should be allowed to purchase whatever land they wanted (Todd, 1982). This made it difficult for the relationship between church and white politicians to flourish as some church personnel did not agree with some of the policies put in place by the Rhodesia government. Paul Gifford (1988:134) notes that "the church cannot afford to be indifferent and isolated in the face of glaring socio-political and economic decay". The church was not silent as some of the priests and sisters were involved in the struggle.

Gifford (1988:134) goes on to say the different Christian churches performed this role of rebuking the evil of the sitting government during the reign of Ian Smith when some of them "castigated and challenged the repressive government of the Rhodesian Front Party (RFP)." Some Christian churches especially the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia (CCJP) established in 1972 challenged the Smith regime for injustices perpetrated against the black majority. The commission changed its name at independence to CCJPZ. The CCJPZ is a non-governmental organisation which seeks to assist people in their plight against human rights abuse. It is a commission of Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference and is also affiliated to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in Rome. It also challenged the government of ZANU-PF through pastoral letters[10] which suggests spiritual and moral guidance of the nation by the church as stated in their constitution. The CCJP Report (2013) from the Catholic Church states that part of their mandate is "research, investigate and publish situations of injustice and violence and use the information to promote justice and peace." The report further notes: "Our strategy involves provision of public/civic education on STCs, human rights, good governance, justice, peace and participation of all, especially the poor and the marginalised to create a living environment that suits God's plan for the

[10] These are public letters written either by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) or by the Catholic Bishops.

earth's creation." However, not all churches were vocal as some remained deliberately quiet maybe to maintain the status quo and supported Smith and his regime.

The intellectual empowerment in a way helped the local people to become critical thinkers in their own right as they were enlightened as well as exposed to what was happening elsewhere. This led them to analyse their situation and concluded that they were being unfairly treated when they compared the life of the previous generation and their own after the coming of the colonialists. Moyo (2013:348) clearly captures this when he writes, "The education that the black people received from mission schools gave them a sense of pride and value that the colonial regimes were not interested in creating." The black Zimbabweans realised that the onus was on them to initiate change rather than follow what was prescribed for them by the colonialists. For fear of remaining oppressed for the rest of their lives, a number of blacks became educated and rose against the system. As already alluded to, this showed that the church was a double-edged sword that both supported and undermined colonial and racist hegemonies. Dillon (2003:3) concurs by noting, "While in some cases religion has contributed to social cohesion and peace, in others it has led to instability and civil wars." In the same vein, Fox (2000:424) contends, "While in some contexts religion has been responsible for positive change, in others it has been an agent for discrimination." This suggests the malleable nature of religion.

Some converts who benefitted from the church (academically or materially) followed the foreign religion although others formed hybrids which combined this religion and their traditional one. Indigenous churches combined the colonialist religion and their own traditional one meaning they infused both religions in their practice. These came to be known as African Independent Churches (AIC). These also call themselves spiritual churches as they centre their faith on the spirit. The AICs believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to guide them in their operations of prophesying and healing among others. As indigenous churches, they are heavily influenced by their background that believed in ancestral spirits. Shoko (2013:40) explains, "The Shona believe that the ancestors are the go-between the Supreme God, Mwari and the living." It is against this backdrop that these churches were founded. They remained spirit bound or controlled but switched from ancestral spirit of the dead to the Holy Spirit in the biblical trinity. Some of them came to South Africa and, partly through Zimbabwean workers in that country and inter-church contacts, their churches and general influence began

to spread in Zimbabwe in the early years of the eighteenth century (Mazikana and Johnson, 1984). According to Moyo (2013:347), they "are radically different from their Western parent churches in their polity, doctrine and general ethos". They are indigenous Christian denominations; as a result, they were not readily accepted by people who belonged to mainline churches and sometimes got labelled as 'sects' rather than churches. Because of how they operated, getting to accept these churches was a process.

Mazikana and Johnson (1984:57) state:

> The process was hastened by the lack of understanding and sometimes the austere rules of the missionaries of the established churches, especially as regards polygamy, dancing and the use of beer and ancestor worship – many members of the mission churches left them to join up with independent churches for such reasons. The independent churches can also be seen to some extent as a form of political protest movement against the background of African nationalism and colonial paternalism.

Those who found the rules set by Christianity too stringent shifted to the AICs who allowed them to mix the foreign religion and their traditions.

Christianity was also spread in Southern Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular through the Zion church. This church also known as the spirit church was introduced to Zimbabwe in the 1920s by migrant workers from South Africa. Allan Anderson (1998) contends that the founder of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) in Rhodesia was Samuel Mutendi. He was born in Bikita, a district in Masvingo Province. He was educated in the Dutch Reformed Church (Daneel, 1971). Mutendi broke away from the South African ZCC in 1925 and founded the Rhodesian branch of this new church. Daneel, a missiologist who has written a lot on AICs, (1999:67) explains that "although he retained ideological and historical links with what was to become the largest Christian Church in South Africa, Lekganyane's ZCC, currently based in Pietersburg, he developed the Zimbabwean ZCC into a fully autonomous church, with an estimated 500, 000 members in 1996." According to Daneel (1971) Mutendi was popular for resisting the oppressive colonial rule and reflected the western biblical Christ in an African setting unlike in the orthodox churches where Christ is portrayed as white. Sundkler (2004) discusses two types of AICs; Ethiopian and Black Zionist churches. The Ethiopian churches were "AICs that broke from Pentecostal churches on political grounds, but have remained closely patterned on them. The Zionist, on the other hand,

are “non-secession churches with a Pentecostal, healing emphasis” (Sundkler, 2004:53). Adogame and Jafta (2013:311) also add that these churches “Stress the presence and influence of the Holy Spirit in the church as well as in the life of the believer.” Unlike Catholicism, “The Zionist churches placed great emphasis on faith healing, prophecy and possession by the Holy Spirit” (Mazikana and Johnson, 1984: 158) as this was designed to appeal to Africans who believed in ancestral spirits who healed diseases. Possession by the Holy Spirit was like possession by their own ancestral spirits so people could easily associate with it when their future was foretold by a person possessed by the Holy Spirit.

Mazikana and Johnson (1984) explain that the black Zionist and Ethiopian churches were not readily accepted by the ruling government and were always under the wary and suspicious eye of the Native Department. They state that these churches had to take caution and avoid conflict with the authorities; as such they had to adhere to set rules and regulations. These churches were quite popular with the locals as they believed that diseases were also healed through the use of anointed water (Anderson, 1998). Mutendi was popular for building the ‘healing’ hospital at the church’s headquarters in Bikita (Daneel, 1970; 1971) and also for assisting chiefs who were disturbed by the colonialists. The heir to the founder of this church, Nehemiah Mutendi is held in high esteem in contemporary Zimbabwe and his word is taken as prophecy (Daneel, 1999). The publicly owned media extensively quote from him. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, the ZANUPF politicians were seen aligning themselves with this church when the country was in turmoil.

This formation of AICs was explained by a popular question asked by Daneel (1987: 46): “How could the white Christ of the Portuguese images, the Christ of the exploiters- how could he ever help the suffering African, pining for liberty?” This could be the motivating factor behind the formation of such churches, which on the one hand have the welfare of the African at heart and on the other hand, have the mandate to spread the word. The desire was to indigenise Christianity. Barret (1968:161) notes that this desire was where “independency reflects a rebellion against a Christianity that had become over-Europeanized.” However, Gifford (1988:97) describes these churches as African Initiated Churches and he says most of them are “conservative in nature and enjoy a pan-Africanist agenda”. The churches aim to conserve their Africanness but at the same time following the colonial religion. Barret (1968:93) notes that these

churches stressed the slogan “Africa for Africa” in a bid to seek for political independence. This is because they have a tendency of upholding their interests and culture as Africans as well as supporting the status quo of Africans as the rulers rather than the colonialists. The roles of the church become quite complex in that they claim to help bring up morally upright African beings but at the same time uphold ideologies of the elites (both economic and political) who supress the voice of the common man in order to remain powerful. On one hand the Catholic Church, for example through its pastoral letters seem to advocate for human rights but on the other the AICs, through their doctrine, seem to help hegemonise the church members who are quite a sizable number into a consenting lot (Dillon, 2003; Fox, 2000).

Seath (2010) purports that religion can prevent change in society and has the power to either inhibit or promote change. It can be the driving force to a society to adopt a new social order. The history of the AICs suggests that these churches were against oppression by the colonialists (Daneel, 1987) and in the contemporary world, in their numbers they would form a formidable force against imperialists. Nhlapo in Huffpost (2017) note that ZCC is described as the largest and fastest growing church which boasts of sixteen million members in Southern Africa and overseas (Anderson, 2003; Engelke, 2004). The given example of the Zionist church is well known for its voluminous numbers which can be seen when they hold their annual conference at Defe in Gokwe or at Mbungu, their shrine in Masvingo. These gatherings attract both the media and politicians who seek to find favour with the church leadership.

The contemporary world continues to witness the nexus of religion and politics. On the operations of one of the prominent AICs, the Johane Masowe Church Mukonyora (1998:198) contends, “Today the name Johane Masowe is associated with communities which pray in open air venues called *masowe*, preach repentance and carry out baptisms in rivers and/or dams called 'Jordans'”. This church is particularly present in my data. Mazikana and Johnson (1984:161) go on to explain that “at their services they incorporated the traditional customs of men and women sitting separately.” Reese (2008) also concurs with this when he notes that at the church services held outdoors men sat at the front with women and children behind them. All this is linked to the Bible where the Apostle Paul instructed women to be quiet in church and sit separately from the men so they could not ask the men what was being preached. It is the reason why this church did not allow women to preach in church.

In this church, women do not preach or hold positions of power. This is belief in a system of ideas as well as prophecy. Gladys Ganiel (2010) argues that women have never been empowered by this movement. She explains that the Masowe Apostles observe rigid gender codes which are reminiscent of the traditional Shona cultural norms. Mukonyora (1998) also describes incidences when women were treated with disrespect by their male counterparts during church services. This literature of how women were given subordinate positions in church helps in the analysis of selected newspaper articles in the findings chapters where politicians utilise the ideologies and doctrines of these churches. For example the elevation and support given to Joice Mujuru as a woman in the ZANU PF presidium by the church and also she was accepted by this church as its patron need unpacking.

The AICs as well as other churches teach their members rules and regulations that should be adhered to. Ex-communication or other forms of punishment are meted out to members who breach the church-member contract. The fear of being labelled or punished seems to keep the members in check. All this detail about AICs and apostolic sects as well as their operations give insight to how the church members who are faithful to their doctrine become vulnerable to political manipulation; therefore, ZANUPF leaders who belong to known orthodox churches were seen fraternising with these churches in the crisis period. ZANU PF attached itself to the Christian churches especially the AICs because it made voters easily manipulated. Their large numbers as well as belief systems were an attraction to the political leaders.

2.2.5.1. Liberation theology

Closely related to the above discussion is liberation theology as expounded by the Roman Catholic political movement in Latin America. This also provides insight into the political role of the church in society. Liberation theology relates to the teachings of Jesus Christ in relation to the liberation of the down trodden from unjust economic, social or political conditions. Its major objective is to help the poor and the oppressed through religious activism.

Dault (2014) notes that liberation theology is both a social and political movement within the church. Its focus is on the lived experiences of the oppressed people. Liberation is presented taking the side of the oppressed and the outcasts as spelt out in the narratives on the liberation of Israelites from Egypt. Cook (1998:203) contends

that liberation theology was a “synthesis of Christian theology” as well as “Marxist socio economic analyses”. In Zimbabwe the cries of the majority as a result of political turmoil was pacified through the use of religion. Instead of the church helping the government to observe rule of law among other issues, it worked hard to make the ruling party stay in power (see discussion chapters). ZANU PF as a liberation movement appeared to be there to emancipate the people of Zimbabwe through the use of religion.

Although Liberation Theology called for the freeing of the oppressed from unjust social, economic or political conditions and interpreted the teachings of the Bible through the lens of the poor and underprivileged in society; it sometimes act in complicity with political institutions. In Zimbabwe churches led by indigenous leaders cannot be placed under the banner of liberation theology. They are mostly its exact opposite as most of them worked closely with the ruling party rather than work for the betterment of the poor or oppressed citizens as highlighted in the findings chapters 4, 5 and 6.

2.3 Conceptual framework

This section discusses the study’s conceptual framing and position. The study is premised on the cultural studies approach in line with Pitout’s (2007) view that the conceptual building blocks of this approach are ideology, hegemony, encoding and decoding (signs and semiotics), polysemy (representation and discourse) and intertextuality (meaning and struggle). This research is on religion and politics which are everyday experiences. This falls under cultural studies as Pitout in Fourie (2007:274) notes that cultural studies “have set out to examine the everyday and the ordinary; those aspects of our lives that so powerfully and unquestionably influence our existence.” Ideology, hegemony and discourse are discussed in detail later in the section. All these are based on framing on which this study is premised. All these form the crux of this study as they were used to analyse and explain the symbolic forms of religion. The section looks at framing of religious stories in relation to politics. It explores the links between framing and hegemony. The section therefore analyses concepts of hegemony and ideology to unpack how ZANU PF as a powerful political party has managed to maintain hegemony through the mobilisation of Christian religion in the political sphere since 1980 when the country won political independence from their British colonisers.

2.3.1 Framing

The study benefits from the Framing theory in analysing the portrayal of the nexus of religion and politics in post-2000 Zimbabwe. The framing theory was propounded by Gregory Bateson in 1972. The focus of this study is on print media representation. Media representations are the ways in which the media frame certain issues through how they portray particular groups, communities, experiences, ideas, or topics from a particular ideological or value perspective. The mass media can either construct or fracture any of the above mentioned by promoting or marginalising some at the expense of others. Rather than examining media representations as simply reflecting or mirroring "reality," this research examines how print media representations serve to "re-present" or actually create a new reality centred on religion and politics through framing.

The packaging and presentation of information to the public by the media is framing. A frame is "a central organising idea…for making sense of relevant events, suggesting what is an issue" (Gamson and Modgliani, 1989:3). Framing which is about the construction of information by the mass media is closely related to the theory of agenda setting. The theory of agenda setting was coined by McCombs and Shaw in 1972. The theory is on the power to 'structure issues' in this case by the media in newspaper articles. Cohen (1963) contends that the press are very powerful in providing topical issues and influencing readers on how to think about these. This is agenda setting. The way news is structured is meant to capture and influence the thinking of readers thereby setting an agenda. Selection of topics and placement of stories in the newspaper is the prerogative of the media. Again the media highlight and give prominence to certain issues, values and perspectives and not others. Devereux (2007:248) notes that the "agenda-setting perspective would suggest that the selective framing of news stories has an important bearing on public beliefs about matters of social, economic and political importance." All these apply to this study. The media focus on specific issues and deliberately choose how to present these to audiences. McQuail (2010:356) gave an example of a "situation in which politicians seek to convince voters as to what, from their party standpoint, are the most important issues." How the media focused on religious issues in relation to politics is the focus of this study.

Framing is how the media tell people how to think about presented topics or issues. Chong and Druckman (2007:104) define framing as referring to "the process by which people develop a particular conceptualisation of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue." The way information is structured has a bearing on interpretation. Fairhurst and Sarr (1996) explain that framing comprises three elements of language, thought and forethought. According to Tuchman (1978:193), a frame in communication "organises everyday reality." There are several possibilities that can be used to frame issues (Deetz, Tracy and Simpson, 2000). Deetz et al (2000:178) note that these frames include "metaphors, stories (myths and legends), traditions, slogans, jargon and catch phrases, artefacts, contrast and spin". The purposes of these frames are to help readers understand and remember the described events thereby influencing interpretation. This presentation of information is analysed in the selected newspaper articles on religion and politics to understand frames of language and thought used by the media.

Frames are cultural in origin. They can be social, economic, political or religious in nature. Shah et al (2002:343) note that frames are meant to promote "particular definitions and interpretations of political issues." Through language and ideology, certain issues are pushed forward to propagate certain mind-sets. Political frames used by the media include liberation struggle, sanctions, puppets, land reform and elections among others. Biblical frames which can be politicised include land of honey and milk, Canaan, Egypt, Moses, Aaron, rulers being chosen by God and divination among others. Through repeated invoking, frames get reinforced.

This section has served the purpose of clarifying how media organisations frame news when they pass it on to their readers. This helps to hegemonise people as well as propagate certain ideologies.

2.3.2 Hegemony, ideology and discourse

The study also appeals to concepts of hegemony, ideology and discourse in a discussion on the deployment of Christianity by ZANU PF government to save a waning hegemony between 2008 and 2013. The three concepts are credited to theorists Gramsci, Althusser and Foucault, respectively. In Gramscian terms, religion is part of the cultural institutions which paves way to political domination (see Strinati 1995). In Althusserian terms, religion constitute the ideological state apparatus. From

a Foucauldian analysis religion is part of discourse which produces truth and knowledge. It reinforces and protects power (Foucault, 1980).

I therefore discuss these concepts grounded in culture. Culture plays a crucial role in the three major concepts used in this study. Culture is “the thoughts, behaviours, languages, customs, the things we produce and the methods we use to produce them” (Jervis, 2006:2). It is a total way of life of a people (Macionis, 2013) which shapes society and reproduces and reinforces the dominant ideologies. Jervis (2006:3) goes on to note, “Religion, ethnicity and culture are among the most difficult concepts to disentangle… Religion, however, is not the same as culture or ethnicity; it can overlap either.” It is with this in mind that this study is premised on issues to do with religion which is part of the Zimbabwean culture. Religion in general and Christianity in particular has always enjoyed an intimate relationship with politics. This relationship brings in the question of ideology where politics is fused with religion through deliberate choice of discourse by politicians in addressing church members and the press when they capture and represent these events.

This study is premised in Antonio Gramsci’s (1962) concept of hegemony as well as ideology and discourse. Ideology can be referred to as an effect of discourse (Stoddart, 2007). Eagleton (2007:1–2) gives a list of definitions of ideology and some of them are: “(a) the process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life; (c) ideas which help legitimate a dominant political power; (i) socially necessary illusion; and (j) the conjuncture of discourse and power” among others. Production of meaning is dependent on how people are socialised and the language used which appeals to the minds of people. Subsequently, this legitimates the domination of those in power over their subordinates. The way this domination is naturalised through articulation or expression is hegemony. Stoddart (2007:193) notes, “In essence, where discourse is mobilized to reinforce systems of power, it functions as ideology.” Religious discourse can also be a point of resistance as well as a starting point for an opposing strategy. Foucault (1980) argues that while discourse produces and protects power, it can equally expose power thereby making it fragile by providing an entry point for opposing strategies.

Ideology has a complex nature which can only be understood by analysing how it is relayed and why. The original concern of ideology was to systematically study the way

people think and it is a term made up of “two Greek words: idea and logy or science” (Sonderling, 2007:310). Eagleton (2007:1) gives one of several definitions of ideology as “false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power”, but Slavoj Zizek (1994:8) notes, “An ideology is thus not necessarily ‘false’: as to its positive content, it can be ‘true’, quite accurate, since what really matters is not the asserted content *but the way this content is related to the subjective position implied by its own process of enunciation*” (author’s emphasis). This citation is important in that it is not about the content in the ideology produced but how the ideology is perpetrated. Biblical allusions are there but how they are used and for what purpose is crucial to this study. Deliberate choice of biblical verses and interpretations are done to suit the user in order to achieve specific objectives. However, Chambers in Moyo (2001) argues that ideology serves as a means to mend the cracks of social fabric. This is how political elites orient people to think in a way favourable to them thus hiding and concealing obvious social and economic inequalities. Chambers goes on to say, “ideology seeks to pacify by transforming a distribution of powers, choices and directions into appearing natural, fair, common-sensical and normal.” Along the same vein, Sonderling (2007:308) argues that an effective method to control people to “make them accept their position, respect their government and maintain the social order is to communicate to them ideas and images, or ideology, that present their society’s structure and relations of inequality as the natural order of the world.”

Ideology is a complex term which has been associated with negativity (Larrain, 1979; O’Connor and Downing, 1995; Van Dijk, 1998; Sonderling, 2007). Storey (1999:129) argues that ideology “is more than a body of ideas as it consists of rituals, customs, patterns of behaviour and ways of thinking which take a practical form.” Religion is a form of ideology which can be manipulated by politicians. This study adopts William’s (2003:146) notion of ideology which are “systems of thought” or “systems of belief” or “symbolic systems”. These systems are in line with either a social action or political practice. McLennan (1991a) argues that it is through endorsement by a significant number of people that a system can be termed ideological. This is connected to the use of power in a given society. The Christian church in Zimbabwe boasts of many congregants; hence, one of the many reasons for politicians’ attraction to it. The huge numbers denote power and the ideology coated in biblical discourse in which they are addressed has a possibility of an impact.

Ideology happens at the level of signification where power struggles are fought (Eagleton, 2007:1). Signification is the meaning-making process. Ernesto Abalo (2012:107) posits, “Ideology is understood as being central in struggles for hegemony, which in turn is the organising principle through which elite masses exert cultural and political direction in order to gain consent for their interests from subordinate groups.” The same sentiments are raised by Boggs, (1976); Gramsci, (1971) and Hall, (1977). Stoddart (2007:194) views ideology as “a vision of society dominated by economic class as a field of social power.” Fairclough (1995:95) calls ideology “a sphere of cultural hegemony” as the social and natural environment influences the ideological struggles. There are ideological wars that are fought on the media where the dominant class uses the media to propagate their ideology in order to gain legitimation. Zizek (1994:8) adds that “the very logic of legitimizing the relation of domination must remain concealed if it is to be effective”, showing the vitality of hegemony where consent rather than coercion is more effective; and how better than by using the church?

Ideology is taken as “a system of representation” by Louis Althusser (Sonderling, 2007:313). Althusser, a French structuralist and Marxist philosopher well known for his theory of ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) (1970), made significant contributions to the question of ideology. ISAs are tools that can be used by civil society to control people. Blunden (1970) notes that ISAs include the sectors of religion, education, family, legal, politics, trade unions, communications and culture. This is because “we live, experience and give meaning to our world by using systems of representations” (Sonderling, 2007:313).

The state can rule either through coercion or consent. When applying ISAs, this is when the state does not force people but rather persuades or encourages people to conform. Althusser (1971:153) argues, “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence.” The exploitative intentions of the elites are masked to appear normal or natural. Althusser (1971:155) adds that ideology “has a material existence” indicating that is based on material structures. This line of argument advances the theory of ideology and goes further to include the family, school, church and the media as ISAs. Leitch (2001) posits that these ISAs function in a manner that is both concealed and symbolic. Although the administration of the ISAs may be private, it can be argued that most of these ISAs are public domains

(institutions) as they belong to the public realm in that they deal with the publics (people in general).

Blunden (1970) argues that the ISAs primarily function by ideology hence they are different from the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) which primarily function by 'violence' or coercion thereby denoting repression. It is through ISAs that people are interpellated into defined subject positions (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2008). O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2008:187) define interpellation as "a process in which we internalise ideologies as a response to being hailed or addressed." This addressing positions the "addressee in relation to the addresser" (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2008:187) within a particular discourse. Interpellation in some way gives people a nationality or identity as brought out by Pitout (2007:279) who notes that interpellation "means that ideology defines and determines our experiences, our identity and our place in society as a whole."

Clarke (undated) analyses Louis Althusser's theory and notes, "the schooling system and other state institutions like the church do not only seek to pass on "'know-how'" (133) but are there also to ensure "subjection to the ruling ideology or the mastery of its 'practice'" (133). The media represent issues from various standpoints, either extolling or denigrating certain political ideologies which results in people either being interpellated or denying the sent messages. Besides fulfilling their mandate of informing, educating and entertaining, the media can operate as an ideological state apparatus as the state can use them to propagate ideologies that hegemonise people. However, this is complex in that it is never conclusive on who is responsible for the behaviour and actions of people in society.

Foucault argues that power could be found in different social relations. Rothman (1978) notes that Foucault analysed two modes of punishment through the prison; one physical and the other psychological. He argued that discipline is a mechanism of power where regulation of society is done through subtle means. Discipline is enforced through organising space. The family has great influence on how an individual integrates in society because of the rules and regulations that the family imposes on the members. The school also has rules by which students have to abide so that there is smooth functioning of the institution. The church is also crucial in that it claims to bring up people who are good and well behaved citizens who accept rules and

instructions given by both the Bible and church doctrine so as to be also accepted by the church and society. All these relate to how a person is socialised which then influences how one interprets media messages. People do not interpret media messages from a dessert background. They do so influenced by their upbringing as well as their socio-cultural position. Biblical messages in the media are bound to make an impact especially to Christianity followers.

A person's consciousness does not always shape perception but the social activities[11] also shape consciousness so "consciousness is socially produced" but is influenced by the ideas of real and active men and women in society (see Berger, 2012:46–7). This shows society, especially the ruling class, is very influential to how people perceive the world. Storey (2008:60) notes that a ruling class is "compelled …to represent its interest as the common interest of all members of society…to give its ideas to the form of universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones." This study shows the way in which ZANU-PF used religious images to propagate their ideology.

Besides ideology, another important concept to this study is hegemony. Sonderling (2007:315) explains that hegemony is the "people's cooperation in production of the dominant ideology." Whereas Marx is grounded in historical and dialectical materialism, Antonio Gramsci is neo-Marxist and his ideas are grounded in idealism. Gripsrud (2010:57) defines hegemony as a concept that "deals with how social power in a modern capitalist country is dependent on the dominant social classes and strata keeping their positions through the fact that those who are being dominated recognize the legitimacy of this arrangement- that is, the hegemony of the rulers." Stoddart (2007:193) also notes that the concept hegemony is used to illustrate how the state and civil society produce and maintain consent to the class hierarchies of capitalist society" (cp Hall, 1992; Hall, 1996b).

Unlike Marx, Gramsci does not see ideology as manipulation and indoctrination done through organised systems like school and church only. They are a result of a person's whole lived experience gained through socialisation or society's practices and expectations (Berger, 2012; Williams, 1977). Berger (2012:64) thus says hegemony is

[11] Social activities include family gatherings, going to school, attending church and being involved in politics among others.

“that ‘which goes without saying’ or the givens or common-sense realities of the world, which, it turns out, serve an ultimate purpose- that of maintaining the dominance of the ruling class.” Religion is one practice that perfectly fits this description as some church leaders use their Bible to co-opt agreement from the people they lead to gain favour. This is in line with the primary argument of this thesis that ZANU PF used the trappings of Christianity to manufacture consent from the masses during the crisis period. Bertrand and Hughes (2005:100) concur with Berger when they say Gramsci “proposed the concept of hegemony (the capacity of the state to achieve the co-operation of its citizens, by a mix of force and consent).”

Gramsci’s idea of hegemony greatly informs this study as the dominant want to maintain the status quo through naturalising issues so that the dominated accept it. According to Bertrand and Hughes (2005:100), Gramsci proposes that, “The state engineers consensus through a bureaucracy which administers state decisions, and an educational system that reinforces the wisdom of compliance.” The Christian church leaders form part of that bureaucracy.

Gramsci (2009:75) defines hegemony as referring to “a *condition in process* in which a dominant class (in alliance with other classes or class fractions) does not merely *rule* a society but *leads* it through the exercise of intellectual and moral leadership”. Williams (2003:54) argues that “the ruling class maintained dominance of society primarily by establishing ‘hegemony’”. Strinati (1995:166) states that Gramsci in his works had distinguished

> between coercive control which is manifest through direct force or the threat of force, and consensual control which arises when individuals ‘willingly’ or ‘voluntarily’ assimilate the world-view or hegemony of the dominant group; an assimilation which allows that group to be hegemonic.

According to Gramsci (1962), the ruling elites rely more on consent than coercion. This is because consent is long lasting (Williams, 2003). Strinati (1995:166) reiterates this when he argues that hegemony, “suggests that subordinate groups accept the ideas, values and leadership of the dominant group not because they are physically or mentally induced to do so, nor because they are ideologically indoctrinated, but because they have reason of their own”. Hegemony is therefore rule by consent where ideology is used to woo subordinates. Religion can be used as a hegemonic tool by

the politicians as it is generally acceptable to most people who belong to the Christian churches. However, it should be noted that consent does not happen automatically but has to be earned. A leader or party has to uphold admirable characteristics which impress the people for them to continue rendering their support. When dissatisfied people change their allegiance. It is with this in mind that the study seeks to analyse how and why the media represented ZANUPF as a political party engaged with the Christian churches. This is also grounded in Sonderling's (2007:308) argument that for purposes of controlling people "every government considers the mass media as important means of manipulating the ideas and opinions of the people."

This thesis argues that the Christian church leaders are part of the intellectual and moral leaders who help politicians maintain the status quo. Storey (2008:81) postulates that "Hegemony is never simply power imposed from above: it is always the result of 'negotiations' between the dominant and subordinate groups, a process marked by both 'resistance' and 'incorporations'." Hegemony is a process and not an event. It is ongoing. This is the reason why hegemony is never won but is always fluctuating and must therefore be maintained so the rulers always enjoy an upper hand.

Texts are related to ideology. Marx (1976a:5) looked at ideology through reference to ideological forms where "texts always present a particular image of the world". Storey (2008:4) posits, "Texts are said to take sides, consciously or unconsciously-all texts are ultimately political that is, they offer competing ideological significations of the way the world is or should be."

For ideology and hegemony to succeed, there is need for appropriate discourse. Discourse is "a language or system of representation that has developed socially in order to make and circulate a coherent set of meanings about a topic area" (Fiske, 1987:14). Discourse is written or spoken language in communication. Gripsrud (2010:201) notes that discourse is "the talk about" something; in this case it is talk about religion. The more a subject is talked or written about, the more the language used become familiar to people. Whisnant (2012) is of the view that discourses are patterns of language that specifically tell us something about the person speaking the

language, his culture, the network of social institutions that the person is caught up in and his beliefs.

Foucault (1980) notes that discourse operates as another form of representation. Discourse is power (Foucault, 1980) and can be used to manipulate people so that they are persuaded to perceive things as presented by both the economic and political elites. Myra Macdonald (2003:1) defines discourse as “a system of communicative practices that are integrally related to wider social and cultural practices, and that help to construct specific frameworks of thinking.” In the same vein, O’Shaughnessy and Stadler (2008:175) note that “discourse is a social process of constructing meaning within a mutually understood set of rules.” Discourse can be used for controlling society depending on how it is used.

Myra Macdonald (2003:2) argues that “a concept of discourse offers a variety of insights into the media’s current strategies for communicating with their publics.” Discourse is powerful and malleable as it can be manipulated to suit the agenda of the disseminator. Foucault (1998:100-1) argues that there are four ways in which discourse operates. Discourse creates a world, defines truth and knowledge, says something about a person talking it and lastly is implicated with power. In the context of this study, the discourse used by both the press and politicians is analysed to establish the type of world they create through their representation.

Media representation makes use of discourse to propagate the ideologies of the market forces which maybe political or economic (Macdonald, 2003). Pitout (2007:278) notes, “The media and other forms of expression serve as carriers of the dominant ideology.” The media become vital creators of reality and have the potential to set agendas through their reportage. Through playing a mediating role, the media become a mirror that reflect society or a window through which people ‘see’ the world. Depending on the size, angle or cleanliness of the mirror or window, audiences are exposed to reconstructed reality. Reality is altered to suit either the producers of text or the sponsors who influence production. It is in this case that framing is clearly visible. The media do not merely present or reflect reality as they also choose how to represent this reality to their audience. Media biases can be detected from the way they represent issues.

2.3.3 Links between framing and hegemony

There is a close link between framing and hegemony as Carragee and Roefs (2004:222) argue that frames as "imprints of power are central to the production of hegemonic meanings". Bertrand and Hughes (2005:100) explain that hegemony "helps shape questions about how media reporting influences public opinion." Berger (2012:64) notes:

> The works carried by the mass media can be seen, then, not merely as carriers of ideology that manipulate and indoctrinate people with certain views. The media, as unwitting instruments of hegemonic domination, have a much broader and deeper influence- they shape people's very ideas of themselves and the world; they shape people's worldviews.

In media reportage what is important is how information is relayed. It is this framing that influences interpretation. Entman (1993:5) argues that "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or recommendation for the item described." This selection is deliberate to set a certain agenda or fulfil certain objectives. As a result the media play a crucial role in hegemonic struggles. The media are conduits of communication and have become crucial as they selectively report on the churches and prophets who are the primary sources of religious ideas. The political and economic elites use discourse in the media to mould religious imagination through use of biblical verses. This is in line with Carragee and Roefs (2004) who argue that politicians and other stakeholders shape frames as these do not develop in a political vacuum. O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2008:174) call this "interplay of meanings and ideas circulating around a particular subject". The print media place salience on certain ideologies thereby promoting them whilst ignoring others.

Issues to do with power are dealt with in social and cultural ways (Fiske, 1987). In discussing social power, hegemony cannot be left out as it brings out the inequalities of power distribution between the dominant and subordinate groups. O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2010:174) note that this power may be partly "maintained and reproduced by the circulation of ideas and beliefs." Through framing, the media select and represent stories of politicians engaging with religious sects. According to O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2010:174), hegemony refers to "the ways in which

ideologies are negotiated, maintained and disputed." Eagleton (1998:113) argues that hegemony is not "just some successful kind of ideology, but maybe discriminated into its various ideological, cultural, political and economic aspects". All these aspects are utilised by the dominant group to gain ultimate power. In explaining hegemony O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2010:209) argue that it is "Power and leadership maintained through processes of struggle and negotiation, especially through winning the consent of the majority of people to accept the ideas or ideologies of the dominant group as 'common sense'".

The notion of hegemony, therefore, connects questions of culture, power and ideology. It is pertinent to this study to highlight hegemony in framing research as this provides strategies to examine how the news print media in Zimbabwe constructed ideological meanings largely consistent with interests of power elites (ZANU PF). Devices which can be used in framing issues include metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions and visuals (Carragee and Roefs, 2004). According to Carragee and Roefs (2004:215) "Ideally, framing research examines how frames are sponsored by political actors, how journalists employ frames in the construction of news stories, how these stories articulate frames, and how audience members interpret these frames" (cp Reese, 2001). Pan and Kosicki (1993:57) aver that "framing, therefore, may be studied as a strategy of constructing and processing news discourse or as a characteristic of the discourse itself". This study adopts Carragee and Roefs' (2004:217) argument that frames "construct particular meanings concerning issues by their patterns of emphasis, interpretation and exclusion".

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature around two broad concepts of religion and politics as well as operations of the media. These were further discussed under five sub themes. Under the first theme of spirituality in Zimbabwe, it was established that spirituality is part of the Zimbabwean culture and has influence on them in some way. ZANU PF has used spirituality during and after the liberation struggle.

In the second theme of religion, politics and power it was established that religion is an authority in itself. It is invisible power which is effective. Turbulent times are when religion thrives most. When people feel hopeless they turn to religion for hope and purpose to live so religion can be a powerful manipulation tool for politicians' survival.

The power of religion examined how religion is both a marker and a cause for societal transformation. Religion can be used to legitimise government policies which in turn are meant to put the party in good light.

The third theme clearly brought out the role of the media in advancing the ideologies of ZANU PF. The interface between religion and politics is portrayed by the press. Both before and after independence, the press was used to serve the interests of the politicians. Roping in the media assisted politicians to hegemonise people.

Missionary press and colonial politics brought out the fourth theme. It was established that the colonial media had the mandate to protect the interests of the white minority while denigrating those of the black majority. The missionary and party press came in to stand in the gap. It became the voice of the voiceless.

The fifth theme on the nexus of religion and politics in colonial Africa in general and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in particular, traced how Christianity came to Zimbabwe. Missionaries were caught up in political issues and were divided between supporting the ruling minority and the indigenous majority. Again religion to an extent empowered people through education which led them to fight against their oppressors. This empowerment extended to the post-colonial era where religion resisted colonial manipulation.

The chapter also discussed the conceptual framework that guides this study. This was mainly on framing, hegemony, ideology and discourse. Through framing, the media deliberately capture events where religion and politics relate to each other. The mediation role is meant to influence the thinking of audiences when they receive media texts. Religion has been used by politicians in a bid to seek legitimacy. The other three are intertwined. Hegemony is domination of subordinates in society by those in power, either politically or economically or both. Ideology works on the people's mind-sets and is persuasive but manipulative in nature. Discourse is language used to perpetrate certain ideologies in order to hegemonise people. Religion as part of ideology exercises a significant influence on believers which then explains why politicians incorporate religion in their functions in order to strengthen their legitimacy (hegemony) and sanitise their activities. This chapter therefore has highlighted the compatible relationship between religion and politics and how the media play a major role in presenting politics as closely linked to religious issues.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses methods and methodology of the study. It also highlights the strengths and limits of the methods utilised in light of the phenomenon investigated.

Methodology is all about what research should do (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995). Ashley Crossman (n.d.) defines methodology as the "practices and techniques in research used to gather, process and manipulate information that can then be used to test ideas and theories about social life." This study did the same as it researched on the nexus between Christianity and political discourses as espoused by ZANU PF politicians. It helped me understand the strategies that were used by this party for it to remain in power which Jennifer Williams (2011) observes as methodology that is vital in giving the researcher a clear idea of what is being carried out. She further states that methodology is the correct platform that helps to map out the research work in relation to making solid plans. Nudzor (2009:115) reiterates that methodologies mean "the strategies, plans of action processes or design lying behind the choice of particular methods." Mapping out and choosing a plan of action in the gathering and analysis of data are central to methodology. Berger (1998:7) notes that research is about looking for answers where the researcher is a "detective", hence should map out how to get answers. This mapping involves methodology which is centred on the researcher's choices. Firstly it is choosing what information and data to gather. Secondly, the researcher has to make choices about how to analyse the gathered information and data. Lastly, the researcher has to make other methodological choices like data presentation.

Yin (2003:12) says a research strategy endeavours to give an explanation "why decisions were taken, how they were implemented, and with what result." Not resorting to data from one source is in line with the belief that sources of data may vary, and means of accessing and gathering it may differ, but all methodologies are reliant on data and the basic methods and tools used to collect it (O'Leary, 2004:150).

3.2 Research approach: qualitative research

This thesis utilises the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is all about giving a detailed description of a topic under discussion. Mason (2001:15) argues that "qualitative research is a systematic, rigorous, flexible and contextual and strategically conducted." In concurrence is Creswell (2007:36) who contends that qualitative research is "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world and it consist of a test of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible." This brings about the advantage of the method which is rooted in words and images. This chapter discusses a qualitative case study based on secondary data. Carter and Little (2007:213) look at qualitative research as that which utilises text data (not numerical one), analysed in their textual form (rather than converted to numbers for analysis), with the aim of understanding aim, action and behaviour of a situation. This study looked at the ZANU PF political party's aim, action and behaviour. In this thesis, a qualitative approach has been preferred owing to the empirical demands of the topic. This approach, according to Rapley (2011), is on knowledge generation which in turn increases knowability. This approach makes no imposition on a prior theoretical position on data but allows one to make meaning hence conclusions.

According to Kuma (2011), the conclusions reached are not based on figures. Rather an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world is used. Furthermore, his research adopted an "interpretive naturalistic" (Lincoln, 2000:3) perspective of analysing political party politicians' discourses in order to remain faithful both to the knowledge generators and to the phenomenon investigated unlike quantitative research which uses numerical means (Mark, 1996), encompasses artificially created phenomena and which also uses "measurement to record and investigate aspects of social reality" (Bless and Hidson-Smith, 2000:156). The making sense or interpretation is based on how people bring meaning to the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). In this case, the operations of ZANU PF to hegemonise people forms the basis on my analysis and interpretation. This is in line with Denzin and Lincoln (2008) who point out that qualitative researchers' aim is to answer questions on the creation and giving of meaning to social experience. This was appropriate to this study as it enabled the

researcher to analyse meanings that were created from the discourses used by ZANU PF politicians in their engaging with Christian churches.

3.3 Research design: case study

A case study "entails the detailed exploration of a specific case (Bryman, 2012: 45). The thrust is on detail as the analysis should be intense. The study utilises the case study design, which is exploratory (Yin, 2011); as it specifically uses a case study of selected Zimbabwean newspapers to interrogate how ZANU PF appropriated religion in pursuit of hegemony. A research design is the process by which data are generated (Gerring, 2011). It is important to note that the research design has to be chosen in line with the demands of the research objectives and questions (Morse and Richards, 2002; Creswell, 2013). Kuma, (2011:230) states that a "research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problem." The researcher sought to find answers to how and why ZANU PF appropriated religious discourse during the crisis period. This is in line with what Flick et al, (2008:5) note:

> A research design is a plan for collecting and analysing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer whatever questions he or she has posed. The design of an investigation touches almost all aspects of the research from the minute detail of data collection to the selection of the techniques of data analysis.

A research design helps in the choice of methods. This brings out the advantage of using qualitative research which mostly lies in words, pictures and numbers. This is rooted in Mason's (2001:15) argument that qualitative research is a "systematic, rigorous, flexible, contextual and strategically conducted."

