

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This critically study interrogates the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi (JMCN)'s ritualisation and institutional practices which can be described as expropriated from various African traditional beliefs systems. While Africa is now like the 'home' of Christianity because of the continuous mushrooming of new African Indigenous Churches (AICs), the study queries the genuineness of Christian spirituality as presented by some AICs particularly those in Zimbabwe. JMCN which is a new millennium Church was singled out as a case study of AICs which presents the phenomenon characterized in the study referred to as 'questionable Christian spirituality'. A careful study on the JMCN's theology and spirituality posits that JMCN confused Christian spirituality by its inculturation of 'incompatible African spiritual elements of 'faith'.

Accordingly, the discourse on the genuineness of Christian spirituality in Africa, particularly on AICs is an old debate that is resurfacing again among Christian boards in Zimbabwe today. For instance, a search for authenticity of Christian spirituality among AICs resulted in one Robert Martin Gumbura's African Independent Church 'End Time Message Church' being banned by the Apostolic Churches Council of Zimbabwe (ACCZ) (Mbiba, 2013). The church was banned for, among other accusations of practicing Satanism while masquerading as a bona fide Christian church. Another incident is of the *Vapositioni* Churches (white garmented) being accused of Satanism argued that they use power from water spirits *mweya yemuvhura* to cure the sick (Zuze, 2015). Prophet Walter Magaya, founder of a popular Charismatic Church Ministry, Prophetic Healing and Deliverance (PHD) allegedly accused all *Vapositioni* to be using the power of the water spirits, *mweya yemumvura*, for healing and exorcism of evil spirits (Zuze, 2015).

Therefore, this study's rationale is premised on the desire to test the accusation that all *Vapositioni* Churches should be banned as they were allegedly reported to be using healing powers from Water spirits, *njuzu* instead of the true Holy Spirit. This accusation would not go unnoticed because the *Vapositioni*, white garmented Churches are the fastest growing Churches attracting many people from all walks of life. We noted that again

this denunciation is an old one started by Bengt Sundkler in the 1948 and later in 1964 where he designated all AICs as Non-Christian (Molobi 2013:1-7). This research interrogates further this generalisation made by Prophet Magaya and other Zimbabwean Christian boards that all *Vapositioni* are non-Christian Churches because they draw their healing powers from water spirits. The study is done to put the dividing line between authentic AICs and non authentic AICs a debate introduced by Prophet Magaya and supported by other Christian Organisations in the Zimbabwean religious landscape today.

Similarly, in Nigeria, Pastor David Oyedepo of Winners Chapel faced backlash after claiming that his members could access wealth through acts of "sacrificial giving" (Akinwale 2016). In Kenya, Pastor James Ng'ang'a of Neno Evangelism Centre has sparked outrage by encouraging followers to engage in dangerous practices, such as rolling in fire for spiritual cleansing (Mbuthia 2017). In Uganda, Pastor Aloysius Bugingo of House of Prayer Ministries came under scrutiny for instructing his followers to abandon their sick loved ones for miraculous healing services (Kabakumba 2018). Additionally, in Ghana, Prophet Emmanuel Badu Kobi of Glorious Wave Church faced public controversy after claiming that women with certain physical traits could not enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Annan 2019). These incidents reflect broader trends of controversial practices that have sparked debates around the authenticity of spiritual leadership and manipulation of congregants in African independent churches.

It is against this milieu that the study investigated inculturated African spiritual elements in the JMCN Church Spirituality in Zimbabwe. The central questions grounding the study are: To what extent should AICs inculturate their pre-Christian beliefs and practices to shape their Church spiritualities without jeopardizing global Christian spirituality? Can African Indigenous Churches continue to appropriate traditional sacred shrines for Church rituals and ceremonies? Can there be a Church that does not use the Bible for its theology and yet presenting an authentic Christian spirituality? In trying to respond to these questions among others a popular notion 'inculturation' was used as a domineering concept for the whole research study.

However, it is imperative to note that this word 'inculturation' is narrowly used in the study to refer to the ratio at which the JMCN Church accommodated the traditional African spiritual elements to the ratio it accommodated traditional Christian spiritual elements to shape its Church spirituality. Following are key scholars whose definition of the term 'inculturation' shaped this research study. Aylward Shorter defined inculturation as "the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian messages and culture or cultures" (Shorter 1988:11). For Ikechekwu (2012:25), inculturation in Church history refers to the "manifestation of the Christian message in particular cultural context". Duncan defined inculturation as the process whereby cultural values are transformed through their exposure to the 'Christian message' and the insertion of 'Christianity' into indigenous cultures (Duncan 2012:2). With these definitions quoted, the study summarized inculturation as the 'baptism' of the Christian gospel into African cultures so that Christianity becomes an African religion but without losing its global identity.

What is being presented as the main argument grounding this study is that inculturation is a process whereby Christian messages are simplified by being tainted with the local cultures without losing its shape and identity. Christianity takes different modes in different cultures and contexts to fit into the local environment but without dropping the *sine qua non* of Christianity (David 2010:24). Hence this research was done in a bid to interrogate on how JMCN whose headquarters is Chirumhanzu inculturated its pre-Christian African spiritual elements to shape its Church spirituality.

This research study is situated in Zimbabwe in general and Chirumhanzu district in particular. Though the JMCN was founded in 1990 in Chitungwiza at Nyatsime dam, 27km east of the capital city of Zimbabwe, JMCN became popular and attracted more members when it moved its headquarters from the urban center of Chitungwiza to a rural district called Chirumhanzu in May 2000 (Baba Gilbert: 2014). Reasons to this religious pilgrimage from Chitungwiza to Chirumhanzu shall be dealt with in the preceding chapters. Thus, Chirumhanzu district is very key and central for the JMCN Church spirituality. To date every month of October JMCN Church members those

within the Zimbabwean borders and those outside its borders go to Chirumhanzu for religious rituals.