A case is "an object of interest in its own right" (Bryman, 2012:69). According to Yin (1984), a case study deals with current real-life contexts of a current issue or situation. It is argued that a large amount of complex qualitative data is produced by case studies (Robson, 1993). Stake (2010) also observes that a case study is about its complexity and particular nature. It is carried out because the concern of the researcher is "to elucidate the unique features of the case" (Bryman, 2012:69). This gives to meanings of case studies. The case study approach is systematic in nature. Bromley (1990:302) posits that a case study is a "systematic inquiry into an event or set of related events which aims to describe and explain the phenomenon of interest." According to Kuma

(2011), a case study ranges from an individual, a group or a community to a sub-group of a population among others. All these apply to my study as individual politicians fought for the cause of the party which constituted a sub-group. The economic hardships and political turmoil that occurred in Zimbabwe during the period under study threatened the hegemony by the ruling party that for all along almost enjoyed not very much contested acceptance by the majority of the people. In trying to regain waning hegemony ZANU PF proceeded to reaffirm alliances with various sections of society which included religious groups as well as the state controlled media. The instrumental case study provided a situation when ZANU PF was examined to provide insight into the phenomenon of religion and politics. Cases studied played a supportive role and facilitated my understanding of how religious and political discourses are intertwined. Further clarification is given by Bryman (2008:691), who argues that a case study is a "research design that entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case." Although many political parties exist in Zimbabwe, this study just focused on ZANU PF as it is the only party that enjoyed ruling the country for over three decades.

3.4 Unit of analysis

The newspaper articles were from different organisations, that is from the publicly and privately owned media. Five state controlled but publicly owned newspapers, *The Sunday Mail, The Herald, Chronicle, Sunday News,* and *Manica Post,* were selected, alongside four privately owned newspapers, *Financial Gazette, Daily News, NewsDay* and *Zimbabwe Independent*. It was because of this scenario that polarisation was rife in Zimbabwe at the time under study. Whereas polarisation is partisan messages from the media (Prior, 2013), Street (2001) refers to it as media reportage with partisan and propaganda bias. This can occur when the print media belong to two distinct camps of either being pro-government as state controlled or anti-government as private media. Street (2001:20) argues that where there is partisan bias "a cause is explicitly and deliberately promoted." The media take sides in a political controversy through subtle comments or explicit recommendations on which party or candidate to vote for.

Furthermore, Prior (2013:102) explains that polarisation is "ideologically slanted content". Although this is not always the case, it proved to be true during the period under study. The public media were apologists for the ruling government whereas the

private media seemed not to have anything positive to say about them. The combination of the two reflects a truer portrayal of Christian representation by the media than looking at papers from one stable would.

Coutts (2015:xxvii) argues that “church news is often non-news.” It is not usual for church news to hit the headlines. With this in mind, the reason for this wide selection of newspaper organisations is that religious news is not as popular as political news so no regular space is usually reserved for such news. However the rare combination of religion and politics is why the newspapers picked the subject which was far between. *The Sunday Mail, Sunday News* and *Manica Post* are weeklies while *The Herald* and *Chronicle* are dailies. From the other stable, the *Financial Gazette* and *Zimbabwe Independent* are weeklies while the *Daily News* and *NewsDay* are dailies. A community newspaper *The Star* from Mashonaland West province from where Mugabe comes, also formed part of the sample as it represented community newspapers in comparison to the rest of the corpus which is mainstream.

3.5 Sampling

This being a qualitative study, it relied on non-probability sampling techniques. In essence purposive sampling was the principal sampling method. The objectives of this study as well as questions laid out in Chapter 1 enabled the researcher to select relevant newspaper articles (which were my research population) in order to establish the way ZANU-PF has made use of the Christian religion as one of its many strategies of remaining in power. Keyton (2001) postulates that a research universe comprises all the things that bear the attributes which catch the interest of the researcher. Through quantitative content analysis and discourse analysis, newspaper articles from 2008 to 2013 were selected and later analysed to establish how ZANU PF politicians strategically appropriated religious discourse to align themselves to Christian churches in order to push forward certain agendas.

The study focuses on the period 2008 to 2013 as two extremes happened in ZANU PF during that time. In 2008, the party lost elections and was forced into a Government of National Unity (as discussed in Chapter 1). In 2013, the same party won elections resoundingly. The archival research method was mainly used as discussed later. There were many news stories on religion and politics but the researcher selected only a part of these in line with the notion that sampling is the process of selecting a few

from a larger group and “drawing conclusions that are an accurate representation” of the larger group (Frankel and Warren, 2006). It is all about studying a part to understand the whole. This is explained by Newbold (2002:35) who contends that sampling is used to create “a miniature replica of the population, reflecting the range of its characteristics.”

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select the original pool of articles. This type of sampling, which falls under non-probability sampling, is qualitative in nature. Going through all issues of newspapers in the six years under study would have created an unmanageable data set as well as not practical so my first step was to ask librarians in newspaper libraries for guidance. At The Herald House I was given files put together by library personnel with stories on religion and politics. I then systematically picked all stories on religion and ZANU PF politicians. I recorded two hundred and four such stories. This project is therefore based on the data the researcher managed to access.

Out of the 204 stories dealing with religious and political issues in six years systematically selected, only seventy nine articles which specifically covered ZANU-PF politicians and their relationship with the Christian religion were analysed as they were the ones relevant to my study. Every year had some articles chosen so that all the six years under study were catered for. Out of the two hundred and four, I then read and classified them by content specifically on ZANU PF politicians or those that carried biblical discourses in the title thereby discarding those that were not relevant to my study. Some articles were rejected as they were on traditional religion whereas this thesis focuses on Christianity. Some articles were on scandals in churches like rape cases which had nothing to do with ZANU PF so these were also rejected. Other articles concentrated on issues to do with false/fake prophets or gosprenuership[12] and had no direct link to party politics. The remaining articles were then put in thematic files labelled prophecy (19), peace (17), indigenisation and empowerment (22) and land (21). The least number was in 2008 while the politicians seemed to scale up their interactions as the most number was captured in 2013. However, more articles from

[12]Gosprenuership refers to prosperity gospel where worshippers receive the gospel that explains why they should be prosperous.

the public than from the private print media were used. The reasons behind this are interrogated in the findings and discussion chapters.

This thesis covers the period 2008 to 2013 which includes events that drew public attention and debate like elections, the anti-sanctions campaign, the period of the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the prophecies that surrounded the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe. These prophecies were given at most church gatherings or when church leaders were given a chance to discuss political issues in the country to guide people on placing their vote on Mugabe and ZANU PF as the ideal leader like Joshua or Moses. This is the period when voting for presidential, parliamentary, senate and local governance candidates all in one day known as harmonised elections were held; where in one (2008) ZANU PF was at its lowest in terms of domination and in another (2013) at its highest when it won resoundingly. This could also explain why there were more stories in 2013 than in 2008. When the party failed for once to be the ruling party they had to go back to the drawing board and restrategise and analyse where and how they had gone wrong. Then towards the 2013 elections, the party was in full force trying to regain lost favour from the electorate. Relevant data were plentiful and readily available so sampling was the best solution in coming up with a manageable number of newspaper articles. Stories that carried headlines with biblical discourses, church leaders and ZANU PF politicians donning church regalia were chosen for analysis. Below is a table with a summary of the newspaper articles that were eventually selected for analysis.

Table 1

Year	Number of articles
2013	23
2012	10
2011	14
2010	16
2009	9

2008	7
Total	79

The number of newspaper articles from *The Sunday Mail, The Herald, Chronicle, Sunday News, Manica Post,* (public) and *Financial Gazette, Daily News, NewsDay* and *Zimbabwe Independent* (private) media

Categorisation was used to divide original data sets into themes. The number of articles available allowed the researcher to create categories around emerging themes. In addition, popular events helped categorise the collected stories. The categories were based on both themes and events that emerged from selected stories. These included GNU, anti-sanctions campaign, elections, advocacy for peace prior, during and after the 2008 elections and indigenisation, empowerment and land reform programmes that took place in Zimbabwe.

Coming up with an appropriate sample is crucial as the quality of research generalisations is affected by the quality of the sample (Patten, 2004). All the articles that were sampled were critically analysed. Out of the 79 selected stories, some were repeats in that they were either the same story in different papers, a repeat in a weekly or a different story in the same edition and on the same date. Only those stories which mentioned or dwelt on issues to do with the three major areas were purposively selected to address the concerns of this study. Stories on prophecy in relation to elections or ZANU PF leadership were selected. These stories focused on a variety of issues which the researcher took as emerging themes like the use of prophecy to convince people to support and vote for ZANU PF during elections. As land was taken as a lucrative attraction for both church members and church leaders, it became a subject at most of these church gatherings or speeches by politicians, especially in relation to the anti-sanctions campaign. The other major emerging theme was peace before, during and after GNU as it was crucial to the implementation of government policies meant to spearhead economic and social development. This was also discussed in relation to the ZANU PF initiated indigenisation and empowerment policy.

3.6 Data collection method: archival research

Archival research was the main data gathering method employed in this research. The nature of this study made archival research appropriate. Mason (2006:107) contends that “archival data are the routinely gathered records of a society, community or

organisation." Robson (1993) notes that an archive is a record or group of records presented in the form of texts that have symbolic meanings. Both hard copy and online newspapers were accessed and categorised. Kuma (2011) notes that an archive is about categorising and organising older documents either digitally or manually. The online articles were also part of my corpus. The starting point was when I read articles in *The Sunday Mail* that articulated issues of Mugabe at church gatherings. I developed interest and started looking for such stories in others papers. It was purposive in that I only looked for stories on ZANU PF and Christianity. For hard copies I went to the archives and perused labelled stories by subject first and later by name.

Bound newspaper articles from *Chronicle* and *Sunday News* as well as those from *The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail* at Midlands State University were assessed and all Christian stories were picked for their potential as research material. Again the university library provided all newspapers from the private stable which included *Financial Gazette* and *Zimbabwe Independent*. Although the university library had all newspapers for the six years, they were filed by date and not subject. This is why I relied on newspaper organisations' libraries more where stories are also filed by subject. At these archives I suggested key words to the librarian and got stories not in any order. Thereafter, I then designed my own system of filing these stories for analysis by theme, date and event so that my analysis followed a chronological order. All stories that said anything on prophecy were put together. The same happened with those on peace and government initiatives. I separated indigenization and empowerment from land because there many stories on the land reform. This may be because the Zimbabwe' land reform programme has caused the country to be placed under sanctions.

First, I visited *The Herald* library where I received assistance in accessing newspaper articles from different media houses specifically on ZANU PF and religion which were photocopied and categorised in separate files. These ranged from front page stories, and those placed inside, feature stories, editorials and opinion pieces. The words "politics" and "religion" were used to search for relevant stories. I started with ZANU PF and religion. Later I asked the library assistant for Mugabe, Mujuru and other politicians written in the accessed stories. These were cut from different papers and dated then those on a politician put in their own file. Church names and church leaders were also used as search tools. I then photocopied the stories and later read them

highlighting relevant parts. I also visited the *Chronicle* library where I obtained a number of articles on the subjects of religion and politics. Religion included African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. Politics included politicians from ZANU PF and MDC among other political parties. I then narrowed the articles down to just ZANUPF and its engagement with Christianity. The online articles were also part of the corpus. I then took all articles (hard copy and online) on Christianity and politics.

I was guided by filed archives at *The Herald* and *Chronicle* (public) libraries as well as the Alpha Media Holdings (AMH) (private; *Daily News, NewsDay, Financial Gazette* and *Zimbabwe Independent*) library. These libraries archive all their published newspaper articles. When one gets to the library, one has to specifically state what one wants because storage of material is done under subject, for example religion. However, one has to be specific to say Christianity. There are also files for ministers and prominent figures thus if one needs a file of Joice Mujuru one gets that file despite an article of her being also in the Christianity file. The librarian also provides a soft copy of the article. One can easily search for all articles to do with Mujuru. Various files are searched to give a mixture of all files saved with the name Mujuru. She then used a curated archive and selected her stories within that corpus.

Through utilising these existing archives that included key words to this study (Christianity and politics), I came up with 79 out of 204 newspaper articles since 2008 when the Zimbabwean crisis reached its peak culminating in the Government of National Unity. The researcher also came up with a list of prominent ZANU PF leaders because the libraries also file stories by ministers and other prominent figures, so I used these to search for appropriate stories. Political profiles captured in the articles included Robert Mugabe (then president), Joice Mujuru (then vice president), John Landa Nkomo (late other vice president), Webster Shamhu (Then Minister of Information and Publicity), Oppah Muchinguri (then secretary of ZANU PF's women's league) and Saviour Kasukuwere (then ZANU PF political commissar) among others. In the process, she also came across other party politicians referred to in the actual stories which prompted the researcher to search for them. She also used prominent church leader profiles as search terms especially from the African Independent Churches (AICs) like Samuel Mutendi, Johannes Ndanga and Johannes Masowe among others. Through Google search, she accessed soft copies on these figures and their churches.

Loaded with my corpus, I went on to read in detail and analyse the stories in search of meanings. An interpretivism approach also known as interpretivist which involves the human interest element (Meyers, 2008) was mainly used to come up with meanings. Collins (2010) views interpretivism as concerned with construction of meaning which is subjective rather than objective as it is socially constructed (Carson et al, 2001). It is a strand in qualitative research where data collection and interpretation of findings are dependent upon the researcher's personal judgement. The interpretation of selected newspaper articles was influenced by my circumstances as a researcher (personal) and flexible (Carson et al, 2001). Reflexivity was part of my analysis. However, I do not assume to know all hence references to relevant literature.

Reflexivity is an aspect from which this research cannot shy away, as Schwandt (2003:302) notes, "reading and understanding is not a matter of setting aside, escaping, managing or tracking one's own standpoint, prejudgements, biases or prejudices." He points out that "understanding requires the engagement of one's biases" (Schwandt, 2003:302). As such,I may be biased in the interpretation of the selected media texts (Willig, 2001) due to the fact thatI am a resident in Zimbabwe and have witnessed events unfolding since 2008. As both a citizen and a worker since the late 1980s, my interpretation may be biased with what used to happen and the events of the period under study.

I witnessed and got indirectly involved in the mass stay aways that were common in the late 1990s to early 2000s. I felt the brunt of the economic meltdown both as a worker and as a parent in how things changed from the late1990s to where they were during the crisis and after. The economic hardships led to the human capital flight (*Financial Gazette*, 5 February 2010) where people fled from Zimbabwe to neighbouring countries and overseas to look for greener pastures. Although I did attempt, I failed to join the brain drain where professionals crossed borders and offered their services (Mutume, 2003; Chikanda, 2004; Chimanikire, 2005), which has put a strain to the country due to skills shortages. All this human capital flight was in an attempt to earn a living as in Zimbabwe the currency had lost value. I also witnessed the uplifting of churches and church leaders by politicians when situations were dire. Interpretation of texts is influenced by all these variables so the conclusions of this research are reflexive of my experiences. However, the systematic methodology of

discourse analysis that I used ensured that the study was as objective as possible rather than solely being subjective.

3.7 Data analysis methods

To analyse the sampled corpus, the researcher used qualitative content analysis, specifically discourse analysis of the written texts and semiotic analysis of images. An approach incorporating discourse analysis of the selected news articles and semiotic analysis of images was used. The gathered printed material was subjected to discourse analysis in order to understand how this relationship between religion and politics is vital in society. Discourse analysis of the newspaper articles under scrutiny was also done to try and understand how persuasive discourse can be. As a result, this study examines the discourse and pictures used in order to analyse how the media represented issues to do with the appropriation of religion by political elites.

3.7.1 Discourse analysis

I employed discourse analysis because a crucial relationship exists between media and discourse. Both political and religious communication is meant to appeal to people and attract as many people as possible. Although this may be done differently, the major reason is the same. As a result they may borrow from each other. It is through the media that we learn about these merging political and religious discourses. Pitout in Fourie (2007:276) argues, “All forms of social and cultural expression are discourses. These discourses are produced in struggles between different people and different groups.” The focal point of this study is on discourse hence the adoption of discourse as part of the data analysis methods. Discourse is at the centre of textual construction which can be identified through the language used. Phillips and Hardy (2002:3) posit:

> We define a discourse as an interrelated set of texts, and the practices of their production, dissemination, and reception, that brings an object into being…In other words, social reality is produced and made real through discourses, and social interactions cannot be fully understood without reference to the discourses that give them meaning.

Discourse is related to language and representation. Stubbs (1983:1) defines discourse as “language above the sentence or above the clause” meaning there is more to discourse than just language. What is crucial to this thesis is just not the

biblical language that ZANU PF politicians used when campaigning or addressing people or that which church leaders used to their congregants but how they used it and to serve what purposes. Punch (2005:221) raises the same sentiments when he talks of language as looking “above its words, sentences and linguistic features” and argues that focus should be “on the way language is used, what it is used for, and the social context in which it is used.” If religious language is used at political gatherings or political discourse is brought to the church gathering then one wonders why such language is used and to achieve what goals. Through social interaction, people tend to recognise things or make sense of situations from the familiar discourses used. Biblical discourse also helps people understand what God requires from them.

To understand discourse, it is important to look at language first. This is because discourse is a way of thinking that is expressed through language. Fasold (1990:65) argues that “the study of discourse is the study of language use.” It is important to find out what language was used by ZANU PF to hegemonise people so as to appear as the dominant party. Scott (2016) argues that language is a system of communication which comprises words, signs and sounds. Larry (2001) notes that discourse is codified language or vocabulary that is used in a given social practice like legal and medical discourses and in this case political and religious discourses. Sloganeering is part of political communication that was often used at church gatherings. It is through language that discourse is constructed. The discourses analysed in this study are from print media representations. Mita, Dewi and Hendra (2013) aver that discourse is the use of language in both written and spoken communication.

Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak (1997:258) write of “language as a social practice” where the context in which the language is used is of paramount importance as it is influenced by context as well as values and beliefs of a people. This is the reason why periodisation is important to this study as the time of the Zimbabwean crisis was a time of turmoil in terms of the social practices present then. After attaining political independence, the discourse then was of taking over from the Smith led government to Zimbabwe. Discourses of liberation through the gun shifted to economic empowerment. Later on, it changed to discourses of traitors and patriots. Language of puppets and sanctions as a way of discrediting the political parties that opposed the ZANU PF led government were adopted. It became the discourse of sovereignty, national integrity and that Zimbabwe would never be a colony again.

Alan Bryman (2008: 508) posits that discourse "emphasises the role of language as a power resource that is related to ideology and socio-cultural change." It is difficult to separate hegemony and ideology from discourse as all denote power. The changing political and economic situation in Zimbabwe warranted a change in use of persuasive language. It changed from celebrating being in power to appealing to stay in power. Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that all language is legitimation so ZANU PF's strategy of using religious language as part of political communication was a form of legitimation.

In order to understand how this happened, this study used Wodak and Michael Meyer's (2012:3) argument on discourse analysis as having "the common interests in de-mystifying ideologies and power through the systematic and *retroductable* investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual)." Analysing the selected articles brought out what the media wrote through quoting politicians and church leaders speaking to the people. The main reason was to gain favour from the electorate thereby creating a strong support base that would legitimise the party's prolonged stay in power through the ballot. This is in line with Jorgensen and Phillips (2002:1) who define discourse as "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)." ZANU PF wanted people to understand it as the only party with a leadership that would never allow Zimbabwe to be recolonised.

Discourse is contested and contestable as it is a powerful mechanism of social control. Crucial to this study is the relation of discourse to power. Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton (2001:2) write of "discourse of power" where they note that "the term 'discourses' not only becomes a count noun, but further refers to a broad conglomeration of linguistic and non-linguistic social practices and ideological assumptions that together construct power." Foucault (1976:93) argues that "basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse." Discourse is power as it is a structuring feature of social life. This thesis analyses its selected newspaper articles through looking at both linguistic and non-linguistic social practices to understand how ZANU PF politicians made efforts to remain in power.

The relationship between religion and politics manifest through discourse. The ideological underpinnings are evident in the discourse used. To explain ideology, Teun van Dijk (2012: 79) states:

> Dominance, defined as power, is often based on, and legitimated by ideologies, that is, by the fundamental social beliefs that organise and control the social representations of groups and their members. …ideologies are typically expressed and reproduced by discourse.

This describes the scenario under investigation in this study. People's religious beliefs influence the discourses that appeal to them. It is through the media that one learns about these merging political and religious discourses. Whisnant (2012) is of the view that discourses are patterns of language that specifically tell us something about the person speaking the language, his/her culture, the network of social institutions that the person is caught up in and his beliefs. It is because of all this that my research used discourse analysis as a data analysis tool.

Discourse analysis (DA) is both a theory and a method (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002). Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton (2001:1) contend that discourse analysis is "a rapidly growing and evolving field" within many academic disciplines. Discourse analysis falls under qualitative content analysis which is about meanings and their association to messages through language. According to Mayring (2000), content can be differentiated into main ideas and themes of the text, which is the primary content and context information which is latent or manifest content. Latent content is the hidden meaning that can be revealed through the interpretation of signs or associations. This is another way of discussing discourse. Both primary and latent content are analysed in this study. The thesis sought to explore how ZANU-PF made use of discourse during the crisis and how this involved the power of ideology.

Norman Fairclough (1992) notes that power and ideology shape discourse analysis, meaning that discourse is language used in context to meet certain demands. Discourse analysis views texts as artefacts that do not exist in isolation, in that both socio-political and socio-historic contexts contribute to the production and interpretation of texts, meaning they are crucial aspects of the analysis (Fairclough 1992). Keyan Tomaselli (1996:40) posits that a discourse "is an elaborated system of meaning which is confined to a particular group of people in a specific area of interest, doing particular ideological work." This alludes to the fact that discourse helps to

establish the relationship between media messages and readers influenced by social practices.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methods and methodologies I used to investigate the ZANU PF political party's aim, action and behaviour in relation to Christianity. It also discussed a qualitative case study based on secondary data as my corpus was from the archives and not interviews. Utilising the case study method helped the researcher engage with party politics with focus being on ZANU PF. In this chapter, the research design of a case study helped in the choice of methods as well as to keep the study focused.

Purposively sampled articles assisted to investigate the research questions. The chapter also discussed archival research as the data collection method mainly used. Curated archives from *The Herald* and *Chronicle* played a major role in finding relevant stories. A mixed methods approach was discussed under the data analysis section. These were discourse analysis for news stories and semiotic analysis for images accompanying some of the stories.

Interpretivism was discussed in line with how newspaper articles that dealt with the two major issues of Christianity and politics were analysed and interpreted based on my own experiences. Interpretivism led to the discussion of reflexivity which greatly influenced interpretation. This interpretation fed into the broader issues of party politics and issues of discourse, ideology, hegemony and power.

Chapter 4: Prophecy as an endorsement of political leadership and justification of clinging onto power

4.1 Introduction

This chapter demonstrates the interface between religion and politics, by exploring how the press framed and presented the relationship between biblical prophecy and politics during the political and economic crisis of Zimbabwe from the year 2008 to 2013. The chapter analyses newspaper articles on prophecy or prophetic messages from the media that were both pro and anti-ZANU PF. These two irreconcilable media positions, portrayed prophetic messages by church leaders and other people in relation to the political situation in the country at that time. The argument advanced by the chapter is that biblical or created prophecy was used by the ZANU PF political leadership to justify its hold onto power against public disgruntlement as evidenced by the existence of various opposition political parties in the country culminating in the formation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) during that period.

The objective of this chapter is therefore threefold; first to show how church leaders prophesied Mugabe as a God-given leader anointed by God, second, how prophecy was used to appeal for votes during elections and last, how prophecy was used by church leaders to endorse political leaders. As a contribution to the existing body of literature, the chapter broadens the assertion that all religions are mediated (Birgit Meyer, 2009). It shows how the print media framed how ZANU PF politicians and church leaders aligned to the ruling party used religious discourse to portray ZANU PF as being the 'true' and legitimate party which should continue to rule the country. As a second contribution, this chapter portrays how church leaders instrumentalised biblical prophecy to access social and economic power from the political elite.

This chapter is organised into four sections. The first section focuses on prophecy as a concept as well as its controversies and implications to the consumers. The second section explores how the African Initiated Churches (AICs) appropriated biblical prophecy during the colonial era to give hope to the oppressed black people. The third section presents and discusses the findings of the chapter and is finally followed by the conclusion.

4.2 Conceptualising prophecy: controversies and implications

Many definitions of prophecy abound. The term prophecy is assumed to have originated with the Israelites specifically by Moses (Anderson, 2014). The underlying assumption was the belief that prophets speak on behalf of God. According to Mare (1966), prophecy is the ability to foretell or see/have visions of the future. Piper (1990:1) views it as a "Spirit-prompted, Spirit-sustained utterance that is rooted in a true revelation". Also, Gorman (2004:275) defines prophecy as "an inspired word of instruction and or exhortation that addresses the community in the language of the people." Makwinja in *The Herald* (14 December, 2011) wrote, "God in his infinite mercy presented to the humankind a series of informative and guiding personalities. These individuals serve to carry his message of humankind. Many of these individuals were prophets." Furthermore Gunda and Machingura (2013:24) view a prophet as a man of insight to the will and purpose of God". This suggests that he or she can see what others cannot see. However, it should be noted that prophecy has lost much of its originality in the contemporary world and is used in ways that suit the prophets rather than what God is saying to people. This is important as findings reveal that some prophecies appeared as creations of religious people or ZANU PF sympathisers.

Piper's (1990:10) assertion that, "Prophecy is a regulated message or report in human words usually made to the gathered believers based on a spontaneous, personal revelation from the Holy Spirit for the purpose of edification, encouragement, consolation, conviction or guidance but not necessarily free from a mixture of human error" is closer to how prophecy is practiced today. The regulation of how the prophecy would manifest would depend with the context and it is at this stage where ideological underpinnings are evident. It could be to warn people of impending danger, offer advice on the way forward or explain why things were happening the way they did. Eckhardt (2013:1) concurs with Piper (1990) when he notes, "A prophet is one who speaks words from God that build up: He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3)". According to these definitions, the major purpose of prophecy is to edify or build up man but this seemed not to be the case when prophets behaved badly through raping women or stealing people's money as evidenced in Zimbabwe. This showed how prophecy could be used for personal benefits rather than edification.

The circumstance under which a prophetic message is given plays a major role. David Bishau (2013:81) explains that the "context of the prophetic message is a socio-political and economic one." This brings about the complexity of prophecy as it can be used as a social, political or economic control mechanism. In their day-to-day living, people experience strange happenings and turn to prophecy for understanding. Prophecies come with rules and regulations which one has to adhere to in order to realise results such as what to do (for example prayer and fasting) to avert danger. It calls for discipline. In this way prophecy becomes a control mechanism as it guides people from a social perspective. For example whereas biblical prophets "were challenging people of their own world, especially their political rulers, to remain faithful to God's commandment and or repent and turn back to God if they had strayed" Just (undated) points out that contemporary prophets tell people who God has chosen as the ideal leader and which political party people should vote into power. Chitando et al (2013) note that in the contemporary world the term 'prophets' is used interchangeably with the term 'men of God'. These people claim to see beyond the ordinary. By identifying with biblical prophecy, the church leadership and politicians gain favor from people. This belief in the strength of the supernatural and spirituality especially appealed to the AICs as it formed the anchor of their religion on which self-acclaimed prophets capitalised.

Although there are various interpretations of prophecy, this chapter focuses on biblical prophecy which has been adopted by AICs as well as well as politicians aligned to the ruling party ZANU PF who masquerade as prophets to the distressed electorate.

These contemporary prophets take their cue from biblical prophets. Just (n.d.:3) believes that the messages these prophets transmit are "not only or primarily about the future, but about the past and present as well. They provide interpretation from God's perspective-about past events, present circumstances as well as future possibilities." In the same vein, Bess (1960: 2) argues, "prediction (of the future) was not the 'larger part of prophecy', it was as much the prophet's responsibility to interpret correctly the past and the present." Contemporary prophets also use the history of the country to explain the present and predict the future as dictated by the Holy Spirit.

Although real prophets may still exist, presently, some church leaders and ordinary people like academics claim to be prophets. These people have the potential to

insinuate who is and who is not an ideal leader from their prophetic messages. People who believe in the word of prophecy will then respond accordingly as they have great reverence for their leaders. Church leaders who are politically inclined then pass on their beliefs and ideologies to their believers in the guise of prophetic messages. Some church leaders clearly portray their partisan stance by paying allegiance to the government. These churches usually try to identify with government programmes and projects as evidenced by white garment apostolic sects who usually grace state funerals and political rallies conducted by the ruling party.

However there are some churches which claim to be apolitical or non-partisan. One such example in Zimbabwe is the United Family International Church (UFIC) founded and led by a respected and popular man who is a trained pastor (Emmanuel Makandiwa) who refers to himself as a 'prophet'. He was quoted saying, "*Ini handisapote party. Handibvumidzwe neshoko raMwari.* (I don't support a political party. This is not allowed by the word of God.) The church is a Government on its own. My duty as a prophet is to pray for leadership. I follow orders and I am obedient to those in authority" (*The Herald*, 5 August 2013). Here the emphasis is on the duties of a prophet which are to pray and obey those who are in political leadership.

Merton (1968) points out that prophecy can be both positive and negative depending on the expected impact. Merton (1968:477) further points out that "public definitions of a situation (prophecies or predictions) become an integral part of the situation and affect subsequent developments." Whether these prophetic messages are genuine or not is not the focus of this study. Lippy and Williams (2010:1206) note:

> When the promises of religion, as they are meted out by institutions and by 'religious specialists', are insufficient to meet expectations and to quiet the fears, confusion, pain and agonies of people on the margins of power, the meanings of religious symbols can be redirected, reinterpreted, or conjured anew to fill the gap between what ought to be and what is.

The implication here is that prophecy is not neutral or free from biases or influences. There is need to interrogate all prophecy in order to understand why it was given in the first place. Even religious people can be influenced by social, political or economic situations to give prophecies that explain or warn people about what they purport God is saying to people through them. In actual fact, in most cases these prophecies relate

to familiar situations which people relate to as these are mostly embraced in their social, political and economic domains. Prophetic messages are meant to advise, warn, explain, console, encourage and foretell. As messengers of God, prophets claim to speak without fear.

In order to remain in power against widespread opposition during the 2008-2013 politico-economic crisis, the ZANU PF party strategised and utilised biblical prophecy to manipulate and convince the electorate why the party should remain in power. Some politicians or church members predicted victory of a particular party whilst others encouraged people to vote for certain candidates as this was the wish of God.

Given this scenario, not only biblical prophecy but an array of religious discourse was used to authenticate certain politicians' or church leadership's political opinions during the Zimbabwean politico- economic crisis. A case in point is when some politicians gave prophetic messages (for example Mujuru) and incorporated religious discourse to authenticate certain politicians' or party position. It appears 'pure' prophecy was no longer the case but reconstructed prophecy carried the day. Lippy and Williams (2010:1206) support this assertion by pointing out that religions "are shaped and reshaped in the struggle for political power."

Biblical prophecy and religious discourse were used by the leadership of the AICs to find favour with the ruling party. Politicians also referred to prophecy to entrench their hold onto power. As an arm of religion, biblical prophecy can also be shaped and reshaped by those vying for political power. It is malleable and can be manipulated by the prophets to achieve desired outcomes. Some church leaders (pastors, founders or elders) are politically aligned and as prophets tend to give prophetic messages that are sympathetic to the political parties they support. This endears them to the political leadership and in the process get them rewarded with socio-economic benefits such as farms or money for projects from the politicians (see article on Muchinguri later in the chapter).

Prophecy was therefore instructive. This is in line with Kruger, Lubbe and Steyn (2009:7) who note, "One wants to know, feel and act in a coherent way not in conflict with oneself, one's fellows, and one's natural and social environment. Religion gives salvation." In order to be in sync with their church doctrine, church members would mostly agree with prophetic messages especially given by their leaders or people held

in high esteem. Although these have the mandate to champion social justice, some no longer use prophecy for that purpose but to propagate their individual or political ideologies suggesting that they assume the role of being tools of the ruling hegemony.

The way the press relates to religion is shown when it is revealed that the church is "the conscience of society and the heartbeat of morality" (*The Sunday Mail*, July 29–August 4 2012). This makes the church an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1972). People are molded by their church doctrine. In the same vein the media are used by the state as an ideological tool (Althusser 1972) as it is their representation that further propagates the cause of those who sponsor them. The economic meltdown and political crisis in the country at that time led to the popularity of prophetic messages as they resonated on the expectations of the people and how they were socialised. As a result the prophetic messages given during this era denoted how religion worked socially in a way which fed on and responded to mass anxieties like political leadership, poverty and unemployment among others. Mostly, the messages were meant to provide hope to a distressed people which goes along what Chitando et al. (2013:10) argue in their statement that the Bible "provides solace".

Chitando et al. (2013:10) further posit, "When the Bible speaks, Zimbabwean Christians listen intently. It will not matter that it will speak in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways: the Bible would have spoken." In the AICs, prophecy comes as an answer to people's queries and anxieties about their life and future. The AICs Christian churches' dogma is unshakeable as it is grounded firmly in the Bible or church doctrine and politicians are very much aware of this. The prophetic messages of that time tried to naturalise or normalise an era that was fraught with problems that directly affected people with biblical oriented explanations so as to appeal to the hundreds of thousands of Christian followers as a way of feeding on and responding to their plight.

4.3 African Initiated Churches and biblical prophecy

This section discusses the print media's portrayal of prophetic messages from religious leaders, politicians and academics who alluded to the bible to present their arguments. It also discusses the African Initiated Churches (AICs)'s appropriation of biblical prophecy as a panacea to black people's oppression.

Having been birthed on such a foundation, most of the AIC's attitude towards colonialism is in sync with former president Mugabe's stance that Zimbabwe will never be a colony again. The African cultural norms are drawn into their modes of worship as well as practices. They prefer being named 'Spiritual Churches' (Ayegboyin and Ishols, 1997) which literally translated mean '*Chechi dzemweya*' portraying that they believe in spiritual power. It is then easy to use biblical and prophetic allusion to convince these church followers to support ZANU PF as the revolutionary party that would cater for their welfare.

AICs are also known as prophetic movements which use prayer, healing and prophecy as driving forces among others to recruit membership. This is closely linked to black people's cultural belief in their ancestors for advice and or warning about the future (Chavunduka, 1994). This is further supported by Kruger, Lubbe and Steyn (2009:13) who also point out that Christianity and African Traditional Religion have met, merged and to some extent forged links. The link is that both allude to spirits having power to guide the living. People who believed in ancestral protection would understand the Holy Spirit speaking through their church leaders. On their formation in the colonial era an outstanding characteristic of the AICs was their belief in the power of the Holy Spirit. Prophecy is religious communication peculiar to these AICs. "The advent of prophets in Zimbabwean Christianity can be traced back to the early decades of the 20th century, during the period that African Initiated Churches were founded and planted across Zimbabwe" (Gunda and Machingura, 2013:15). It was the belief of these churches that the Holy Spirit's manifestation was particularly seen in visions, interpretation of dreams and prophetic utterances (Ayegboyin and Ishols, 1997). This usually happened during worship services and portrayed the indigeneity and Africanness of these churches which was glaringly absent in the mainstream churches. In the post-colonial era the healing powers of these churches attracted a lot of followers who had either lost trust in the modern medicines or had no economic power to access them. The 2007–8 period was socially, economically and politically harsh for Zimbabwe as pointed out by Chitando, Gunda and Kugler (2009:9) who state that "Zimbabwe during that era was under the grip of a 'prophetic craze". The religious dogma of these people and their abnormally high numbers draw the attention of politicians who then try to manipulate them.

Biblical prophecy became the much sought after commodity during Zimbabwe's politico-economic crisis and gained a lot of prominence. The prominence of prophecy was evidenced by various newspaper headlines. The *Sunday News* 6-12 December, 2012) carried a headline entitled "Bulawayo church hosts prophetic conference." Furthermore cases of people involved in prophetic scandals also escalated where some women were abused because they believed in the prophecies given by 'men of the cloth'. Headlines such as "Self-proclaimed prophet rapes woman" (*Sunday News*, 13–19 December 2009) raised heated debates among the readership. Young people were also not left behind in the prophetic storm that had gripped the nation as evidenced by headlines like "Young prophet takes Bulawayo by storm" (*Chronicle*, 10 March 2012). Fortune seekers had their monies stolen from them by people who claimed to be gifted in prophecy and foretold the future. "Prophet threatens to burn patient's house over credit", *Sunday News*, 4–10 March 2012) and "Prophet convicted for extortion" *Sunday News,* 18–24 March 2012). Some of these prophets were scandalous as evidenced by "Pastor accused of raping two married congregants" (*The Herald*, 18 October 2013) among other newspaper headings. All these stories showed prophets misbehaving which was in direct contrast to what Vengai (2013:38) argues, "Prophets were understood or understood themselves as social and religious critics in order to bring about reform." Church people in social problems appeared to place their trust in prophets who then took advantage of their precarious situations. This blind belief in prophets at a micro level could also be witnessed at a macro level. Instead of just linking prophecy to social issues, the crisis saw prophecy extending to politics where it was given to justify why a candidate had to be voted into power.

The political climate marred by violence was not very friendly to most Zimbabweans in the periods prior, during and post elections especially the 2008 one except maybe for just the perpetrators. Many people suffered the violence and some even lost lives. Makumbe (2009:98) reiterates this by noting, "Political violence is, sadly, becoming part and parcel of the Zimbabwean political culture." As a result, biblical explanations were sought. To a greater extent the public press (*The Herald* and *The Sunday Mail*) mostly brought out this interesting relationship between prophecy and elections as these papers have a wider reach and are quite popular even in the urban areas (ZAMPS, 2016) which are MDC strongholds. To a lesser extent, the privately owned press (*NewsDay* and *Zimbabwe Independent*) expressed their oppositional

sentiments on how prophecy was linked to ZANU PF. During the turbulent times under discussion, the press framed and represented the relationship between prophecy and elections in different light which was glaringly partisan.

Selection of news is a prerogative of media organisations. Fourie (2007:134) contends, “A reportage will thus be ‘coloured’ (structured) in such a way as to reflect the newspaper’s own views and attitude about a political issue, a politician, a news event.” The press basically reported on the pro-ZANU-PF and anti-opposition prophecies to drive their point home that the ruling party was the ‘correct’ party to vote for. There is bias in the reportage as no anti-ZANUPF or pro-opposition prophecy was reported on. However, the privately owned media come in to frame these prophecies in a satirical way. The 2013 harmonised elections were referred to as a spiritual warfare (*NewsDay,* 1 August 2013) as political parties through the media appealed to the spirituality of the electorate. However, hardly any prophecies contrary to the sitting government were reported. This on its own shows how the press deliberately chose to write what made ZANUPF favorable, hence a party of choice while demonising the opposition parties particularly MDC.

The given prophetic messages were on who was eligible to lead Zimbabwe and why. Political leadership was put under ‘spiritual’ scrutiny and received or failed to receive approval as potential country leaders. Kudzai Biri and Lovemore Togarasei (2013:81) concur to what Chitando et al. (2009) say when they note, “The crisis years in Zimbabwe saw the rise of many prophets.” This cascaded to political campaigns where prophetic messages were said in light of the prevailing political situation. Although there were over 20 stories from my data corpus on prophets from both publicly and privately owned newspapers, only those that discussed issues of politics and prophets were utilised.

4.4 Analysis of findings

In this section, the researcher discusses prophetic statements that suggested that Mugabe was a God-given leader, how prophecy was used to appeal to votes and the role of prophecy in the endorsement of political leadership considering how they appeared in 18 of the newspaper articles from my data set. The analysis is thematically presented and in each theme, the stories are chronologically presented and each story

analysed in detail. In the process of analysis some stories which are not necessarily chronological are used as evidence to explain or elaborate a raised issue.

4.4.1 Mugabe, a God-given leader

In order for ZANU PF to be accepted as a party anointed by God, it entrenched itself by interpreting the Constitution to suit its supporters. Oppah Muchinguri, a ZANU PF politician who was then the ZANU PF's national secretary for women affairs was quoted saying, "I am happy that you have remained resolute in your Christian beliefs despite the attack you are getting from some members of the public that you are violating women and children's rights. We are behind you in everything that you will be doing" (*Manica Post*, 12 March 2010. Muchinguri was addressing members of the Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect at the Musangano Wegore in Mutasa district on projects aimed at empowering women. The story was accompanied by a photograph with members dressed in all white and seated on the ground. From their head gear most appeared to be women. However, Muchinguri seemed to be addressing men. The attack was being directed at the church leadership by the public. The 'we' used by Muchinguri was referring to the government. This suggested that the church leadership, being aware of the backing from the government, gave prophetic messages that would help this government to remain in power.