One could be asking, what makes Chirumhanzu the Headquarter of JMCN Church? Or what type of a theology Masowe yeNyenyedzi presented which attracted thousands of followers to go to Chirumhanzu every year in October? Accordingly, the study grapples with these questions by examining the JMCN Church sacred places particularly those in Chirumhanzu District of Zimbabwe. The justification for the selection of Chirumhanzu is therefore, automatic owing to the fact that it is the centre of the church, a head office type of centre. Thus, the key contribution raised in the study is to flag on what pre- Christian beliefs and practices should indigenous Churches inculcate or not inculcate in their process of Africanising Christianity.

According to the Division for Social Policy and Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) dialogue means a conversation between two or so people or a swap of beliefs and opinions (2005:3). Religious dialogue therefore, represents a mutual borrowing of:

Ideas and notions from either spoken or written that are based on norms and values that the discussion thereafter tries to widen and intensify to identify variances, similarities and criticisms and to find the loci where shared influences or mutual fecundation may take place (Adamo 2011:6).

Hence the study does not downplay mutual borrowings between African Traditional Religions and Christianity. However, the study opines that religious dialogue should not temper with the central pillars of any religion in the process of mutual borrowings. For example, Christianity has its central pillars such as the belief in the Bible and belief in Jesus Christ (Holt 2005:13) and many others Christian spiritual elements as the study will allude to. On the other hand African traditional religion has its central pillars such as belief in Ancestral spirits, belief in spirit mediums, belief in sacred places, mountains, caves and trees (Mbiti 1986:55).

Though there are some commonalities between Christianity and ATRs, these religions are rendered distinct by the central role played by what is referred to in the study as central spiritual elements. These central spiritual elements are

incompatible to other religions as they cannot be shared among religions as means of religious dialogue. It is against this background that the study interrogates to what extent have JMCN inculturated African spiritual elements to shape its Church spirituality.

The problem relates to the blurred interface and religious boundaries between African/Karanga traditional sacred places and objects of faith and the JMCN sacred places and paraphernalia of faith. Karanga traditional beliefs systems and the JMCN are in principle not in tandem with each other, yet in practice a symbiotic relationship exists. One where the Church adapts and adopts Karanga traditional belief system, symbols and institutions and uses them as part of their spirituality and Church practice. Thus, the study argues that, African/Karanga spiritual worldview dominated in the JMCN Church spirituality of Chirumhanzu in Zimbabwe. We argue that this African Church has replaced traditional Christian spiritual elements of faith with traditional African spiritual elements of faith to substantiate its Church spirituality. Thus, the study questions whether JMCN constitutes a Christian Church in the Christian sense of a church?

The study is anchored on the following rationale; the discourse about Africanisation of Christianity and the development of Christianity in Africa continues to surge on. In fact, this discipline continues to be vital to the analysis of the growth and development of new AICs and particularly the spirit-type or *mapositori* (Apostolic) churches (Chitando 2005:85). The present study constitutes a specific case-study on an investigation on impact of Karanga Spirituality on JMCN Church spirituality.

- The study investigates some theological developments ingrained in this African Indigenous Church of Zimbabwe today.
- The study also seeks to address and educate the local people on the need to be cautious about what to accommodate and what not to accommodate in the process of inculturation of the Christian gospel; hence a case study of JMCN Church spirituality in Zimbabwe.

The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To assess the extent to which JMCN Church inculturated African spiritual elements.

2. To verify the extent to which JMCN spirituality deviated from universally accepted Christian spirituality.
3. To ascertain spiritual setbacks regarding the development of African Christianity through the continuous dilution of genuine Christian spiritual elements particularly by other AICs in Zimbabwe.

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent have JMCN Church inculturated African spiritual elements of faith?
2. How valuable is the accession that 'JMCN Church spirituality deviates from Biblical Christian spirituality?
3. What are the setbacks of 'Africanisation' of Christianity in the light of the continuous 'Christianisation' of Traditional Religious practices and beliefs by some AICs in Zimbabwe?

In “every research ventured there is an infinite amount of literature, countless reports on what others have done” (Leedy and Ormrod 2001:70). For Leedy and Ormrod (2001:70) “the essence of literature review is to find out what issues are already known about one’s topic of interest”. In addition, as the existing literature is discussed and critiqued, areas of further research are exposed. Therefore, this section reviews related literature on; Spirituality in general, African spirituality, Christian spirituality, African Indigenous Churches (AICs) and the notion of *masowe* (wilderness). This is done to find out what other scholars discovered on Africans as they inculturate pre-Christian beliefs and practices to shape their Church spiritualities particularly those in Zimbabwe (Chitando 2005:4). The literature provides a base to analyse, investigate, evaluate, scrutinize and assess effectively the impact of African Indigenous spirituality in the development of JMCN Church spirituality in Zimbabwe. This background helps the researcher to add to the already existing knowledge which serves as a guide and a critical stepping stone in the study of Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church spirituality.

It is important to note that the meaning of the word spirituality did not only underwent some changes in meaning over time but is one term which was also subjected to different interpretations by different scholars across various

disciplines (Kees Waaijman 2003:10). According to Jones, Wainwright & Yarnold (1986:26) the term spirituality means; “interior life, inner life, devotion, piety or mysticism”. McGrath (1999:9) defines spirituality as that “which expresses life or power on a person’s religious beliefs and practices.” It is that which awakens a person’s religious belief to greater depths and excellence. A basic definition of spirituality is the status of one’s reflection on the things of the spirit. And what are these things of the spirit? These are those things that cannot be directly professed by our senses but whose effects can be construed or inferred by our observations, such as, gods/God, death, life after death, evil spirits i.e. *zvikwambo* (goblins), forgiveness, peace, retribution/*ngozi*, reconciliation, justice and many other metaphysical elements.