Muchinguri did not condemn the polygamous practice of AICs. The paper went on to write, "….no-one should attack vapostori for having many wives." The framing here portrayed the government accepting both monogamous and polygamous marriages. Muchinguri was quoted saying, "What you are doing is recognized under the laws of this country. No-one has a right to stop you from having as many wives as you want." In the same vein, *The Sunday Mail* (18 July, 2010) quoted Mugabe saying, "Our Constitution allows polygamy. We will not force people into monogamous marriages. *Inga muBhaibheri chaimo zvirimo. Solomon haana kungopiwa upfumi chete asi nevakadzi vakawanda.*" (It is even there in the Bible. Solomon was not just given wealth but also many women.) This was hegemonising the church members so that they would take comfort in their practice as was accepted by the government. It would then appear normal to marry many wives as even the Constitution and laws of the country supported this practice. This would be situation where politicians sought to convince voters on their party standpoint (McQuail, 2010). This line of thinking by

ZANU PF helped the party gain favour from the AICs and may have influenced the kind of prophecy given.

4.4.1.1 Leaders are chosen by God

Most articles suggested that Christians believe that leaders are God ordained and the ballot only endorses what is predetermined. That appeared to be the common discourse used. Although there have been plenty of instances when Christian churches have spoken against leaders[13], the AICs in particular seem to believe that all leaders come from God based on Romans 13 verses 1-2 which partly reads "there is no authority except by God". This is both ideology and hegemony at play. People then "reorient their thinking" (Chong and Druckman, 2007:104) in what is publicized. Based on the argument that Mugabe was the God-given ruler of Zimbabwe, elder Lieb Umah Daniel Mashaya of the Johanne Marange Church spoke that "Mugabe's reign fulfilled the prophecy made by the leader of the church, High Priest Noah Taguta in 1957" (*The Sunday Mail*, 18 July 2010). This came in to confirm the 1934 prophecy done by Shonhiwa Masedza also known as Johanne Masowe. Mashaya was quoted saying, "Our High Priest had a vision of a black cock fighting a white cock in 1957. The black cock triumphed over the white one." Unlike the direct prophecy from the founder of Johanne Masowe that Mugabe would rule for life, this prophecy from Taguta came in the form of a riddle. The black cock symbolised the locals while the white one referred to the white Rhodesians. Mashaya went on to give an interpretation of this prophecy. "The black cock represents President Mugabe and his reign was foretold years back. President Mugabe is not just a leader of Zimbabwe but Africa as a whole and his visit to our shrine is a fulfilment of the 1957 prophecy." An analysis of this discourse paints a picture of Mugabe being the only appropriate candidate for the highest office. This was at Mafararikwa in Marange district where Mugabe had addressed "more than 200 000 pilgrims from across Africa". They had come for their annual Passover. Mashaya gave the prophetic message at this occasion. The reference to the 1957 prophecy was used to add weight to why Mugabe was the chosen leader. It naturalised Mugabe's stay in power.

[13]In Nazi German The New York Times, 1985) and during apartheid in South Africa (Lodberg, 2008; BBC News, 1998), some churches spoke against their political leaders.

The symbol of the cock was used by ZANU PF when it came into power in 1980. This cock alluded to in the prophecy signified political supremacy. ZANU PF's use of the emblem of the cock is evidenced in other articles like when the *Zimbabwe Daily* (7 December, 2010) in an article titled "Zanu PF Launches Operation *Jongwe mumusha*" wrote, "Zanu PF uses a cock as its symbol and Mugabe, 87 next February, is often referred to as the cock (*jongwe*) by his supporters." Again the then Zambian President, Michael Sata who officiated at the opening of the 53rd Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) in Bulawayo was quoted saying, "*Pamberi nejongwe* (Forward with the cock-the Zanu PF party symbol)" (*NewsDay*, 28 April 2012). In the prophecy of two cocks fighting there was an interplay between religious and political discourse in that a cock representing supremacy was used to explain a prophecy of Mugabe being the anointed ruler. Again prophecy of the fight excluded women and youths. However, this interpretation is not clear on whether the manifestation of the prophecy was on Mugabe ruling for life or his visit to the church shrine.

Besides giving the prophecy and interpretation, Mashaya also expressed the futility of not supporting Mugabe when he was quoted saying, "Leaders are anointed by God and all those who will try to get in power through chicanery will not make it" (*The Sunday Mail,* 18 July 2010). The discourse used by Mashaya showed finality or a closed meaning that without God's anointing one would never get into the prestigious office which Foucault (1980) argued reinforces and protects power. Mashaya as a prophet confirmed what Brueggenmann (1968:84) points out that a prophet is a 'watcher' and goes on to say, "Based on the function of the sentry who warned of the coming enemy and enabled the city to prepare, the image was taken over for covenant faith so that the watcher was one who warned of approaching doom and summoned the faithless to repent while there was still time." Important to note is that the sentry had a purpose for giving out the warning. Prophecy, among other purposes, also serves to warn people of impending danger so that they could pray to avert the disaster. Likewise, the church elder's prophetic message seemed to warn those who opposed Mugabe. Having multi political parties and vying for presidency by opposition parties was dismissed as 'chicanery'. The church elder revealed and supported his church leader's prophecy and at the same time endorsed Mugabe as God-given.

4.4.1.2 Prophecy of leadership and wisdom

Every leader is expected to be endowed with wisdom. *The Sunday Mail* (4–10 November 2012:4) ran a story under local news titled “President Mugabe wise, God-given”. The newspaper used prophetic wording in the headline to set the agenda that intellectuals can assume a prophetic role. The wisdom of Mugabe has a biblical allusion. Christians know that wisdom comes from God as the great biblical king Solomon did not ask for wealth but wisdom to rule his people. As a result, this God given wisdom made him a very popular ruler. Likewise, the implication seemed to be that if Mugabe was a gift to Zimbabwe from God, then he would be a great leader like Solomon. It is with this in mind that the use of the word ‘wise’ in the title suggested that Mugabe was not just a leader but had God-given wisdom hence the encouragement to vote for him. The paper quoted a South African academic, Professor Chris Landsberg, a political science lecturer at Stellenbosch University who urged Zimbabweans to pray for Mugabe so he would be given more years of wisdom and leadership. Landsberg explained that Mugabe had made many people in the continent realise their dreams. This was a ZANU PF ideology that Mugabe was a leader par excellence. Landsberg was not just mentioned by name but his occupation was also mentioned to give credibility to his prophecy. What is problematic in this report is imagining what had led a senior lecturer to be involved is such debates. The paper’s use of an academic was meant to give validity and credibility to what he was saying as a senior lecturer would not just speak but base his argument on research. However, using him as an authority may have on one hand strengthened the prophetic messages on Mugabe being the true and natural leader of this country at the time but on the other hand, people know that being an academic does not necessarily justify all one’s statements as true especially when disguised as prophetic. The paper quoted Landsberg (2012) saying:

> Look at them (Zimbabweans), Mugabe gave them all the wisdom and education they thirstily wanted soon after 1980. Some people think there is political opposition to Mugabe’s rule in Zimbabwe and some of us even believe that Mugabe is hated by his people. Only foolish people will believe this.

From the title of the story, Landsberg is presented as a seer or just an observer from afar. As an academic who knows the value of education, he celebrated Mugabe’s move to educate his people. This was meant to then make Mugabe a great leader

worth voting for because as a wise man he championed wisdom acquired through education. The use of the words ‘wise’, ‘God-given’ and ‘thirstily’ in the Landsberg article can be biblically explained where true wisdom is said to come from God like that of King Solomon. Biblical frames were used to convince the reader. Again God-given is synonymous with anointing. There is talk of thirsting for the word and the way it is used paints a picture of people who were desperate for education denied by the colonialists. However, this is no longer true as Zimbabwe is highly ranked on African countries (*The Financial Gazette*, 14 May 2015; UNESCO, 2013) with the most educated people. Mugabe himself encouraged the apostolic sects to educate their children. He was quoted speaking to more than two hundred thousand pilgrims from across Africa at Mafararikwa saying, “Every child should have at least 11 years of education. You should ensure your children attend school for them to have a better comprehension of the Bible. Our children should be well mannered” (*The Sunday Mail*, 18 July 2010). Learning just to understand the Bible is encouraging people to conform to the dictates of the Bible, which in this case was an advantage to Mugabe and his party. Landsberg’s reference to the Zimbabwe education history confirmed the good work done for the country by Mugabe since independence hence retain him in power.

The title of this article was misleading as it suggested a prophetic message but the content was very political and did not constitute a prophecy. In other words, the article was not a prophetic message at all as there was nothing religious in it. Landsberg is not a prophet but the paper used his lecture “The tragedy of the South African unrest and the future of Africa” which gave a prediction of what Zimbabweans should do to retain Mugabe as their leader. From this title one would not be wrong to presume that Zimbabwe was the future of Africa. From a Christian perspective, just mentioning prayer and God does not make this message prophetic so people who anticipated a prophetic message after reading the title would have been disillusioned. Just this last statement in the whole article alluded to religion. Even then, Landsberg expressed a wish about the present rather than predict the future. The story is only discussed to portray the paper’s ideological orientation. It may just be an odd sub-editing choice. However, it may be a presentation of prophecy reinvented or conjured anew in that it was not the religious prophecy generally known from either a prophet or church leader. This was from a ZANU PF apologist whose academic paper was used by *The Herald* which seemed bent on trying to convince people about Mugabe being a God-given

ruler. The implication is that it was done to make people accept Mugabe as the bona fide leader. There is the use of Mugabe's history which made him popular which was being used to shape the future. In the article the paper gives Landsberg the role of a watcher who analyses the Zimbabwean situation, speaks political polemic and advises accordingly.

The article seemed to encourage that when people read this message, they would ponder on how even people from beyond their borders realised that Mugabe would always be the 'only' true leader of Zimbabwe. This is production of meaning (Eagleton, 2007) which is ideology. This brings in the agenda setting theory by McCombs and Shaw (1972) when they argue that the media may not be successful in telling readers what to think but they are definitely successful in telling them what to think about. The agenda set by the media through their reportage has a bearing on the public agenda. By its choice of discourse in the title the paper seemed to give a prophecy on the country's leadership, then people would definitely think about it. There are many renowned prophets in Zimbabwe in particular (Emmanuel Makandiwa-UFIC, Walter Magaya-PHD, Ezekiel Guti-ZAOGA, Samuel Mutendi-ZCC, Paul Mwazha among many others) and Africa in general (Pastor Chris Oyakhilome of Christ Embassy - Nigeria, T B Joshua of Synagogue Church of All Nations-Nigeria, Victor Kusi Boateng-Ghana among others) who could have been quoted to validate this constructed prophecy.

4.4.1.3 Prophecy cannot be challenged

Politicians utilised biblical discourse when addressing church members. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) note that discourse is historical in the sense that it is connected to previous discourses. This is revealed in another newspaper article where the then Vice President Joice Mujuru (*The Sunday Mail,* 13 January 2013:3) was speaking at the official opening of an Apostolic Faith Church building in Mhondoro[14]. The appropriation of religion in political campaigns was evident in this article written by Tinashe Farawo titled "President Mugabe anointed at 10 – VP Mujuru". Anointing is typical Christian discourse as kings in the Bible were anointed by prophets, for example David was anointed by Samuel. Alluding to the age that Mugabe was said to have been anointed suggested that he was born to be a leader and God chose him at a tender age just as

[14] A rural area in Mashonaland West province.

David had been chosen when he was very young tending to his father's sheep. Just like David, it took a long time before Mugabe took office after the anointing but eventually he did signifying that a prophecy will be fulfilled no matter how long it takes. Biblical frames of patience were alluded to. However, what is a mystery is how this prophetic message was hidden from 1980 when Mugabe became the leader of the country to this period. Mujuru implied that she knew about this as she made reference to it. Mujuru's message was constructed around the 1934 prophecy to authenticate it. The article read:

> People are wasting their time by opposing President Mugabe. It was prophesied way back in 1934, when he was only 10 years old, that he was going to lead this country. How can a normal person challenge such a leader?

This prophecy had been given by Prophet Shonhiwa Masedza, founder of the Johanne Masowe Church. This is confirmed by *The Manica Post* (24 February, 2013) which carried a story titled "Johanne Masowe 1934 prophecy: President Mugabe will rule Zimbabwe till death". Having the prophecy repeated suggested naturalizing it as what Fourie (2007:286) argues, "Through repetition of symbolic and religious rituals, worshippers are reminded of supernatural powers." Both articles were written in 2013 pending the July plebiscite[15].

In *The Sunday Mail* article Mujuru said "those fighting to replace him are wasting their time" which carried the suggestion that it was futile to oppose prophecy as Mugabe would remain the head of the nation despite what people may desire. It suggested that politically Mugabe was superior. This discourse of superiority borders on ideological underpinnings of ZANU PF being the desirable party which could not be compared to others. It also suggested that Mugabe was the be all and end all. Both this article and the one in *The Manica Post* portrayed Mugabe as a life president and what this seemed to imply was that having elections was just a rubber stamping exercise of what God would have given. The campaigns are mere rituals but the actual decision of who should be leading the country and when was done by supernatural powers. It seemed the 1934 prophecy was like a warning so that people would not waste their ballots by placing them on a losing candidate. Reference to history was meant to shape the present.

[15]The July plebiscite was the first election after the Government of National Unity which restored ZANU PF as the ruling party.

Normal is a relative word as what may be normal to one may not necessarily be that to another. In this case what seemed to be regarded as normal was accepting the prophecy that Mugabe was life president without question. The AICs, who Turner (1979:97) called “prophet-healing”, were a spirit driven church whose doctrine was grounded in the belief that prophetic messages were from God (Chitando, 2013). This connotes that it was unheard of for believers to challenge prophecy as this would attract the wrath of God. This suggested that the rule of Mugabe and ZANU PF could not be challenged as they were anointed leaders. The rhetorical question by Mujuru suggested the futility of challenging Mugabe. She presented him as a leader par excellence. The implication was that because of being the chosen one, Mugabe could not be challenged.

Prophecy was being used as a strong political campaign tool. The words by Mujuru reaffirm what Sonderling (2014:163) argues by noting, “Whoever has social power legitimizes and imposes meaning.” After giving and explaining the prophecy, the paper wrote, “She further encouraged Zimbabweans to vote for Zanu-PF” (referring to Mujuru). The aim of the prophecy here is revealed. After all had been said and done, Mugabe had to be voted into power. This was meant to legitimise the party’s endorsement of Mugabe as their presidential candidate. In addition Mujuru said, “There is nothing wrong in people having ambitions and discussing political issues with their wives. They should not, however, tamper with the presidency, it is sacrosanct.” This was trivializing the opposition to Mugabe’s position to private discussions between husbands and wives. Mujuru’s speech was quite a strong warning to Christian believers as when something is sacrosanct it cannot be questioned. Doing so would be sinful. This would instill fear in Christian members. The paper wrote, “Cde Mujuru said leaders are anointed by God, making them irreplaceable.” Replacing God’s appointee was a futile task and tantamount to religious deviancy. Mujuru’s presentation in *The Sunday Mail* suggested that Mugabe was a life-time leader who could only be removed by God and not through the ballot. Biblically, leaders were put in place by God and removed by God. Emphasis seemed to be placed on the fact that Zimbabwe had to accept Mugabe as given by divine appointment.

4.4.1.4 Prophecy in relation to sacrifices and destiny

The ideology of sacrifice and destiny also came out of the prophetics messages. Still citing why Mugabe was a God-given leader, Mujuru induced fear by referring to the liberation struggle and sacrifices made. She said:

> Our independence did not come by accident. Thousands of school children died in the name of the party. People sacrificed their lives for this country. Even when Abraham was about to sacrifice his only son, God saw it fit for him not to sacrifice human blood. However, people have paid the ultimate price for this country to be free (*The Sunday Mail,* 13 January 2013:3).

Although not a professional prophet herself, Mujuru is captured giving a prophetic message grounded in the prophecy given by Masedza. Mujuru used the opportunity of explaining the 1934 prophecy to raise her sentiments concerning the country's leadership. This is a carefully worded message foregrounded by Masedza's prophecy reminding people of how God intervened and gave them Zimbabwe just like what He had done for Abraham and Isaac was saved. The appropriation of biblical discourse of Abraham and his son Isaac is very popular with Zimbabwean Christians as it is preached about in church and a song was even composed for children in Sunday school on how Abraham was prepared to follow God's instruction and kill his only son. This is familiar discourse with Christians. Natajaran (2010) notes that familiarity breeds security while unfamiliarity may generate insecurity. The example of Abraham and Isaac is where the popular Christian adage "obedience is better than sacrifice" is usually used. It was Abraham's obedience that moved God and a lamb was provided by God to be slaughtered in place of Isaac. This biblical allusion was suggestive of how the faithful get rewarded. The implication was that the Zimbabwean populace would do the same through obeying their leaders thereby sacrificing their wishes. Mujuru was using the party ideology to persuade people which is in line with Sonderling's argument in Fourie (2007:309), "Ideologies are ways of making sense of the world. Each ideology can be considered as being a map of the social world and helps guide thinking and action in that world."

By alluding to the 'ultimate price' Mujuru could also have been referring to how God had sacrificed Jesus, His only son to give Christians their spiritual freedom. Through accepting and endorsing Mugabe, Zimbabweans would be obeying a prophetic message. *The Sunday Mail* (15-21 September, 2013) confirmed the importance of

obedience when it wrote, “It’s better to do what people might term foolish but remain in line with the word of God.” The 1934 prophecy may seem archaic and hence irrelevant but the presentation of the paper suggested that believing in it was obedience. This was meant to make church members value their belief and or doctrine and remain resolute in it. There is the Christian belief that if one believes in prophecy one would be established as a Christian (Graham, 2006). This organization of beliefs into a somewhat coherent pattern would lead to attitudes which denotes ideology (Sonderling, 2007:310). If Christians are given a prophecy the expectation is for them to embrace it (expected attitude). To strengthen her prophetic message, Mujuru alluded to ‘independence’, ‘died’ and ‘sacrificed’ which denoted the discourse of liberation. That was the ultimate price Zimbabweans had paid so they were being warned not to let the country be taken over by those with foreign interests. The numbers of young innocent children who died alluded to seemed aimed at making people feel ashamed for sacrificing Zimbabwe in 2008 through the ballot which had led to the GNU.

Like the church men (Wutawunashe, Ndanga and Mutendi[16]) quoted in other articles, Mujuru implied that leaders are born and not made. Destiny decided on leadership and not the ballot. Mujuru appeared to concur that positions of leadership were not man-made when she said, “These positions come from God, they do not just come.” Along the same vein Pastor Wilson of the Seventh Day Adventist had also confirmed this notion when he was quoted saying, “We should respect and submit to the leadership of this country because all leaders are appointed by God” (*The Herald*, 12 March 2012). The common denominator in both speeches was that leaders are divine appointees and therefore could only be replaced by God Himself. This seemed to connote that the role of the people in all this was to render the appointed state leaders anointed by God respect and submission. The apostolic sects would be very much agreeable to such sentiments as they believe in Revelations 2 verses 7, 11, 17 and 29 which in the vernacular says, “*Une nzeve ngaanzwe zvinoreva mweya kukereke*” (He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches). The Bible

[16]Andrew Wutawunashe is the founder and overseer of the Andrew Wutawunashe World Witness and Worldwide Family of God Churches also known as African Revival or commonly FOG. Johannes Ndanga is the overseer of the religious body which administers local churches and was voted President of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ). Nehemiah Mutendi is the Head (Chief Executive Officer) and Supreme Spiritual leader Leader at the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) founded by Samuel Mutendi and is one of the biggest locally initiated churches in Zimbabwe.

was used by Mujuru to emphasise the importance of not sacrificing their freedom by endorsing the 'wrong' person.

It is in line with this prophetic word that Mugabe was quoted by *The Herald* of 22 April 2013 appropriating the religious discourse to appeal to the gathering he was addressing as well as attempt to justify why he remained in power. At his 89th birthday celebrations Mugabe told his family, friends, workers, colleagues and party members that God had charged him to serve Zimbabwe. As a result, he had pledged to carry on this 'divine task' without backtracking. Mugabe was quoted saying:

> In my small way, this is the task the Lord might have wanted me to fulfil among my people and as I carry on the burden of fulfilling it, it being a divine task, I read it as a bidding of God. A commandment that this is how you serve your nation. The Lord has chosen that they go. The Lord has chosen that I remain. Why is it that all my friends are gone and I continue to linger on? It is not my choice. It is His choice. Painful choice. As you move from stage to stage, there is a kind of loneliness and solitude around you because of the loss of friends, loss of relatives and of very dear ones (*The Herald*, 22 April 2013:5).

The tone of this quotation is not celebratory at all even though it was at Mugabe's birthday party. He spoke with a heavy heart as denoted by words like 'burden', 'painful', 'loneliness', 'solitude' and 'loss'. This paints a gloomy mood of depression which resembles the discourse of death as those left behind feel the pain of losing someone and become lonely. Instead of celebrating long life, there was lamentation.

There was also an attempt at humility when Mugabe referred to what he was doing for Zimbabwe as insignificant. This was in direct contrast to what other politicians were saying as they took pains to show the sterling work Mugabe was doing for Zimbabwe. Mugabe seemed to be appropriating a narrative of Christ-like sacrifice which connotes humility. This is revealed when Mugabe humbles himself by describing his work as the leader of Zimbabwe as a 'small' contribution. This is appealing to Christian believers who understand the importance of humility as Jesus was humble. He seemed to imply that what he was doing was not out of choice but what was expected of him. This is contrary to the party' rhetoric as it never failed to remind Zimbabweans how it had fought the liberation war for the people to enjoy the fruits of their sweat and blood (Mhanda, 2011; Hlatywayo, 2014). This, for example, was revealed by Collins Gabriel

Chipare, president of Zinalisa[17], in his celebratory message after ZANU PF had won the 2013 harmonised elections. He was quoted saying, “Our detractors are flabbergasted, they thought that Zimbabweans have very short memories and have forgotten that they won their independence and democracy through blood, sweat, tears and sacrifices” (*The Herald*, 3 August 2013). Grace Mugabe was also quoted saying, “This country came through the blood of our ancestors…the bones of Mbuya Nehanda shall rise again …” (*NewsDay*, 23 November 2015). The liberation struggle is used as a license to remain in power. However, at this occasion, ZANU PF’s efforts were presented as sacrificial. The implication was that the party had done a lot for Zimbabwe because it was its mandate as the revolutionary party. The use of ‘task’ in Mugabe’s shows that Mugabe was in the presidential position by divine appointment. This was in line with the above prophecies that he would not be easily removed through the ballot as God had ordained him to lead Zimbabwe.

The impression was that being the leader of Zimbabwe is not an ordinary job but ‘special’ in that it is by divine appointment. There seems to be correlation between savior and president. As Jesus is regarded as savior to mankind, so was Mugabe regarded as savior to Zimbabweans. Because of the role Mugabe had played in the liberation struggle that had saved Zimbabwe, being president meant continuation and sustenance of this good deed. As a divine appointee, the suggestion was that Mugabe got his strength and instruction from God which kept him going just as Jesus had trusted God to see him triumph. As a result, this lightened the burden of carrying the responsibility of ruling the country. This is in sync with Mashaya and Mujuru’s proclamations that Mugabe had been anointed by God to rule Zimbabwe. Repetition, which is part of framing, would help to hegemonise people into believing in the prophecies. Reminiscing on his dearly departed presented Mugabe as a humane leader to his listeners. The speech by Mugabe was suggestive of the notion that his continued stay in power was God’s decision and not his. Talking about death at a birthday bash is unexpected but was meant to make an impact on the sacrifices Mugabe and his party were making for Zimbabwe culminating in him being God’s choice in terms of leadership.

[17]The Zimbabwe National Liberation Supporters Association (Zinalisa) support Mugabe and his policies.

Mugabe in his speech was reminding people that God had the power to make someone live or die. The implication seemed to be that as long as he was alive, he was eligible for the highest office. In defense of why he is still alive and ruling, Mugabe said “The Lord has chosen that I remain.” This appeared to be manufactured reality which was aimed at normalising Mugabe’s prolonged stay in power as head of state. All this was because a superior being had authorised it. However, remaining alive did not necessarily mean remaining in office. The way the message is given seems to refer to the latter. This he claims is not easy for him but a ‘painful choice’. Christians would be familiar with this as Jesus had also made a painful choice when he accepted a humiliating death on the cross. This goes on to naturalise his stay in power for so long. There is also reference to how God had given him a task just as he did to Moses and Joshua. Mugabe claimed to take his task seriously as he described it as a commandment. From a biblical perspective commandments are sacred and have to be observed.

The melancholic mood induced by Mugabe’s speech seemed bent at having a psychological effect on the listeners (and therefore *The Herald* readers). The sacrificial talk of humility presented in a sad tone was meant to appeal not only to their emotions but also to their faith. Faith according to Pitout (2007:285) “permeates and governs our public and private lives, what we believe about the world we live in, and what determines the core of our existence, our being.” The speech by Mugabe which capitalised on people’s faith seemed to suggest that being the head of state was destiny or by God’s design. This naturalisation of the man’s continued stay in power seemed aimed at deflecting people’s attention from real issues like age, succession, political and economic woes among other things. Again this reportage by the media of Mugabe’s words called for sympathy and empathy from Zimbabweans as it is a known fact that although death is inevitable people normally do not know how or when they would die. Use of words like ‘loneliness’ and ‘solitude’ paint a picture of sacrifice from Mugabe to continue working for the people despite all odds which may include even age.

Shaw (1986:376) quoted Mugabe just after independence who proclaimed, “As clear as day follows night…ZANU-PF will rule in Zimbabwe forever. There is no other party besides ours that will rule this country.” Pitting Mugabe’s utterance against Shaw’s quotation, it becomes difficult to comprehend this discourse of sacrifice that he and his

party claim to be doing for Zimbabwe. The proclamation portrayed the extent to which Mugabe and the party were prepared to go in order to remain in power. This was when Mugabe proposed a one-party state which dismally failed to yield the desired results (Chuma, 2005; Sithole and Makumbe, 1997). To uphold this proclamation, there was need for the party to win and re-win hegemony over the people and what better way than through prophecy.

4.4.2 Prophecy as an appeal for votes

In this period of economic and social upheavals due to an unstable political environment, the press came up with a reportage that gave indicators of the best candidate to vote for in the impending 2013 elections. However, this time, prophecy was more evident than before in this reportage. At the time it was not just about prophesying on the forthcoming elections but also announcing the victor ahead of the voting. *The Herald* (21 August, 2010) where Dr Joshua Dube, the outgoing United Baptist Church bishop, stated:

> We should all embrace the goings-on in politics as the will of God. Those are the decrees of the Holy Spirit. We all saw the violence that prevailed as people refused to accept the outcome of the elections some months ago but that is deplorable, to say the least. That should never be allowed to happen again. We should all embrace it as the will of God. These things are just a fulfilment of things that God declared centuries back.

This prophecy came after the 2008 elections. The goings-on alluded to was the power sharing deal in the GNU.

4.4.2.1 Election violence

The 2008 elections were marred by a lot of violence. Chris McGreal in *The Observer* (22 June, 2008) wrote, “There has been election violence before. Beatings, intimidation and sporadic killings were part of every ballot since the opposition emerged as a coherent force in 1999. But never before has it generated such widespread fear that even urban critics of the government have gone into hiding.” The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum (2009:2) notes, “From the beginning to the end of 2008, Zimbabwe’s political terrain was defined by the violent preparations and anticipation for the watershed 29 March Harmonized Elections and its bloody aftermath which culminated in the bloodier 27 June Run-off election.” The prophetic message was meant to explain this violence that happened during the aftermath of the

elections as some form of punishment. Using ‘we’ was all-embracing suggesting that every reader was included. The prophecy used the past to explain the present. The paper was writing about the role of the church in the reconciliation process based on the insecurity people felt due to the aftermath of the 2008 plebiscite.

The 2008 election results took long to be announced leading to the opposition parties concluding that the results were tampered with to suit ZANU PF. In other words there were allegations of rigging. What Dube called deplorable was not clear. Was it the refusal to accept election results or the violence? However, whatever it was, the encouragement was to accept the outcome of the election as God ordained. The message was appealing to people’s faith and Christian dogma rather than their rationality. This prophetic message came from a ZANU PF member who once served in the party’s administration. The fact that the paper divulged the status of Dube, the church leader as Manicaland’s first Governor and Resident Minister after independence is setting an agenda. However, this could cast doubt on this kind of prophecy suggesting that it may have been ‘constructed’ prophecy from a patriotic member turned prophet.

4.4.2.2 Gender and prophecy

Gender was also part of prophecy and party politics. A prophecy was made concerning Mujuru as the only woman in the ZANU PF top echelons. An elder in the Johanne Marange Apostolic Church, Lieub-Umah Noah Marimbizhike, was quoted saying, “You can waste time looking for charms and prophets from outside the country, but you cannot reverse what God would have made and decided. Our High Priest prophesied that there shall be a woman leader, and this came to pass when Mai Mujuru ascended to the Presidium” (*The Sunday Mail*, 15 July 2012). This brings out the irreversible aspect of prophecy. The support that Mujuru got from priests is a bit surprising considering that in AICs women are not given leadership posts. This would go against Jervis’ (2006) argument that culture and religion are difficult to disentangle. In the AICs women are supposed to sit down and listen to the word being preached. Having a woman in the presidium seemed contrary to the general belief of the AICs. The ideologies of the church and party appeared to clash but in the end the party ideology dominated. The fact that the priesthood seemed to be rendering Mujuru support suggested how prophecy was taken seriously. The priests may have endorsed

Mujuru's ascendency because they had no option but agree to the prophetic word. On Mujuru's elevation *The Standard* (30 November 2014) wrote:

> Her pinnacle was the 2004 Zanu PF congress where against all odds she was elevated to become the first vice-president of the party and subsequently state Vice-President. Mugabe's hand was visible in her elevation at the 2004 congress when he, at the eleventh hour, manipulated the party constitution to say one of the three members of the presidium should be a woman.

The unforeseen turn of events could only be explained as a consequence of Mugabe's interference rather than through prophecy. The fact that there was manipulation of the party constitution suggests that originally issues of the quota system were not addressed. "Constitutional quota system increases the number of women in political positions due to the reservation of seats specifically to be occupied by women" (Zungura and Nyemba, 2013:205). Women were given a percentage in leadership positions so they could also participate in governing the country. It may be concluded that this last minute decision that led to the upliftment of Mujuru had no human explanation but spiritual. As a result of this development, conclusions were even suggested that Mujuru could be Mugabe's heir apparent (Nehanda Radio, 1 December 2014). However, this prophecy was only made public by the media eight years after the elevation of Mujuru at the ZANU PF congress of 2004. Prophecies may be made every day in these churches but only catch the attention of the media when prominent politicians are involved. Instead of predicting the future, the prophecy came in to explain what had already transpired as well as the present. Although this portrayed the party accommodating women, what is puzzling is the time and context of the prophecy. It appeared like justification to convince people that this was a gender sensitive party which was worth voting for. With more women than men in the country (Zungura and Nyembe, 2013), it was ideal to have a woman in the presidium to cater for women issues.

The use of prophecy to explain the ascendency of Mujuru to the highest office connotes the contingency nature of prophecy. It suggests that prophecy to some extent is an eventuality set aside for an emergency like when Mugabe decided to have Mujuru elevated to a senior post in both the party and government. There seems to be no certainty to prophecy as it appeared to be used to make certain political points when necessary. Paradoxically, barely two years down the line, Mujuru was expelled

from the presidium ahead of the elective ZANU PF 2014 congress and was left just as a card carrying member. Explaining Mujuru's expulsion Mugabe was quoted saying, "Those we didn't expel we get them out of the central committee, out of the management of provinces and they become ordinary card-carrying members" (*DailyNews*, 7 December 2014).

From presidium to ordinary member was quite drastic. There was no prophecy captured by the media on this development of Mujuru's downfall or fall out with ZANU PF and why this could have happened. The church had no explanation on this. Again, Mujuru was replaced by a man, Emmerson Mnangagwa. This was not revealed through prophecy that had originally talked of a woman in the presidium that there would be a fall out. This implies how prophecy can be constructed to push forward certain ideologies and at opportune times. It capitalises on readers' Christian dogma. Marimbizhike seemed to have wanted his church members to accept Mujuru who had come to address them. The paper also placed a photograph of Mujuru clad in the apostolic garment together with the head gear which completes the prescribed dress for women in the church holding her speech and addressing the church members who formed the background. The impression given was that church members would accept Mujuru as one of them as well as their vice president. That acceptance would be acceptance of the party she represented. The timing of Mujuru's prophecy was appropriate as there were ongoing campaigning sessions for the 2013 elections.

4.4.2.3 Prophecy of resounding victory for ZANU PF

Even ahead of elections, prophecies of who would win were given. *The Herald* (22 April 2013:5) ran a story titled "Prophesy points to President's victory" which partly read, "Leading prophets from various indigenized apostolic sects have prophesied a resounding victory for President Mugabe in the forthcoming harmonized elections expected this year." To authenticate this statement the article also alluded to the 1934 prophecy that claimed that Mugabe would rule this country forever. In line with Bishau's (2013) argument that ritual observance in the African Initiated Churches (AICs) is strict, the ritual of prophecy was taken seriously. The paper wrote, "The indigenous prophets from the apostolic sects have previously made accurate prophecies on the political developments in Zimbabwe with the most notable being the 1934 prediction by Johanne Masowe church leader Shonhiwa Masedza." The use of

‘accurate’ was deliberate to try and make readers believe in prophetic messages. This 1934 prophecy was highly regarded (Daneel, 1971; Mukonyora, 1998 and Gunda, 2012) as has been noted by the reference that both church leaders and politicians made to it. Some renowned prophets were also mentioned when the paper wrote, “One of the leading prophets who preside over thousands of congregants and are famed for making accurate prophecies, include Paul Mwazha, leader of African Apostolic Church, Zion Apostolic Church, Johannes Marange and Johannes Masowe among others.” Ndanga, also quoted in this article went further and hailed these church leaders as he noted that “leadership that does not have a relationship with God would not last.” Emphasis is placed on ‘accuracy’ so as to convince people on why Mugabe was the right candidate.

The people giving these prophecies were leaders of big sects and could be interesting to readers because they were regarded as mediators between man and God leading to their prominence. The phrase “are famed for making accurate prophecies” suggested that these named prophets were tried and tested messengers. The power they wielded in their churches was meant to translate to the power of their prophecies. Again by alluding to the victory being ‘resounding’ and this coming from several prophets implied that the prophecy was loud and clear and could not have been disputed. The media seemed to have chosen them as they were believed as not just anonymous prophets in the small churches but prominent ones who commandeered huge followership hence their messages were bound to make an impact. Again some of the sects’ presence at the airport to welcome Mugabe whenever he left or came home showed their allegiance to the ruling party (*Zimbabwe Independent*, 29 April 2010; *The Zimbabwe Situation*, 26 January 2011) which could be another reason why these prophets were described by the term ‘leading’. Leading was twofold as it referred to both the prophets’ prominence in terms of their predictions as well as the huge followership they had. This relates very well to politics which is also about vying for the top position as well as attracting multitudinous numbers. So by quoting leading prophets the implication is that what they said was regarded as the truth. Appearance in the media leads to greater legitimation of given prophecies. This implied that these leading prophets would influence their followers’ voting patterns.

Bishop Ndanga, as leader of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ) was quoted saying, “As prophets we would like to reveal the Word that has been delivered

to us through the spirit. We now know the winner of the next harmonized elections and it is President Mugabe" (*The Herald*, 22 April 2013:5). Using the phrase 'as prophets we...' Ndanga was using discourse of inclusion as he was giving himself an identity which Christians could identify with as well as believe. Non-prophets were automatically excluded and could not challenge the voice of prophecy. Ndanga gave the impression that he was the voice of many prophets. If one prophet could make an impact, what more a combination of many? The implication was that there is power in numbers. The paper quoted him with the knowledge of the power these 'men of God' wielded in society. Ndanga is not just a prophet but also the leader of several churches hence the reason why he was representing the other prophets. The paper, however, just mentioned some of the other prophets but did not elaborate on what predictions these other ones had made. As a result, there was a possibility that there could have not been any other prophetic messages that endorsed Mugabe. This suggests that Ndanga utilised the popularity of these church leaders to push forward his agenda of endorsing Mugabe.

The newspaper used 'Word' with a capital letter in Ndanga's message putting emphasis on the fact that it is sacred and therefore should be given the seriousness and respect it deserved. True to form of prophecy, this prediction of the future was meant to swerve people into believing that God had spoken and going to the polls would just be a formality. It would just legitimise what was already destined for Zimbabwe. Dodd (1962:19) notes that traditionally the bible "has been regarded as the supreme doctrinal authority in faith and morals, divine in origin and consequently infallible." This gives credence to how Christians put value to prophetic messages. Likewise Christians in AICs believe in cases of destiny being shaped by God more so through prophecy. As a result Ndanga seemed to be appealing to the spirituality of people as he knew he was addressing church members who were bound to take his message seriously as he came as a messenger of God. Although Mugabe and the leading prophets did not actually go this far, the impression was that by obeying the prophetic messages, Zimbabweans would have obeyed God.

4.4.2.4 ZANU PF and Christian leaders' relationship

There seemed to exist a tight relationship between party politics and the Christian religion. Politicians became familiar faces at the church gatherings led by prominent

prophets with huge congregations. This was because the church leaders were helping their campaign process gain prominence. However, Bishop Ndanga in the article "Prophecy points to President's victory" (*The Herald*, 22 April 2013:5) was quick to dismiss accusations of the church being aligned to the ruling party. He said, "People should understand that this prophecy is not based on whether or not the apostolic churches support ZANUPF. It is a message that has come from God which we are now relaying to the people". Ndanga seemed to be running away from the fact that he and the churches he led supported ZANU PF. He seemed to be hiding behind the fact that God's proclamation cannot be disputed. Ndanga denied that prophecy was being used as justification for supporting ZANU PF. Again the message is said to be from God which gives Ndanga's message credibility as he is known as a man of God who communicates what is sacred. This way of communication tried to portray the neutral stance of the church in regards to politics although this is hard to believe through the analyses of discourses used. This is what Lippy and Williams (2010) refer to as prophecy redirected to suit the circumstances. Dodd (1926:43) points out that "prophets cannot be studied independent of their historical context".

The Herald of 28 May 2013 also carried a story titled "Indigenous churches predict Zanu-PF victory". The reporter wrote, "Over 150 bishops and their followers from various indigenous churches from all over Zimbabwe have predicted President Mugabe and Zanu-PF victory in the forthcoming harmonized elections." The number of bishops gave the idea of the strength of the prediction which in turn was meant to portray the popularity of the ruling party. This sweeping statement would allay fears of this party losing the election as it seemed to have a strong support base. The paper wrote, "Bishop Lyphet Matenda of Zion Christian Church-Kumuka Kuvakafa said President Mugabe and his party were heading for victory…" This reportage claimed that it was common knowledge that Mugabe would win but no voices were heard confirming this. The church members of these sects would be assumed to be convinced by the prophecy that Mugabe was the right candidate. If these assumptions translated to ballots then the party was bound to have a landslide victory. The argument that religion is complicit in the hegemonic dominance of party and state is confirmed by the fact that it is made possible and natural for all these bishops to be making similar predictions. It appeared as if the paper was subtly campaigning for the party by appealing to their religious conviction.

4.4.2.5 Contrasting frames on prophecy

The privately owned media used different frames from the state controlled media in their reportage of visitations by politicians. In sort of ridicule, the *Zimbabwe Independent* (19 July 2013) ran a story titled “Battle for the apostolic vote” by Elias Mambo. The deliberate use of battle was to portray how doing church visitations as well as convincing the electorate was not easy for ZANU PF. The introduction read:

> Take the Biblical Moses who descended from Mount Sinai with two tablets of stones with the 10 commandments, President Robert Mugabe was completely clad in white robes and held the trademark apostolic sect staff when he attended the Johanne Marange annual Passover feast at the church’s Mafararikwa shrine in Manicaland last weekend.

This is a weekly privately owned paper that painted an image of Mugabe canvassing for support at a church gathering. Compared to Moses who brought back the 10 commandments, the paper wrote, “Mugabe had gone to the shrine to meet the worshippers with nothing but a plea for their votes in the general elections on July 31.” This implied that Mugabe had nothing to offer the people of Zimbabwe. This comes in as a critical report that discusses the way Mugabe uses religious symbology. Instead of bringing something for the people, the paper gave the impression that he came for their support. This is portrayed when the paper wrote “Mugabe was the perfect picture of a deity, barefooted and surrounded by a train of ‘prophets’, taking slow steps and chanting “*Rugare*! (Peace)”, which was acknowledged by tens of thousands of church members.” The way the paper writes is to ridicule the lengths politicians take to woo support from the church. This is in direct contrast to how the state controlled media presented Mugabe. Emphasis is placed on Mugabe being barefooted and clad in the Apostolic Church regalia. The article is even accompanied by a photograph showing Mugabe holding a staff. The staff denoted leadership. The implication is that Mugabe is being given the highest authority in the church although he did not belong to that church. The descriptive words of ‘taking slow steps’ may indicate the respect that the train of prophets wanted to command but it could also mean that as Mugabe is an old man, he cannot move fast. This privately owned paper wanted to push the ideological connotations that Mugabe is too old to be running the country. They seemed to be confirming the discourse of Mugabe’s age being a hindrance rather than an asset to Zimbabwe. The implication appeared to be that Mugabe was no longer administratively and politically efficient.

The paper's use of deity is indicative of how Mugabe was taken as a small God who then should be obeyed. The song used to welcome Mugabe to this gathering was "*Tambirai, tambirai, tambirai zvauya nemutumwa* (receive what the messenger has brought from God). Mugabe was elevated to the level of a prophet (mutumwa). However, he was there for the purpose of campaigning for his party rather than being a messenger. A senior church official was quoted by the paper saying, "He is Gabriel and it is not by accident that he was given such a name and we welcome him here…" Gabriel means archangel. The paper satirised the implication by the church official that Mugabe was being likened to the angel Gabriel whom God always sent with messages of good tidings. The paper wrote "Mugabe had gone to the shrine to meet the worshippers with nothing but a plea for their votes". It is satiric in that the biblical Gabriel brought something and not just to take from the people. The article seemed bent on exposing why ZANU PF and Mugabe were fraternising with the church. Polarization of media reportage was quite evident. Mockery was being levelled against Mugabe who stooped so low that he, a Catholic, could wear the church regalia and walk barefooted just to market his party.

The reportage by the *Zimbabwe Independent* showed its ideological orientation where it tried to explain the reason why Mugabe had visited the church gathering at Mafararikwa. The paper wrote:

> Mugabe's Marange excursion was instructive. As election fever grips Zimbabwe, parties across the political divide are jockeying for the support of local churches, especially those that draw thousands of followers to their worship services. Most local churches have been infiltrated by politicians who have turned places of worship into political rallies as the struggle for the religious vote takes centre stage.

The paper's ideological orientation was shown by its description of the period with the word 'fever'. It connoted that Mugabe was also caught up with this 'fever' (excitement) through visitations to church gatherings thereby undermining his self-presentation. The word 'jockeying' painted a picture of Mugabe and ZANU PF, just like any other political party, aggressively competing for top position to fulfil their goal of endearing themselves to the people. There seemed to be a competition on accessing the church members for the advantage of gaining political supremacy hence the paper's allusion to a 'struggle'. Given such ideological underpinnings, the implication was that prophecy should not be accepted wholesome as some maybe manufactured to suit

the prophet and the prevailing situation. The suggestion seemed to be that the journey by Mugabe to the shrine was not to fulfil prophecy but manipulate the congregants. “Most local churches have been infiltrated by politicians who have turned places of worship into political rallies” was how the paper described the politicians’ visits. This suggested that some of these visits were imposed on the churches. It is suggestive of an outsider or someone who does not belong forcing themselves on the core of the church organisation. The implication is of a spy creeping into the midst of the church doing its business. *Zimbabwe independent* (19 July, 2013) carried a story titled “Churches fear being hijacked” to reiterate that these were imposed visits.

From this kind of presentation readers are being indirectly told not to believe the messages brought by the prophets as it was a ploy to uplift the image of Mugabe and ZANU-PF in the eyes of the people. This ties in well with my argument that prophecies made during politicians’ visits were not neutral but meant to serve a purpose. When afforded a chance to address the gathering, Mugabe attacked the MDC. The paper wrote, “Mugabe also castigated foreign ideologies being pushed by the MDC formations.” All this had nothing to do with church business or why Mugabe had visited the church gathering. The discourse used changed the church gatherings to political rallies. This was why some churches avoided such visitations. For example the *Zimbabwe Independent* (19 July 2013) a story titled “Churches fear being hijacked”. The title gave the impression of criminality in that not all churches were happy to welcome the politicians to their gatherings. The implication given was that politicians would come as if to join the church activities but go on to seize control of the church. The paper wrote, “Some churches in Zimbabwe have postponed their annual gatherings which usually take place between July and August, fearing the events would be hijacked by politicians as the country marches towards crucial polls set for July 31." Although the article referred to politicians generally visiting churches to woo voters, the way the word ‘hijacked’ is used suggests that ZANU PF was a criminal party using devious means to arbitrarily force the church to accommodate them so as to gain supremacy. This would cast doubt on the prophecies given by church elders during the crisis.

The *Zimbabwe Independent*’s first story on the “Battle for the apostolic vote” referred to above wrote, “Mugabe could not continue to pretend to be a deity shouting ‘peace, peace, peace’. The political animal inside betrayed him and the true to form Mugabe

exploded as he bellowed '*Pamberi neZanu PF* (Forward with Zanu PF) instead of '*Rugare*!'". This suggested that it was not easy to change someone who is politically minded from his mission. The predictions of Mugabe as a messenger of God were dismissed in this article as all pretense meant to serve purposes of gaining votes from unsuspecting church members. What ZANU PF wanted was access to the numbers the church attracted. The writer confirmed this by noting, "For politicians, these numbers are a jackpot if harnessed." Large numbers are lucrative to politicians as they are potential voters.

The same event was captured by *The Sunday Mail* (July 14–20, 2013) as a headline story titled "President bags votes". Bagging is suggestive of harvesting. The introduction of the article read, "Members of the Johanne Marange Apostolic Church yesterday vowed to vote for President Mugabe in the 31 July elections, describing the revolutionary leader as a messenger of God." Unlike the privately owned newspaper, the focus is now on the success of the visit. Again the story is accompanied by a photograph of Mugabe addressing the gathering clad in white robes and holding the church staff. The speech given by Mugabe takes three quarters of the article where he castigated party politicians who believed in the power of the west. The paper quoted a church elder who said, "We are firmly behind you because you are our leader and as a church, we cannot go against our leader. You were given to us by God and we will always be behind you." This seemed like a declaration of allegiance based on faith. It would eventually lead to unshakeable loyalty as denoted by making a vow. This is confirmed by the opening statement of the article which read, "Members of the Johanne Marange Apostolic Church yesterday vowed to vote for President Mugabe in the July 31 elections..." The party seemed to count on this to form a concrete support base.

The two papers cover the same story but from very different angles hence polarisation. *Zimbabwe Independent* focused on a 'battle' where Mugabe was fighting to convince church members that he was worth voting for while *The Sunday Mail* portrayed how Mugabe had succeeded in convincing the church to vote for him. Both papers included Mugabe's picture in the church regalia. However, in the *Zimbabwe Independent* the picture was of Mugabe standing alone with some white clad members in the background showing that it was a one man show. This donning of a church leaders garment for a church he was just a visitor was meant to mock him or satirise the

lengths Mugabe took to gain favor with the church. However, *The Sunday Mail* carried the picture of Mugabe addressing hundreds of church members and seemed to have wanted to show how Mugabe was part of the congregation and had been received by many church members. While the publicly owned newspaper described the 'revolutionary leader' Mugabe as a "messenger of God", the privately owned newspaper described him as a "perfect picture of a deity". This implied that he was pretending to be a 'god'. The *Zimbabwe Independent* made biblical reference to Moses, Gabriel and the Promised Land Canaan and went on to show how Mugabe could never be like Moses.

The Sunday Mail concentrated on what Mugabe said and who accompanied him. The *Zimbabwe Independent* used an unnamed senior church official to describe Mugabe while *The Sunday Mail* used two church elders, one from Angola, Mr Elis Joso Francisco Miguel and the other from Mozambique, Mr Liazano Framualo. The latter wanted to bring weight to how Mugabe was the answer not only to Zimbabwe but also to Africa. Whereas the private media were telling people to open their eyes and see why politicians were fraternising with the church, the public media seem to propagate the ideologies of the ruling party in their representation.

Again to appeal for votes, *The Herald* (25 July, 2013) carried a story titled "Prophet endorses President Mugabe" where Prophet Wutawunashe (founder and leader of Family of God Church) was quoted saying, "I want to urge you to vote next week for a leader and political party that gives you a sewing machine and materials to make your own clothes than voting for a party that will only give you clothes." The assumption by Wutawunashe seemed to be that church leaders can make political decisions on behalf of the congregants. Sewing machine and materials denote equipping people with survival skills that are permanent. The implication was that ZANU PF was the ideal party as it empowered people through its policies to be self-reliant rather than MDC that relied on donors. These policies include giving land to indigenous people to empower them for economic development (see Chapter 6). Wutawunashe went on to say, "I am urging Zimbabweans to vote for President Mugabe and Zanu-PF in the coming elections because they have a clear track record and are consistent, which answers the aspirations of the majority." There is nothing prophetic about this message except that it is coming from a renowned prophet. It is clearly a campaign strategy. The endorsing of Mugabe was through reason and ideology rather than

prophecy. Phophecy was just used to fulfil what the church leaders wished for. It became difficult to differentiate between messages from God and the created phophetic messages. This was an ideological strategy used on people socialized in Christian beliefs to support the ruling party through voting for it.

4.4.3 Prophecy as an endorsement of political leadership

Prophecy in the crisis decade was used as a campaign strategy because it endorsed the candidature of Mugabe. *The Herald* carried a story that discredited the MDC party and its leadership through prophecy. Arch Bishop Ndanga remarked, “It has been prophesied many times that Morgan Tsvangirai is going to lose in the next elections and this year’s elections will mark the end of his so-called legacy, relationship with his blinded donors” (*The Herald*, 29 April 2013). The church was working in complicit with the ruling party which goes against liberation theology. Ndanga’s claim seemed not valid as there were no references to any prophecies against MDC-T and its leader. It is not clear what ‘next elections’ referred to. The same statement could be made at any other time and remain relevant. Ndanga belittled the opposition when he talked of the opposition’s ‘so-called’ legacy. The suggestion was that this party had nothing to offer Zimbabwe. There was a direct attack on those alleged to be sponsoring opposition parties through the phrase ‘blinded donors’. Blind suggested people who had no insight for placing their bet on the losing horse. All this was from a ZANU PF aligned prophet.

4.4.3.1 Mugabe, the Zimbabwean Messiah?

Prophecy that was mostly given in the state controlled media appeared to elevate Mugabe to the position of the Messiah or Jesus and God. This was trying to hegemonise people to see Mugabe as God’s appointee but some people might have rejected this notion. *The Herald* of 25 July 2013 carried a story with the title "Prophet endorses President Mugabe” by George Maponga. The story read, “Family of God Church founder and leader Prophet Andrew Wutawunashe yesterday endorsed President Mugabe’s candidature, describing him as Zimbabwe’s messiah due to his spiritual drive to ensure people have total control over their God-given natural resources.” Mugabe here was elevated to the position of Jesus suggesting that he was the only one who was the rightful leader for the country. This idea of ‘drive’ suggests someone who is focused and working to achieve set goals. Mugabe was portrayed as

the man who would deliver Zimbabwe from her detractors through empowerment. This reference to Mugabe as Messiah is confirmed by Chitando (2013:86) who notes, “In 1980, Mugabe was portrayed as a Messiah/Deliverer. In the early years of independence, ‘Baba Mugabe’ (Father Mugabe) was a term that suggested that Mugabe was the provider and protector of his people. In this sense, he was a ‘shepherd’.” Biblically Jesus is known as the ‘good shepherd’ who would do anything to protect his sheep.

Likewise, the impression given was that Mugabe would do anything to protect Zimbabwe and her citizens. As a result some ZANU PF activists venerated Mugabe to the position of Jesus. This signifies the existence of a culture in the country where Mugabe was called the son of God or was God. Evidence of this is shown when the party’s political commissar, Saviour Kasukuwere called Mugabe their god (*Southern Eye*, 24 February 2015). The paper quoted him saying, “There is only one Zanu PF and it is the one which is led by our god, President Robert Mugabe.” This religious zeal and veneration was why Mugabe continued to enjoy the role of leading the country. There is a paradox here in that Mugabe had been savior when he contributed in the liberation struggle which brought independence. The pertinent question was who Mugabe was saving Zimbabwe from in the crisis. Wutawunashe and other church people seemed to suggest that it was from the opposition parties and their funders. The savior narrative used had a whole new meaning focused on appreciating Mugabe as a renowned protector of Zimbabwe. The suggestion seemed to be that Zimbabwe would not survive outside Mugabe’s leadership.

The messiahship of Mugabe was stretched as reports claimed that even economic troubles in the country could be overcome by Mugabe. *The Herald* (25 July 2013) went on to note that voting for Mugabe would consolidate the “gains made in the indigenization and economic empowerment.” These are government policies so the paper seems to be pushing forward the ideologies of the party in their reportage. This resonated well with other prophecies.

The paper wrote:

> Addressing thousands of Zanu-PF supporters at a rally to drum up support for the party’s Gutu North National Assembly candidate Dr Paul Chimedza at Mawere Business Centre, Prophet

> Wutawunshe urged Zimbabweans to ignore the economic hardships induced by illegal sanctions which he said were on the brink of being overcome.

Although this was not a church gathering, the paper acknowledged the presence of a known church leader and captured his sentiments in regards to elections. The address was to rural folk who normally get food donated by the party. Wutawunashe prophesied that the economic hardships bedeviling the country would come to an end with Mugabe and his party in power. What becomes problematic with this kind of prophecy is what had caused these economic problems when Mugabe had always been in power. Like ZANU PF, Wutawunashe adopted the sanctions discourse and blamed this on sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the West. Again this prophecy was given at a rally and the article clearly stated that the purpose was to canvass for political support. Prophecy came in not only to the endorse ZANU PF candidature but also to give assurance that the country's economic problems would soon be a thing of the past. Barely four days down the line, the same paper carried a story with the headline "Churches rally behind President" written by Farirai Machivenyika (*The Herald,* 29 July 2013:4) which carried prophetic messages by two prominent prophets who were Wutawunashe and Ndanga. The article which came out just two days before elections encouraged readers to stand with Mugabe in the 2013 elections as he was God's anointed one and prophetically had been chosen to lead the nation.

Prophecy during the crisis era was a warning that Zimbabweans should be forward thinking and therefore vote wisely in elections. This was portrayed by the public print media in the country to counter what the private print media were presenting. Ndanga just reiterated the Shonhiwa Masedza prophecy of Mugabe being the life president. Wutawunashe was quoted at length and said:

> We are not going to where we came from. The elections that are coming this Wednesday are important. We should not be like the Israelites who after experiencing a little hunger they craved to return to servitude in Egypt (*The Herald,* 29 July 2013:4).[18]

This was said at the final star rally[19] of a party that desperately wanted to regain its popularity. Wutawunashe as a contemporary prophet took this position to remind people that Zimbabweans should be resilient even during challenging times and

[18]Reverend Andrew Wutawunashe dedicating the ZANU-PF final star rally held at the National Sports stadium in Harare.
[19]Star rallies were major rallies organised by ZANU PF at national levelto address an issue or issues of national consequence.

remain resolute in safe guarding their national sovereignty and territorial integrity. Wutawunashe was quoted saying, “To all Zimbabweans, I say be wise to protect the wealth that God bequeathed us. Empower him on Wednesday to complete the work he embarked on.” God’s work was to provide wealth. Now Mugabe was proposed to continue that work. Mugabe was being elevated to the position of God. The message could have been emphasizing the weaknesses of voter apathy so people were encouraged to exercise their democratic right and vote. However, the pertinent question was what was so peculiar or different in this election that Mugabe needed to win to implement the policies which he had failed to do after previous elections. It can be concluded that this was just a political gimmick as nothing new was likely to be added by voting Mugabe back into office. What work Mugabe had embarked on is not spelt out. All this effort to make sure that people understood the importance of casting their vote for the ‘correct’ outcome may be a ploy not to vacate the highest office as well as prevent the power sharing deal. Priming[20] and frequency which are characteristic of agenda setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1972) portrayed the desperation for the party to win these elections.

Still on why Mugabe was the ideal candidate but now from a privately owned paper, the *NewsDay* (1 August 2013) wrote, “Grace used the Zanu PF final rally in Harare to claim that God had chosen her husband to lead this country and saluted Zanu PF-aligned clerics that had endorsed his leadership”. The paper was reporting on the same final star rally of ZANU PF. In this report the focus was Grace Mugabe, wife to Mugabe, and it came out a day after the July 31 elections. The unfortunate thing was that it was coming when people had already cast their ballots. However, the way of presentation showed the ideological orientation of the paper. Referring to the First Lady just as Grace showed no respect for her utterances. Again the words ‘used’ and ‘claim’ suggest that prophecy was reconstructed to get through to people. The same sentence that made the proclamation (prophecy) is the one that also made the salutation (introduction). The phrase ‘Zanu PF-aligned clerics’ show how the paper emphasised the ‘unorthodox’ close relationship between the party and religious leaders who had worked hard to campaign for ZANU PF. This description of church leaders was meant to cast doubt on their prophecies. Grace was quoted saying, “I

[20]Smith (2011) contends that priming is when the media provide the context under which an issue is raised.

want to thank (Reverend Andrew) Wutawunashe and Archbishop (Johannes) Ndanga for their words, but there are people who don't know that leadership is made in heaven." At the time, Wutawunashe was chairman of the Faith for the Nation campaign. Limelight is given to this quotation suggesting that Grace was not only alluding to Wutawunashe and Ndanga's 'words' at this particular occasion but for their allegiance to the party.

Ideological underpinnings are at play here. Whereas the article in *The Herald* (29 July, 2013) had reported, "Zimbabweans, Rev Wutawunashe added, should use their vote wisely to protect the national heritage" thereby focusing on the cleric, the *NewsDay* (1 August, 2013) had focused on how Grace had used biblical allusion to campaign for her husband. The publicly owned paper's selection of Wutawunashe's message made a pronouncement that the Zimbabwean legacy was only safe in the 'capable' hands of Mugabe while the privately owned paper seemed to be attacking the way church cleric were used by political parties to push their agendas. Whereas the paper portrayed how ZANU PF took advantage of prophecy and the clerics' support, *The Herald* utilised the discourse of patriotism to make people feel indebted to 'protecting their national heritage'. The implication was that ZANU PF was the only party that would do it for them. However, without another party to compare with, it would remain a mystery.

4.4.3.2 Mugabe as Zimbabwe's Joshua

The ruling party's leader was regarded as the Joshua of Zimbabwe. The article in *The Herald* (29 July 2013) quoted Reverend Andrew Wutawunashe who in his speech reminded his parishioners of the biblical Israelites who were unfaithful to the Lord when they were faced with adversities in the wilderness, forgot that God who had redeemed them from Egypt was still with them. Zimbabweans were also told that despite the economic and political challenges that bedeviled the country in the crisis decade, they should not forget Mugabe and ZANU-PF who liberated the country from colonialists. The article read, "Rev Wutawunashe said President Mugabe was to Zimbabwe what Joshua was to the people of Israel as he led them to the Promised Land." This gave the impression that Zimbabwe is the biblical Canaan. Among others, one notable difference is that Zimbabwe is socially, politically and economically in a crisis unlike the one Israelites were led to which had milk and honey flowing in it. Maybe the Zimbabwe of 1980 was the Promised Land as it had a fairly stable economy unlike the

Zimbabwe in the crisis era. The respect that Joshua commanded should be extended to Mugabe as both were capable leaders.

On the same note of likening Mugabe to Joshua, Wutawunashe was quoted addressing Mugabe when he said, “The reason why God is not allowing us to rest is because your work has not been completed yet. You are to Zimbabwe and to some extent to Africa what Joshua was to the people of Israel.” As a respected man of cloth who is given the honours to grace such an important rally, the assumption was that his words would be taken seriously. The ‘us’ was all embracing suggesting that the church had to play its part in returning Mugabe to total power.

The reference to the uncompleted task resonated with Mugabe’s birthday speech. This seemed to be a lame excuse as the work of leading a country can never be actually completed. New prospects and challenges continue to arise. Joshua was more energetic unlike Mugabe whose mental efficiency was affected by age. Wutawunashe just concentrated on taking Mugabe as Joshua and ignored the other issues. Wutawunashe’s encouragement was captured by *The Herald* (29 July 2013:4) which quoted his words, “Whatever we are given by God we must keep, we should not lose our country by the vote. Instead we should protect it by that vote.” However, this could make the readers be thoughtful on what Mugabe had managed to deliver that warranted his prolonged stay in power as they went to the harmonised elections.

This whole biblical allusion by Wutawunashe denoted the discourse of patriotism. AICs and most Christians’ belief is anchored in that God is Jehovah Jireh which means He sees and provides. It is with this in mind that Wutawunashe encouraged Zimbabweans to treasure what God had provided for them. The given impression was that it would be reckless and irresponsible for Zimbabweans not to vote wisely. There is interpellation of voters into an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1983) or specific sorts of Christians or citizens who should vote for Mugabe to fulfil a divine appointment. Through voting wisely, which the country should do, the right candidate who is God given would be kept.

The same article in *The Herald* went on to report that at this same occasion, the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe Archbishop Johannes Ndanga had presented a certificate of Presidency to Mugabe “declaring him life president saying this was prophesied by Shonhiwa Masedza (Johanne Marange) in 1934.” The paper

chose to highlight the presentation of this certificate as it is of high esteem which can only be awarded to 'special' individuals. *The Herald* presented Archbishop Ndanga's action being in sync with what had been prophesied by Shonhiwa Masedza who is locally known as Johane Marange on 23 January 1934. The article ended up saying, "Archbishop Ndanga said the ACCZ was aware that the MDC-T and its leader Morgan Tsvangirai had caused untold suffering to Zimbabweans through their call for sanctions." Just like Mugabe, all blame was placed on the opposition party that had called for sanctions. The direct attack on the opposition was grounded in the Shonhiwa Masedza prophecy so people had to vote for Mugabe. The suggestion was that with the ruling party in power eventually there would be peace and harmony in the country. Prophecy was quick to point out that this might not be the case if anyone else not appointed by God took over the reins of government.

4.4.3.3 Church leaders partisan

Society expects the church to embrace and unify people belonging to different political divides. This is because the church is not divided along political frames but doctrine. However, some Christian churches proved partisan rather than remain apololical. After elections the press continued writing about churches confirming prophecies that had been given ahead of the elections. The Zion Christian Church's Bishop Dr Nehemiah Mutendi was quoted urging the Christian church to always work with President Mugabe as well as support him for the country's prosperity and as this is dictated by the scriptures. In a story titled "President Mugabe God-sent: Mutendi" (*The Herald*, 14 August 2013:5), Mutendi said:

> We are proud of President Mugabe because he came from God. We are also proud of the country and its leadership, some of whom are here to congratulate us for attaining 100 years. We want to say congratulations to the President and his party for winning elections. It is because of their origins, where they came from and where they are going that they won the elections…we support the (ZANU-PF) leadership because the Bible tells us that it is the right thing to do…

This was an open declaration which showed how the church could be partisan. Mutendi was addressing thousands of his church members at their centenary celebrations held at the church headquarters in Defe Dopota area in Gokwe South. This was a twofold congratulatory message. Mugabe and his party had won once again and ZCC had attained 100 years. Repetition of the word 'proud' denotes the

mood of the event. Longevity of the existence of the church in Zimbabwe was an achievement just as much as Mugabe's stay at the realm of power.

This study argues that *The Herald* chose to write about this to validate their earlier reportage on the power of prophecy. The use of 'we' includes all members so that they feel that they were also victors. The assumption was that those who prophesied and those who heeded the prophecy and voted 'wisely' had all contributed to the victory. In this instance prophecy was used to applaud what the imagined community had achieved through the ballot. It was meant to strengthen the 'right' choice that had been made and now seemed to have yielded positive results. In this speech Mutendi came out in the open that his church supports the leadership of the ruling party as this is according to the dictates of the bible. The prophecies were extremely blatant and explicitly stated that Mugabe had been sent to Zimbabwe by God and therefore deserved their vote. Again the opposition parties particularly MDC were denounced by the prophecies. The celebratory speech portrays the presence of politicians in the gathering which shows the inseparable marriage between Christianity and politics.

The results of the 2013 elections seemed to suggest that the words of prophecy in Zimbabwe during the crisis years bore fruit. This in a way legitimated both prophecy and Mugabe's stay in power. To support this perception a community newspaper in Mashonaland West province named *The Star* (4 October 2013) ran a story titled "Mugabe chosen by God: Murefu". The article read, "President Robert Mugabe who won the July 31 harmonized elections resoundingly and accepted to rule the country had not done it by his choice but was God chosen." These words were quoted from the then Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe's deputy president Overseer, Titus Innocent Murefu. The tone of the paper appeared celebratory. The voice of authority used by Murefu as a church leader was quoted by the paper to show the manifestation of earlier prophecies thereby giving credibility to the church leaders who had prophesied on this issue. Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFM) is a popular Pentecostal church. The quoted authority had this to say about Mugabe, "President Mugabe was chosen by God to rule this country, therefore we should respect him since he is a spiritual leader." Church leaders are usually referred to as spiritual leaders as they are the anointed ones of God. Elevating Mugabe to this position suggested that he was not only leader of the country but also of the church.

Murefu seemed to point out that what God had chosen should not be opposed. It could have been encouragement to accept the election results without question. The language used by Murefu suggested that the respect church members were expected to give to Mugabe may not necessarily be because of his leadership skills but merely because their faith demanded it. Murefu implied that by being head of state, Mugabe was automatically a spiritual leader. This is not normally the case as most spiritual leaders have no government positions. Murefu went on to quote Romans 13 verses 1-2 when he said, “Let every soul be a subject to the superior authorities for there is no authority except by God, the existing authorities stand placed in the relative positions by God, therefore, he who opposes the authority has taken a stand against it and will receive judgment to themselves.” The use of the word judgment denoted spiritual wrath. As a church leader, Murefu’s reference to this verse may have been designed to remind people of what happens to sinners in hell. The prophecy seemed like a warning that challenging political leadership had repercussions.

The reference made by Murefu suggested what it might mean to be a member of the opposition in a rural area and how this could impact on church discourse. The use of oppose suggested being likened to people who belong to the opposition party so because this is a community newspaper, the rural people there might have feared eviction from farms given by ZANU-PF (Nading, 2002) and would therefore take heed of this advice and conform so as to enjoy the benefits gained through supporting the ruling party. Amnesty International wrote on Zimbabwe that many sources from the rural areas they spoke with “were unwilling to place comments on record for fear of reprisals.” The fear of reprisal or ostracisation may then force these people to join the band wagon.

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter argued that prophecy was used by the media, politicians and church authorities as an ideological tool. It further discussed the interface between religion and politics highlighting that a leader is God-given, prophecy can be used to endorse political candidates and lastly that it can be used to appeal for votes. Discourses of divine appointment and intervention in political leaders abound. To imagine that prophecy was claimed to endorse political leadership needs a lot of faith to believe in it. Rather than take measures to make right the wrongs of ZANU PF and fight for the

plight of the oppressed (liberation theology), the AICs seemed to support the party wholesomely. The newspaper articles framed Mugabe as the only eligible leader. Frames of messiah, Jesus, Joshua, Canaan the land of milk and honey and Israelites were used to convince readers of ZANU PF and Mugabe's virtues. Constructed prophecy by politicians and academics who do not normally fit the role of prophets was mainly used to put ZANU PF in the limelight. Again, past and prevailing circumstances influence contemporary prophecy. Fear of the supernatural as well as biblical knowledge and dogma were manipulated to suit the prophetic messages given.

This chapter established that the press framed and represented the relationship between prophecy and politics in Zimbabwe along partisan lines. Only positive prophecy was given about Mugabe and his party by the state controlled media whereas Tsvangirai and his party were prophesied to be bad or wrong for Zimbabwe. The analysis of newspaper articles portrayed that the prevailing socio, economic and political situation influenced the prophetic messages by church leaders from AICs and other people sympathetic to ZANU-PF and castigated MDC as an opposition party. This showed that prophecy is neither neutral nor free from outside or contextual influence. The messengers seek to give acceptable prophecies. However, whereas the state controlled papers seemed to extoll the virtues of the ruling party and its leadership through prophetic messages, the privately owned papers ridiculed and satirised these prophecies. This reflects the polarisation of the media in the country (see Chapter 2).

It was also established that the political leadership in ZANU PF as a party used prophecy to legitimise their hold to power as evidenced by the press in Zimbabwe which depicts two irreconcilable positions in the frames they use which utilised either the pro-ZANUPF discourse or anti-ZANU-PF discourse. The fact that elections were anchored in the Christian word of prophecy portrayed the entwinement between Christian religion and politics.

Chapter 5: The religious discourse: a hegemonic tool to advance a political agenda

5.1 Introduction

From prophecy that was used to venerate ZANU PF, government policies were also strategically used to help the party regain lost popularity. This chapter shows how Christianity was manipulated by ZANU PF politicians to propagate their election manifesto during the crisis period (2008-2013). The chapter employs theoretical elements of ideology and Gramscian hegemony to argue that a religious discourse (appeal to peace) was employed by ZANU PF to regain the political ground lost due to the violence that characterised the previous general elections as explained in the previous chapter. This chapter argues that ZANU PF used church fora and its rallies to emphasize the vitality of peace as a pre-requisite to the introduction and implementation of its policies. The articles were on both ZANU PF and church leaders appealing for peace in the country as a strategy to propound the government's economic empowerment and indigenisation policies to a restive electorate that had been marginalised by previous colonial regimes.

The objectives of this chapter are firstly to establish how the print media presented peace as an aspect of Christianity to woo support from the church and electorate as well as unify a restive nation afflicted by political and economic ills and secondly to analyse how the strategy appealed to economic empowerment and indigenisation policies as ways of entrenching their hold onto power. As a contribution to the existing literature, this chapter supports the assertion that hegemony is not constant and must be continuously renegotiated (Gramsci, 1971; Fiske, 1987; Storey, 1994).

5.2 Contextual background

The issue of peace and reconciliation began when Zimbabwe won independence through the years of Gukurahundi to the unity accord between ZANU PF and ZAPU. However, the peace which this study focused on was the one under a Government of National Unity in 2008 after an election that was condemned by both SADC and the international community as not free and fair (Masunungure, 2008). Chitando (2013: vi) states that it was in the crisis period that "Zimbabwe captured global media attention due to the political, economic and social drama that was underway." The period 2008–

2009 was described as the “darkest period” (Chitando, 2013:83) during the crisis years because of the suffering Zimbabweans endured. This was a challenging time for Zimbabweans because of the violence that was experienced in the country. It was both physical and verbal violence through hate speech. Reconciliation was a major challenge for most citizens who witnessed the atrocities perpetrated on people purported to belong to different political parties. The Catholic Communications Network (25 April, 2008) in a press release noted:

> Organized violence perpetrated against individuals, families and communities who were accused of campaigning or voting for the ‘wrong’ political party in the March 29, 2008 elections has been unleashed throughout the country, particularly in the countryside and in some high density urban areas.
>
> People are being abducted, tortured, humiliated by being asked to repeat slogans of the political party they are alleged not to support, ordered to attend mass meetings where they are told they voted for the ‘wrong’ candidate and should never repeat it in the run-off election for President, and, in some cases, people are murdered.

It is in the context of this abominable situation painted by the Catholic Church that this chapter analyses articles that portrayed ZANU PF advocating for peace. Party politics had fragmented the nation and the church as the voice of morality and responsibility had to come in to spearhead the process of peace. Togarasei (2013:100) states, “By the time the crisis reached boiling point in 2008, most shops had empty shelves with food found on the alternative (black) market…It was indeed a crisis of the highest magnitude.” There seemed to be no rule of law. National peace was crucial in Zimbabwe prior, during and post 2008 especially after the political and economic upheavals which could be equated to a conflictual situation thus leading to the GNU. The Zimbabwean economy had been disturbed by political instability, economic chaos and an escalating inflation, hence the party advocating for peace through appealing to the church. Religion and politics had the same agenda. A peaceful people are governable. The year 2008 was when the hegemony of ZANU PF was at its lowest.

The discussion is grounded in mediated messages. Klaus Jensen (2012: 351) asserts that the “media are sources of both meaning and power.” It is from this perspective that an exploration of operations of different print media organizations is done. Through their representation, the media wield power as sources of information as people tend to make meaning and understand the world through them (McQuail, 2005;

Picard, 2004). It is through the media that people get to know about what is happening in the world and what is important. Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold (1998:92) argue that media content could be seen as "monitoring the cultural temperature of society." Communities can be empowered through the media where policies and government issues are exposed and explained to them. Joram Nyati (2005: 29) contends that "the media as purveyors of information and shapers of opinion can help in the healing process." This study interrogated the theme of peace and government policies through an exploration of how the media captured politicians co-opting religious discourse to propagate ideologies of peace as a prerequisite of government policy of indigenisation and economic empowerment.

The policy of indigenisation and economic empowerment was from the Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment Act [Chapter 14:33] of 2007 but date of commencement was 17 April 2008. The general objectives and measures of the Act were:

- Objectives and measures in pursuance of indigenisation and economic empowerment;
- Power of Minister to review and approve indigenisation and empowerment arrangements;
- Enforcement of notification and approval requirements; and
- Referral to Minister of proposed notifiable transactions in respect of which no counterparties have yet been identified.

The Indigenisation and Economic and Empowerment Act (2007:2) defines indigenisation as "a deliberate involvement of indigenous Zimbabweans in the economic activities of the country, to which hitherto they had no access, so as to ensure the equitable ownership of the nation's resources". Empowerment is defined to mean "the creation of an environment which enhances the performance of the economic activities of indigenous Zimbabweans into which they would have been introduced or involved through indigenization". The other important term is indigenous Zimbabwean and this according to the Act is "any person who, before the 18th of April 1980, was disadvantaged by the unfair discrimination on the grounds of his or her race, and any dependent of such person, and includes any company, association, syndicate or partnership of which indigenous Zimbabweans from the majority of the members or hold the controlling interests." This Act would be overseen by an

appointed minister who would be responsible for its implementation. The ZANU PF 2013 election manifesto noted, “The essence of the ZANU PF ideology is to economically empower the indigenous people of Zimbabwe by enabling them to fully own their country’s God-given natural resources and the means of production to unlock or create value from those resources.” This was closely related to the Act. This is the act ZANU PF moved around church gatherings discussing.

As the media represent issues of ZANU PF in relation to Christianity to their readers, they carry their own imbedded meaning which people can adopt, negotiate by accepting some aspects and questioning others or completely rejecting them (Hall, 1980). This chapter presents newspaper articles on how ZANU PF politicians talked about the importance of upholding peace in the country at a time it faced difficulties of lawlessness, political instability as well as issues of hunger and starvation (Mukonori, 2015) and how the print media presented these politicians’ messages. This chapter mostly focuses on gatherings of different Apostolic or Zion churches although some other churches addressed by politicians are incorporated.

5.3 Analysis of findings

5.3.1 Unifying a divided society through Christian discourse

ZANU PF politicians openly made an attempt to ride on Christianity to re-unify a fractured society in the aftermath of the controversial and violent 2008 presidential election runoff. A significant number of analyzed newspaper articles seemed to suggest that during the crisis, in order for nation healing to succeed, peace was specifically activated and regarded as a must.

To foster peace, there was need to speak against violence. Service chiefs implored the church to participate in anti-violence campaigns. These are highly placed people in ZANU PF with liberation war credentials. *The Herald* (10 May 2008) reported on a meeting between church leaders and security chiefs. The focus of the discussion was on political violence. This was during the run-up to the country’s presidential poll re-run. The service chiefs included the then Commander of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces General Constantino Chiwenga, former Police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri and a representative from the President’s Office. The article reported, “It is understood that General Chiwenga appealed to the church leaders to

urge their congregations to work towards peace while political parties were also implored to impress upon their supporters to desist from violence." Discourses of peace and violence were at play to propagate the party's ideology. It resonates with Stoddart's (2007) notion that when discourse is used to reinforce forces of power it becomes ideology. The phrase 'it is understood' suggests lack of confidence in the claim being made. Questions like 'by who?' and 'from?' may be asked. There appeared to be desperation on the part of the paper indicating the extent of lack of lawlessness. On one hand the paper reported that Chiwenga had used the word 'urge' showing how he was encouraging church leaders to stress the importance of peace to their members while on the other hand he had 'implored' political leaders to stop their supporters from being involved in violence. Whereas church leaders were 'urged' to 'work towards peace', political parties were 'implored to impress' on their supporters 'to desist from violence'. The words suggest encouraging and warning respectively. The paper used discourse that appealed to each section hence interpellation. Church members understand encouragement whereas supporters of politicians understand commands. With both parties doing their part, it would lead to the realisation of peace.

This publicly owned paper was trying to paint a picture of dialogue happening between service chiefs and both ZANU PF and MDC in which the political parties were urged to shun violence. Constitutionally, service chiefs are supposed to be apolitical. What is problematic is that these same security chiefs had vowed countless times that they would not accept a leader in Zimbabwe without war credentials (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2005) implying their rejection of Morgan Tsvangirai. For example General Zvinavashe flanked by Chiwenga, Chihuri, Bonyongwe and Zimondi in 2002 had made the claim; Major General Trust Mugoba and Nyikayaramba; Major General E. Rugeje on countless times had also made the claim. This may be explained by Moyo (2012) who notes that a considerable number of Zimbabweans liked ZANU PF for its liberation history. In this political stalemate, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2005) argues that there was politicisation of the security chiefs and an 'unbreakable umbilical cord' between these security forces and ZANU PF. This tight relationship was noted by Ndlovu-Gatsheni:

> …in December 2001 General Vitalis Zvinavashe, then overall commander of the ZDF, flanked by the commanders of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA), Airforce, Police and the Directors of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) and Prisons, openly announced, at a televised press conference, their partisan and unequivocal allegiance to ZANU-PF. They went on to

> threaten a military takeover if another party other than ZANU-PF won the presidential elections (2005:52).

ZDF refers to Zimbabwe Defence Forces. The Commander-in-chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF) was then President Mugabe. That there was dialogue between the service chiefs with ZANU PF on one hand and the MDC on the other would be regarded as provocative and spark both debate and violence. Turning around and preaching the gospel of peace by the combative armed forces was controversial. The quoted utterances by the security gurus led by Chiwenga in a meeting with church leaders in 2008 compromised their genuineness in calling for peace as history had recorded them in their combative stance. Chihuri also advocated for peace. However, few if no cases at all of political arrests due to violence were reported to have been done by the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) or perpetrators of violence taken to court. This is also articulated by Mukonori (2015:113) who states, "Several election-related political violence cases never reached the Courts or if they did, the judgements were biased." How then were the police doing their part in ensuring that there was no political violence? This article set the tone on the seriousness that the issue of peace seemed to be given. Using this strategy to make people believe in peace could have been an effort to mend relations which is the aim of ideology (Chambers in Moyo, 2001). However, it could be proved problematic.and this could explain what Foucault (1980) referred to as discourse exposing power hence making it fragile.

Hegemony was at play as while addressing church gatherings, ZANU PF politicians put emphasis on the role of the church in reconciliation and nation-building. After the March 2008 elections there was a meeting where church leaders met with ZANU PF officials. *The Herald* (19 June 2008) captured the event that took place in Harare. This was ahead of the presidential run-off[21]. The discussion between the officials and representative of church organisations included "the possibility of establishing a government of national unity." The article reported, "The clergy presented a document titled 'A position Paper to (the) ZANU PF Leadership on the Church's view of the Current Situation and its Process that they think will Bring Transformation to Zimbabwe'." The title of the presented document indicated that it was the church that recommended the GNU for a specified period. This was a proposal for a new political

[21] The run-off was a second round of elections for a president which was done after the failure to get an outright winner in the March 2008 elections.

dispensation and this was triggered by the volatile political disturbances. The article reported that Dydimus Mutasa who was then secretary for administration and Sithembiso Nyoni who chaired the ZANU PF national presidential public relations sub-committee described the meeting as "very positive. We have had a very good meeting. This is the beginning of the engagement process. Solutions are in Zimbabwe." The phrase 'very positive' alluded to the extent that the clergy had been won over by the politicians.

Good is a relative word and suggests that to ZANU PF the meeting between the officials and church leaders bore fruitful results. Nyoni admitted that the meeting had marked the 'beginning of the engagement process' which portrayed how the party would be working with the church to bring back sanity to a country ravaged by violence. It was not a once-off meeting as there would be more meetings in the future implying continuous engagement. Zimbabwe as a nation required home grown solutions hence the need for the church to work with the government/ZANU PF rather than appeal for outside assistance. This involvement between the ZANU PF politicians and the clergy cemented the partnership of the church and the party which would pave way for future engagements. However, what was worrying was that not all churches were represented.

The church was expected to be principled where peace was concerned. This was emphasised by Shamu, the then ZANU PF political commissar, who was also the then Minister of Media, Information and Publicity at a gathering of Musangano weGore for the Johanne Marange Apostolic Sect in Mutasa district. The *Manica Post* (12 March 2010) quoted Shamu saying:

> You should not be forced what you don't want. Your principles of advocating for peace throughout Africa are similar to the principles of Africa's founding fathers like Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda, to mention but a few. These founding fathers wanted nothing, but peace to prevail as what you are preaching by saying: 'Rugare muAfrica (Peace in Africa)'

This quotation brings in the question of rights. The church observes religious rights as much as politics observes political rights. The church was assured that ZANU PF was against anyone who violated other people's religious beliefs. If peace was to be bestowed then intolerance of other people's rights was unwelcome. It seemed as if the

party preached one thing and practiced the opposite. Violation of human rights was one of the reasons why activists had demonstrated against the ruling government. This speech gave the impression that the party was quite aware of how the church operated and had no problems with that. The party was accommodating as long as its rights were also observed. Shamu referred to these big and reputable names in Africa who had advocated for peace as a unifying motive. Likening this church to these African fathers was raising them to a level above other churches. It suggested the centrality of the church in issues of nation building and reconciliation not only in Zimbabwe but in Africa as a whole. Zimbabwe could be united by the efforts of the church. To unify a divided nation, ZANU PF utilized the discourse of peace and anti-violence to hegemonise people. This was meant to present itself as a peace loving party which would build the foundation for the launch of the indigenization and empowerment policy.