Bouyer (1961:4) defines spirituality as person’s activities of self-transcendence as he/she gets connected to an ultimate concern’. For Bouyer:

It is through this bond that man constructs a worldview which defines particular ways of acting and interpreting reality. Spirituality is born from the union of such a worldview related to the holy or Supreme Being and the way of living which is in accordance with this worldview. In other words, spirituality is the basic, practical, existential attitude of man which is the outcome and expression of the way in which he understands his existence and the meaning of reality (1961:4).

According to Fabella & Surjirtharajah (2000:189),

“spirituality is a cry for life and for the ability to resist death and the causes of death. It energises the strength to go on, for it is the guarantee that God is in the struggle.”

Theorising on the notion of spirituality, Constable (2003:10) also contended that:

Spirituality fulfills the quest for self-discovery, self-affirmation, and self-inclusion, so the whole human community can live fully as human beings created by God. Spirituality is human connectedness to the ultimate concern, to human roots, to the rest of nature, to one another and to human self. Spirituality is celebrated in songs, rituals and symbols that show the energising spirit animating the community to move together in response to God.

Waaijman (2004:2) defines spirituality as:

One’s relationship with God which is experienced within a given community as a whole: at the time of birth and death, on the occasion of the naming and weaning of the child, in the child’s upbringing and at the time of marriage, upon entering new

pasture grounds and leaving them, at the time of illness and dangers, in the context of the assemblies and mutual helpfulness.

Constable (2003:10), Fabella & Surjirtharajah (2000:189) and Waaijman (2004:2) posit that this spiritual core is the deepest centre of a person because it is here that the person is open to the transcendent dimension; it is here that a person experiences ultimate reality. Hence spirituality deals with prayer, spiritual direction, the various maps of the spiritual journey, and the methods of advancement in the spiritual ascent. Therefore, spirituality can be summarized as one's connectedness to the ultimate concern. For Christians the ultimate concern here is the Supreme Being, the transcendent Trinitarian God.

However, the study observes that though the term spirituality seems to be new in ATRs, in principle spirituality as a concept is not new to Africans. For Orobator (2008:141) from time immemorial, Africans devised methods of communicating with the divine. It is against this knowledge that the study seeks to investigate how Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi church members relate to their pre-Christian ways of evoking the divine which shaped their Church spirituality. Briefly, the study pronounces that JMCN Church spirituality is consciously informed by pre-Christian African worldview that the spiritual world controls the fate of human beings. Hence in their prayers JMCN always engage in a spiritual warfare fighting, *mweya yekumadokero*, *mweya yerima* literally translated means spirits from the west which operates as the sun goes down.

It is on this note that members of Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi congregate for long periods, at times under extreme weather conditions in open spaces *kumasowe* without any shelter. They did this bare footed while they waited for a prophetic voice from any among them to pronounce blessings and reversing of all misfortunes *minyama*, *rushambwa* ne *rushavashava*/bad luck and misfortune. The study criticises JMCN's conscious or unconscious adoption of pre-Christian Karanga existential ways of wading away evil spirits among other life threatening challenges. We hypothesised that, a careful study of JMCN Church spirituality demonstrates that the Church inculturated incompatible Karanga spiritual elements of faith more

than it inculcated the traditional Christian spiritual elements of faith into their Church spirituality.

The study suggests that every Religion has its own central spiritual elements of faith. By central spiritual elements of faith, the study refers to essential tenets or teachings that sustain each religion. These tenets together form what the study refers to as incompatible Religious spiritual elements. For instance, Islam spirituality is identified by Muslims believing in central/incompatible religious spiritual elements summarized as the 5 Pillars of Islam. Thus, we argue in the study that though Islam is divided into Sunni and Shiites what makes them all Muslims are these central spiritual elements of their faith.

On the same note, Odak posited that African spirituality is articulated mostly in shrines and revered places where prayers and sacrifices can be offered (Odak, 1995:24). Odak describes a shrine as a place discernible for religious purposes and where sacrifices could be offered (Odak, 1995:24). Adding to that Mbiti (1975:9) opines that African spirituality is found in many holy shrines of which some belong to families, such as those related with departed family members for instance, family graveyards. Others belong to the community for example, provincial or national heroes' acres where war veterans are buried, some are rocks, some are caves other places like, hills, mountains, and under certain trees" (Mbiti 1975:18-21). Mbiti argues that:

Africans respect such shrines and in some societies no bird, animal or human being may be killed if hiding in such places. At the shrines and sacred places, Africans make or bring sacrifices and offerings, such as animals, food, utensils, tools and fowls. They regard such places as holy and sacred where people meet with God. These places are protected from desecration or misuse by unauthorized individuals. Religious articles and objects are found in such religious places. They are of different shapes, kinds, sizes and colors. Some are kept in the houses while others are kept in the forests. The graves of ancestors usually serve as shrines. These objects are material expressions of religious ideas, beliefs and practices like praying, making offerings and sacrifices and major ceremonies and rituals (Mbiti 1975:18-21).

African spirituality therefore, in the study is narrowed to refer to pre-Christian Karanga of Chirumhanzu ways of appealing to the divine world which is passed on from one generation to another generation through, among other methods, oral tradition, artifacts hidden in sacred places such as

graveyards, certain pools, rivers, dams, mountains, caves and trees (Mbiti 1975:21). These constitute what is referred to as African spiritual elements of faith in the study. Above mentioned, some of the central Karanga spiritual elements or emblems of faith for traditional Africans which will be discussed in the study are certain religious symbols, rituals and ceremonies the JMCN inculcated to shape its Church spirituality.