5.3.2 Church key in political stability

The crisis in Zimbabwe was characterised by people who tried to erase political differences. These resulted in political party fights so there was political instability. The Government of National Unity (GNU) brought with it a spate of violence. Although there were outcries about political violence being perpetrated on citizens especially prior to and during elections in Zimbabwe through beatings, arrests, killings, intimidation (Masunungure, 2009; CCJPZ, 2009) and denying opposition party members privileges like seed or maize, subtle means to get support from people by ZANU PF was done from a religious perspective. In the campaigns towards the 2013 elections, ZANU PF adopted the motto “Peace begins with you, peace begins with me, peace begins with all of us” initiated by the late Vice President John Nkomo. The party was advocating for peace publicly and visiting church gatherings publicly to talk to people. These alternative discursive spaces were captured by both the public and private print media. They appealed for the church to unify people who were victims or those who had witnessed atrocities being perpetrated on people who belonged to different political divides. Issues of forgiving and forgetting were addressed as well as Christian churches being encouraged to preach the gospel of peace.

Bishop Trevor Manhanga[22] in an opinion section of *The Sunday Mail* (14-20 December 2008) lamented the mishaps brought by the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) which paved way to the GNU. The opinion titled "Season of political goodwill" noted:

> The lack of political goodwill which had seen what seemed to be a major leap forward when the Global Political Agreement was signed by our three major political players in September ground to a halt in a quagmire of political expediency, is very disconcerting, to say the least. This current political impasse, coupled with the economic holocaust, which continues to inflict mayhem on the population of Zimbabwe, leaves the nation facing a Christmas bereft of the joy and festivity we should experience.

This was evidence that politically things were not stable in Zimbabwe. The phrase 'political goodwill' gave the impression of stability. The signing of the GPA was described as 'a major leap forward' suggesting that people had pinned their hopes on this development for positive results. Like Christmas when people overfeed and temporarily forget their problems, this was just an illusion as it only 'seemed to be' but in actual fact it was not. Christmas comes and goes but the everyday reality remains. The paper's choice of words connotes disillusionment, for example 'ground to a halt' portrayed coming back to reality. Even with the signing of the GPA, people's hopes were temporarily raised only to be shattered as the situation remained dire. The use of the phrase 'quagmire of political expediency' is a complicated phrase that does not appeal to the man on the street. It suggested a mess or predicament of being in a situation that appeared convenient and advantageous but not necessarily right or just. The implication was that the GPA served self-interests of the opposition parties and was not for the good of the nation as a whole. This was meant to put ZANU PF in good light as compared to MDC.

The article was about how Manhanga was well aware of the 'economic holocaust' in the form of challenges facing the country like the paralysis of the educational and medical institutions. Children had stopped attending school in the final term and hospitals had no drugs. Manhanga wrote, "The unacceptable paralysis of our medical and educational institutions that has led to many of our children not going to school for the third term of the year and seen our major referral hospitals being closed due to

[22] Manhanga is a well-known ZANU PF sympathizer who also leads the Pentecostal Assemblies of Zimbabwe (PAOZ) since 1993.

shortages of drugs and other human resource issues." All this was what Manhanga said inflicted 'mayhem' or a situation that was very violent and hurt Zimbabweans. He admitted that these were not normal times and the prevailing situation was awkward, troubling, disturbing and of grave concern to everyone hence the use of the word 'disconcerting'. The word 'bereft' denotes both deprivation and lacking on one hand and sadness and loneliness on the other meaning there was no anticipation of festivities, togetherness, happiness nor excitement that people normally have towards Christmas because of the prevailing political and economic situation. What this article was implying was that the 'political impasse' marred by political violence meant that there was nothing to celebrate in 2008 as things were dire politically, economically and socially. The lengthy article was meant to hegemonise readers through the given interpretation. What Manhanga did was use ideology which according to Sonderling (2007) was an effective control mechanism meant to make people accept their position as well as respect their leaders who would bring them the longed for goodwill.

Despite admitting that the situation was dire, Manhanga castigated some clerics together with opposition political parties for having called for foreign military intervention in the country in a bid to restore normalcy. There was the utilization of the discourse of anti-sanctions. He wrote, "But for someone to use the cholera epidemic as a pretext for inviting foreigners to invade Zimbabwe must be opposed by all patriotic Zimbabweans with all the strength of galvanising opposition to the dangerous idea." The church was accused of being violent instead of coming up with peaceful means of solving the Zimbabwean crisis when Manhanga wrote, "The fact that two clerics have come out in support of this heinous idea is even the more reason why we the Church in Zimbabwe must stand up and be counted." The two clerics (not Zimbabweans) mentioned by name were Bishop Desmond Tutu and Sentamu. The church was described as having sided with the opposition to spearhead the call for foreign military intervention instead of being the glue that would keep the country together as it would have prevented it from imploding into doom. The church was regarded to have 'wrongfully' influenced the opposition by also advocating for the inclusive government. In as much as the church could work with ZANU PF, it could also work against it.

This portrayed the malleable nature of religion. In light of this, the church would be an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1970) and perpetuating ZANU PF ideologies

but in this case they were accused of upholding oppositional ideas. As a well-known ZANU PF apologist, (*Zimbabwe Daily*, 17 January 2010; *The Zimbabwean*, 19 January 2010) Manhanga could have been implicitly blaming MDC for the lack of goodwill. In the story about Christmas Manhanga was laying all the blame on the church supporting GNU and insinuating that only a ZANU PF government would be a desirable option. What is puzzling is which government in the first place had caused all these problems.

The church was expected to toe the ZANU PF line of thinking to be acceptable as evidenced by the discourse of patriotism. If some churches raised dissenting voices they would be labelled as enemies. *The Zimbabwean* (19 January 2010) brought this out in an article titled “Bishop sparks political storm.” The story had another sub-title “Non-Zanu pastors victimized”. The article read, “The head of PAOZ, Bishop Trevor Manhanga, is said to have instructed the church’s overseer for Harare, Bishop Never Muparutsa, not to renew the credentials for a number of pastors suspected to be linked to the MDC.” Discourse of division is sown in church. The church was being politicised and Manhanga from this reportage seemed partisan through his choice of discourse. The sub-title seemed to be explaining what Manhanga was doing and that was victimisation of those pastors who refused to align themselves to ZANU PF. With this kind of thinking and fighting among churches themselves, it would be difficult to bring peace to the nation spearheaded by the church. the church was taken as another arm of the ruling party, tasked to propagate the party’s ideology. Although hegemony is rule by consent, the churches were put in a difficult position of choosing to align themselves to ZANU PF and become patriots or be labelled as puppets for raising dissenting voices.

5.3.2.1 Church as the peacemaker

The June 2008 re-run came and went leading to the GNU. The coming in of the GNU was a new phenomenon to the country and was received with skepticism. During the period of political turmoil in the country the church was expected by the government to play a very important role in reconciling people divided by political differences thereby helping to heal the nation. *The Herald* (21 August 2010) carried a story titled ‘Play pivotal role in reconciliation, churches told’. In that article the late Vice President John Nkomo was quoted to have said: “Churches in Zimbabwe should play a pivotal

role in the process of reconciliation and national healing among citizens with different political affiliations."

The article titled "Play pivotal role in reconciliation, churches told" (*The Herald*, 21 August 2010) wrote that the church was expected to be a mediator, a unifier, a peacemaker. Through its efforts people of different political dispensations would be brought together. Nkomo uttered these words at Mutare Teachers' College during the consecration of a United Baptist Church (UBC) bishop Peter Chibinjana. Also gracing this occasion were prominent representatives of ZANU PF and senior civil servants. These were representatives of the ZANU PF political party. This was a church gathering where political issues were discussed. Ray Bande in *The Herald* (21 August, 2010) who reported from Mutare used the language of persuasion where the ZANU PF politician VP Nkomo "implored churches to adhere to their traditional role of promoting peace, tolerance and unity in society". Tolerance has biblical connotations that people are different but live harmoniously because they tolerated each other. Nkomo was suggesting that churches were not living up to their traditional role as they were not fostering peace. This was a way of demonizing those who supported MDC. By appealing to the church's 'traditional role' Nkomo was using familiar church discourse that the church would readily accept. Christians being fully aware that nothing could separate them from the love of God; be it strife or challenges were expected to stick to their beliefs which implied following their church practices despite the political and economic challenges. Christian dogma shows that challenges may come but they could be overcome. This is supported by Cline (n.d.) who claims that religion makes people feel better about the distress they experience with the assurance that it would come to pass. The given impression was that peace had to be bestowed in Zimbabwe and this was possible with the church working together with the government.

By emphasising the role of the church in the peace and reconciliation process, Nkomo was psychologically manipulating the members so that as church members they could feel the burden of upholding peace. To an extent, the researcher agrees with Ramirez as ZANU PF politicians presented the church as the answer to the political differences as the church, as an ideological state apparatus, can make an impact (Althusser, 1970). The aim of the article was to encourage people to accommodate each other

without taking notice of the political divide as evidenced by Nkomo's utterance "among citizens with different political affiliations" (*The Herald,* 21 August 2010).

On the same vein of seeking political peace in line with the GNU, Felex Share wrote in *The Herald* (23 May 2011) a story titled "Polls only way to end GPA row". Webster Shamu, was addressing hundreds of the Johanne Masowe weChishanu sect. Shamu took advantage of the numbers of the members to give them direct information about the sentiments of the party concerning the GNU. ZANU PF wanted the GNU to end and elections held in the near future. At this gathering Shamu had lauded the Christians' role of maintaining peace in Zimbabwe. He was quoted by the paper urging "the church to denounce neo-colonialism and uphold aspirations of those who fought for the liberation of the country." There is reference to the war of liberation which is against neo-colonialism. The church was encouraged to emulate ZANU PF through demonizing the opposition who were regarded as mercenaries of the West as Tsvangirai, their leader, was labelled a British and American puppet (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003; Kriger, 2005; Ranger, 2005; Mazango, 2005).

Again name calling as a propaganda technique was used to describe the opposition as sell-outs, puppets and stooges (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009; Chuma, 2008; Diane, 2006; Chitando, 2005; and Waldahl, 2005). This is in total agreement with what VP Nkomo had said (*The Herald*, 21 August 2010) when addressing United Baptist Church members in Mutare so that there were no policies implemented that were counterproductive to the ideologies of ZANU PF. The implication was that anything against ZANU PF from opposition political parties was counterproductive. This led to those against the ruling party policies of indigenisation and empowerment being described as enemies of the state. This section revealed how the burden of fostering peace was placed on the operations of the church.

5.3.2.2 Political ideology taken to church

Church gatherings were sometimes turned into party gatherings. At the occasion of Shamu addressing the Johanne Masowe WeChishanu sect and being accompanied by a number of other ZANU PF cadres, he was portrayed advancing his party's ideologies and not participating in any church business. Instead of being subtle in his address through adopting Christian iconography to legitimise his political party's stay in power, Shamu seemed to be directly co-opting church members to support ZANU

PF. This shows that he was doing party business on a government ticket. This is similar to what the *Zimbabwe Independent* (19 July, 2013) captured when the paper reported on Mugabe clad in the white Johanne Marange's apostolic regalia at their Mafararikwa shrine. The paper wrote:

> Mugabe could not continue to pretend to be the deity shouting "peace, peace, peace. The political animal inside betrayed him and the true to form Mugabe exploded as he bellowed '*Pamber neZANU PF*' (Forward with ZANU PF) instead of '*Rugare*' (peace).

The impression given suggested that politicians would be acting in front of congregants. Mugabe was being accused of thinking that he was a deity. This is implied by the phrase 'political animal in him betrayed him' signifying how temporary pretense was. Reference to politics as an animal by the paper was also loaded with meaning. It is difficult to tame a wild animal just as the behavior of Mugabe as a politician was untamable. Again, the phrase 'true to form' implied that Mugabe failed to remain subtle and religious and became very political at a church gathering. It is very rare for party slogans to be chanted at church gatherings but not impossible. The words 'exploded' and 'bellowed' are extreme denoting the vigor with which Mugabe preached his party ideology (political animal) which seemed first and uppermost in his mind.

Shamu in his speech reminded the sect that supporting Mugabe would irk the wrath of Britain and America when he remarked:

> Your ideology of supporting the blacks resulted in you being blacklisted by the settler regime. They wanted you to follow their churches so that they would have dominance over you in all sectors but you remained resolute. You saw the dangers of imperialism and fought those who wanted to see themselves as a superior race *(The Herald,* 23 May 2011).

Discourse of bondage denoted by a superior race, dominance and imperialism seemed meant to remind people of why they should shun oppositional political parties. Here Shamu took the church back in memory to when it lost favor with the then colonisers and used the word 'blacklisted' to evoke anger in the congregates from the treatment they got from the former colonisers. Using 'settler regime' and 'dominance' painted a picture of the struggle the church had gone through to be liberated. Likewise ZANU PF had liberated itself from the colonialists. The removal of the GPA was implied as the answer to the country's economic problems. The church was commended for

being principled and for this reason it had the mandate of maintaining the country's moral fabric. Shamu said, "You are a principled sector and together we must show the world that we are our own liberators." This discourse appealed to people who understood the liberation struggle. The implication was that ZANU PF which had helped in liberating the contry was also principled and through its development policies, it would maintain the country's economic fabric.

However, all this talk by Shamu and other politicians might have been just empty words of blaming neo-colonialism and imperialism as the economy of the country is yet to improve. The period of the GNU had an MDC Minister of Finance, Tendai Biti. It was also the time when ZANU PF introduced the multicurrency system in January 2009 ahead of the inauguration of the GNU. Why this policy was only implemented at that time and not earlier showed that the signing of the GPA jostled the party into action. The government introduced the one hundred United States vouchers for all civil servants[23]. This continued into the GNU and things appeared stable. The dollarisation in the country for some time helped Zimbabweans to enjoy their hard earned money in either the United States dollar or the South African rand and the education and health sectors were resuscitated (Chagonda, 2010:14). Nehanda Radio (28 March, 2014) noted, "The chief advantage of dollarization is that rampant inflation has been dramatically stabilized. This has, in turn, stabilized the overall economy, sustained the buying power of the Zimbabwean people, and allowed the nation as a whole to experience significant economic growth." Citizens could buy cars especially from Japan and the United Kingdom. Shelves in shops filled up with goods which had not been the case before January 2009. People could afford to put food on the table unlike what was happening in 2007–2008.

Those who had left the country for greener pastures like teachers wished to return home as the situation had improved. Chagonda (2008:14) notes, "…by April 2009, 6,000 teachers had returned to Zimbabwe from South Africa…" Claiming that the removal of the GNU would help improve the economy may have been difficult to comprehend for people who had gone hungry for days on end as the Zimbabwean dollar had lost all value (Hanke, 2008). Again to most people dollarisation was the

[23] This was the salary every worker got in January 2009 regardless of post or qualification (Chagonda, 2008:14) at the onset of using the American dollar as the accepted currency in the country (*The Telegraph*, 19 February 2009).

result of GNU because it came after the signing of the GPA. The solution to these troubling times was suggested to be through maintaining peace so as to foster developmental projects.

5.3.2.3 Peace in the post-2008 period

The aftermath of the 2008 elections distressed most people in the country and the church was called to be actively involved. This was evidenced by Mujuru saying, “The indigenous churches are doing a great job by promoting peace in the country because it is at the church where people who live in communities are taught good morals” (*The Herald*, 15 October 2012). The tone of the speech would appeal to the listeners as the speaker came in peace through appealing to the church’s moral responsibility. This would appeal to the spirituality of the church members leading to them trying to uphold peace in the country in accordance to their doctrine. With the church properly hegemonised, ZANU PF believed it would be easy to penetrate communities which would pave way for the introduction and implementation of government policies.

The period since the introduction to GNU stretching to 2010 was then termed the reconciliation and national healing period which was the aftermath of political disturbances prior, during and after the 2008 elections. Activists and followers of these political parties had to accept the formation of the inclusive government and adjust in both behavior and mindset (Grzymala-Busse, 2012). The ideology of political parties lead to their actions as Ramirez in Valle (1992) argues that the mind can be dominated by ideology. With the same line of thought *The Herald* (4 May, 2013) wrote a story with the title “Churches, spread gospel of peace” in which part of the introduction read, “Churches can do a far easier job in hammering the message of peace home compared to other sectors of society.” The churches here were praised for being more influential than other sectors. The influence of the church was greater because of people’s beliefs and doctrines. In the same vein of applauding peace, *The Sunday Mail* (19 May, 2013) wrote “Promote peace, church leaders urged” showing the significant role the church was expected to play in advocating for peace. All these examples show how the church was placed at the forefront of maintaining peace.

Even after the end of the GNU when peace was said to be prevailing, there were traces of violence. *The Herald* (5 August, 2013) wrote an article titled “Church urges parties to accept poll outcome” in which an appeal was made to all political parties to remain

peaceful. Reverend Goodwill Shana, the leader of the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations said:

> As the church we commend Zimbabweans and the political parties for the manner they conducted themselves during the elections. We now urge all political parties to show the same resolve to maintain peace and harmony as we move forward and that those with any issues have them addressed in a peaceful and orderly manner.

This suggested that there was need for peace in the aftermath of the 2013 elections. The impression is that election periods have conflictual issues that need redressing. The word 'commend' suggested that the speaker is putting himself in a position of moral superiority where he has the right to praise churches for doing 'good'.

However, this call for peace after the 2008 elections was difficult to implement as people who had suffered during the political disturbances at the hands of those they knew too well found it hard to forgive and forget just like that (Machakanja, 2010). This was the period when the ZANU PF hegemony was at its lowest. The *NewsDay* (9 February 2015) in a story titled "Zimbabwe's long, winding road to peace, reconciliation" started with a quotation, "Since her death, life has been a nightmare for me. I have looked for comfort from anything you can imagine- from alcohol to church. I sometimes go to church where the gospel of forgiveness and letting go is preached." These were memories of a Chinhoyi resident, a widower and father of two. The man was further quoted saying, "What haunts me most is not that my wife died to injuries related to the political violence she suffered on the hands of Zanu PF youths in the run up to the June 2008 presidential run-off elections. What eats my soul every day is watching her killers walk free with no hope of responsible authorities doing anything to bring justice." This was a heart rending speech full of bitterness. Politicians might advocate for peace but there seemed to be need for corrective action being taken against perpetrators. In the absence of such action being taken, people resorted to finding peace in church. However, even then, it seemed difficult to being peaceful. As a result of such scenarios, Dodo, Nyoni and Makwererei (2012: 15) opine, "In Mashonaland region, respondents indicated that silence has never been a permanent solution to any conflict let alone to the 2008-post election violence where victims know the perpetrators of the conflict that cost their lives." Mukonori (2015: 108) argues, "If justice is left dangling, it will only harden the wounds that will result in more violence." It is against this background that although people from different political parties were

encouraged to be tolerant of each other and live peacefully together despite their different political affiliations, peace was difficult to attain.

Mujuru said, 'People should all come together. We must bury our differences because we were brought together by the war of liberation that we fought as a family for the cause of each and every Zimbabwean" (*The Sunday Mail,* 19 May 2013). The use of 'we' was inclusive of everyone. The suggestion was that peace knows no boundaries and it was healthy for the nation. When Mujuru used the phrase 'bury our differences' she appeared to be tolerant of even people belonging to different political dispensations like MDC. Again, reference to the war of liberation embraces all people as this war was combined effort. By alluding to 'family' Mujuru denoted close ties where Zimbabweans were one big family.

The church was expected to play a significant role in ensuring that peace prevailed just as families are expected to be united and protective of each other. The late VP Nkomo noted:

> We are aware that the traditional role of the church is to promote unity, peace and tolerance in society and as Government we really appreciate your efforts in upholding unity and peace among Zimbabweans (*The Herald,* 21 August 2010).

The church and government were presented as partners in ensuring that there was stability and harmony in the country. Partnership between the government and the Christian community would culminate in a better life for the citizens. Storey (2008:60) explained that in such a scenario the ruling class would be "compelled …to represent its interest as the common interest of all members of society." This would then give the ideas of the elites some form of "universality, and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones." (ibid) The promise of a better life seemed aimed at enticing the church members to appreciate the message. *The Sunday Mail* (10-16 February 2008) also alluded to the church as a unifier. The paper wrote, "The church by its nature is supposed to be a unifying force of usually divergent views" indicating that the church could be instrumental in peace building. Again the *Chronicle* (31 December, 2009) carried a story titled "Church has role to play in nation healing." This adds emphasis to the role of the church in enforcing a peaceful environment.

The Herald (4 May, 2013) wrote, "Romans 10 verse 15 perhaps sums up the importance of preaching peace: 'How beautiful are the feet of those that preach the

gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!' Preachers can start from this verse as it is an open instruction to them to consider prioritising peace, especially as the country moves towards harmonised elections." This article actually quoted from the bible which Chitando, Gunda and Kugler (2013) argue is the most popular book in the country. Glossing on effects of peace, Shamu used the bible in what appeared to be a campaigning strategy disguised in church business to politicize the preachers. It showed an intertwinement of religious and political discourses. At a church gathering people appear acquiescent and neither protest nor challenge authority. This merged quite well with the mentality of the *vapostori* that in their churches the leader; '*Mutumwa'* (messenger) or High Priest is revered and his word is their command. This is explained by Moyo (2013) who argues that God was taken as the source of all power and his messengers were regarded as equally powerful. The belief in the supernatural (Nyabuezwe, 2009) also led to the reverence. This is evidenced by *The Herald* (4 May, 2013) when the paper wrote, "The preachers are held in high esteem in society and usually what they say goes…preachers in local churches must make it clear to their followers that once people live in the peace of God, they eventually become committed to peace on earth." This was a cardinal rule with the church. This was an elevation of preachers thereby bestowing them with unquestionable powers. By bringing them to the government's side, it would be a step in gaining favor in the eyes of different church members.

5.3.3 The mutual relationship between Church and politics

The relationship between church and politics is very complex. When politicians appealed for the church to help them maintain peace it was for a prize. The supportive church would be rewarded in some way. It could be in terms of recognition by the ruling party and government or receiving material benefits. Both the party and the supporting churches would benefit from each other. The *Zimbabwe Independent* (19 July, 2013) wrote, "In 2011 Vice President Joice Mujuru visited Mafararikwa for the church's ceremony where she addressed more than 300 000 people. Like Mugabe, Mujuru was promised more than a million votes." These visits were expected to be rewarding in the long run.

Zimbabwe since independence had been using the Lancaster House drawn constitution of 1979. In the 2000 referendum the Zimbabwean people rejected the

proposed new constitution. The constitution making process was meant to get Zimbabweans to contribute towards a home grown constitution that could lead to peace and harmony in the country. The government was vying for a people driven constitution. *The Herald* (21 August, 2010) carried a story that commended the United Baptist Church for complementing government efforts. Ray Bande wrote in the paper, "VP Nkomo also urged members of the Christian community to take full advantage of the ongoing constitution making process to redress some colonially inherited ideologies that were counterproductive." By taking 'full advantage' the church would be making their voice heard. This would help rule out a constitution imposed on the nation like the one rejected in the 2000 referendum.

The voice of the church was called for to help ZANU PF legitimate their call for the replacement of the old constitution. The AICs had revolutionised themselves from the orthodox churches so they were supposed to know how to 'redress' injustices perpetrated by the old constitution. In 2010 up to 2013 ZANU-PF was advocating for a home grown constitution. In this article the church members were being encouraged to rethink their present situation and give their own input so that "at the end of the day we will have a constitution that Christians also contributed towards." As most of Zimbabweans are Christians, their input would be the voice of the majority. The church were encouraged to be responsible for a constitution that Zimbabwe would be proud of. In important national events, the church was not left out so its contribution was held in high esteem as it was the custodian of people's spiritual livelihoods. The government relentlessly appealed for the church to play a conciliatory role.

5.3.3.1 Church-government "close buddies"?

Indigenous churches played a crucial role in the crisis period and in turn were drawn close to the government. The church was expected to be instrumental in peace keeping and prayer was also taken as a powerful tool to persuade the church to work with government. George Maponga wrote an article in *The Sunday Mail* (November 2010) titled "VP Mujuru hails churches". The article pointed out that the government was pleased with the churches founded or led by indigenous Zimbabweans. This resonated with what Webster Shamu had said to the Johanne Masowe weChishanu sect (*The Herald,* 23 May 2011). It portrayed that the ZANU PF politicians had the

same goal. Mujuru wished for these churches to flourish as they helped create a society that upheld good morals. She stated:

> We want to express our profound gratitude as Government for the role that is being played by churches in creating a morally and spiritually upright citizenry as churches in this country have millions of followers who are under them today. As Government, we want to applaud the role that is being played by churches in creating a nation of people who fear God because the prisons and law enforcement agents that we set up as the State to control vice would be over whelmed if churches were not aiding by teaching our citizenry to be law abiding and God fearing (*The Sunday Mail,* November 2010).

Mujuru used the word 'we' portraying that ZANU PF was government and government was ZANU PF. The conflation between the party and government suggested that party business was government business. What the church was doing to foster peace showed how the government was indebted to the church. This was because the church helped 'create' obedient citizens who were God fearing. The church was celebrated for the role it played in upholding peace in the country.

Locals who had successfully established indigenous churches were commended for having a huge following because this huge following presented the politicians with fertile ground for campaigning to and manipulation of the masses. These numbers attracted the politicians as they could be heard in person and not just getting mediatised information. Referring to 'prisons' and 'law enforcement agents' showed a close relationship between the state and church. Whereas the state would arrest and rehabilitate a person, the church would mold him/her 'morally and spiritually'. A morally upright person would be most unlikely to commit sins that would warrant a prison term. This combined effort would translate to peace in the country. Both the church and government were fighting for the same cause and that was the eradication of any evil that could create social and political instability. In Mujuru's speech what 'law abiding' was to state, 'God fearing' was to church. Speaking to the church members was a sure way of getting the desired message across as very few of them would buy a newspaper to read about what ZANU PF was proposing. According to *The Herald* (21 February, 2018) the two sister papers, that is *The Herald* and *Chronicle* are read by a combined 40% of Zimbabwean adults and 51% of the urban adult population. ZAMPS 2016 Report, notes that 25% of Zimbabweans read *The Sunday Mail*. *The Herald* (21

February, 2018) further noted, “No other weekly is read by more than 2%.” However, these papers can be accessed online.

In this article Mujuru was reportedly addressing 12 000 members of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) at their Mbungo shrine (in Masvingo province). Moral and spiritual guidance would be instilled in the people making them governable thereby leading to moral stability which would translate to national peace. A God-fearing people are people who listen to their leaders especially when they bring a word of prophecy (see Chapter 4). In this case it was not just moral and spiritual guidance but also political guidance delivered in their backyard. The fact that the Vice President had graced their occasion and addressed them would make an impact on these worshippers. Again it was not just acceptance of her as an individual but also the party she represented. When one accepts the messenger, one is indirectly accepting those who sent him/her. The faith and loyalty of these church members would translate into a support base that was strong and dependable. All this is conjecture on my part.

The Sunday Mail (July 29-August 4, 2012) wrote, “Politicians have for long been known to enlist the help of religious leaders during election time in order to woo voters.” This would be a way of educating them on the politics of the country. The characteristics explained in the literature review of the AICs having most of the people not politically educated may be the reason why this kind of manipulation was portrayed. Shizha and Kariwo (2011:17) note, “the purpose of advancing education to Africans for the purpose of proselytization, and making the African able to read the bible” set the pace for most of these people in terms of education. However, this may just be a myth which politicians wanted to sustain as reality on the ground reflect differently on this issue of education. For example, Nehemiah Mutendi, the leader of ZCC is a trained teacher and his church currently runs a school; Mutendi High. In recognition of his contribution to education, the University of Zimbabwe conferred him an honorary degree. The Johanne Marange Church also recently built a school that was officially opened by former President Mugabe. St Elisha is a sect that runs a secondary school in Wedza. Mujuru, when addressing Johanne Marange pilgrims in Mafararikwa said, “You have some of your children with the required education to come up with a number of economic empowerment programmes and you should make use of them to set up programmes and projects that will benefit your members” (*The Sunday Mail*, 15 July 2012). This is evidence that AICs send their children to school.

Given these examples, it becomes difficult to sustain the argument by some scholars that most are not enlightened. Chitando, Gunda and Kugler (2014:123) argue:

> African Independent Churches, especially the apostolic groups are often bandied together in the media. Although the different media images seem to imply that all followers of Apostolic churches are polygamists, are averse to Western medicine, shave their heads, wear white robes and that they do not all send their children to school; the truth of the matter is that the media have not bothered to research deeper and try and understand the religious practices and differences of these groups, preferring, instead to find solace in sweeping generalizations and hyperbole.

Mugabe encouraged the Johanne Marange church to educate their children. He said, "Every child should have at least 11 years of education" (*The Sunday Mail*, 18 July 2010). This is reiterated by *Parade* (December 2001:4), a magazine, which observes the Apostolic Church of Zimbabwe "encourages its members to be highly educated." The assumption by party politicians that members of the AICs would readily embrace their ideologies because of their political naivety was a misnomer. The myth that they are not enlightened is a media creation.

The theme of mutual benefit for state and church were evident after the 2008 elections and the formation of the GNU and the period prior to the 2013 elections. The government appealed to the church to pacify people so that peace could prevail. This was revealed at an event when the then Vice President Joice Mujuru in her capacity as acting President of Zimbabwe and patron of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ) presented certificates to nearly 100 churches. The ACCZ was formed in September 2010 and is a union of apostolic churches operating in the country. It is headed by Bishop Johannes Ndanga. According to *The Sunday Mail* (November 2010) the council's membership had risen to 350 churches so spreading the gospel of peace would touch many lives. *The Sunday Mail* (23 January 2011) captured this story headlined "Pray for peace, says VP Mujuru". There were hundreds of ACCZ members gathered at the City Sports Centre in Harare. The article was accompanied by a photograph of Mujuru donning a church uniform. The uniform helped in making Mujuru identify with the church members. This also would make her be easily accepted by the sects. The introduction to the article read:

> Acting President Joice Mujuru has implored members of local apostolic sects to lead in the fight against vices and to pray for national peace and unity in a country that should continuously uphold cultural beliefs.

The major thrust in this article was on peace which could be attained through prayer. The occasion was certification of 100 churches which joined the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe at the City Sports Centre in Harare. This suggested how the government could 'help' the church that came to their assistance. It indicated a strong way of begging the church to be not only peaceful but patriotic. By taking a proactive role against societal evil and praying, the apostolic sects were made to feel significant in the reconciliation and nation-building exercise. This were familiar duties of the church so it would not be difficult to do as instructed. Again the church was reminded of its mandate to pray as a weapon for fighting 'vices' as this would lead to national peace. The praying would then go on to embrace the welfare of the ruling party.

The paper also brought out the link between the country and cultural beliefs. This is familiar to AICs who also have links to their cultural beliefs. Mujuru went on to say crimes such as rape, murder, theft and incest could be easily mitigated through the intervention of the church and prayer so that there would be peace in the country. The paper went on to write, "She said the church should pray for unity and peace saying that was the route to stability." Mujuru had reinforced the fact that through prayer there would be peace. If the church worked closely with the government, such social ills would be addressed and peace fostered. What is interesting is whether the ruling party was really interested in peace or preparing people to accept them as a peace loving party.

5.3.3.2 Church as the enemy of the state

For the country to develop, the claim was that there should be peace which would be a result of the state and church having common goals. However, in as much as the church could pray for peace and rally behind ZANU PF, facts on the ground reveal that some churches could also be regarded as enemies if they were seen to be sympathetic to the opposition. This was evidenced by two articles; "Whose agenda are the men of God pushing?" (*The Herald*, 3 March 2012) and "Church leaders join regime change bandwagon" (*The Chronicle*, 28 February 2012). The articles were in the publicly owned papers. Both articles were on some churches leaders who had

toured the region in order to persuade SADC leaders to force Mugabe to implement security, electoral and media reforms prior to the 2013 elections. The solution to the actions of these clergymen could be the story titled “The earlier the clergymen know their place, the better” (*The Herald*, 29 February 2012). Here these churches were blamed for their lack of sincerity and honesty and their mission was alleged to be partisan and them being mouth pieces of MDC. This was evidenced by the paper writing:

> We are not too sure to what extent they have been able to engage with their own Government here in Zimbabwe before seeking the audience of foreign governments. We know from time to time they issue pastoral letters, which have had limited impact because of their lack of sincerity and honesty in dealing with the real issues in Zimbabwe.

The ‘we’ stood for either the paper or the sponsors behind the scenes. In this case the funders were the government. As a result this article seemed biased towards ZANU PF which was extolled while the Catholic Church (which writes pastoral letters) was demonized. This character of the church which was like the liberation theology mandate where the church would fight for the oppressed was unacceptable to the government. By seeking foreign intervention, they would be operating like MDC which was accused of calling for sanctions. These leaders were being accused of being traitors as they were fighting against their own government. What is evident is that church leaders were blamed for failing to find home grown solutions to the problems in the country. Again, even those Zimbabweans who were not ZANU PF members or had oppositional ideologies were regarded as enemies. The paper wrote:

> We admit that these may be their own views, which tend to coincide with the views of MDC-T such as their call for security sector, media, electoral and legislative reforms. But by championing these views and completely ignoring the other issues raised by Zanu-PF and a wide section of Zimbabweans, they open themselves to the allegations that they have joined the regime change bandwagon.

The reason why MDC was given derogatory names like ‘puppets of the West’ (Masunungure, 2004; Waldahl, 2005) was because they were alleged to be traitors. This reference to reforms and use of the phrase ‘regime change bandwagon’ appeared like hostile political discourse meant to discredit this party. The implication was that these were not peace loving people and were therefore regarded as enemies as they wished for a change in government thereby subtly inviting the former colonisers back

into the country. What is problematic is that the church at one time is called to spearhead peace projects but at other times is blamed for supporting violence related activities. However, these two positions relate to different churches.

Mpofu (2012) wrote that “church leaders are said to have produced a position paper which articulates the views and demands of one political organisation in the Inclusive Government, thereby alienating Zanu PF whose leader is President Mugabe so working in opposition to his party’s position.” It is with reference to this document that the article concluded by noting, “If indeed the words contained in the document were theirs, they would have done an honorable service to Zimbabwe. Sadly, they are borrowed words that are regurgitated by the coterie of civic bodies that are part of the well-funded regime change business.” The whole article was castigating church leaders who were alleged to be pushing for certain positions.

The choice of discourse painted a picture of disgust at people who are not patriotic. Being honorable was supporting Mugabe but what is amazing is how this could be an ‘honorable service’ to only support the ZANU PF position. The adjective ‘sadly’ denotes a hopeless situation where some church leaders had joined the MDC party to call for intervention. Regurgitated and borrowed portrayed the link between the church leaders and MDC so both were regarded as enemies. There is repetition of the phrase ‘regime change’ which is now described as ‘well-funded’ so the blame is on the church leaders who were purportedly sponsored to act the way they did. This was an example of failed hegemony where some church leaders resisted the ruling party ideology.

The Masvingo Bureau of *The Herald* (5 November 2012) wrote on this in a story titled “Churches rap parties with foreign agenda”. The churches being referred to were member churches of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe. It was reported that the ACCZ had slammed those political parties that advanced foreign interests. Polarization was also rife in churches just like in the media. The title was misleading as churches do not speak on behalf of each other. The title generalised churches so that it would appear as if all churches subscribed to this notion. The article actually stated that the church had “attacked the parties for failing to support the ongoing indigenization and empowerment drive in Zimbabwe.” The MDC formations were the political parties alleged to be advancing foreign interests. They were portrayed by the state friendly media as the ones bent on seeing Zimbabwe as a nation fail.

For peace and harmony to prevail in the country at a time when the social, economic and political environment was fractured, ZANU PF gave an impression that the partnership of the church and government was inevitable. This could be a game of blame shifting so that when the party failed to deliver then it would not be its fault alone. *The Sunday Mail* (July 29 – August 4 2012) in a feature story ran an article titled "Church and politics are inseparable" by Edwin Mwale. It was almost similar to the one in the *Chronicle* (20 July 2010) headlined "Church, State compatible in serving Zimbabwe". The article by Mwale defended the politicians' presence at church gatherings. This would help the country realize peace quickly. This was reiterated by the article "Why Church, State must join hands" by columnist Stephen Mpofu that appeared in *The Herald* (5 September 2013). The article started by making a pronouncement of the close and undisputed relationship between the church and state.

Part of the article read, "Church and State in Zimbabwe are not enemies but indispensable allies who must embrace one another and fight together to shame the enemy who wants to see this country being reduced to a pile of rubbish." This appeared like emotional blackmail as the country was in a crisis even though there already existed a relationship between the two. The clergy seemed to be encouraged to absolve themselves from being partisan. However by denigrating MDC and supporting ZANU PF they would already be partisan. The word 'indispensable' alludes to the fact that one cannot do without the other which is not necessarily true. The quote alludes to the popular adage 'united we stand, divided we fall'. But if the church could play a significant role in challenging colonialism by supporting the liberation struggle it means that the same church could still challenge ZANU PF's misrule. If that was the case then ZANU PF's move to solicit for support with the promise that they would not lead the country to its demise was meant to prevent this situation of getting opposition from the church.

5.3.3.3 Church gets recognition for supporting ZANU PF

This study argues that social and political development could be kick started by political stability in the country. On the same note of encouraging people to be morally upright as well as to observe political peace for both social and economic development

to start off, Mujuru, was quoted by *The Herald* (15 October 2012) in an article entitled "Mujuru hails indigenous churches" saying:

> The indigenous churches are doing a great job by promoting peace in the country because it is at the church where people who live in the communities are taught good morals and Government is fully aware of the strides made by church leaders such as the late Bishop Shoko in keeping families and communities to live at harmony with each other.

Recognition from the government was an intangible asset to the church. The quote specifically referred to the AICs and the phrase 'doing a great job' implied through praise that the church was being celebrated for playing a crucial role of fostering peace. The church was portrayed as being active in reconciliation and nation building processes thereby leading to political stability. The church becomes the fertile breeding ground for the molding of morally upright citizens which would translate to law abiding citizens. Alluding to families and communities on the surface embraces everyone as technically everyone belongs to a family and or community. However, not everyone is included. The same with political parties; there may be the ZANU PF family just as there may be the MDC family. This means that MDC supporters were specifically excluded from the ZANU PF family or community. Had it been possible to group everyone into a family and with these observing peace, it would lead to 'harmony' which strongly suggested the desire for peace to prevail.

The church was taken as the answer to issues of curbing social and political vices as these also contributed to the disharmony in the country. Prayer was cited in several articles to what the church could do to contribute to fostering peace. *The Sunday Mail* (23 January 2011) wrote "Pray for peace, says Mujuru". In this article Mujuru was quoted saying, "We have a task ahead of us as we fight against robbery, murder and incest." The word 'we' is all inclusive meaning the church and government. These mentioned vices could be prevented through prayer. The word 'task' suggests not only removal of social vices but all that was aimed at robbing ZANU PF of its victory. It was mandatory for the church to pray for the nation to be peaceful during these elections. This issue of prayer meetings was also taken up by other newspapers. *The Herald* (5 August, 2013) wrote about Makandiwa hailing the peaceful 2013 elections where he gave all the credit to the church. He was quoted saying, "The only answer we have is prayer." This confirms the fact that the church is known to be prayerful and Christians believe prayers yield results which ZANU PF adopted.

Politicians used prayer as a strong weapon to appeal for church involvement. Prayer was given undisputed power which could be utilised to change the prevailing political situation. This was evidenced by the article “Prayer meetings to mark Africa Day” (*The Herald*, 25 May 2013) that had appeared on the day Africa usually celebrate the formation of the Organisation for Africa Unity (OAU) now known as African Union (AU). At that time AU was being led by Mugabe. A number of activities were lined up to celebrate this particular day and these were mainly prayer meetings. There was a call for prayer so the Christian churches could intercede for the nation. The paper wrote that the ACCZ was holding a National Day of Prayer at Zimbabwe Grounds in Harare at which the initial independence celebrations of 1980 were held. The information given showed that at least 350 apostolic sects were expected to attend. The numbers worked very well for the mobilisation of masses. The guest of honor was Joice Mujuru who at the time was only second to Mugabe.

At the prayer meeting, Reverend John Chimbambo who was coordinating the event at a national level said, “The National Day of Prayer is non-partisan nor a political event which strictly observes the tenancy for a divinely driven nation where every Zimbabwean despite their political affiliation are afforded an opportunity to come together and pray for their nation.” This seemed as just rhetoric as these gatherings had always shown bias to one or another political party. Again the thrust was on the event being apolitical. The coordinator may have used persuasive language which would make all people feel invited but only those who belonged to ZANU PF were the invites. This was because they were loyal to their party leader, Joice Mujuru, who also happened to be their patron. The quotation from the guest of honor and her delegates gave an impression of who were welcome to attend.

To bring peace and stability to Zimbabwe, politicians appealed for the church to rally behind ZANU PF. *The Herald* (18 July, 2013) quoted Dzikamai Mavhaire, the then ZANU PF secretary for production and labour urging indigenous churches to mobilise their members so they could vote for ZANU PF in the July 31 harmonised elections. He was quoted saying, “ZANU PF was the only political party that was predisposed to give dignity to indigenous people.” This was just politicking as Mavhaire could only say the positive about his party. What was problematic was that no other party besides ZANU PF had been afforded the opportunity to rule so comparison was inappropriate. The word ‘dignity’ was given a meaning of uplifting indigenous people. All the three

papers that emphasised the compatibility of the church and ZANU PF were from the pro-government stable. As an ideological state apparatus, the print media were pushing their sponsor's ideologies to the people. On the other hand, the *Financial Gazette* (10 January, 2013) pointed out that this relationship could pay dividends like when the paper wrote: "Johane Masowe leader Mudzidzi Jowasi started calling for the lifting of targeted sanctions imposed on ZANU-PF officials by the West while his church members could be seen at various state functions where President Mugabe would be addressing."

Unlike the state-controlled media, this paper referred to 'targeted sanctions' and not just sanctions. *The Zimbabwe Mail* (2 March 2018) explain targeted sanctions as the "national emergence in Executive Order 13288 of March 6 2003, with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions." The policies included the land reform programme which started in 2000 and led to many commercial farmers evicted from their farms so as to resettle the locals. These sanctions were imposed on the country by the European Union led by Britain and America. They were tied to ideologies of re-colonisation by ZANU PF and was the major cause why MDC was denigrated. The word 'imposed' gave the implication that ZANU PF officials were the ones targeted by the sanctions and not everyone. The article could be suggesting what working together of the church and ZANU PF would yield. The anti-sanctions campaign was engineered by ZANU PF to show the MDC and international community that Zimbabwe would not bow down to the dictates of the west. The anti-sanctions discourse was meant to remind people of the suffering they were going through hence support the party that advocated for the removal of theses.

Moyo (2012) notes that Makandiwa, leader of United Family International Church (UFIC) was one of a number of high profile religious leaders to have joined the anti-sanctions campaign. The *NewsDay* (1 March 2011) had a headline story titled "Mugabe launches sanctions campaign" which reported that Makandiwa had officiated at the anti-sanctions launch done by ZANU PF. *The Herald* (28 February 2011) had carried a full page advert placed by ZANU PF information department where the party claimed that the decline of the economy, the non-availing of lines of credit, the negative perceptions of the country by the international community and the general fall of the standard of living of the citizens were all a result of the sanctions. The advert went on

to read, “It is thus a responsibility of all political parties and all patriotic Zimbabweans to take a stand against these illegal sanctions and sign an anti-sanctions petition.” The word ‘responsibility’ made it a burden for all political parties to come together to fight against sanctions. Again labelling Zimbabweans as either ‘patriotic’ or not implied forcing them to be seen to be complying so as to be acceptable. These sanctions were described as ‘illegal’ and therefore victimizing Zimbabwe for her stance on the land issue.

Makandiwa in the launch had signed a petition against the targeted sanctions. African Apostolic Church leader Paul Mwazha, Nobert Kunonga and Trevor Manhanga were also among the high profile religious leaders who petitioned against the sanctions in solidarity with the ZANU PF led government. The then minister of Information and Publicity, Webster Shamu was quoted saying that this was a national event. The paper quoted Shamu saying, “This is a rare opportunity for all people of Zimbabwe, irrespective of color, creed or political affiliation, who have been affected by the illegal sanctions…People of various political and religious affiliations are free to turn out in their respective regalia.” The call by Shamu gave the impression that this was a national event where everyone was encouraged to participate. However, the same paper also quoted Luke Tamborinyoka, who was Tsvangirai’s spokesperson at that time dismissing this event as a ZANU PF programme. He was quoted saying, “If it’s a government event, it should have been deliberated in Cabinet and the Council of Ministers. It has been peddled as a party thing and therefore cannot be on government business.” Tamborinyoka noted that this could be manipulated content coming from the dominant party so that those who failed to participate would be regarded as the enemy.

The Herald (5 September, 2013 carried a story titled “Why Church, State must join hands” by Stephen Mpofu. The language of persuasion used in the article was meant to invoke anger in the readers when it was concluded that these enemies wanted “to see this country being reduced to a pile of rubbish”. This denotes uselessness and detestable. For Zimbabwe to be described as such was an insult to ZANU PF and its members. To emphasise the importance of the church politics relationship, the article wrote:

> Yet a new marriage, in the form of a Church-State partnership, holds the key to unlocking accelerated social and economic development, full bellies and smiles on people's faces culminating in national security under which national economic reconstruction will take place without any hindrance.

The article suggested that a sound relationship between the church and government was the solution to Zimbabwe's political, social and economic challenges. It simplified solutions that could be used to save the country. Here the church could not be AICs but mainstream churches as reference was made to their sister churches abroad. The church's provision of high academic education as well as skills training was crucial to Government policies of indigenisation and economic development. Through partnering with the government, different church organisations would work together for progress to take place. This is brought out in the article in which Mpofu (2013) wrote:

> In addition, the message the Church preaches will have a moderating effect where hot heads trade dog-eat-dog politics for a lack of political culture, a gap that Church culture will fill and peace and inter-dependence will become prerequisites in the lives of the Zimbabwean people.

The phrase 'dog-eat-dog' describe uncultured politics which was being castigated in this article as they insinuate connotations of violence. The Zimbabwe government and media treated cases of violence differently. Nyathi (2005: 31) notes, "During the 2000 election the state media quoted President Mugabe saying he had 'degrees in violence'." Mukonori (2015: 113) reiterates by saying that the party had "boasted that it was the only party with 'degrees of violence'". This was conveniently forgotten by both the party and the media as the statement was not referred to again by the state controlled media so that the party would claim to be peaceful. What is problematic and a paradox is that the media and ZANU PF never fail to remind people of what Tsvangirai once said, "What we want to tell Mugabe today is that please go peacefully. If you do not want to go peacefully, we will remove you violently. The country can no longer afford Mugabe a day longer than necessary" (*The Zimbabwean*, 2 October 2000). He was addressing his supporters on the party's first anniversary. This threat of violence was regarded as unlawful by the government so Tsvangirai was charged for treason but got acquitted *(The Standard*, 7 November 2003). To avoid such practices of unprincipled politics preaching the gospel of peace would then help the nation embark on national development projects as well as end social ills that bedevil

the country. This is in line with Machakanja (2010: 1) who notes that “coming to terms with past injustices is an important foundation to sustainable peace, stability and development.” The Christians in the country were encouraged to be active participants rather than mere observers.

The *Financial Gazette* (10 January 2013) dismissed all these efforts by ZANU PF as political gimmicks. Tinashe Madava, a senior reporter wrote: “ZANU PF is planning to intensify efforts to woo millions of church goers to support them in the coming elections as they pull all the stops to ensure victory.” The article seemed to suggest that the stint of sharing power had galvanised ZANU PF into a mode of action that would ensure that the GNU would meet its death in the 2013 elections. To an extent this study agrees with Madava as the impasse that the GNU faced was as a result of the three principals failing to make compromises. However, it might also be true that this article titled “ZANU-PF woos churches” from the privately owned media was voicing the sentiments of the opposition. It was this article that brought out how Vice President Joice Mujuru had attended an Apostolic sect meeting at Mafararikwa in Marange in 2012 where she had addressed 300 000 people. Even the then Defence Minister Emmerson Munangagwa had declared that he was a born again Christian. The article went on to note:

> In 2010, President Mugabe dressed up in white apostolic sect robes joined the Johane Masowe Passover ceremony in an apparent bid to woo followers of the church as he campaigned for elections he expected in 2011.

This picture was meant to authenticate the claims in the article. This article was accompanied by a photograph of Mugabe donning the white robes and holding a rod. The article quoted the party’s commissariat report and wrote, “President Robert Mugabe and his vice presidents, Joice Mujuru and John Nkomo ‘have been on the forefront of spearheading mobilisation of religious, traditional and commercial organisations in an endeavor to increase the support base of the party.” The article probed readers by subtly questioning why Mujuru, a member of the Salvation Army and Mugabe, a Catholic could be found ‘crisscrossing’ the country addressing various church gatherings. This bastardisation of doctrines was meant to paint a picture of seeking acceptance as well as gaining a sense of belonging by the concerned politicians thereby entrenching themselves for support. Several ZANU PF cadres were cited as frequent visitors to these church gatherings for example Webster Shamu, the

then war veterans' leader Jabulani Sibanda, the then party deputy spokesperson Ephraim Masawi among others. The mentioning of these names had the effect of exposing the tactic that was being employed by this political party to regain lost popularity through fraternising with the church. Whereas some churches were in complicit with the ruling party's ideologies, some tried to dissociate themselves.

5.3.4 Peace breeds tolerance and acceptance

From an analysis of relevant articles, it was deduced that peace was regarded as fertile breeding ground for people from different political dispensations to tolerate and accept each other. The analysis revealed that if everyone was agreeable to peace then a recurrence of the political bloodbath of 2008 elections could be averted. This was regarded as acceptance of policies initiated by the government.

The ZANU PF politicians were quoted claiming that peace was apolitical. *The Herald* (15 October 2012) in an article entitled "Mujuru hails indigenous churches" (already cited) noted that Mujuru had said "Government was happy with churches' role in preaching peace to people of different political persuasions." ZANU PF being synonymous with government was happy with the activities of the church because they were assured of support. The phrase 'different political persuasions' seemed a cover up because what was important to Mujuru as the matron of these churches was them rallying behind her party. This is clearly evidenced again by Mujuru who stated, "The church is one social institution where there is no discrimination based on political affiliation or socio-economic backgrounds. The role of the church is bringing people together as one family" (*The Sunday Mail*, 19 May 2013). She had gone on to say, "No one is superior to the other. Therefore, no one should be discriminated against based on religion, race, political affiliation, tribe or social background." In both articles the church was shown as being influential across the political divide and hence working with it in developmental issues would embrace all people regardless of their political affiliation or socio-economic status.

On the same note, Mpofu (2013) argues that the marriage of the church and the state is what holds the key to unlocking accelerated social and economic development. However, this may not necessarily be true as evidenced by the Anglican saga; the fight between Chad Gandiya and Nobert Kunonga for leadership which divided the church along party lines. *The Standard* (18 March, 2012) wrote, "Kunonga, a self-

confessed ZANU PF apologist has been fighting for the control of the Anglican Church in Zimbabwe with a rival group led by Bishop Chad Gandiya." This rival group was purported to be aligned to MDC. *The Zimbabwean* (28 November, 2012) also portrayed this church as aligned to party politics when it wrote:

> Kunonga knew that ZANU PF was desperate for the support of church leaders and their multitude of followers. He also knew that President Robert Mugabe has a phobic hatred for homosexual behavior. He therefore, announced his support for ZANU PF and that he was breaking away from the Anglican Church…

It cannot be taken for granted that there is no discrimination in the church as what sparked the Anglican saga was that Kunonga had declared that he would start his own church that did not accept homosexuality. My argument is that he took advantage of what he knew was prevailing in the country and used politics to further his interest. He may only be an example of other church leaders who capitalised on the weaknesses of the party and endeared themselves to the party for personal gain. This proved that in the effort to find favour it was not always the ZANU PF party that used the church as some churches appeared to also use the party for their benefit. He benefitted as he had the support of Mugabe hence the government for not allowing homosexuality in his church. Court orders were given to restore peace and harmony. As a result this failed to bring the peace which was a rhetorical strategy used by ZANU PF to blame others for the state of the country.

Politicians tried to show that peace was meant for everyone and knew no political boundaries. In an article titled "Promote peace, church leaders urged" (*The Sunday Mail*, 18 May 2013) featured the former vice president. In this article Joice Mujuru was quoted making a call on church leaders to support efforts made by the government aimed at promoting unity and peace. This call was made ahead of the 2013 harmonised elections. It was reported that the church was supposed to actively advocate for national unity as this brought together people of various political and socio-economic backgrounds. Mujuru had referred to the church as "one social institution" where discrimination was not practiced. In this article the church was mandated to bring people together to be one family. To cement this notion of solidarity Mujuru noted:

> Church and politics should work hand in hand. It is the duty of the church to unite people from all walks of life. That spirit of oneness has always been there and was further cemented by the

> liberation struggle which brought people of different tribes and cultural backgrounds together. For that reason Zimbabweans should remain united. The church also has been supportive even during the liberation struggle therefore the church should take part in jealously guarding the gains of revolution (*The Sunday Mail*, 18 May 2013).

Using the word duty reminds the church of its mandate. The use of 'unite', 'spirit of oneness' and 'united' suggested peace. When Mujuru talked of politics, she was making reference to ZANU PF so the church was urged to continue working with this political party. This relationship was a strong bond (cemented). Reference to the revolution as the base in which this bond was grounded seemed intimidating to those who vividly remembered the war of liberation as these Zimbabweans knew the pains of the struggle. When Mujuru said, "We should bury our differences because we were brought together by the war of liberation that we fought as a family for the cause of each and every Zimbabwean" it appeared to remind people of how the country got independent and for whom. The people were encouraged to forget their political differences and forge ahead. The phrase 'jealously guarding the gains' was meant to emphasise that united Zimbabweans could fight against their enemies together and win. This may be problematic considering that even members of the same family have differences. Rashweat Mukundu (2005:11) notes, "…differences in society merely reflect our diversity and not a reflection of enmity." Differences are bound to emerge as witnessed by political factions within ZANU PF which saw most ZANU PF cadres being expelled from the party ahead of the party congress in 2014 (Chibuwe, 2016).

Paradoxically, Mujuru who was travelling all over the country campaigning for ZANU PF later received a vote of no confidence from the party and was expelled. Again, Shamu was denounced by the party and this led to his political downfall in December 2014. These two were therefore relegated to the political doldrums by the party they believed they had served so well. There were many other political casualties. If this could happen to loyalists and apologists of the ZANU PF party cadres then the church could attract the same or worse wrath if it appeared deviant. This study argues that the church was used to propagate ZANU PF ideologies as long as it was agreeable. It would not be surprising for the church to be demonised when it ceased to be useful to the party. The *Zimbabwe Daily* (2 September, 2010) published a story titled "Robert Mugabe deploys security agents to Apostolic sect meetings." The paper wrote, "ZANU-PF has intensified its campaign on members of the apostolic sect this time deploying

officials from the Registrar General who are giving birth and national registration certificates at the church gatherings." This portrays how much the party was prepared to benefit from the church. By giving these members identification papers meant they could register to vote. The word 'intensified' suggested how rigorous the party was to legitimate itself and hence remain in power. Again the phrase 'this time' implied that this church visitations with a party agenda was an ongoing process.

By analysing all the sampled articles on the vitality of peace, it can be concluded that calling for national unity as a panacea for economic development and prosperity appeared only a ZANU PF ploy to exterminate opposition parties and dissenting voices. It cannot be disputed that the party preached the gospel of peace which was good but it was also for ulterior motives. As explained above, ZANU PF seemed happy when churches or church leaders seemed cooperative but angered when they used dissenting voices. Frequent movements between churches by the party politicians as captured by the press seemed not coincidental but appeared a carefully planned party strategy to make church leaders especially conform. Not all ZANU PF politicians were captured doing these church visitations but a few prominent ones featured frequently like Mugabe, Mujuru, Shamu and Kasukuwere among others. The church leaders would in turn impact on their members.

Elimination of opposition voices in governments takes away the much needed criticism on government performance in normal democratic processes. Oppositional voices would cause government to be alert and stay on their toes. This would actually compel the government to deliver policies and services that would lead to genuine national development. This chapter argues that unity in the country would lead the government to relax and this would lead to economic stagnation. The policy put in place would need critical analysis on how valid and credible it was in helping restore the Zimbabwe economy or whether it was just used as a stop gap measure to pacify people at a time when the situation was dire.

5.3.5 The policy of economic empowerment and indigenisation in relation to Christianity

As mapped out in the last section, the government desired a peaceful environment to launch the policy of economic empowerment and indigenisation. This was a ZANU PF and government initiative to give the Zimbabweans power over their economic

development through projects. A peaceful environment is conducive for successful implementation of government policies. Peace is crucial to any government and governments have been known to undertake peace and reconciliation projects so that after liberation struggles or periods of conflict people come together and try to forgive and forget. The church has been called upon quite often to support government efforts as these were aimed at promoting unity and peace in the country. The implication is that for peace to prevail the church and politics should work amicably together. From the analysed articles, it was established that ZANU PF capitalised on this close relationship to bring in new policies that would help the party regain confidence and trust from the people.

Chitando (2013:vi) described these people as “a restive citizenry”. To remain in power and relevant, the government crafted the policy of economic empowerment and indigenisation rather than just for altruistic desires of placating the unhappy people, bring sanity back to the ailing economy as well as prevent demonstrations on the closure of companies and lack of investments. The purpose of introducing this policy was revealed by the *Chronicle* (4 February 2013) which noted, “The Government was struggling to bring peace and stability in the country, which was expected to bring development and create more opportunities for youths.” The government of Zimbabwe had a whole ministry on this policy which explains the importance placed on its successful implementation. The 2013 harmonised elections had a pamphlet which carried the words “indigenize, empower, develop and create employment”. These words captured the essence of the policy. The message was for Zimbabweans to move from being labourers to being owners or from being employees to being employers. The ZANU PF party seemed to claim that all this could be achieved through empowering people so that there could be economic stability in the country.

Women were an important group that the party targeted for the implementation of the indigenisation and empowerment policy. With regards to numbers, women outnumber men in Zimbabwe. Women are also more in church especially in the AICs (*Manica Post*, 2010). By convincing women on the importance of this policy, many people would be influenced as women would then go on to convince their families. As a point of reference, *The Manica Post* (12 March, 2010) ran a story titled “Church women to be empowered” where the then ZANU PF’s National Secretary for Women’s Affairs, Oppah Muchinguri-Kashiri had addressed members of the Johanne Marange

Apostolic Sect. The paper wrote that Muchinguri-Kashiri had announced that they had planned several projects to empower women members of this church. She said:

> We have lined up a number of income generating projects, which we want your women to benefit from. These projects include baking, shoe polishing-making and the processing of milk from soya beans. I know you like your tea very much and these projects will come in handy.

When Muchinguri-Kashiri said 'we' it was not clear whether she came as a government or party representative. There seemed to be no clear demarcation line between the government and the party. What was problematic were the type of projects that were planned for these women. The suggested projects lacked sophistication in terms of qualification and degree. The implication may be that the simplicity of these rural women translated to the type of projects they could run. These projects were small scale that might have appealed to these rural folk unlike the women in urban areas. By alluding to the church and their fondness for tea, Muchinguri-Kashiri wanted to draw herself close to these church members expressing her understanding of their plight. The implication was that the policy would work very well with these women taking up the projects so as to buy sugar and ZANU PF would be held in high esteem for uplifting the standard of living of these people.

The question of indigenisation was not new to the Gospel of God Church as they, like other AICs taught their members survival tactics so they could be self-reliant. The church members were taught such skills as carpentry, tin-smith, weaving and sewing among others (see characteristics of AICs in Literature Review). *The Herald*'s reporter Felex Share wrote an article with the title "Thousands bid Madzibaba Nzira farewell" (26 October, 2011). Webster Shamu was quoted speaking at Chitungwiza cemetery at the burial of Johanne Masowe WeChishanu apostolic sect faction leader Madzibaba Godfrey Pegnick Nzira. Shamu said:

> He demonstrated in practical ways how the church could be relevant in the lives of the people. The self-help projects he initiated at the shrine are a living example of how the concept of indigenization and economic empowerment could be promoted and implemented for the benefit of communities.

Emphasis was placed on the fact that the church played a complementary role to government's initiative of empowerment programmes. This was through initiating self-help projects. It cemented the close ties between state and church. It should be noted

that all this was raised at a burial and at the cemetery. This portrays that the party had no boundaries when it came to propagating their ideologies. Every opportunity that ZANU PF was afforded access to people, it would preach its party gospel. ZANU PF capitalised on the church activities and just made their policy appear appropriate by citing known examples.

Raftopoulos and Mlambo (2009:177) describe how ZANU PF operated in the 1980s thereby gaining popularity with the people by noting, “It skillfully articulated populist policies on land, indigenization of the economy.” These scholars note that what made ZANU PF popular was because the party “initially delivered on some of its social and economic promises.” This same tactic of articulating populist policies was also employed in the crisis period when the party’s hegemony was waning. The policy on indigenisation and empowerment was based on historical experience when the party had delivered on its promises. However, in line with what Ranger (1986:5) had argued that society could only “ignore religion at its peril”, this time around ZANU PF brought in the church which attracted a lot of followers who rigidly obeyed the dictates of their doctrines.

The *Chronicle* (9 April, 2012) carried a story titled “Churches urged to promote African values”. The introduction to the story read, “Indigenous churches must continue to promote African values and must not be apologetic in standing and supporting Government initiatives to empower Zimbabweans through owning and exploiting their resources.” This quotation as well as the title suggested that empowering people was an African value which the church had to uphold and not feel ashamed of. The emphasis was on African value and this resonated well with AICs who did not forsake their Africanness because of Christianity. In the same vein of incorporating the church, *The Sunday Mail* (19 May, 2013) wrote, “Cde Mujuru said church leaders should embrace Government empowerment initiatives such as the land reform and the Indigenous and Economic Empowerment programme.” Again emphasis was placed on the mandatory role of the church to be good stewards of the resources God gave them. It naturalized the process of supporting government initiatives. The impression given was to cajole churches not to be left out as these policies were meant to benefit all and sundry. Finney (1978) and Levin (1979) both agree that church members are very passionate because of their belief so it was important to make them believe in the ZANU PF policy of land redistribution.

So as not to rely on foreigners for economic survival, ZANU PF vowed not to renege on its promises of implementing the policy under discussion. *The Herald* (18 December, 2012) captured these party sentiments in an article titled “No going back on indigenization”. The party affirmed its position on the policy of indigenisation and explained how this could be done through Community Share Ownership Trusts and the Employee Share Ownership Trusts.

> Let me put it on record that ZANU PF’s indigenization and economic empowerment policy is centred on the need to control our resources and improve the living standards of ordinary Zimbabweans and the party will never backtrack on that.

These words were said by Joice Mujuru when she addressed thousands of Gospel of God Church which was founded by Johane WeMasowe. Mujuru clearly stated that this was a ZANU PF policy but implemented on a government ticket. The quotation clearly spelt out the reasons for the introduction and implementation of the policy. By stating that it was aimed at improving the lives of ‘ordinary’ people, the policy would be appealing even to the church as it embraced ‘ordinary’ people. Again the promise that the party would ‘never backtrack’ on the implementation of the policy was meant to assure the listeners that this policy was good for them. Mujuru said, “This is coming in the form of the Community Share Ownership Trusts and the Employee Share Ownership Trusts among others.” The policy was made to look complex through the discourse of ownership and trusts. Mujuru went on to give an example of a church owning and managing a bank. This was a large project which called for money and expertise. This was meant to entice church members to be part of the empowerment exercise as they would do great things and be able to sustain themselves. Again the church was meant to be manipulated by the promise to move from small scale businesses to those that involved big organisations like banks. The lucrative promises would have helped the church to embrace the policy. What remained problematic was the implementation and also the fact that some church leaders were canny and had agency so they could not be casually manipulated.

On the idea of marketing the proposed policy, *The Sunday Mail* (19 May 2013) with the title “Promote peace, church leaders urged”, although already used had relevant content. This title was misleading as the thrust of the message delivered was not on peace but cajoling church leaders to partake in the implementation of the policy. Mujuru was a guest of honor at a Minister’s Fraternal for Churches and Denominations

prayer meeting held at the Civic Centre in Gweru. At this supposed prayer meeting, Mujuru had encouraged church leaders to embrace government empowerment initiatives such as indigenisation and economic empowerment programmes. She remarked:

> Church leaders should be allocated land. We are going to set up a meeting with the mining commissioner so that churches can also venture into mining as part of the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment Programme.

The church leaders seemed to be paid for upholding peace in the country and supporting the government initiatives. Mujuru was subtly bribing the leaders with material wealth so that they in turn could encourage their members to vote for ZANU PF as she claimed that it was a party with their welfare at heart. Matikiti (2011: 30) refers to this as "policy of appeasement". This is when some Christian churches violate her integrity to please politicians. This is the same strategy that the government had used with chiefs; they were bribed with vehicles, homesteads with piped water and electricity. "Traditional chiefs have been given Mazda B1800 vehicles before with their homes fitted with electricity and boreholes" (*NewZimbabwe.com*, 11 May 2017). The *dailynews* (21 January, 18) wrote, "As this year's harmonized elections loom in the horizon, debate on the Chiefs' role in the country's politics has once again been reignited, after the chiefs were recently rewarded with new cars by government at a function where they pledged their loyalty to Zanu PF." This was lucrative enough to persuade the chiefs to stand firm in support of the status quo as well as to force their subjects to vote for Mugabe.

The speech by Mujuru was dangling a carrot to the church leaders who might take up the proposed initiatives because it was beneficial to them. What was surprising at this prayer meeting were the ZANU PF attendees who included the then Midlands Governor and Resident Minister Jason Machaya, the then Minister of State in the Vice President's office, Sylvester Nguni and Flora Buka, the then ZANU PF Secretary for Information and Publicity Rugare Gumbo and the Zvishavane-Ngezi legislator Obert Matshaya among other dignitaries. What is problematic was the presence of this high powered delegation at what the paper described as a prayer meeting. They spoke about peace and the policy but they never lost track of upholding their party's ideology thereby trying to hegemonise people.

5.3.5.1 Beneficiaries of policy

The indigenisation and empowerment policy was to benefit citizens including the youths and the church members. Pamela Shumba, a *Chronicle* reporter wrote, "Support indigenous church -Minister" (*Chronicle*, 4 February 2013) in which it was reported that the then Minister of Youth, Indigenisation and Empowerment, Saviour Kasukuwere had called for respect and sufficient support for indigenous churches. The AICs were not to be denigrated for their small projects but earn respect as these fitted very well with indigenous programme. Kasukuwere was quoted saying, "If our own people can build big churches with their own resources, then nothing would stop them from building the nation." The implication was that if people could support the churches then they could support the nation. Kasukuwere was addressing hundreds of Guta RaMwari Zvimiso congregants in Mpopoma Bulawayo.

It is reported that Kasukuwere said, "We have come to join the Guta RaMwari Zvimiso church in their celebrations and also assure members of this church that the Government is prepared to assist them, through the indigenization programme in various projects that they might be aspiring to venture in." The quotation implied that what the churches needed was support to start as well as sustain their projects. The given impression was that this would ensure total economic empowerment in the country. The church was given assurance that it would get adequate government support which would bind the church to government. The church was assured that there was no limit on what they could endeavor to do as long as it boosted the Zimbabwean economy. The purpose of the presence of the politician at this church's celebration was to propagate party ideologies. The reason behind this economic empowerment programme strove to revive the ailing Bulawayo[24]industry which ranged from production and processing goods and services to distribution. To substantiate this claim the paper wrote, "Minister Kasukuwere urged the youths to be part of the solutions to total empowerment and development in the country as his Ministry tried to find solutions to challenges such as the de-industrialisation in Bulawayo." This was causing ethnic tension in the country as comparisons were drawn between Harare and Bulawayo. Harare was the home of the Shona people and had a better industry where business seemed to be thriving and employment available than the almost dead one

[24] This is the second largest city in Zimbabwe where more than 80% of the population is Ndebele.

of Bulawayo, the home of Ndebeles. Like in the articles on peace, this article reported Kasukuwere assuring people that this project of resuscitating the economy was not discriminatory along tribal lines.

Kasukuwere implored youths and the church to be part of the process. This was brought out when he said, “Bulawayo must be revived, developed and supported and we have just started the journey. I am now going to be a permanent feature in Bulawayo because I want churches and the youths to be part of this process.” The word ‘journey’ denotes continuity so the implantation of the policy was a process and not an event. Referring to Bulawayo as needing to be ‘revived’ suggested the city was lagging behind in terms of development. The speech by Kasukuwere was quite emphatic and brought the conflation of government and ZANU PF into the picture. He was clear with his intentions by using the phrase ‘I want’. The ‘I’ represented his employer which is ZANU PF. The question that may be raised is whether this was a government or ZANU PF policy as government is more than just ZANU PF. Other political parties occupy seats in parliament, senate and local authorities.

The church and youths are groups which form the biggest number of citizens in the country (*The Herald*, 7 March 2018: ZimStats, 2016) and having them on the party’s side would help legitimise the party’s leadership prowess. These were regarded as people who had the potential to bring the desired change if properly handled and once they were convinced of the purported good intentions of the government. The words by Kasukuwere gave the impression that the recovery of the economy would be a success with the churches and youths working together with the government.

Through analysis, this study established that ZANU PF believed that indigenisation in Zimbabwe would wean citizens and communities of donor dependency. ZANU PF portrayed that as a party it did not tolerate any form of domination from foreigners. *The Herald* (2 June, 2013) ran an article to this effect titled “No to dependency syndrome, Shamu tells church”. The then Minister of Media, Information and Publicity Webster Shamu had said that in the free and independent Zimbabwe the country had been liberated both physically and spiritually. There was political independence as well as freedom of worship. Shamu had uttered these words at a fundraising dinner of the United Methodist Church. Shamu was quoted saying, “We are now in charge of our own destiny both as a country and as a people having waged a protracted armed

struggle to liberate ourselves from British colonial rule." The implication was that independence would be maintained through the policy of economic empowerment and indigenisation. The reference to the 'protracted armed struggle' would imply that even if it was not easy to implement this policy, just like it had not been easy to fight the white minority government, it would eventually be done just like the liberation struggle had been won. According to Shamu Zimbabwe "had remained steadfast before God in the midst of foreign oppressors." This implied the concrete relationship between politics and religion. Politics had liberated Zimbabwe and AICs had liberated themselves from orthodox churches. To explain this, one leader, Bishop Mutendi said:

> As inscribed in the Bible, we are a product of the leadership. We are similar with them (Zanu-PF). ZCC is a revolutionary church just like Zanu-PF is a revolutionary party. Our founding father, Rev Samuel Mutendi was arrested and persecuted by the colonial regime for starting a church that espoused African values" (*The Herald,* 14 August 2013).

Both the party and church were known liberators. The alignment of the party to the church is implied as having assisted the party to win Zimbabwe as evidenced by Shamu saying, "We have since graduated from that colonial period and liberated ourselves both physically and spiritually". The word 'graduated' denoted a paradigm shift instigated by both the party and the church. Despite challenges and opposition on the proposed policy, ZANU PF believed it would conquer. This would be a shift from economic turmoil to economic stability. Shamu went on to say, "We turned the tables against our oppressors but we never even as we waged the liberation war turned against the Almighty and the Bible." Even in the struggle for indigenising and empowering Zimbabweans, ZANU PF was claiming to rely on the church.

Another publicly owned paper also carried a story entitled "Churches urged to take indigenization seriously" (*Chronicle* 23 October, 2013). The paper wrote:

> Addressing thousands of Johanne Masowe Church members in Bulawayo's Entumbane suburb yesterday, the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs in Matabeleland North, Cde Cain Mathema, said the church played a pivotal role in the history of the country and its involvement in socio-economic matters today was crucial.

Like in the previous article, this was in the second biggest city of Zimbabwe. The paper drew the attention of readers to attendees to paint a picture of popularity. The church

was reminded of their role which was being called upon to make an impact in turning around the country's economy. The words 'pivotal' and 'crucial' are strong descriptive words which show how important the church was regarded in the exercise of turning the economy around. Mathema was quoted saying;

> You refused to work for the white settlers way back because you wanted to work for yourselves and own the economy. I know I am speaking to business people here and as politicians we learn a lot from you about indigenization. I believe Christianity is a religion of revolution and we urge churches to take the indigenization programme seriously.

The words by this ZANU PF politician gave the impression that the church deserved praise for having revolutionary tendencies. This related the church to this political party. Both had refused to remain colonised and the same relationship was being invited to work in the fight against economic decline. The church was asked to establish financial institutions that would support the local economy. By appealing for this financial help, the politician appeared humble so that his humility would appeal to church members. Mathema spoke on behalf of the government and said, "I regard poverty to be a sin before God and it is because of this realization that Government has embarked on this indigenization programme meant to empower people." The ideological position that this discourse of sin was drawing was pertinent here. So to avoid sin might have led to the popular gospel of prosperity which would be clearly understood by the church members. This shows acceptance of this gospel leading to the appropriation of church discourse to explain political issues. Carrying out income generating projects by the church was meant to fight against both dependency and poverty which could be referred to as sins. At this occasion, the head of the Johanne Masowe Church, Bishop Joshua Matongo stated, "We are aware of the changes that the Government is trying to implement and as a church we cannot be left behind." This acquiescence by the church denoted a close knit relationship between politics and church in developmental issues. It confirms Mpofu's (2011:16) assertion that the church "is a transforming and empowering community."

5.3.6 Why the church appeared acquiescent

The church did not blindly support the ZANU PF policies. There seemed to be reasons why they rallied behind the ruling party. From an analysis of the selected articles, it can be deduced that the party politicians either made promises to the churches they

visited or actually made donations. This could have been the party's way of rewarding these churches for their support. The churches (through their leadership) also promised to support the party for various reasons. Besides material benefits, the churches also got recognition from the ruling party and government.

The politicians did not go to church gatherings empty handed. The targeted church almost always benefited from these politicians. When Mugabe visited Mafararikwa at their pilgrimage he preached his gospel and left a gift. *The Sunday Mail* (18 July, 2010) wrote, "President Mugabe donated two of the four tractors he recently received from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as a gift to help the church produce food for those who will attend future Passover gatherings." A year later, Chris Mushohwe also visited the shrine and gave the church a gift. Mushohwe commented, "We tasked your leadership to identify the farm of their choice and they came up with the Chipinge farm, which was already gazette for resettlement purposes. I have also brought 20 tonnes of both Compound D and AN fertilizer." With this publicised, other churches would see the benefits of aligning themselves with the party. All people who wanted land made applications and the Ministry of Lands would allocate the plots. Choosing a farm was not a prerogative of all those people who were resettled. This was a favour extended to this church for what the party would get in the long run.

In addition, newspaper articles sampled portrayed that the AICs were known for praising the government for this policy. The *Sunday News* reporter, Dumisani Nsingo (27 May, 2012) captured this stance taken by the church in an article titled "ACCZ praises Govt for continued support". The ACCZ is a combination of Apostolic and Zion sects. In this article, the church bishops "praised Vice President Joice Mujuru for cementing the position of Government in supporting indigenous Apostolic and Zion churches." Most of the article portrayed the politicians taking the central role of urging churches to work with them, but this article put the church leaders at the center of praising ZANU PF. Chitando (2013:xi) notes,"…in as much as politicians seek to use religious leaders in their quest to resolve the crisis, religious leaders seek to derive various benefits from the politicians." The researcher agrees with Chitando's sentiments that church leaders are neither naïve nor lack agency when dealing with politicians. It is a win-win situation as both parties in this transaction tend to benefit.

By being involved in the implementation of the policy, churches went on to castigate MDC as the political party that failed to support the indigenisation and empowerment programmes. *The Herald* (5 November, 2012) ran a story titled "Churches rap parties with foreign agenda" which wrote, "Member churches of the Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe have slammed political parties that advance foreign interests." The church appeared to be fighting the party's battles. The enemy of the party became an enemy of these churches. These foreign interests were "failing to support the ongoing indigenization and empowerment drive in Zimbabwe". The paper also reported that the "ACCZ president Reverend Johannes Ndanga said churches under his organization will only support political parties that have a track record of advancing the interests of indigenous Zimbabweans." This article shows that the ZANU PF strategy of using the church to sanitise and legitimate their stay in power had some positive results as some churches publicly declared that they supported the party.

The ACCZ executive president, Johannes Ndanga in an interview stated:

> The Vice President has sourced US15 million, which is ready for certain modalities to be finalized before it is disbursed to fund various projects for our members. Most indigenous churches have been given farms and ZCC got a farm to build a university while Zion got 295 hectares of land in Chartsworth to build a hospital and do other projects. Some of our members received sewing machines and candle making machines from the Zanu-PF women's league (*The Herald*, 10 November 2012).

All these are examples of what ZANU PF did for the churches it visited to preach about the policy of indigenisation and economic empowerment. The party in return offered both spiritual and physical support from these churches.

In the article from *The Herald* (18 December, 2012), church leaders were quoted giving assurance to the revered politician (Mujuru) that the church was fully behind the leadership of Mugabe. One leader said, "We are fully behind you and your party and may the Lord continue to give you wisdom and vision to lead our country to prosperity." This articulation of being pro-ZANU PF was an outright declaration of allegiance portraying some church leaders as partisan which others had denied.

The *Chronicle* (4 February, 2013) also portrayed the church being a beneficiary of these visits. After Kasukuwere had addressed hundreds of congregates in Bulawayo,

the chairperson of youth development and education in Guta RaMwari, Life Gumbo said:

> Our church moulds us to be respectful, self-reliant and skillful people in society. We therefore fully support Minister Kasukuwere's indigenization programme because it strives to bring total empowerment, especially to the youths. We therefore encourage the minister to continue to empower us to have our own businesses and create a better future for ourselves and the generations to come.

In return, Kasukuwere offered them a gift. The paper wrote, "He donated 600 bags of cement to the church to assist in the building of an incomplete church building." This showed that ZANU PF took strides to have the church on their side through both use of ideology as well as material gains. Just by accepting the politician to come and address them, they got 'paid' in kind.

5.5 Conclusion

The chapter established how ZANU PF politicians appealed to peace as an aspect of the Christian religion to entrench their proposed policies. The print media were complicit as evidenced by the articles in question. It established that ZANU PF utilised prayer meetings, church conferences, funerals, celebrations or church services among other church gatherings to propagate their party ideologies. At these fora the politicians took the opportunity to advance the notion of a peaceful environment as conducive and instrumental for the introduction and implementation of the ZANU PF or government policy of economic empowerment and indigenisation. Newspaper articles analysed illuminated the power of spirituality as the interface between Christianity and governance discourses in advocating for peace in the country. The AICs' doctrine was used to influence their members to support the government policy of economic empowerment and indigenisation.

The chapter also established that the publicly owned print media positively presented the importance of peace as propounded by the ZANU PF politicians to the church. Frames of catchphrases like patriotism and nationalism were utilised to convince readers of the need for forgiveness after the 2008 violence. Although this was in a bid to unify a fragmented nation hence bring political stability, it was also meant to make people accept the party's policies. Again it was deduced that Christianity played centre stage in the reportage on the government policy of economic empowerment and

indigenisation so appealing to the church was a political strategy. Political ideology was propagated to the AICs in particular to hegemonise church members. Religion was employed as an instrument to achieve peace during a period when ZANU PF was in dire need of support to legitimate and sanitise their stay in power. With peace established, it emerged from the articles that this would be conducive ground to introduce and implement ZANU PF initiated policies. This chapter is in agreement with the notion that hegemony, if continuously renegotiated, it can be re-won. The ZANU PF party's ploy to re-strategise may have yielded results as the responses of some churches portrayed how the party won back the hegemony it had lost to the opposition through the use of various strategies including the pulpit. However, the few churches that resisted the ZANU PF ideology and were regarded as enemies of the state indicate that not all Christian churches supported the ruling party. Other churches may have seemed to align themselves to the party because of the benefits they would eventually acquire. It was also concluded that churches and church leaders were not just casually manipulated but in turn also manipulated the politicians and their followers for their own benefit.

Chapter 6: Religion and land politics

6.1 Introduction

Besides strategically using prophecy, peace and government policies to win lost popularity, ZANU PF also used land to lure the electorate. This chapter demonstrates how the ZANU PF political leadership linked land reform in Zimbabwe and religious discourses to win the church fraternity and electorate at large to their side during the political crisis period. Land is a bitterly contested political issue in the country and the church is involved. It is a defining principle of the Zimbabwe national identity as supported by Landow (n.d.: 1) who points out that, “The history, contemporary politics, and literature of Zimbabwe reveal that land is a defining cultural issue that resonates in many unexpected places.” The church becomes one of the ‘unexpected places’ as the analysis shall reveal.