Strengthening the debate, Orobator posited that African spirituality represents Africans' various ways of expressing and celebrating their experiencing of God in certain places using certain objects that pre-dates Christianity and Islam (Orobator 2008:141). With this in mind the study selected well known sacred shrines of JMCN in Zimbabwe and interrogated why specifically the Church selected these places to be religious centres. Examples of these places are:

- Nyatsime Pool in Chitungwiza;
- Hokoyo/Gwehava dam in Gokwe;
- Gonawapotera Pool in Chirumhanzu;
- Chivavarira Hill in Chirumhanzu; and
- DomboraMwari in Epworth in Harare.

We have noted that though other places mentioned above are religious rituals centres for JMCN Gonawapotera and Chivavarira are the icons of their Church spirituality as shall be demonstrated in the study.

However, it is imperative to note that one cannot dismiss the fact that African spirituality was a fertile ground for the acceptance of Christian spirituality in Africa. For instance, the concept of prayer, existence of a true eternal God, rewards and punishments (Benyera 2014) are not new concepts to Africans. For Orobator (2008:141) what is new to Africans is Jesus and the Bible and not prayers and sacrifices to God. He further argues that "long before missionaries came to Africa; Africans had already developed their various ways of expressing and celebrating their experience of God" (Orobator 2008:142). Arguably, the critical questions raised in the study is: Should Africans continue to pray under certain African sacred trees, should they revive traditional sacred mountains, baptise their Church members in sacred pools where Water spirits are said to inhabit, should Africans Christian

Churches completely reject the Bible and the mediatorship of Jesus Christ and continue to be referred to as Christian? It is against this background the study interrogated inculturated African spiritual elements in the JMCN Church in Zimbabwe.

According to western missionary worldview Christian spirituality is defined as “an experience that arises from an inspired and vibrant amalgamation of faith and life, intended for adherents to live out the Christian faith genuinely, dependably, productive and wholly” (McGrath 1999:9). For Principe (1983:127-141), “spirituality is an authentic Christian term derived from the Latin word *spiritualitus*, an abstract word related to *spiritus* and *spiritualis* both terms used to translate the Greek words *pneuma* and *pneumatikos* as used in the Pauline epistles”. Principe further argues that Paul’s understanding of a “pneumatic” or “spiritual” person is one whose whole being and life is ordered, led, or influenced by the “Spirit of God, in contrast with this stands the “*sarkic*,” that is, the “carnal” person whose being and life oppose God’s Spirit” (Walter 1993:931). For Peck (2012:2) Christian spirituality is “the conscious human response to God that is both personal and ecclesial – it is life in the Holy Spirit”.

According to Sheldrake (2005:1)

Christian spirituality refers to the whole of the Christian’s life leaned to self-transcending knowledge, freedom, and love in light of the decisive values and highest ideals perceived and pursued in the mystery of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit – that is, spirituality concerns everything that constitutes Christian experience.

For Downey (1992:271-280) Christian spirituality is a spiritual status that a Christian acquires by following the teachings of the Bible. These definitions suggest that what differentiates Christian spirituality from other spiritualities is its rootedness in the Bible, following the teachings of Jesus as the role model. To sum up, the definitions of Christian spirituality as understood by missionaries means, a life of prayer that a Christian should lead which is informed by the teachings of the Bible and following the examples set by Jesus Christ through the help of the Holy Spirit such as; love, forgiveness, humility, long suffering, tolerance and many other virtues of the Holy Spirit. When a believer follows such an example of Jesus Christ, the

benefit is that when he dies he/she goes to heaven and enjoys life eternal (Dowley 1992:271-280). Therefore, it is in this light that the study have investigated the JMCN Church spirituality as mirrored by the above definition of Christian spirituality.

It must be noted that the term AICs was used in various contexts to denote various meanings or interpretations in relation to contemporary African Christianity. In fact, there are five ways in which the term AICs was used by scholars. For instance, AICs was loosely used to refer to different church formations such as the African Indigenous Churches (Turner 1967), African Independent Churches (Daneel 1987), African Initiated Churches (Hastings 1996), African Instituted Churches (Chitando 2004) and African International Churches (Maxwell 2007). Conclusively and as postulated by Chitando (2004), the term AICs refers to Christian Churches founded by 'Africans in Africa' and not by Western missionaries. By Africans here the study refers to black skinned populace living in the African continent.

Nevertheless, most of these Churches though started in Africa have crossed African borders and no longer confined to Africa hence defeating the nomenclature given to them by earlier scholars as 'African Churches for Africans in Africa (Kofi Appiah-Kubi 1979), (Turner 1979). Gerrie ter Haar posited that AICs are African Churches just by origin but in nature are African International Churches because they accommodated other nationalities such as Europeans (Gerrie ter Haar 1998). For example, Europeans, Indians and Chinese are enjoying the economy of salvation in these African Churches in the nations they have crossed to (Gerrie ter Haar 2001). However, it is imperative to note that while other AICs economy of salvation is for all nationalities, JMCN Church is not open to other nationalities. It is against this theological position that JMCN Church spirituality was interrogated in the study.

Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church is a split group from the original Johane Masowe weChishanu (John of the Wilderness that congregates on Friday). The study observes that there are several branches of the same Johane Masowe weChishanu which mushroomed in Zimbabwe. If one tries to enquire on the causes of the continuous breakaways in this Johane Masowe weChishanu church, it is not surprising to find out that the

leader of the congregation who is usually a prophet or prophetess is accused of deviating from the original teaching of *mutumwa* meaning Johane Masowe (Sixpence Shonhiwa Masedza), hence starting his/her own Church. Surprisingly after a time another leader will discredit this new leader and also claims to have received the vision from God resulting into another breakaway from a breakaway of the breakaway and the circle continues. What is noteworthy is that all these factions claim to be Johane Masowe weChishanu but adding something that distinguishes them from other Johane Masowe weChishanu. The study noted that after the death of Johane Masowe; many Masowe groups were formed such as:

- Johane Masowe weChishanu Jerusarema (John of the wilderness of the Friday Jerusalem);
- Johane Masowe weChishanu Vadzidzi (John of the wilderness of the Friday the disciples);
- Johane Masowe weChishanu Mudzimu unoera (John of the wilderness of the Friday Sacred ancestor);
- Johane Masowe weChishanu venguvo tsvuku (John of the wilderness of the Friday of red clothes);
- Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi nomwe (John of the wilderness of the Friday of the seven stars), (Baba Amos: 2014).

It is in this background that Johane Masowe weChishanu *inotungamirigwa neNyenyedzi*/the one led by the star which is identified in the study as Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi was founded. The Church Masowe yeNyenyedzi was founded by Sanders/Sandros Nhamoyebonde and was popularized by Antony a disciple of Sanders/Sandros Nhamoyebonde. Sanders/Sandros who was a disciple of Sixpence Shonhiwa Masedza (Madzibaba Johane) the original founder of Johane Masowe Chishanu Church in Zimbabwe (Engelke 2007:114). After the death of Johane Masowe in 1973, Mudyiwa Dzangara whose religious name 'Emanuweri' took over the leadership of the Church Johane Masowe Chishanu. According to the church key informants Emanuweri was accused of deviating from the teachings of Johane by encouraging polygamous marriage and consultation of the dead (Moris: 2013). It is on that note that Sanders/Sandros Nhamoyebonde embarked on a religious pilgrimage from Guruve to Chitungwiza, a district situated on the eastern side of Harare the capital city of Zimbabwe. Chitungwiza is significant because when Johane Masowe Chishanu Church

was first excommunicated from Port Elizabeth in South Africa on 7 June 1962 the Church came back and occupied Seke, Chitungwiza. (CliveM.Dillon-Malone 1978:36). Perhaps this is the reason why Sanders/ Sandros Nhamoyebonde revisited Chitungwiza imaginably in a bid to revive the original spirit and vision of Johane Masowe.

The inside informant informed the researcher that some pious Johane Masowe Chishanu members who were not amused by the dilution of the divine message by Emanuweri followed Sanders/Sandros to Chitungwiza (Moris: 2013). According to Engelke (2007:115) one day as Sanders/Sandros was praying with the disciples of Johane at Nyatsime pool there in Chitungwiza, he claimed to have seen a bright star leading the Church converting people from brewing of beer and polygamous marriages hence his name was changed to be *Mutumwa Nyenyedzi*, Angel star. This was in 1990 coincidentally after the death of Emanuweri who died in 1989 (Engelke 2007:115). Sanders/Sandros Nhamoyebonde professed that he had seen a star leading the church, restoring lost soul who were caused to backslide by Emanuweri's weird teachings of polygamous marriages and consultation of the dead (Baba Gilbert: 2014). The study observes that during Sanders/Sandros Nhamoyebonde leadership, the Church was still Johane Masowe weChishanu. But the group that remained in Guruve after Emanuweri died re-named itself *Mudzimu unorera* (John of the wilderness Church lead by a sacred ancestor). This Guruve Johane Masowe weChishanu also referred itself as the Church of the First born, *Chechi yematangwe*. This second name 'Church of the first born' signifies that they themselves were true followers of the doctrine of Johane Masowe and not the Nyatsime-Chitungwiza group of Sandros (Goredema: 2013).

Later, the name Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi became popular after the death of Sanders/Sandros in July 1994. This name was popularized by Baba Antony during a decisive moment on who to lead the church after the death of Sanders/Sandros Nhamoyebonde (Nyenyedzi) (Baba Gilbert: 2013). Among the founding disciples of Johane Masowe, only three were still alive; Father Godfrey Nzira, Father Micho of Chiweshe and Father Wimbo of Guruve. These three were fighting amongst themselves for leadership of the church. It is in the midst of this critical moment that Baba Antony stood up to announce that, "those who want to follow Nzira, those who want to follow

Wimbo and those who want to follow Micho you can do so but the rest we are going to follow the star” (Baba Gilbert: 2013). Baba Antony further declared that the time of human leadership is gone, it’s the time for the spirit/Nyenyedzi to lead this Church (Baba Gilbert: 2015). In Shona Antony lamented; *hakuchina mutimbi uchagagwa nomweya sezvawakaita pana Johane, pana Emanuweri ne pana Sanders/Sandros, mweya uchashandisa munhu upi ne upi* (the spirit is not going to operate as it used to, selectively choosing individuals like in the case of Johane, Emanuweri or Nyenyedzi; rather the spirit will use any one available). This is how the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi was founded in 1994. However, the church became more visible and popular in the dawn of 2000 in the Chirumhanzu District and now has spread and has affected many parts of the Continent with branches in countries such as Zambia, South Africa, Botswana and Namibia.

Fig 1 - Below is the portrait of Baba Gilbert the longest member of JMCN



The portrait above is Baba Gilbert one of my Key informants, who witnessed the schism and formation of the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church in Zimbabwe. Currently is the spiritual leader of the JMCN in Matebeland based in Bulawayo.