The chapter argues that land reform in Zimbabwe was laced with the Christian biblical discourses by the ruling party to gain political mileage. The objective of the chapter is therefore threefold, first, to highlight the centrality of land to Zimbabwe’s socio-economic development, second to establish how the political leadership viewed the relationship between the church and land reform, between land and self-reliance and finally how the land reform programme was used as an election gimmick by ZANU PF.

The chapter analyses the manipulation of land reform by politicians in their quest for political mileage. The print media portrayed land reform as a panacea to the country’s socio-economic problems as it would unlock agricultural and mining opportunities to the people. The reportage in the media promised Christian Churches to also benefit from the land reform programme just like all other citizens in Zimbabwe who have benefited from the scheme.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section explores what precipitated the land reform in Zimbabwe, the second section highlights the centrality of land to the Zimbabwean socio-economic fabric. The third section delves into how the land question was used by ZANU PF as a campaign tool.

6.2 Background to the chapter

Land has been a cause for struggle in many countries. Zimbabwe is no exception to the land contestations hence religious leaders, church-based organisations and land reform advocate for the broad peoples' unity to advance genuine land reform, social justice and civil liberties amidst current turbulent times. The most urgent situation calls upon all to unite and act collectively for social justice and the common good. The success of socio-economic development policies is dependent upon the availability and fair distribution of arable land as well as adequate training of farmers and appropriate resources.

As discussed later, land redistribution in Zimbabwe started just after independence (Sachikonye, 2003; Moyo, 2000) but fast track land reform was introduced in 2001 to speed up the land redistribution exercise (Fast Track Land Reform, 2017).. Considering the history of Zimbabwe which notes that the white colonialists under the umbrella of the British South Africa Company, commanded by Cecil John Rhodes had expropriated the country's best agriculture lands (Sachikonye, 2005; McLaughlin, 1996) and began the widely condemned colonial rule, the wars fought by the majority of black Zimbabweans since then were mostly to reclaim what was rightfully theirs but forcibly taken from them. Ranger (1985:177) notes that locals "fought during the guerilla war for the recovery of their lost lands." Land alienation had affected people and had resulted in bitterness (Pazvakavambwa, n.d.). However, what becomes problematic is that it was not just a question of giving land back to the people that would result in the turnaround of the economy.

There was also the need for both skills and knowledge as well as the requisite equipment for the people to be properly empowered. The reason why most of the land redistributed to people is either unoccupied or lying idle may be because most of the resettled people lacked the farming know-how and the financial resources (Sithole and Ruswa, 2003) that would result in agricultural yields reminiscent of the harvests of white commercial farmers. Again, lack of appropriate equipment and proper training has resulted in people having the land but failing to utilise it. Ox-drawn equipment can effectively work on a small piece of land but not on a farm several hectares in extent.

To make up for this shortfall, the Zimbabwe government requested the church to utilise the land allocated to it. Mainline churches got land from the colonial government which

was given to missionaries (Mashingaidze, 1973; Linden, 1980). McLaughlin (1996:10) notes that the Catholic mission at Chishawasha was “founded in 1892 on land taken from the Vashawasha people by Rhodes and given to the church.” He further notes, “The Catholic Church eventually became one of the biggest landholders in the country, owning nearly 190 000 acres” (McLaughlin, 1996:8). As a result, churches like Roman Catholic, Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, Methodist, Lutheran and Seventh Day Adventist among others used the allocated land to build schools, teachers training colleges, universities and hospitals. Zion Christian Church (ZCC), starting from 2005, built a shrine which is a multi-million dollar conference centre at their Mbungo Estates administrative headquarters in Masvingo on 5000 square metres of land. The church bought 1200 hectares of land in February 1981 (*Chronicle*, 1 July 2011). The church has another shrine in Gokwe. Moyo (2001:40) identifies six categories of landownership of which churches and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) accounted for 1.6% of farms. However, most of the AICs do not have infrastructure as they hold their services in open air.

6.3 Centrality of land to Zimbabwe

In order to understand the analysis on newspaper articles that presented how politicians articulated the land issue in connection with the Christian church, there is need to first explore the centrality of land to the Zimbabwean populace. Ever since the colonisation of the country, land has remained a sensitive issue. Thus, the centrality and importance of land in the economic development discourse of Zimbabwe cannot be overstated. Land is a significant issue where Africans are concerned. Revolution is not complete until nations have repossessed the land. Mufema (1999:1) explains that “land was one of the pillars of the liberation movement in Africa.” The land question has remained contentious from pre-colonial, colonial to post-colonial times in Zimbabwe. Through all these epochs there was inequitable distribution of land. There was dispossession and alienation of land from the indigenous people by the white minority government then which had monopoly over the arable land. It was partly due to these disparities to land distribution that led the Africans to wage a war of liberation which was part of the anti-colonial process.

All this resulted in the birth of the Zimbabwe nation in 1980 (Ranger, 1985). Although there were other reasons for that war, they are not pertinent to this study. Specific

concessions and Acts starting with the Rudd Concession of 1888 which paved way for the colonisation of Zimbabwe in 1890, significantly contributed to the demise of indigenous Zimbabwean on land ownership. The arrival of the Pioneer Column in 1890, the small group of Europeans who occupied and from 1890 began to colonise Zimbabwe under the leadership of Cecil John Rhodes' British South Africa Company (BSAC) (Phimister, 1988; Beach, 1990) complicated the land issue through appropriation based on racial grounds. The Pioneers were a group of Cecil John Rhodes' emissaries who took all the arable land they desired (Moyo, 1986) and left little for the locals.

The Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893, which marked the end of the Ndebele state and its sovereignty effectively meant the Africans in the land now called Zimbabwe, had virtually lost control of the land. Lobengula[25] was defeated by the white settlers in 1894 and actual land grabbing by the white settlers (McLaughlin, 1996; Ranger, 1985) occurred when the traditional grazing land of the Ndebeles was reallocated to the Europeans. There was massive expropriation of land by white colonialists and black Zimbabweans had their land dispossessed. The Land Apportionment Act of 1930[26], the Land Tenure Act of 1969[27], and the Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951[28], were designed to serve the interests of the white settlers.

After independence, reform became a pertinent issue in the country. Land is key to Zimbabwe and saw the international media castigating the country for recovering the land forcibly from the white commercial farmers and redistributing it to the people. For example, *The Guardian* (30 November, 2010) (International edition) wrote, "Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe, and his allies have seized nearly half the country's commercial farms in a land grab widely condemned for economic collapse." The beginning of the recovery of the land was done by locals through seizure from the white commercial farmers and both farm owners and workers were affected. The year 2000 was crucial for the redistribution of land as ZANU PF embarked on what has been described as the controversial and violent fast track land reform programme

[25]The African who was Mzilikazi's son and was the second last king of the Ndebele state (Bhebe, 1977; Cooper-Chadwick, 1975; Preller, 1963).
[26] The Land Apportionment Act was a policy of segregation which saw the demarcation of State-Indigenous Forests and legally formalised land ownership between blacks and whites (Alexander, 1993; Bradley and Dewees, 1993; Moyo, 1998)
[27] The Land Tenure Act which replaced the Land Apportionment Act was for the purpose of ensuring that each race had its own area (Vhudzijena, 1998).
4 The Native Husbandry Act was meant to enforce private ownership of land on black small holder farmers as well as destocking and conservation practices (Duggan, 1980; Kramer, 1998; Land issue- fact sheet).

(Thornycroft, 2001; Kiley, 2002; Colin, 2012). Mabaye (2005:5) notes, “Beginning in 2000, led by war veterans of the Chimurenga war, landless blacks began to invade farms and seize white owned land.” This was just a year after the birth of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in 1999. This party was alleged to be sympathetic to the white commercial farmers who were also alleged to be part of the sponsors of this party (Pindula News; *The Herald*, 21 February 2002; *The Zimbabwean*, 14 December 2015). The war vets who are ZANU PF strong supporters then spearheaded the farm invasions in retaliation of the support MDC got from the white commercial farmers. Togarasei (2013:99) notes that “the ruling party supporters started invading white owned farms as punishment for the white farmers’ support of NCA[29] and MDC who campaigned for the rejection of the constitution.” ZANU PF then utilised this development to legalise the land issue as the land reform programme.

The seizure of land attracted a lot of media attention locally and internationally. Murisa (2010:3) states that Zimbabwe attracted the attention of the international media and the country’s appearance in the headlines at that time was not just because of “worsening conditions of poverty, contested elections and the general decline in the economy” but also “a land reform programme that did not adhere to acceptable norms of transfer of property.” This was referring to the willing-buyer willing-seller arrangement as had been agreed on at the Lancaster House Constitution. The media became an indispensable tool for disseminating information on land as people got to know about the politicians pushing the land reform agenda from the media. Issues of politicians at church gatherings speaking on the land and church leaders supporting the land reform programme were captured and published by different newspapers.

The reportage by the print media on the land issue was to some extent of assistance to the politicians as it publicised the whole exercise thereby drawing the attention of the public. The reportage on the rampant land grabbing was thereby legitimating the ZANU PF national policy on land as approved the sitting government. The media reported on the Svosve people who forcefully settled themselves on a farm owned by a commercial farmer (Scoones et al., 2011). As a result of this reportage, some people may also followed suit. After gaining political independence, people wanted to occupy the areas with fertile land. ZANU PF as the ruling party had the mandate to avail land

[29]The National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) was formed in 1996. Its mandate was to push for a people-driven constitution in Zimbabwe. This was against the government-driven constitution (Togarasei, 2013:99).

to the general people as a way to “redress the injustices created by settler land appropriation” (Landow, n.d.:1). However, the church raised concerns on the violence that characterised land grabbing. Togarasei (2013:102) notes, “In a statement jointly signed by Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ), the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), Wutawunashe said while they supported fair and lawful land distribution, they were calling for an end to violent and illegal land acquisition by landless black Zimbabweans.” This suggests that although the church wanted land, they wanted it in a peaceful manner.

Besides the newspapers reporting on the land issue, broadcast media also did the same to show the centrality of land to Zimbabwe. On radio and television, short pieces of music or short messages (known as jingles) composed to educate people on the land reform were repeatedly played or aired every five minutes or so. For example, these were the ‘*rambai makashinga*’ (be resilient) short messages which also converted to musical jingles and were meant to encourage people to remain steadfast in their acquisition of land as well as withstanding the economic and political turmoil happening then. Sithole and Ruswa (2003:6) note, “The media was awash with jingles on land reform exercise”. In this case the media became points of reference as they were the conduits of these land jingles popularly known as “*hondo yeminda*” (war for land) or “*chave Chimurenga*” (it is war) (Sithole and Ruswa, 2003:6). The nomenclature used suggest that taking land or redistributing land was not easy. Chitando (2005:224) writes of a jingle that was released in the last quarter of 2000 which illustrated “the harnessing of religious themes in political efforts”. It stated:

> In the beginning was the land, the people were on the land, the people owned the land. As it was in the beginning, so shall it always be. Welcome to Zimbabwe. We are down to earth.

By alluding to creation as depicted in the bible and to land as the country’s heritage and prosperity, the jingle appropriated religious ideas which reflected that land was being sacralised. The jingles on the fast track land reform programme by the ZANU PF party on public broadcast media was a move meant to push the agenda of re-designation of land by ZANU PF.

Land was also crucial to Zimbabweans from a religious perspective. Nkosi (n.d.) asserts that Africans believe that land is a gift from God and they are the stewards of

God's resources which include land. When a person dies they are buried in land as Christians also believe that God used soil from the land to create the first man, Adam. The umbilical cord of an African is buried in land (Nkosi, n.d.) which denotes why land is regarded as sacred by Africans. As explained earlier, the church also sacralised land as they build infrastructure or use it for projects like farming. All this shows the importance of land to the church. As a result the church was not left out in the acquisition of land as they needed it for projects among other things. Different print media organisations reported on how ZANU PF handled the land issue in line with the church for the purpose of getting recognition, support and legitimation from the people.

To kick start the process of giving land back to the people, there was need to revisit the constitution. In 1990, the ZANU PF government amended the provisions of the Lancaster House Agreement concerning property rights. It then became possible to compulsorily acquire land for redistribution and resettlement. In 1990 the National Land Policy was put in place and its major objective was "To resettle deserving and landless people" (Chitsike, 2003:4). Chitsike (2003:7) further explains, "The Government of Zimbabwe formulated a new National Land Policy in 1990 with the main objective of reducing the imbalances in land distribution." The Land Acquisition Act of 1992 gave the government power to acquire land for resettlement after paying compensation. The Land Acquisition Act (Chapter 20:10) as amended had the following categories targeted for land acquisition: Derelict, and under-utilised land, Land under multiple ownership, foreign-owned land and land contiguous to communal areas. All this land could legally be taken by the state and redistributed to the masses.

The fast track land reform was formally announced in July 2000 (Scoones et al., 2011). The land reform plan was to de-congest the crowded communal areas which were created by the minority white regime. This was meant to satisfy compelling national, economic and social imperatives at the time. Again, the land reform entailed incorporating and creating an indigenous commercial farming sector. This would lead to poverty eradication and faster economic development. Togaresi (2005) among other scholars describe it as the third *Chimurenga* as Zimbabwean people were fighting to take their land back just as their ancestors had fought the British in the first and second *Chimurenga*. All these were just proposals implying that implementation would be something different from mere proposals. However, a skewed land redistribution exercise, lack of infrastructure and support network plus a growing

economic crisis (Pazvakavambwa, undated; Togarasei, 2013) led to the fast track land reform where the war veterans forcefully took land without compensating the white commercial farmers. Even then, Chitando (2005:230) notes that, “While Mugabe has been radical in expropriating large scale commercial farms, he has spared church land.” Instead the church was encouraged to utilize it or acquire more land. As a result, Gundani (2003:499) avers that, “Black church leaders have been careful not to be too outspoken concerning the land reform programme because the church remains in charge of vast tracts of land.” This cemented the relationship between the church and ZANU PF. As already explained, most mainline churches own land and ZCC also owns land. Pentecostal churches like ZAOGA own land but some like Makandiwa’s UFIC are still in the process of acquiring land (source).

To show the centrality of land, election manifestos also used land to campaign. Sithole and Ruswa (2003:6) note, “The election manifesto for ZANU PF during the Parliamentary (June 2000) and the Presidential (2002) elections was based on land.” As an agro-based economy land is life to Zimbabweans especially those in rural and communal areas. The agriculture industry relies on land from crops like tea, wheat, tobacco, sugarcane, beans and maize among others. Mining also involves digging the land to extract minerals like gold and diamonds among others. In Zimbabwe, agriculture is the mainstay or the cornerstone of the country’s economy and mining is a significant contributor. Successes in agriculture explain why at one time Zimbabwe was known as the bread basket of Africa. To explain how Zimbabwe moved from producing plenty of agricultural products to importing almost everything Nyikadzino (17 April, 2011) wrote an article which partly read:

> A nation once regarded as an economic powerhouse in the Sub Saharan continent considered to be the breadbasket of the African continent has had its fair share of tribulations on the political scene which has resulted in it becoming a symbol of ridicule, shame and contempt in the international community (Continental News Network).

Agriculture was thriving then through white commercial farming and the economy was stable. At the turn of the century, Zimbabwe did not only fail to export farm produce but also failed to feed her people. Blame is sometimes placed on the ZANU PF led government’s policy on land. Amnesty International (2004) also noted that “the way in which the government’s ‘fast-track land reform programme’ has been implemented is a significant factor affecting domestic food production and the ability of millions of

people in Zimbabwe to access adequate food." Kanyenze, Kondo, Chitambara and Martens (2011:93) note that during the time of the mentioned elections ZANU PF in their campaign used the motto, "Land is the Economy and the Economy is Land". This was an attempt to reassure people that the economy would be revamped and restored to its vibrancy nature of the 1980s by taking over land. In 1980 when Zimbabwe got independent, the late President Julius Mwalimu Nyerere of Tanzania had told Mugabe who was then Prime Minister that, "You have inherited the jewel of Africa, please take care not to spoil it" (*The Zimbabwean*, 28 August 2015). ZANU PF was making efforts through land redistribution so that Zimbabwe would regain its status in the region as well as stabilise its economy. The party talked about the land issue at all fora including at church gatherings.

All this provides the background of the land issue and its centrality to Zimbabwean politics. It is with this in mind that various newspapers ranging from dailies to weeklies and belonging to different stables were analysed in this chapter to illustrate how they captured ZANU PF politicians in action in terms of the land reform in relation to religion in this era. Although some articles are explicit on the land issue and Christianity, others imply on the centrality of land. Because land in Zimbabwe is taken as the engine of economic growth, the land reform was meant to be a nationwide exercise meant to benefit everyone regardless of their political affiliation.

6.4 Analysis of findings

The following subsections discuss 10 newspaper articles from the data set which explore and examine how land was strategically used to lure both church leaders and their members. The task is twofold as the study examines churches already with land and those that require land. Issues of leadership and its influence on land occupation are explored. Lastly the section deals with how land and its reforms had a bearing on elections. Except where newspaper articles are used as evidence for raised points, they are chronologically presented as per theme under discussion with each article analysed to bring out its intentions as well as ideological orientations of the paper concerned.

6.4.1 Land and self-reliance

After independence, the ZANU PF government encouraged people to be self-reliant rather than awaiting for donor aid (Agere, 1982; Nyikahadzoi et al, 2012). Although some churches had benefited some land from the colonial regime, most AICs and Pentecostal churches still required land as they were growing and wanted to expand. Giving land back to people including the church was a powerful tool which ZANU PF used to entrench itself further with the people. Discourses of land and those of religion merge. This chapter argues that the party wanted the church to retain and utilise the land it had in support of the party's ideology of land to the people. With their church leaders supporting the land reform, church members were made to believe that land can empower them economically. However the argument here is that this can only be possible if land is properly utilised and with resources permitting as it can also entrench people into deep poverty if there are no resources culminating to under-utilisation or non-utilisation of the land. Both individuals and churches were beneficiaries of the land reform programme.

The party's aim was not just on empowering people but to also get support and eventually votes in times of elections. The land was a trump card in the hands of this political party. Different churches had (through various initiatives) proved capable of working hard to sustain itself as well as serve the nation. The church activities included building schools, colleges, universities, hospitals (*The Herald,* 10 November 2012) and acquiring farms for market gardening among others. Through these activities, the church (and therefore members) would become self-reliant and not wait for foreign donors to help them as what used to be the case in the past.

6.4.1.1 Land, education and health

Education and health facilities can be realised on the availability of land. The *Chronicle* (20 July, 2010) ran a story titled "Church, State compatible in serving Zimbabwe" which did not specifically talk of land but its uses in terms of infrastructure for education, health and training. The article wrote about the work done by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) in contributing to the highly literate population. In its introduction it stated that, "The church in the Zimbabwean state can claim with indisputable justification to have contributed immensely to the welfare of the people of this country in the delivery of various services." The various services which required

land for buildings and operations included education and health among others which were benefits of land. Making this claim portrays the newspaper's conviction that the churches were doing a good job which was a service to Zimbabwe. The phrase 'indisputable justification' explains this conviction. Again 'immensely' was meant to portray the benefits of land redistribution. 'Welfare' alluded to the relationship between church organisations and ZANU PF as both were concerned with the well-being of people. Although the article does not directly address the land issues, the services provided by the church was reason enough for the church to be given land which would be put to good use through putting up infrastructure beneficial to the generality of Zimbabweans. This is a paper that falls under ZIMPAPERS and is government controlled and a national paper from Bulawayo so its content is pro government. The article wrote:

> It is probably in recognition of this that when inaugurating a new water project at Mnene Mission Hospital on May 5, Vice President Joice Mujuru made a call to other church organisations in the country to emulate the work of that church in augmenting what the government has done to improve health, education and other services in the country's burgeoning population.

The water project is a self-reliant project that can be a success where there is land. ZANU PF extolled the good work done by churches in providing cognitive development to the people. Not only was the church providing education, but training and employment. The ideological underpinnings were that this initiative was why the church deserved to be given more land as the activities of the church meant grooming a self-reliant populace.

The article seemed to put emphasis on the church striving in 'augmenting' developmental initiatives of the government. Mujuru was speaking at the commissioning of a new water project on 5 May 2010 in Mberengwa Rural District in Matabeleland South province. The water project together with a power booster "brought to an end perennial challenges for staff and patients especially at Mnene". The article went on to write, "Countless numbers of today's professionals and luminaries plying their trade in the country and abroad have their names indelibly inscribed in the history books of Mnene." The number of people who acquired education through the church benefitted the nation thereby enriching it. As a result of the education provided by the church (from schools built on state land), Zimbabwe is among nations with a high literacy rate. This is evidenced by the *Chronicle* (1 July

2011) which reported on how ZCC had built a tourist attraction church and had schools throughout the country[30]. Again the African Methodist Episcopal Church also boasts of schools around the country[31]. Even Johanne Marange Apostolic Church built a school in a record eight months[32] (*The Sunday Mail*, 15 July 2012). Still on education and health in connection with the church, in an interview captured by *The Herald* (10 November, 2012) Johannes Ndanga said, "Most indigenous churches have been given farms and ZCC got a farm to build a university while Zion got 295 hectares of land in Chartsworth to build a hospital and to do other projects." Allowing the church to continue its good work on land allocated to it was an advantage to the government as the state and church would share the burden of educating the populace thereby reducing the unemployment rate.

The reference to 'professionals and luminaries' attempts to portray the value of education offered by the mission schools. The article extolled the work done by the Mission as prominent figures like Professor Phineas Makhurane, the founding Vice Chancellor of the National University of Science and Technology (NUST); Professor Ngwabi Bhebe, Vice Chancellor of the Midlands State University (MSU); the late lawyer and legislator Byron Hove and the late educationist and politician, Dr Sikhanyiso Ndlovu had passed through Mnene Mission School. This showed the capability of the church to do viable projects leading to self-reliance. It is also plausible to note that quite a number of orthodox or mainline churches like Methodist, Dutch Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, Lutheran among others own schools, tertiary institutions and hospitals *(The Sunday Mail*, 15 July 2012; *The Herald,*10 November 2012). By extolling the good work done by the church, Mujuru was subtly justifying why ZANU PF had not expropriated church land in the land reform programme as it would be beneficial to them in the long run. The paper brought out names of public figures associated with the church so that church members would gain confidence with working closely with the government on developmental projects. This is in line with Chitando's (2005:222) notion that, "Most of the ruling party officials received their education at mission schools and were favourably disposed towards the religion." The story paraphrased what Mujuru said and even used a photograph of Mujuru in the

[30]Mutendi High School in Masvingo, NegondeNafombo schools in Mashonaland West are some schools built and managed by ZCC.
[31]The church has schools like Sizane High in Bulawayo, Makwe High in Gwanda, Mapewume Primary and Secondary in Filabusi, Mpindu High in Tsholotsho and Matema High in Harare.
[32]The church built a primary school with an enrolment of 2400 pupils.

Salvation Army uniform chatting to a church member. All this was done to authenticate the story. The church attire by Mujuru suggested that she was discussing church business and may have attracted Christian readers. This further substantiates that words and pictures are used to gain attention (Kellner, 1995; Sherlcovin, 1985; Pratkins and Aronson, 1991). The paper was in essence using ideology to imply that through proper utilisation of land given by the state, the church has the potential to help turn around the economy through the provision of essential services.

6.4.1.2 Projects to empower citizens

Land was perceived as a source of self-help projects. *The Sunday Mail* (15 November, 2010) seemed to encourage different church organisations to aspire to be self-reliant when it wrote, “Addressing over 12 000 members of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) at Mbungo Estates, east of Masvingo, during a graduation of nearly 850 women who successfully completed a course in Internal Savings and Lending….” Women were being empowered to become self-reliant through projects practised in the informal sector. This action done by the party seemed to portray that what was believed by the party was to make people self-reliant and not rely on formal employment as the industry sector in the country has been dwindling since the turn of the century. This is also confirmed by the chairperson of youth development and education in Guta RaMwari, Life Gumbo who was quoted saying, “Our church moulds us to be respectful, self-reliant and skilful people in society.” Self-reliance meant governable citizens preoccupied with their own work and not loitering or roaming the streets. All these were possible with the provision of land.

In the same vein, the *NewsDay* (26 May, 2012) carried a story titled “Mujuru promises Apostolic Sects Land”. Mujuru noted:

> I was happy to hear Bishop (Mugodhi) talking about land. That land shall be given to them. Right now I have another big group I am assisting with the acquisition of farming inputs. President Robert Mugabe has launched a lot of programmes that help better the lives of people…but empowerment projects and programmes, these we will support so you will also benefit from them.

As a privately owned newspaper organisation *NewsDay* insinuated ulterior motives behind churches being given land when it presented a ‘special’ bond between the church and ZANU PF in relation to land. The church would ask for land and their wish

would be granted. This was not normally the case as some people apply for land and it takes time for the process to be done. Issues of corruption and bribery were subtly alluded to as promises of land were given to some churches and not others. At Mafararikwa, church leaders were asked to choose a farm of their choice. Mujuru is presented admitting to assisting another church with farming inputs suggesting that ZANU PF wanted to use the church for the agriculture of the country to be improved. This would go along with Mugabe's desire to improve the economy which would in turn make Zimbabweans lead better lives. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003:127) also argues, "ZANU PF was indeed capable of raising itself from the looming political cemetery through a populist articulation of the land question." Land became a mobilising tool to church members. Land was appropriated through action and functional discourse was used to legitimise it to help resuscitate the ailing party.

African Independent Churches (AICs) also contributed to the ZANU PF's government project of making people become self-reliant. *The Sunday Mail* as a government controlled weekly national paper also reported positively on government initiated programmes. This paper (15 July, 2012) reported on Mujuru, who was acting president at the time appealing to the Johanne Marange Apostolic Church to establish a church bank. The paper reports that Mujuru stated, "Your spirit of self-reliance is in line with the Government's indigenization and empowerment and land reform programme." Pushing the self-reliance agenda is also witnessed by African governments like those of Tanzania, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe among others who have been known to encourage their people to desist from sitting back and waiting for donors coming to their aid (Nwosu, 1998; Bondarenko et al, 2014). In the same vein, Zachary (2001:1) reported from Switzerland that, "African leaders, in a fresh bid to win international attention and respect, are pushing the novel idea that the revival of their continent depends on self-reliance and self-sufficiency." The impression given is that African leaders had the vision of coming up with an African recovery plan that would draw on indigenous energies, talents and resources. Implementation would differ from state to state with some succeeding but others failing depending on their peculiarities. The Zimbabwe ZANU PF led government worked along the same lines of a recovery plan by citing the availability of land as a way of making indigenous people self-reliant. This is in line with Sonderling's (2014:163) assertion that "whoever has social power legitimizes and imposes meaning." As the party that initiated the indigenisation and

empowerment programme, ZANU PF had the logistics of implementing it. Mujuru is represented as the one with social power as she had authority from both the party and government. The use of 'spirit of self-reliance' alluded to by Mujuru in the article explains one of the objectives of land redistribution. Nhamoyebonde (2012) argues that Zimbabwe at independence moved with the politics of self-reliance. This shows a close relationship between the party's ideal and the church's belief.

The Sunday Mail further wrote, "Cde Mujuru also hailed the relationship between apostolic sects and ZANU PF, saying this came about after a realization that the party has people-oriented programmes." Although land is not mentioned, it is implied as it belonged to the 'people oriented programmes'. Ideologically, discourses of self-reliance are intrinsically related to the land question. Self-reliance discourse was used as justification for land redistribution. This was meant to make Zimbabweans accept the reform. As a result, the discourse of the seemingly inevitable or obvious relationship between ZANU PF and Apostolic sects is appropriated to religious discourse so as to make the church in general and apostolic sects church members in particular feel that they were also legitimate beneficiaries of land. Mujuru went on to commend the church for introducing and undertaking the "*Mombe Kumhuri*" (Herd to Family) Scheme. Heifer international gave 10 small scale farmers who had enough grazing land 10 heifers and a bull. It was a long term project which ran for at least 5 years. The farmers would then pass on 10 heifers and a bull to the next group and retain the calves as their own. This alluded to land as cattle ranching is done on farms. The scheme would help families own their own cattle and at the same time increase the national herd. However, this could only make an impact if done on a large scale and not just at isolated village level. This would mean more land to the farmers for their herds to meaningfully contribute to the national herd.

To illustrate how agriculture was the backbone of the Zimbabwean economy, the same article quoted Mujuru saying:

> The Government will complement the church's efforts in increasing yields and productivity from 0.7 hectares to seven tonnes per hectare. I also want to encourage you to consider using organic and cheaper fertilizer. Your joint and concerted efforts will certainly go a long way in shaping the approach to agriculture in our country in future (*The Sunday Mail*, 15 July 2012).

As acting President, Mujuru assured the church members of positive results if they worked with the government (manipulation). Recommendation for cheaper inputs but aiming for higher yields was made to church members with the assumption that they could not afford expensive fertilisers. This might have worked on a small scale but not for huge productivity. For the country to regain its lost status in the region, there was need for sophisticated machinery as well as adequate and appropriate inputs. Although this article was in a public paper, the church members are part of the targeted audiences so the religious ideology of producing more from very little[33] was used as discourse that implied a biblical allusion that may have appealed to them. The media do not just produce content, but do so for a targeted audience with the aim of propagating certain ideologies (Shaw and McCombs, 1972). The media create certain images in the minds of the audience to think or worry about (Lipmann, 1922). It becomes natural and commonsensical to support a party that seems to be advocating for the empowerment of church organisation through giving them land.

The numbers at church gatherings outweighed the numbers that normally attended political rallies. Not only that, the apostolic sects have, over the years come to outweigh the orthodox churches by far (Chitando, 2005). By reference to the church members working hard, Mujuru's speech carried ideological underpinnings of the party. This was with the hope that there would be a ripple effect and the party ideology would rub off on other churches as they all believe in one God and the same bible. It confirms the argument of this study that politicians particularly targeted these apostolic sects as their religious ideology encourages them to accept their rulers as they are there because God allowed it (see Chapter 4).

In line with self-reliance, in the post 2013 elections, ZANU PF has been moving with their latest initiative of Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) which is an economic blue print running from 2013 to 2018 when other presidential, parliamentary and other elections will be held. The economic blue print advocates for entrepreneurial tendencies so that people fend for themselves in the informal sector as the formal employment sector is diminishing on

[33]There was the allusion to the biblical explanation of feeding the multitude with five loaves and two fish which miraculously fed five thousand people and there were substantial remains (Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:41;John 6:1–14).

a daily basis. The national policy came to boost what ZANU PF was already doing with the apostolic churches.

The Herald ran a story titled “Johanne Marange Apostolic sect urged to support President Mugabe” (2 April, 2013) where the then Minister of Media, Information and Publicity, Webster Shamhu had also talked about indigenisation and empowerment. The paper wrote, “On indigenization and economic empowerment, Cde Shamhu urged members of the apostolic sect to participate in government programmes. He said the indigenisation process was a government programme that should benefit everyone.” Indigenisation and empowerment could be done well where land was available, be it tin making, basket weaving, and market gardening among others. The publicity given to this event helped to explain the government policy. From the title of the story, accepting the policy was a way of supporting Mugabe and his party. The media were ideological tools that propagated the ZANU PF ideology. This role is explained by Jensen (2012: 351) who notes that the “media are sources of both meaning and power.” The given impression was that ZANU PF was inviting all members of the church as well as the whole nation (as readers) to be partakers of the exercise thereby implying it being non-partisan. Through the non-partisan discourse, the article gave meaning to government policy captured in an environment of worship where Christian readers were bound to believe it as leaders are respected as per bible instruction. The message captured and reported at a church gathering was bound to be positively received due to the influence of the setting. The assumption was that leaders could not lie in such a setting for fear of God. There was supposed to be a difference between what was said at a rally and at a church gathering. Separating government from ZANU PF might be difficult hence some readers would find it difficult to believe Shamu’s proclamations. This was because a party initiative was being addressed at government level.

In this article the leadership styles of Mugabe and the High Priest (Noah Taguta) were compared or juxtaposed. Shamhu had addressed thousands of followers explaining that the President was a virtuous man whose leadership was conferred upon him through democratic means. The paper went on to write, “He said just like their leader, Noah Taguta’s leadership was spiritual, and the leadership of the President, who is also Head of State and Government and Commander in Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces came from the people who overwhelmingly voted him into office.” The

essence of the message here is that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Mugabe was the same man who was then advocating for land redistribution so as to improve the economy. What is ironic is that the term that Mugabe was serving was the one in which he retained power through violence and other unethical means. When Mugabe won the 27 June Run-off election, it ended a one-man show when Tsvangiral abdicated from the race. Contradictions and obfuscation surround the fact that the June 2008 election was not democratic at all. People were harassed, abused, tortured and some even killed (Masunungure, 2009; CCJPZ, 2009) as a way of forcing them to vote for Mugabe during the run-off election. This resorting to coercion instead of relying on consent shows how Mugabe and ZANU PF were regarded by the people. All these titles given to Mugabe in the article were aimed to suggest his reliability and credibility thereby restoring his

lost credibility.

6.4.1.3 Why the Church should benefit land

Land was supposed to be given to the church as this would help the nation. *The Sunday Mail* (19 May 2013) wrote, “Cde Mujuru said church leaders should embrace Government empowerment initiatives such as land reform and the Indigenization and Economic Empowerment programmes.” This land reform was explained in relation to other government initiatives. Mujuru was addressing leaders of different churches at a prayer meeting and this was revealed when she said, “*Vafundisi vanofanira kubata pamwe neHurumende…”* (Church leaders should work with Government).” Land was used to cement this relationship. Mujuru stated:

> Churches and their leaders must benefit from the land reform and the indigenization programme. You deserve that land. No one is more superior to the other. Church leaders should be allocated land. We are going to set up a meeting with the mining commissioner so that churches can venture into mining…

This was encouragement for the church to exploit the Mugabe-given resources. Mujuru explicitly stated that the church should be given land. The use of ‘you’ was suggesting that everyone had the right to land. It was talking of all churches being equal and deserving equal treatment where land redistribution was concerned. It also stated that no tribal or political differences would be used to discriminate people from their right to land. Mujuru was also highly regarded by churches in the assistance she

as a ZANU PF leader had promised. The founder of Canaan Apostolic Church, Archbishop Ndila Mhlanga reportedly stated, “She also said Government will assist us in seeking land to build churches as worshipping in open air is detrimental to the environment.” Most apostolic sects worship in open air and use small portions as their shrines (*sowe*). Being convinced to build meant more land and the government had to provide the land. Environmental issues of using the bush toilet and felling trees everywhere would be addressed which would be for the benefit of both government and people. All churches who wanted land could get it through the assistance of the party.

The Herald (2 June, 2013) wrote a story titled “’No to dependency syndrome’ Shamu tells church”. Webster Shamu was speaking at a United Methodist Church fundraising dinner in Harare. Shamu was quoted saying, “We have since graduated from that colonial period and liberated ourselves both physically and spiritually. The dependency syndrome has no room any more in a free and independent Zimbabwe.” By using the word ‘graduated’ the quotation admitted that at one time Zimbabwe had relied on donors for her upkeep. The use of words like ‘colonial’ and ‘liberated’ were meant to remind people of their current status. The Minister placed emphasis on both spiritual and physical liberation. As a free nation Zimbabwe had to work for herself as a ‘free and independent’ country. After all the function was for fundraising not begging which alluded to self-reliance.

This study concludes that land in the hands of the church would translate to self-help projects implying self-employment. The church would then be self-reliant like Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZAOGA) which is founded and led by Ezekiel Guti. He encourages his church members to work ‘talents’[34] which would empower them economically. On the issue of land Guti was quoted saying, “*Toraiwo ivhu zviri kuita vamwe. Hariruzi* value.” (Grab the land as what others are doing, soil does not lose value) (Biri, 2013:116). Land was key to social and economic development even to the church.

However, some newspapers did not agree with ZANU PF’s strategy of using land only for the purpose of empowering the church among other beneficiaries. *The Standard* (13 February, 2013) reported on the church visitations by ZANU PF politicians

[34]Talents are self-sufficiency projects introduced by Guti to his pastors and church members to sustain themselves.

including Mugabe, Mujuru, Webster Shamu and Ignatius Chombo. The churches visited were Johanne Masowe, Johanne Marange and other independent African churches. The paper went on to give reasons for these visitations by noting, “They have been promising church members land and benefits of the indigenization and economic empowerment programme.” However, this talk about indigenisation and empowerment through the land reform programme was dismissed by the *Zimbabwe Independent* (10 July, 2013) where Elias Mambo wrote, “Most politicians have now mastered the art of lacing their statements with Biblical quotes to appeal to multitudes of church goers attending different houses of worship.” The use of the phrase ‘mastered the art of’ indicate deliberate choice of the discourse of pretence by politicians with the sole purpose of convincing congregates about the party’s policies. The implication was that politicians are trained speakers who speak to push forward prescribed agendas. Through practice, one becomes an expert in speaking convincingly.

Preaching the ideology of self-reliance was because politicians likely believed that it would be readily accepted by church members as they would embark on entrepreneurial projects in this day when ZANU PF is preaching about ZIMASSET. Grzymala-Busse (2012:422) avers, “Churches in many democracies influence policy in domains ranging from abortion to education to the welfare state.” Along the same lines, ZANU PF believed the church had impact and influence in affecting the political situation like when AICs also got involved in the anti-sanctions campaigns (*The Manica Post*, 11–17 March 2011). The AICs would contribute in changing the economy through utilising land for developmental purposes as revealed by different churches providing services like education already alluded to.

6.4.2 Leadership and land

There is a close link between land and leaders, be they political, traditional, church or spiritual. Harman (2007) comments on Gramsci’s notion on the ideological struggle that happens in society at the highest level between ‘organic intellectuals’ and ‘traditional intellectuals’ which then influences those around them. Harman (2007:3) explains that “organic intellectuals are people who consciously ground their ideas in the struggle of a particular class.” They seem to fight the status quo on behalf of the common people or social class they represent. On traditional intellectuals, Harman

(2007:3) notes that these contrastingly “see the clash of ideas occurring simply at an intellectual level without any connection to material struggles, while themselves taking for granted many of the ideas of existing society.” King (1978:26) argues that “intellectuals organize and enforce the authority of the group they represent.” The articles seem to base their stories on these two categories. The selected newspaper articles could have been selecting quotes that made different leaders seem as leaders from different types. The public media quote from traditional intellectuals while the private media seem to bring out the voices of the organic intellectuals.

Church leaders who included pastors and elders were part of the intellectuals who showed allegiance to ZANU PF. Leaders like Noah Taguta and Johanes Ndanga also formed part of these intellectuals who supported the ZANU PF ideologies. A Johanne Marange church elder from Mhondoro, Thomas Benhura, was quoted saying, “It is surprising to note that some of the people who advocated for sanctions against Zimbabwe also want to eat the food produced by people empowered through the land reform programme. They should import their food from America and Europe and not wait for what we produce on the land” (*The Manica Post*, 11–17 March 2011). Benhura was castigating the opposition parties and all those against the designation of land. Asked on what empowerment programmes the church organisation had put in place for its members, Johannes Ndanga in an interview with a reporter, Tendai Mugabe, said, “As ACCZ, we have a Negotiated Benefits Housing Trust which deals with the issue of stands for our members. Close to 3000 members have bought stands in Harare alone through this trust. The trust is found in other towns such as Bulawayo, Gweru, Kwekwe and Masvingo, among others” (*The Herald*, 10 November 2012). The church organisation was helping its members in the provision of stands from city fathers which was part of land redistribution.

Besides church leaders there were traditional leaders who were equally significant in the land matrix. In Zimbabwe, rules of succession are used by families to select traditional leaders (Dodo, 2013). In the pre-colonial times traditional leaders like chiefs and headmen presided over land disputes (Traditional leaders Act [Chapter 29:17]) among other issues in society. This is evidenced by Pazvakavambwa (n.d:1) who notes that “prior to the colonization of the country by the British, the people of Zimbabwe lived in communities where traditional chiefs were the recognized land authorities.” These would be the ideal people ZANU PF had to work with in giving land

to the needy people. However, Ncube (2011:1) writes about how the "crisis of communal leadership manifested itself in land disputes" showing how the power of chiefs after independence was stripped from them by local government officials. Chiefs were left to be only arbitrators of domestic disputes and sitting on village development committees (William, 2016). In rural communities, on one hand, traditional leaders are regarded as wise and powerful hence revered people in society. What they say is law (Keulder, undated). Earle, Goldin and Machiridza (2006: 35) note, "It is important to note that traditional leaders have power to preside over customary law and local courts in civil cases." The Traditional leaders Act [Chapter 29:17] notes that one of the responsibilities of chiefs is

> Ensuring that the land and its natural resources are used and exploited according to the law, in particular in controlling over cultivation, over grazing, indiscriminate destruction of flora and fauna, illegal settlements and degradation, abuse or misuse of land and natural resources.

This act is silent on the allocation or designation of land by traditional leaders. The *Sunday News* (1-7 December, 2013) wrote a story headlined "Are chiefs still custodians of tradition?" The paper outlined the duties of chiefs, "The mandate of chiefs in Zimbabwe is among other things to establish control in predominantly rural communities, foster strategies for rural survival, preside over small civil cases and chief among them, to allocate land to their subjects." ZANU PF adopted the religious discourse of equality among citizens as chiefs should not discriminate in their operations. On the other hand, chiefs may work against the government which may be problematic to the plans and agenda of ZANU PF.