Thus, there is justification for suspecting and hypothesising that the purpose of these schematics in Johane Masowe weChishanu Church was not about feathering the gospel of Christ but were based on fighting for Church leadership as means of survival, particularly in the face of economic hardships that faced Zimbabwean during that time. These schematics are survival means in the sense that *hwai* (congregates) of these African Churches took upon themselves to look after their spiritual leaders in the person of *munzwi wedenga* (the one who hears from heaven). They catered for *munzwi wedenga* by paying rents, providing them with food, sending their children to school as token of appreciation. The study observes that there is no proper system of paying *munzwi wedenga* but *hwai* (believers) willingly bring anything as token of appreciation for the services rendered by *munzwi wedenga*.

The study observes that as a means of gaining popularity Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi introduced water Baptism in sacred dams and pools which is not done anywhere else in other Johane Masowe weChishanu Churches in Zimbabwe. This is central to its spirituality and as a result JMCN Church attracts most local people who are not sure whether to follow Western Christianity and abandon African Traditional Beliefs systems or to combine both. The study theorises that, Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi attracted more members by reviving the indigenous traditional sacred shrines as they redefined such places. The study perceives that for this African Church; a sacred place is always a sacred place and people want to familiarize themselves with such places regardless of religious affiliations. We found out that because of the Chirumhanzu/Karanga worldview (the world of spirits), Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi with its sacred water baptism and the revival of these traditional Chirumhanzu shrines, the church was growing tremendously. People across the borders of Zimbabwe were seen annually converging at *Gonawapotera* and *Chivavarira* hill for water baptism and exorcism of evil spirits respectively.

Masowe or *sasa* is described as a place where there is “poor soil that is difficult to build houses, grow crops, and do other things that would attract people” (Mukonyora 2007:12). The origin of *Masowe* or *sasa* is explored in the book, Wandering a Gendered Wilderness. (2007). Isabel Mukonyora highlighted in that book that the founder of this African Indigenous Church

decided to look for a “secluded place to worship God instead of worshipping in Churches which were built and led by white missionaries, the then colonizers of Rhodesia”. For Engelke (2007:5) the first founder of Masowe traditions Sixpence Shonhiwa (Johane) accused the colonial missionary Christianity of being too academic and out of touch with the existential African problems; as a result, it failed to attend to Africans’ deepest needs. This led Sixpence Shonhiwa to look for a new place of worship hence *sowe/sasa* becomes the ideal place. It is against this backdrop that almost all the Masowe Churches do not have church buildings. Instead they worship under trees, near dams, open spaces and roadsides to authenticate Shonhiwa Sixpence’s instructions. Their lack of buildings does not imply their inability to purchase such structures, as the Masowe members have become quite prosperous, but is a reflection of their doctrine (Mukonyora 2001:8).

According to Dillone-Malone (1978:28) Masowe people see themselves as aliens fashioned by their early experiences of being stressed by colonial missionaries and above all having a prophetic and redemptive word for Africans. Further he argues that Masowe Church members see themselves as mandated by the divine to minister to the whole continent of Africa, claiming to be the new Israel through many terrains and wildernesses as they made their way to the New Canaan (Dillone-Malone 1978:29). As a result of this vision, the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi propagated a spirituality that is not wholly borrowed and that is not wholly local but ‘hybrid spirituality.

Daneel (1987:99) in Quest for Belonging noted some AICs whose approach to theology different to that of western missionaries. For these AICs, God is not confined in a written word but is manifestly present in His creations. It can be argued that this is how Masowe yeNyenyedzi almost rejected written scriptures and believed in the doctrine of ‘live and direct’. Accordingly, for the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi church, God speaks to humanity through many ways such as dreams, signs and visions and through *munzwi wedenga* (prophet/prophetess). Besides the Masowe denying written scriptures, advocating for oral transmission of the divine oracles, evidence of what is shown in its efforts to revive sacred indigenous places as her place of worship. The question is: Is there any problem if African Christian Churches

intergrate African customs, cultures and practices as sources of their Church theologies and outrightly condemn the Bible and Jesus Christ as western imposition? Or should African Christians outrightly denounce their pre-Christian traditions; throw away their pre-Christian celebrations and rituals for them to be regarded as authentic Christians? Or must they throw away their African spirituality fashioned to some degree by the extensive indigenous view of a spiritual world or rather inculturate it and develop a new African Christian spirituality? (Nketia 2009:10). If they inculturate their pre-Christian religious spiritual elements of faith, should they consciously select those that are compatible to Christian faith or just unconsciously inculturate compatible and incompatible African spiritual elements. These are some of the questions this present research grapples with.

The study interrogates to what extent African Churches should accommodate their pre-religious systems without obfuscating the essence of Christian gospel. The debate raised in the study is on how some AICs in their attempt to Africanise Christianity ended up Christianise African Religious systems. However, there are scholars the likes of Mukonyora 1998, Daneel 1987, Chitando 2004 among others who raised that AICs are a result of Africans innovativity and creativity, by blending Christian beliefs into African thought forms hence the adoption of the five(Is) Indigenous, Independent, Instituted, Initiative, and International African Churches. By this AICs have successfully dealt with the sting of colonization, western missionaries' dominance, western theologies and imposition of western cultures. This is what was summarized by Musopele as theology cooked in an African pot (Musopele 1998).

However, in as much as the study appreciates different views on Africanisation of Christianity, what remains critical is how should AICs inculturate pre-Christian African beliefs and practices without confusing Christianity. Thus, the nerve centre of this thesis is an attempt to posit that every primal religion like Judaism and African Traditional Religions has compatible elements of faith to be adopted and incompatible elements not to be adopted in the process of localizing secondary Religions such as Islam and Christianity. Hence, this present study agrees that Christianity from time immemorial adapted to the various environments where it was taken. It was first expressed in Aramaic and then in Greek, a language profoundly different

from Aramaic and later to many other languages (Mushete 1978:50). For Mushete:

Though the Church takes shape of its environment, for instance, in Palestine it was called Palestinian-Christianity, in Asia it was Asian-Christianity and in Roman Empire it was called Hellenistic Christianity, “the church never ceases to insist upon the revealed truth such as the transcendental character of Christian revelation, totally given in Christ which has been defined and transmitted in diverse teaching (Mushete 1978:51).

In other words, Mushete is arguing that diversity is not bad, pluralism in Christianity is accepted, but certain central spiritual elements like belief in the Bible and faith in resurrected Christ must be maintained regardless of space and environment. What the study argues for is that these central Christian spiritual elements are the core values, the landmarks of how Christianity should be practiced. Ikenga-Metuh (1990:151) observes that some churches in Africa continue to embrace pre-Christian African spiritual element of faith to shape their Church spiritualities. Therefore, this present study posits that the central tenets of Christianity should not be overridden by African spiritual elements of faith (Ikenga-Metuh 1990:171).

Daneel (1987:25) in Quest for Belonging: An introduction to the study of African Independent Churches argued that some churches were growing in membership because they emphasized the total freeing of the ‘black man’ from the bad influence of western oriented missionaries and henceforth will have some latitude to incorporate traditional religion into their liturgy. He defined the term independent to mean freedom in organization, leadership and religious expression from the western oriented historical or mission churches. The title, *Quest for Belonging* describes the very essence of these African Independent Churches yearning to “feel at home” while in Church. However, the outstanding question is; to what extent should African Indigenous Churches incorporate African spirituality in their processes of Africanising the Christian gospel? This question becomes central to this research particularly on JMCN spirituality in Zimbabwe.

To sum up the study seeks to fill up the knowledge gaps in the history of African Christianity in a way in that: Most African Scholars popularizes contextualisation and Africanisation of the Christian Gospel, baptising the

Christian concepts into African ideas. However, little has been said on the process itself of contextualisation; on what to take and what not to take in a bid to avoid 'Christianisation' of African Traditional Religious beliefs and practices. In as much as inculturation is a noble idea for the gospel of Christ to be meaningful to the locals, howbeit/how about the study raises questions on what to inculturate and not in the process of Africanisation of Christianity.

The section above discussed the interrelated literature on AICs spirituality. Selected themes such as African Indigenous spirituality, Traditional understanding of Christian spirituality, Spirituality of the Johane Masowe weChishanu and the notion of masowe (wilderness) were discussed among others. The selected sources dealing with the above cited themes were reviewed to find out what other scholars discovered on AICs spirituality and how AICs inculturated pre-Christian beliefs and practices to shape their Church spiritualities particularly those in Zimbabwe. The study noted that though other scholars like Dillon-Malone 1978, Engelke 2007 and Mukonyora 2007 wrote specifically on the Johane Masowe weChishanu they did not account for many breakaway Johane Masowe weChishanu Church in Zimbabwe today. The above cited scholars among others presented Johane Masowe weChishanu as a unified homogeneous African Church movement and yet there are numerous Johane Masowe weChishanu Churches in Zimbabwe. It is the reason why the study selected one of these numerous Masowe Churches namely Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church in Zimbabwe. Thus because of the previous scholars generalisation of the Johane Masowe weChishanu Churches, there is dearth of documentation particular for the *Johane Masowe Chishanu inotungamirirwa ne Nyenyedzi* Church in Zimbabwe. Thus, the study fills an academic lacuna in that it tries to provide a historical and theological reflection of one of the fastest growing AIC in the Zimbabwean religious landscape.

In carrying out the study, there are two fundamental matters regarding methodology. The first deals with how the researcher will collect the data and the second deals with how the researcher will interpret the data collected. In that regard, the study utilizes the phenomenological method. The phenomenological method is employed because it has two essential

approaches: the descriptive approach and the hermeneutical approach. Kasomo, argues that an outsider (non-believer) can appreciate the meaning of religion as insiders (believers) do because phenomenology as a method encourages researchers to suspend temporarily their personal or academic presuppositions by provisionally placing them within brackets (*epoche*) thus permitting them to cultivate a feeling for the believer's own faith position (empathy) (Kasomo 2012:130). By so doing the researcher can describe the phenomena accurately, hence the descriptive phenomenological approach. After observing and describing the phenomena correctly, what follows is an authentic interpretation of the phenomena that leads to the second strand – the hermeneutical phenomenological approach. Thus, before the study discusses the two strands of phenomenological approaches it is imperative to define the method first.

Cox (1996:12) defines phenomenology as a way of pointing to the phenomenon. It is the 'study of appearances' and calls for 'bracketing assumptions'. It encourages the researcher to go back to the things themselves as they are and not as informed by the researcher's impressions or preconceived ideas. The phenomenological method is a qualitative method which is frequently defined as the study of the phenomena as perceived by the people themselves. Etymologically, phenomenology is derived from the Greek word, *phainomenon* that means 'that which appears'(Cox 1996:12). Further Cox as quoting (Kant who lived between 1778-1802) argues that phenomenology is a method that analyses 'things' that appear in the mind as if in the physical (Cox 1996:13). In other words, one cannot just dismiss something on the basis of one is not seeing it in the physical. Maposa suggests in his unpublished Doctoral thesis that Emmanuel Kant gave phenomenological approach a fresh and wider meaning in the distinction he made between *noumena* (things as they are in themselves) and phenomena (things as we perceive them) (Maposa 2014:36). In this regard, Sharpe (1975:2) observes that the phenomenological approach is a discipline whose focus is to develop researchers in their understanding of 'that which manifests' through participant observations. Schmidt (1985:45) further identifies two reasons why phenomenological approach is essential for empirical research. First, it allows the researcher to observe the phenomena and describe it. Second, it

reduces prejudice, pre-conceived ideas that influence the researcher to wrongly judge 'that which appears'.