In post-independence Zimbabwe, there was the establishment of the Association of Zimbabwean Traditional Ecologists (AZTEC) which sought to "empower traditional leaders again with the responsibility of controlling rural land, and protecting it against deforestation and degradation, as well as preserving species in the forests" (William, 2016:3). If development is to take place successfully in society, then the developers have to work closely with the traditional leaders. ZANU PF utilised this by working with chiefs to create a strong support base. These people have internal influence and know a lot about their people and what would or would not work for them. Augustine William (2016:1) in the first brief of a series of briefs on the role of traditional leaders in Africa notes that in Zimbabwe chiefs as traditional leaders are said to have "a connection to the land in the eyes of the public and are often seen as traditional custodians of the

land, customs and societal values." Redistribution of land would not be successful without chiefs. This is the ideal role but some traditional leaders no longer have power in the allocation of land.

6.4.2.1 Role of Chiefs in the land question

In Zimbabwe instead of the chiefs being involved in national politics (Karereshi, 2014), they are into party politics. This is evidenced by the *Financial Gazette* (7 November, 2013) where Mzumara wrote, "Chiefs and headmen have repeatedly been engaged to distribute agriculture inputs, land, food aid, farming inputs and welfare funds to ZANU PF party faithful". The ZANU PF led government takes care of chiefs as evidenced by the *Southern Eye* (18 December, 2014) which wrote "Govt to spend $9M on chiefs". Provisioning personal benefits seemed like a way of buying the loyalty of chiefs. This was a way of keeping the chiefs close and happy so that they could help push forward the party ideology. *The Herald* (15 June, 2013) carried a story where Joice Mujuru castigated people who separated the chiefs from the government. She began by explaining the close link between the church and the government. She remarked, "ZANU PF is about the people and churches are also about people meaning we will continue working hand in hand to improve the conditions and welfare of our people." Mujuru then went on to explain that ZANU PF as a revolutionary party fought for land. *The Herald* (15 June, 2013) went on to quote Mujuru saying:

> Some people say ZANU PF has patronized traditional leaders but how can you separate the revolutionary party with the custodians of the land (chiefs). Our people need land and ZANU PF has been fighting for that since time immemorial and now to ensure everyone benefits it has to work with traditional leaders.

Mujuru denied that chiefs were treated as unduly inferior, taken for granted or treated condescendingly. The quotation implied that chiefs were therefore not being used by the party in redistributing land to people but doing their rightful duty.

Robert Mugabe also expressed similar sentiments as those of Mujuru as he was quoted by *The Herald* (13 November, 2009) which read, "The churches deserved praise for steadfastly partnering Government in engendering socio-economic

development." Land redistribution was part of socio-economic development. The complementary roles played by both the government and the church of fostering development and raising standards of living for the people was the emphasis of the president's speech. Mugabe was reported to have been one centre of power in both ZANU PF and government (The *NewsDay,* 7 April 2011). This quotation is in line with Gramsci's notion of traditional intellectuals being used by those in power to hegemonise people.

In Zimbabwe chiefs and village heads are regarded as the grassroots of ZANU PF as they form the support base of the party as evidenced by *The Zimbabwe Mail* (28 June, 2015) which carried a story with the title "Chiefs belong to ZANU PF: Munangagwa". Munangagwa, now the current president but was then vice president stated, "Traditional leaders cannot fail to know the right people [ZANU PF]. They know and pray that God must keep and protect President [Robert] Mugabe." Munangagwa claimed ownership of chiefs portraying how chiefs were party agents. In line with this, churches had to work closely with them to gain favour where land was concerned.

Chiefs have been known as custodians of the customary law and culture of the country (Dodo, 2013; *The Zimbabwean*, 24 January 2016). Matyszak (2010) also argues that chiefs were co-opted into campaigns as allies of ZANU PF and they were encouraged to exercise power in presiding over rural activities. The rural activities included allocation of land to people in their constituencies. This was a partisan role by the traditional leaders as they were portrayed as the ruling party affiliates. *The Standard* (24 January, 2016) pointed out that "the Traditional Leaders Act (1998) was rehashed in order to recreate, reproduce and re-imagine the colonial-like chief who would discipline the rural voters on behalf of the elites." All this suggest how chiefs were working to further perpetrate the ZANU PF ideologies. As a result, the support base which ZANU PF was building was not solely comprised of ZANU PF supporters but beneficiaries, including churches and a fearful people who complied with the chief to avert conflict.

The traditional leaders can make a project succeed or fail through their influence. "Traditional leaders are the best force for development in a country and can relate to their constituents in a way that politicians may not be able to do" (*Sunday News*, 1-7 December 2013). ZANU PF realised the centrality of these leaders in communities and

gave them recognition for pushing forward the party's ideas. *The Standard* (24 January, 2016) supported this view when the paper wrote, "When Mugabe's government began to lose legitimacy and relevancy in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it solicited the services of the chiefs to save it from imminent political demise." The chiefs who in the early 1980s were dismissed as carriers of the remnants of colonialism were then co-opted to serve the purpose of legitimising the party's stay in power. The co-optation of traditional leaders for a purpose is evidenced by William (2016:3) who notes:

> Realizing the importance of traditional leaders in the country, especially as custodians of customs, culture and values, the government of Zimbabwe is now giving back power to traditional leaders to restore their dignity and role in the communities, especially in remote and rural areas, but their compensation still is determined by each chief's loyalty to the ruling party.

The chief could only survive through being partisan to ZANU PF. *The Standard* (24 January, 2016) carried a story headlined "Sunday Opinion: Chiefs are Zanu PF, Mugabe auxiliaries" which seemed to suggest that these traditional leaders are not neutral.

6.4.2.2 Party leaders in support of land redistribution

Traditional intellectuals also included party stalwarts who would stand by ZANU PF no matter the circumstances. Machingura (2012:26) quotes one such intellect, Tony Gara, who made this statement in parliament, "This country and its people should thank the Almighty for giving us his only other son by the name of Robert Mugabe." The biblical language of likening Mugabe to Jesus shows how these party stalwarts held their party leader in high esteem.

Mujuru was also quoted encouraging all Zimbabweans to partake in the land reform exercise in order to be beneficiaries. She said, "Some of you took the land reform programme for granted and were left out in the exercise but now we are moving towards economic empowerment and this is an opportunity you should make use of it to empower yourself" (*The Herald,* 15 June, 2013). It can be deduced from this quotation that churches should not be onlookers of the exercise as this would not stop it but the church would have lost out. ZANU PF was presented as a party that would work only with those willing as nothing and no one would stop them. The church would be beneficiaries if they accepted working with ZANU PF. Working on the land would

result in church members producing enough for themselves. The full bellies would then translate to happy people which would also culminate in national security thereby legitimising the party that advocated for the land reform. However, because ZANU PF is cynical, this promise for the provision of land as a means of turning the economy around should not be taken at face value. Land reform was being strategically used to manipulate people.

However, not every leader was agreeable to the ZANU PF rhetoric as there were some who appeared opposed to the ideologies of this political party. The *Daily News* (15 July, 2013) questioned why Mujuru and Shamu were seen at Mafararikwa at an Apostolic Faith Church's ceremony garbed in the indigenous church regalia. Mujuru is a Salvation Army follower so this movement between churches was with a motive. This paper argued that there was polarisation of the church in an article titled "Churches polarized as politics heats up." Pius Ncube[35], a fierce Mugabe critic was quoted blaming ZANU PF for the economic meltdown and violation of human rights. Ncube was quoted saying, "This government does not have the Holy Spirit and they know what I think of them. I am not going to let them off the hook. These men are liars. They are murderers. They are only working to make themselves rich." The language used in this quotation showed anger from a pastor who was unhappy with Mugabe and ZANU PF. This is indicative of the fact that not all churches or church leaders were influenced by the ZANU PF rhetoric of giving land back to everyone. Describing the party politicians as 'liars' and 'murderers' took someone with a lot of courage to point out what others would never dare say. ZANU PF is known for labelling those who do not agree with their ideologies as enemies of the state. The same article wrote of Mugabe responding "by urging his supporters to disregard church leaders who were calling for his forced ouster accusing Ncube and other church leaders of 'peddling falsehoods about Zimbabwe's governance'." Blame was placed on those church leaders who wanted Mugabe to retire because of his type of governance which was based on the way the government redistributed land.

6.4.2.3 Church leaders who benefited from the land redistribution

The land reform was meant to benefit everyone including churches. Chitando and Mashiri (2015:92) state that the AICs' religious ideologies "have placed emphasis on

[35] Bulawayo-based renowned Catholic bishop

the importance of the land as the locus of identity." Already from inception, these churches had embraced land reform. Moyo (2011:499) avers that "During the 1990s the state had sanctioned the ownership of agricultural lands by 'blacks' through non-profit public trusts, including churches and educational institutions." However, analysis of selected newspapers portrays that those who seemed to be beneficiaries were those prominent churches which attracted huge followers. This was evident in an article in *The Herald* (22 May, 2010) in which Webster Shamu had addressed members of the United Family Inter-Denominational Ministries in Chitungwiza. The paper wrote, "He appealed to the Chitungwiza municipality to provide Rev Makandiwa with more land to build a temple that can accommodate the thousands of people who attend his service." Emmanuel Makandiwa, the prominent preacher who leads a large congregation in the United Family International Church (UFIC) has been known for working well with the ZANU PF government as he participated in the anti-sanctions campaign (*Daily News*, 30 March 2011). The paper mediated the issue as if the participation was not voluntary when it wrote that Makandiwa was roped in by ZANU PF in the anti-sanctions campaign. His popularity and big church may have prompted the party to bring him on board.

The appeal by Shamhu was addressed to the Chitungwiza[36] town council who are the city fathers of that town. These are the traditional leaders in an urban set-up and therefore custodians of land which is central to this chapter. These are the people who through urban planning can allocate stands to churches as well as other sectors like business and residential stands. Giving land to the church was not a neutral nor natural process. There is neither doing a favour without expectations in return nor innocence in the appeal for land on behalf of the church. Even the size of the land is alluded to in the appeal. This favour would be returned by the church at the appropriate time of elections through voting. *The Manica Post* (11-17 March, 2011) wrote, "Church members denounced the opposition MDC-T, saying it was a puppet out to reverse the gains of the land reform programme." This is ZANU PF discourse being used by the church members to show their allegiance to the ruling party and at the same time resentment for opposition parties. Advocating for churches to be beneficiaries of land was a calculated move by the party to win favour in the eyes of the church. As a result,

[36]Chitungwiza is a town just outside Harare

this could be described as building trust in people for future benefit. Even some church leaders were aware of what was expected of them.

Newsday (28 March, 2011) in a story titled “Pro-Zanu PF Bishop Demands Cars” in which Johannes Ndanga, leader of Apostolic Christian Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ) was quoted saying, “So what Zanu PF simply needs to do is give us land and empower us as a church and it will rule forever.” The church leaders had their own demands as reward for supporting ZANU PF. Their support was not value free. This reflects the cunning side of the church leadership as it forced the hand of the party if it wanted legitimation. The party had to pay a price for remaining in power and the churches would rally behind it as long as it kept its end of the bargain. This means that there was a possibility of the church swinging its vote if it felt disappointed by the party. The relationship was therefore anchored on material gains and benefits.

In the article from *The Herald* (15 June, 2013) the Apostolic Christian Church of Zimbabwe leader, Bishop Johannes Ndanga responded to Mujuru’s plea for the church not to ignore government policies by saying, “We are always open that we support ZANU PF because of its clear empowerment programmes and we pledge to continue working with the revolutionary party forever.” These are strong words which portray an ideologically converted Christian and his sentiments have no apologies for siding with the ruling party. The churches were beneficiaries of the land reform programme and a representative of the church was not hiding that fact. This strategy by ZANU PF to appeal to the church is what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003:127) describes as how the party was “capable of raising itself from the looming political cemetery through populist articulation of the land question.” The land issue therefore, was instrumental in ZANU PF’s hegemony prevailing over other political parties and the church was the platform used to preach the party’s vision. Gifford (2001:26) explains how religion is closely related to politics when he argues, “Religion inculcates a particular way of perceiving, experiencing and responding to reality.”

In light of these newspaper articles, this study argues that some leaders are in the fore front of upholding the status quo through supporting the land reform programme as a solution to the current social, economic and political dispensation. In essence, some leaders dismiss the church-politics relationship as theatre which lacks genuineness, mostly based on a win-win situation and therefore a political gimmick meant to move

people's focus from important bread and butter issues. The church became a readily available space where these different sentiments were raised in line with the land reform.

6.4.3 Land reform and elections

People are generally very sensitive to religion and politics and both can be used as hegemonic tools. This is quite evident during times of elections. Chitando (2005: 223) notes, "The land question was revisited as part of an intense propaganda war." Election time in Zimbabwe has seen a lot of land related promises being made to the electorate. For example, MDC used 'change' in their campaign but ZANU PF used land. Land was the focus of these campaign manifestos by ZANU PF politicians in their interaction with both church leaders and their members. Most of the time the promises are just rhetoric but in rare cases the promises are fulfilled.

Mugabe in 2010 had visited the Johanne Marange sect where he had pledged to give them a farm. The *Manica Post* (11–17 March 2011) published a story titled "President fulfills promise to Vapostori". The article noted that there were thousands of members of the Church who received an offer letter for a farm in Chipinge. Not only did they receive the offer letter but also twenty tonnes of both compound D and ammonium fertiliser to boost their farming activities. The inputs ahead of the acquisition of the farm seemed to signify the importance of farming impressed upon the church. The offer letter had been signed by the then Minister of Lands and Rural Resettlement, Dr Herbert Murerwa. Normally, it took time to have such ownership papers ready but this case was fast tracked in order to convince the church that political pledges could be fulfilled. The leader of the church, High Priest Noah Taguta had received the letter on behalf of the church. The article wrote:

> Thousands of church members from Zimbabwe and neighboring countries attended the gathering which is held at the beginning of March every year. Cde Mushohwe said the offer letter was a fulfillment of the promise made by President Mugabe during his visit to Mafararikwa area of Marange for the church's annual Passover in July last year where he said they would help in supporting their agricultural activities to feed the multitude of their followers.

This was during the period of the GNU when ZANU PF was trying to resuscitate itself from the humiliation of sharing power with the opposition. During the power sharing period, rallies did not attract a lot of attendees as coercion could not be used when all

parties were proclaiming the importance of peace. The numbers at the church gathering were an enough attraction especially if the members could vote for the party thereby reflecting the impact or power of the church. This is captured by Matikiti (2014:99) who quotes Johannes Ndanga claiming that "real bishops had more Zanu PF followers as compared to traditional leaders". The article brought out how the church boasted of followers even outside the country. Convincing these about ZANU PF would help the popularity grow.

The article in *The Manica Post* (11–17 March, 2011) went on to quote the ZANU PF politician, Chris Mushohwe saying, "We tasked your leadership to identify the farm of their choice and they came up with the Chipinge farm, which was already gazetted for resettlement purposes." The church, as beneficiaries of the land reform programme, was given the prerogative of choice. This appeared like a way of maximising political mileage. Mazango (2005) notes that ZANU PF had moved with the land reform as their central theme since the 2002 elections. An example is that ACCZ had been promised some land by ZANU PF "for agricultural activities in a move designed to cement the relationship the church have with Zanu PF" (Matikiti, 2014:100). This had once worked for them as the elections came immediately after the Svosve[37] people initiated the land reform well-known as "*jambanja*" (to take by force). Even though these people were not directly related to the church, the move they took may have led the church leaders to realise how they could benefit from the party by paying allegiance to ZANU PF. It revealed a special bond that existed between the church and ZANU PF at the time.

To further cement the close link between the church and ZANU PF, a church elder of Johanne Marange was quoted saying, "President Mugabe also empowered the blacks through the land reform programme and he is now pursuing the economic empowerment agenda. Every leader worth his salt advocates for the empowerment of his people." (*The Manica Post,* 11-17 March, 2011). This quotation seemed to give the impression that the new agenda would be as successful as the land reform programme. However, this could be difficult to measure as the country was still struggling eleven years after the launch of the land reform programme. Use of the word 'empower' has a dual role as by empowering the people Mugabe would be

[37]The Svosve people were from Wedza who forced the hand of Mugabe to take steps in land redistribution.

empowering the nation. One church leader at the meeting said, “No one should come and feed us, but we should work on the land for the benefit of our families and the nation at large.” The suggestion was that working on the land with one accord would yield positive results. The land would be the licence to an economic revamp. All this was done because the party was ‘pursuing’ a motive for its action. Seemingly, the church leader was implying that only a leader with stamina and determination like Mugabe would defy the international community criticism on land and would not be swerved by circumstances in achieving his objective. All this is why this church leader was extolling the virtues of Mugabe as a leader and ZANU PF as a party that implemented meaningful policies which included giving land back to the people through resettlement.

6.4.3.1 The church castigated those against land reform

The same paper, *Manica Post* (11–17 March 2011) reported on the church castigating the opposition for being puppets of the west. A Congolese national who is also a prophet in the church was quoted saying, “We should know that everyone is equal before God. European democracy is centred on imposition of puppet governments in Africa and we should say no to that.” This prophet’s nationality given by the paper suggested that the church was non-discriminatory and that African countries were against imperialism. The prophet’s speech echoed the sentiments of Mugabe. Although Britain, America and their allies were critical of the land reform, that did not deter Mugabe. As leader of MDC, Tsvangirai was castigated as a puppet of the west used to derail the gains of the liberation, that is, land. The article quoted an elder from Mt Darwin, Victor Chiyangwa, who described Morgan Tsvangirai as a weak leader. He said, “Tsvangirai was a grown up person during the liberation struggle, but he ran away from participating, yet today he wants to rule us.” The land was given such importance that anyone who opposed the land reform programme belonged to the opposition.

The fact that MDC as the main opposition party was not against the programme per se but was opposed to the criteria of redistributing the land was ignored. The reporter wrote, “Church members denounced the opposition MDC-T, saying it was a puppet out to reverse the gains of the land reform programme.” All this sounded just like the party discourse. The article quoted one church elder of the Johanne Marange Apostolic Church from Mt Darwin, Victor Chiyangwa who said, “We will only support

people with a spine who will tell the country's detractors in their face to stop meddling in Zimbabwe's internal affairs." This resonated with the discourse of not accepting anyone without war credentials to rule Zimbabwe. The elder appeared not accommodative of people interrupting the good work done by ZANU PF. Detractors include opposition parties as well as the British and Americans. The land distribution exercise had attracted the international community so arguing that it was part of the country's 'internal affairs' so non-Zimbabweans had no say in what was happening was not practical.

Along the same lines, another church leader, some was quoted saying, "We know that the opposition will come to you with a lot of promises, but you should not be misled." It was acceptable for ZANU PF to come and address them but wrong for the opposition. This being a public paper, it resorted to fault finding to bring out how the opposition were not ideal leaders and for people to support the only party that had their welfare at heart. This was in sync with ZANU PF that used smear campaigns to gain favour with the people. The article insinuated that being led astray was politically and economically detrimental to the Zimbabwean citizen. From a political perspective, Zimbabwe would be 're-colonised' according to the ZANU PF ideology. Economically this re-colonisation would be detrimental for Zimbabwe as the foreigners would control the economy. One church elder was quoted saying, "We are ready to go for elections because we want a Zanu-PF Government that will spearhead the empowerment of blacks. This Inclusive Government is not working because those in it are not speaking with one voice. Some are pretenders." This church elder was speaking on behalf of his church. The use of 'we' reflects appropriation of the church in politics and 'we' shows that the intention of the church was to remove the GNU. By pointing out that the principals in the GNU were fighting, the church elder expressed a sad development as this disunity was harming Zimbabwe. It suggested that precious time spent on disagreements rather than on developmental issues. The implication seemed to be that bringing ZANU PF back into power would make the party concentrate on developmental projects rather than on petty issues raised by the opposition.

Besides, the discourse used by the newspaper itself and the official words from church leaders, the article also had three clear photographs of ZANU PF leaders handing over the offer letter to the High Priest of the church, Noah Taguta. The photograph of Robert Mugabe at Mafararikwa with the Johanne Marange Apostolic Church in flowing robes

with part of the caption reading “MAN OF HIS WORD…” suggested that Mugabe was not the kind of politician who would renege on his promises. The photograph on the event under discussion first appeared on the front page of *The Sunday Mail* (28 July, 2010). Mugabe was in a decorated white Apostolic Sect garment reserved for the church leadership. This depicts acceptance of Mugabe as a leader by the church. He is posed like a man on a mission as he was firmly holding the staff of authority. However, the dark sunglasses may be because he wanted to hide the actual reason for his visit. He is pictured surrounded by two men also in garments but the other two in their normal clothes. The man in jacket behind him could have been his bodyguard.



Mugabe at Mafararikwa, a Johanne Marange shrine (*The Sunday Mail* -28 July, 2010)

Berger (1998) explains that photographs or images are very specific and to the point. As a result, images can be easily processed in people’s minds unlike words. This would help authenticate the event as readers would actually see the visuals and how the politicians were clothed. The visuals portrayed how some of the politicians were allowed to wear garments which were the preserve of the church. These pictures captured what transpired at the function which was an anomaly as Mugabe is a known Catholic. In a way, this would convince readers that ZANU PF was a party that

honoured promises as the images portrayed Mugabe in the midst of church leaders. Readers would know that this article was not just fabrication or photo-shopped but based on an actual event.



Robert Mugabe arrives at Apostolic Sect at Mafararikwa Shrine in Marange (relzim.org)

In the picture above, Mugabe was at the function that resulted in the apostolic church getting land. He was not wearing just an ordinary robe but one reserved for church elders. Those around him are in plain flowing white robes but his is decorated. Again he is seen holding the staff of authority which is described as the “trademark of the worshippers” (*The Standard*, 14 July 2013) which is also different from the others. He seems already endowed with leadership, not of only the church but of the country. His visit to the Mafararikwa Shrine on his mission to propagate his party ideologies and his pledge to give land to this church resulted in all these discussions about politicians and their visits to church gatherings. All this is in agreement with Chitando (2005:233) who argues that this sacralisation of the land had been taken to acquire new religious meanings like the extentto which ZANU PF went in order to not only gain support for

its policies but also to seek legitimation as a party with the people's welfare at heart. Land was also used to entice the church leaders so they could gain government recognition. Land became a weapon in the hands of ZANU PF to fight off their enemies and win the support of the people.

When the ZANU PF leaders visited church gatherings, they made a number of promises of how people would benefit if they remained in power. *The Herald* (25 July, 2013) also reports on promises made by politicians in line with elections. In an article titled "Prophet endorses President Mugabe", Family of God Church founder and leader Prophet Andrew Wutaunashe was quoted saying:

> I want to urge you to vote next week for a leader and political party that gives you a sewing machine and materials to make your own clothes than voting for a party that will only give clothes…..It is important for Zimbabweans to vote for President Mugabe because his drive to redistribute land to the majority and moving ahead to make sure that indigenous people have complete control of their soil and what is underneath it is plausible.

The redistributed land was used as the measuring yard stick of Mugabe's worthiness. Whereas sewing machines denoted donors hence perishables, land brought in the sense of permanency. It would be wise to opt for long lasting things than be blinded by temporary things. This quotation came from a church leader who was confident of his words because of the promises made to him and his church by ZANU PF. The word 'drive' shows the strong conviction Mugabe had in the redistribution of land culminating in the stability of the economy leading to Wutawunashe actually telling his congregates who to vote for. His words that Mugabe's conviction was rubbing off on Wutawunashe and in turn to church members. Questions of inclusion and exclusion came up from the phrase 'it is important for Zimbabweans'. It was not about nationality but partisan. The phrase segmented the readers so that they would feel patriotic and vote as their church leader wanted. The implication from this quotation was that sewing machines and materials were symbolic of ZANU PF as a realistic party. It suggested that the party had the aim of equipping people with survival skills. Wutawunashe juxtaposed a sewing machine and materials on one side and clothes on the other. The opposition were referred to as giving people temporary things symbolised by clothes which would not last. These were valorised symbols that were meant to appeal to people's emotions. Being in charge of agricultural and mining activities would be total control and not just isolated activities. It was difficult to believe Wutawunashe as there

were allegations that ZANU PF was the party in total control and its leaders were the only ones with economic and political muscles not just anyone. This was in line with the indigenisation and economic empowerment policies of the ZANU PF government which they wanted to yield positive results. One could have political power but with no resources one would fail. The same would apply to those with resources as they would need the backing of the political powers to succeed.

6.4.3.2 Land as a cement to the ZANU PF-Church relationship?

A close undisputed relationship between the church and the state was also revealed by Stephen Mpofu in a feature story titled "Why Church, State must join hands" (*The Herald*, 5 September 2013). This was shown when Mpofu wrote:

> Church and State in Zimbabwe are not enemies but indispensable allies who must embrace one another and fight together to shame the enemy who wants to see this country being reduced to a pile of rubble.

The process of giving land to the church would further cement the tight or close knit relationship between ZANU PF and the church. In this case the British and the Americans as well as oppositional political parties who advocated for regime change and opposed the land reform programme were the detractors and therefore enemies. For fear of being labelled enemies, churches might have felt obliged to appear supportive. As these detractors were alleged to have wanted the land reform to fail, the church seemed to shun them in order not to attract castigation. From the article, it could be deduced that the government would provide land while the church would also use the land to uplift the standards of people. The paper suggested that the marriage of the church and state held the key to unlocking accelerated social and economic development. This would be in agreement to the party slogan "The land is the economy-the economy is the land" (Mazango, 2005: 41; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003:127).

Unlike the *Manica Post* and *The Herald*, *The Standard* (24 February, 2013) in an article titled "Vapostori vow to vote for Mugabe" wrote about ZANU PF leaders' visitations to various church gatherings from a completely different ideological orientation. The paper wrote:

> Zanu PF leaders, among them Mugabe, his deputy Joice Mujuru, Minister of Media, Information and Publicity, Webster Shamu and local government Minister Ignatius Chombo have

> relentlessly addressed gatherings of Johanne Masowe, Johanne Marange and other independent African churches.

Relentless suggested not being placated or persistent in their quest for votes. The paper noted that in these visitations, these politicians were "promising church members land and benefits of indigenization and economic empowerment programme." The article brought out that in return the church had promised ZANU PF total allegiance. The paper wrote, "Apostolic and other African Initiated Churches have vowed to mobilise millions of people for Zanu PF in the forthcoming general elections." The promises made by politicians were expected to yield positive resulting in a strong support base. Johannes Ndanga was quoted declaring that religion could not be separated from politics when he said, "Just wait and see. We want to show our power by swinging the votes in favour of Zanu PF…If we decide to swim in a river we all go in at the same time." Metaphorically Ndanga gave assurance that all the churches that he led would rally behind Mugabe and his party. However this could also be true as during elections, some people vote but others engage in voter apathy as they may not believe in voting for one reason or another. Casting one's ballot is a secret so assuming that all church members would vote for Mugabe was simplifying a complex exercise. It is with this in mind that the same article quoted the coordinator of National Movement of Catholic Students, Gift Mapimbiri who said:

> We still vote with our heads and stomachs, not our bibles. People know the character and history of Zanu PF and they don't need church leaders to open their eyes. They smile at some political leaders in broad daylight for fear of victimization, but act otherwise when they are handed the ballot and a pen.

This was in direct opposition to what the public print media were writing. This church coordinator used the phrase 'heads and stomachs' to show that people could reason and make decisions on who to vote for depending on what would be of benefit to them. He was saying that people are heterogeneous, thus, it means ZANU PF politicians would be delusional if they expected that people would act in an appropriate and expected manner for acceptance. The decisive moment was time for elections. It is only then that ZANU PF could measure the success or failure of their efforts. In the same vein, another intellectual, Ezra Chitando, was quoted talking about the non-existence of a 'religious vote'. He said that sharing the same religion did not translate to sharing the same political ideology ZANU PF was warned that not all people would

necessarily agree to what their church leader would have told them. As a privately owned paper, *The Standard* wanted to dismiss the politicians' visits to church gatherings as futile as people knew that their votes were their secrets so they would cast their vote the way they saw fit. The point was that using land as a campaign tool might not necessarily translate to the required votes.

6.5 Conclusion

The chapter established that land was an important tool in the battle for control by ZANU PF politicians. As explained in the chapter, facilitaties like education and health provision as provided by mainline churches like Lutheran require land. Likewise asking for land by the AICs like Zion Christian Church led by Samuel Mutendi was for building schools and clinics or hospitals. This has already happened but most of these churches do not have buildings to congregate and some shun hospitals and the government, being aware of this offered them land.

The land question was strategically used by ZANU PF as the message that they told people at church gatherings to canvass for support. The land was not only meant to help eradicate poverty through self-reliant projects and to redress the situation of landless and congested communities but to give ZANU PF a life line. The allusion that self-help projects could be made possible through the government availing land was a ploy to make the citizens see the party in good light. In the Zimbabwean economy where the informal sector is thriving because the industry is almost non-existent, encouraging self-employment was to keep people occupied and at least feed themselves.

Churches in general and independent ones in particular were given or promised land by the politicians who addressed them. Mostly, leaders rather than the generality of the people benefited the promised land. However, this may have failed to yield the desired results as pointed out by some papers.

Patriotic leaders were quoted by the public media to authenticate the ZANU PF ideologies; yet, those with dissenting voices were heard in the privately owned papers opposing the strategy used by the party. The pulpit became a forum for propagandising the ZANU PF ideologies of how land was the answer to the economic instability the country was facing. The media played their mediation role by reporting

on church-politics events concerning the land issue from certain standpoints. Land is a contested terrain in Zimbabwe but the bottom line is it is a well sought after commodity by many sectors including the church and ZANU PF knew this very well and used this commodity to draw people close to them.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter serves as a conclusion to the study. The thesis shows the pronounced relationship between religion and politics in Zimbabwe as portrayed by the press. People survive within the systems of religion and politics (Chitando 2013; Chimuka 2013). This is why politicians resort to religion to gain political capital. ZANU PF won the 2013 harmonised elections and religion, specifically Christianity was central in their campaign discourse. Such episodes did not escape eyes of the mass media. However, systematic academic studies on the subject are few and far between. This thesis therefore, qualitatively and critically explores the connection between Christianity and political discourses during the 2008-2013 era as reported in the media. The study demonstrates how the Christian religion and discourses were appropriated by the ruling ZANU PF party to save a waning hegemony during the Zimbabwean political and socio-economic crisis. The study asked the following research questions: How did Zimbabwean politicians use religious symbolism to legitimise and justify their stay in power? How did the media articulate political and Christian discourses in the crisis period to capture popular political imagination?

This study used an eclectic theoretical approach, fusing a Gramscian, Althusserian and Foucauldian analysis. Such an approach was necessary in strengthening the analysis on intersections of Christianity and politics in Zimbabwe. The study complements earlier research on religion and politics in Africa in general (Ranger, Moyo) and Zimbabwe in particular (Chitando, Carson et al, Manyonganise and Museka among others). It concurs with Casanova's (2001) contention that that religion and politics are dependent on each other for purposes of enforcement and legitimation. The study also broadens Manyonganise and Museka's (2015) description of the turbulent economic and political situation in Zimbabwe where the country became a nation of churches. Citizens became prayerful citizens and implored God to intervene. Mugo (2014) contends that when people are under economic strain they turn to religion as it offers ideological services that appeal to their souls. The most subtle domination that can be done is of the mind (Ramirez in Valle, 1992). This study partly agrees with Blau (2013) who argues that Christianity numbs the pain that people experience. People may be manipulated through religion but can use the same religion to resist domination. Marx's ideas on religion were employed and this study agrees that to an extent religion can be used by the elites to manipulate people. When people

are in distress they turn to religion for solace. Shagor (2010) argues that this is religion as ideology where religion masks and distorts the socio-economic and political reality that people experience. However, this study disagrees with the notion that religion can lull people into subservience like sheep without agency. These scholars are among the many that this study interacted with and this study complements some but disagrees with others. The thesis thus shows the centrality of religion in African and Zimbabwean politics.

Benefiting from archival research, the study analysed purposively selected newspaper articles that dealt with issues of Christianity in relation to ZANU PF in six years. Articles were drawn from Midlands State University library and *The Herald* and *Chronicle* libraries. This study was largely confined to qualitative content analysis, relying on newspapers for data. However, future studies could benefit from in-depth interviews with selected ZANU PF politicians, Church leaders and ordinary' people on this relationship. Another area for further studies is whether after the Mugabe era in ZANU PF, the party would continue fraternising with the Christian churches especially the AICs. Politicians are known for making promises that are rarely fulfilled. A further area of study would be to find out how the church benefitted from government initiatives of indigenisation and empowerment as well as the land allocated to them. From the above findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

7.1 Prophecy as an ideological tool

The fight to win elections since the birth of the strong opposition saw ZANU PF politicians turning to the pulpit in order to endear themselves with the electorate. This study only focused on ZANU PF as the only ruling party in the country except for the short duration of the GNU. Although generally people have been religious long before the crisis, the number of people who attended church gatherings addressed by politicians at that time showed that many had turned to the church for divine intervention as the government had failed to correct political and economic upheavals in the country. The state extensively engaged with the church as proven by the selected newspaper articles. Most newspaper articles quoted revealed hundreds of thousands of congregates being addressed by ZANU PF politicians in a number of either church gatherings or prayer meetings. This move by the people to attend various church gatherings willingly also made political parties follow people to church.

The argument is that people's faith in the supernatural has a bearing on what they accept or reject in life. However, the same faith can be used to intimidate people into consenting to being ruled. Biblical prophecy was used to endear ZANU PF politicians to the electorate. It established that the press framed and represented the relationship between prophecy and politics to suit their agenda. The study established that prophecy was used to woo the electorate to vote for ZANU PF in the elections. The emerging trends include the fact that churches and religious people come up with prophecies during election time proclaiming that God has chosen a leader for the nation. It was established that party endorsement can be done by church leaders through word of prophecy and proclamations that state leaders are anointed by God. The 'Africanness' and indigeneity of AICs and prophecy attracted politicians especially to their church gatherings. The political party endorsements and proclamations by church leaders that state leaders are anointed by God and that Mugabe is God-given suggested therefore that he was the natural leader for the country. Even news writers imposed headlines related to prophecy to try to convince the electorate that God had spoken and anointed Mugabe the leader of both the party and the country. However, articles from the private sector ridiculed these prophecies and proclamations and quoted people or religious leaders who were unhappy with politicians invading their space for political reasons.

Religious discourse can be used to manipulate people as well as also being a point of resistance or a starting point for an opposing strategy. In light of the fact that religion has become one of the most crucial platforms for political communication in Zimbabwe, this study established that politicians used religious symbiology to legitimise and justify their stay in power. The reference to Mugabe as Joshua or Moses paints a picture of how political leaders can be elevated to a level that equals that of God. Politicians like Tony Gara (Nehanda Radio, 2013), Saviour Kasukuwere (*Southern Eye*, 24 February 2015) and Psychology Maziwisa (*DailyNews*, 30 December 2013) seemed to worship Mugabe and were passing their belief to people. The message sent through prophecy suggested that no one could replace Mugabe as he was God's gift to Zimbabwe. The strategies that were used by politicians enlisted the Christian religion to capture popular political imagination. As a result, this may have been just propaganda as it was a political strategy adopted to try and convince the electorate.

During these campaigns the politicians used both biblical and invented prophecy as well as Christian discourses to woo the electorate in their bid to remain in power. What was glaringly evident from the content of the newspaper articles was that the articles from the state controlled media naturalised how ZANUPF tried to manipulate church leaders and members by using Christian religion discourses and biblical prophecy to protect its hegemony. On the other hand the privately owned media castigated the attendance of these ZANU PF politicians at church sessions as a ploy to gain political mileage.

7.2 ZANU PF's call for peace

A combination of ideology and hegemony assisted the ZANU PF government to appropriate religion so as to maintain the status quo during the time Zimbabwe was at its weakest since independence. Societies are battlegrounds for various stakeholders (including religion and politics) to fight and attain their goals. Ideologies can be used as propaganda to serve self-interests and if they were removed then people would see more clearly the reality or truth of situations. ZANU PF used Christianity to sanitise its intentions on the introduction and implementation of the indigenisation and economic empowerment policy as well as the land reform programme. The removal of the religious dogma from church members may help them introspect on the advantages of being ruled by the same man for thirty seven years as well as interrogate the suggested initiatives.

The gospel of peace was used to propound government policies. Peace as a Christian attribute was used to appeal to the electorate. It was established that the party was trying to use the idea of peace to stay in power. This was done through pushing the motion that peace was instrumental in the introduction and implementation of government policies. These were part of ZANU-PFs 2013 campaign manifesto so the party politicians were represented by the press extolling the policies and claiming to be implementing them. During the crisis period politicians preached the importance of peace in the country at different fora thereby perpetuating their party ideologies through the Christian discourse. Church leaders commended the party for advocating for peace as people had suffered in the violence prior, during and after the 2008 elections.

7.3 Land: crucial to Zimbabwe's politics

The study shows that the different churches in Zimbabwe are actively involved in the politics of land ownership. This is land for infrastructural development or for services like universities, schools and clinics or hospitals among others. Biblifying the land issue justify the land redistribution. The study established that land reform in Zimbabwe was justified as a correction of the historical imbalance that had been committed by the whites. Despite the outcry from the international community over the violence and chaos that characterized the land reform, Christian discourses were used to explain the reasons for taking land back thereby sanitizing and legitimating the exercise. Discourses of moving from Egypt to Canaan led by Moses or Joshua were used by Mugabe's politicians to justify why Mugabe should remain in power.

7.4 Role of the press in uplifting the ZANU PF hegemony

The focus of this study was the press and its representation of religious and political discourses. It was concluded that ZANU PF got assistance to negotiate hegemony from the media. Through representation, the state controlled media positively portrayed how ZANU PF used the strategy of embracing Christianity to avoid what had happened in 2008 of governing the country together with the opposition. Only positive prophecy or biblical discourses that extolled Mugabe were reported by the government controlled media. Furthermore, news on how the state and church were operating towards the same goal of peace and stability appeared in most published stories. Most news articles selected showed how the churches were beneficiaries of empowerment, indigenisation and land reforms. The churches that opposed the government or its initiatives were exposed by both politicians and the media.

This study established that ownership or control over newspapers by the ZANU PF government influenced reportage. It was established that mediated representation of the politics – religious reality through the print media's reportage showed how the party politicians engaged with the people using Christianity so that they could win the 2013 elections. The government should have no business in the business of the media. Interfering in the content produced by the media makes even genuine strategies used by the ruling party appear dubious as besides being the only party given space, ZANU PF has no negatives published in the state controlled media. This helped them reassert their power hence one of the reasons why they remained in power.

Religion was one of the many strategies the party used to justify their stay in power. Of interest were the churches turned to, in this case mostly AICs, and the discourse used by politicians was a tactic of manipulation. The politicians who got media coverage seemed to believe that religion, as political communication could help legitimise their political party. This strategy seemed to have succeeded to help push forward the party's ideologies thereby hegemonising people through political manipulation. The hidden ideologies as well as the language used established the power of religion and its impact on politics. Quotations from church leaders or prominent people should not be from one side. The media should research widely before publishing a story thereby giving both sides of the story. Interpretation should be left to the readers.

It can also be concludes that whereas some of the churches willingly agreed to support the ruling party, a few showed some form of resistance. The biblification of politics led to the privately owned media portraying the actions by ZANU PF as political gimmicks of gaining political mileage. Some of these papers brought out the fact that ZANU PF politicians who mostly belonged to other Christian denominations only engaged with other churches to propagate their ideologies and all this in a bid to build a strong support base. The study established that the press take slants in reporting political issues in relation to religion. As the fourth estate meant to keep checks and balances on the other three (executive, judiciary and legislature) there should be truthful, fair and objective reportage by the media to fulfil their mandate of informing, educating and entertaining the public. Polarisation is a result of the media taking slants which confuses the readers as one event can be reported from different perspectives.

The study also concludes that it was difficult for Mugabe and his politicians to separate party business from government business. This made it appear as if ZANU PF was government and government was ZANU PF. As a result the media framed church leaders who had dissenting voices as having joined the regime change agenda. This meant that church organisations like Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace were labelled as puppets of the West bent on removing the democratically elected government. Framing is very influential so discourse should be used with caution. Journalists deliberately choose frames when packaging news so they should not be political activists. Every word used evokes a frame. Social norms and pressure from politicians as well as ideological and political orientations influence how some stories

are given prominence over others. There was bias towards a certain perspective (either supporting or opposing ZANU PF) portrayed by ways of representation so journalists should be formally trained.

The overall purpose of the study was to examine how ZANU PF used Christianity discourse as part of political communication. Christianity and political discourse can be conjunctively used as a strategy to seek recognition and support from the electorate as demonstrated by the Zimbabwean case examined here.

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