As quoting Husserl (1859-1938) Schmidt argues that phenomenological approach is a scientific method which reacts against "positivism" (Schmidt 1985:45). Positivism here is used to describe an approach that is rigid and unchanging. What you know of 'A' applies on 'B' and does not change. It is against this background that Willig (2008:2) cited by Scott, J & Watt (2010:49) observed that research methods should not be viewed as 'recipes' but as 'an adventure'. Consequently, the study perceived that travelers and explorers to Africa failed to appreciate that Africans are religious because for them a religious group must follow certain 'recipes.' For them a religious person should be seen going into a temple or a mosque to offer prayers and rituals. According to Ijizu (1988:14) travelers and explorers did not see a temple or a Mosque in Africa and concluded that Africans were not religious. It is against this observation that Husserl (1905) dismissed the standard practice which dominated in mathematics that had influenced philosophers of his time, such thinking as; 'if it is not like this, then it is not' (Shoko 1993:13). An example is given by Idowu (1977:4) quoting Emil Ludwig a British Philosopher asking the following rhetorical questions:

- How can the untutored Africans conceive God?
- How can this be?

Deity is a philosophical concept which savages are incapable of framing (Idowu 1977:4).

For Ludwig a British philosopher as quoted by Idowu (1977:4), Africans cannot understand the concepts of God because Africans are not philosophers hence, they cannot comprehend the concepts of God, they are barbaric and uncivilized. It is imperative therefore, to note that the popular phrase, '*zu den sachen*' meaning, 'to the things themselves' conveys Husserl's determination to switch off from pre-conceived philosophical concepts towards allowing the phenomena to manifest itself and described it accordingly (Allen 1971:274).

The study observes that Husserl's phenomenological approach was informed by the quest to 'go to the beginnings, see it yourself then describe what you have seen and take it as it appears; do not judge. Thus, below are two main

strands of Phenomenological methods which are Descriptive and Hermeneutical approaches.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is considered to be the chief proponent of the descriptive phenomenological approach. For Husserl the starting point for empirical research is to deal with personal biases which hinder researchers from discovering the essence of the phenomena (that which is studied) (Wojnar & Swanson 2007:172). Further, Husserl posits that the meaning of the phenomena may be unraveled only through one-to-one relations between the researcher and the objects of research. This interface must involve attentive listening, interaction and observation to create representation of reality more sophisticated than previous understanding (Wojnar, & Swanson 2007:143). It is through these phenomenological steps such as *epoche*, *eidetic* intuition, and *empathetic interpolation* that Husserl concluded that it is possible for a researcher to gain insights into the common features as universal essences or *eidetic* structures and considered them to represent the true nature of the phenomenon under investigation (Wojnar & Swanson 2007).

Smith *et al.* (2009:5) defined descriptive phenomenology as that skill of 'bracketing off' influences around a religious phenomenon to get to the essence of the phenomena. However, the critics of the method, question the practicability of *epoche* 'bracketing off' (Chitando 1998). In response Kasomo posits that bracketing is only for the period of phenomenological investigation (Kasomo 2012:133). It is in this sense *epoche* is used to mean temporary suspension of preconceived ideas for empirical research purposes only. Therefore, the focus of descriptive phenomenology is the correlation of the *noema* (what is experienced) and the *noesis* (how it is experienced) (Kasomo 2012:135). This means that the researcher has to observe the phenomenon as it appears, not as it is understood through opinions formed prior observation. The approach, therefore, begins by bracketing out and suspending the researcher's previous ideas, opinions and personal beliefs and withholding judgment on academic theories about religion, and allows the phenomenon to speak for itself (Shoko 1993:14). Once the things themselves have been identified, the descriptive phenomenology considers its work done (Kasomo 2012:136). The researcher thereafter has the liberty to do whatever he or she wishes with the outcomes. However, whatever the action he/she

takes is guided by what he/she had seen thus descriptive phenomenology. This is how we see the introduction of the second strand of phenomenological method, Hermeneutical phenomenological approach in the study of religions.

After Husserl died in 1938 his successor Martin Heidegger further developed the phenomenological method to include interpretation of the phenomena. Heidegger (1889-1976) a student of Husserl wanted to answer the question of the meaning of the existence. For him the question of the meaning of being can be discovered when a researcher moves further from descriptive to interpretive of that is being studied. The word hermeneutic is derived from the name Hermes, Greek god who was responsible for making clear, or interpreting messages between gods (Reiners 2012:3). Thus, Interpretive phenomenological approach is a process of bringing out and making manifest what is normally hidden in human experience and human relations (Reiners 2012:2).

Therefore, hermeneutical phenomenology, rather than seeking purely descriptive categories of the real perceived world in the narratives of the participants, will focus on describing the meaning of the individuals' being-in- the world and how these meanings influence the choices they make (Wojnar 2007:172-180). This is how phenomenological method was selected in the study. The researcher after describing the inculturated African spiritual elements of faith in the JMCN Church also at last interpret the phenomena by mirroring the Masowe spirituality with other AICs spiritualities. It is when JMCN Church spirituality is mirrored with other AICs Church spiritualities, that one can maintain or dismiss the authenticity of the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church spirituality. Thus for one to achieve this goal, Phenomenological approach was coupled with "Intrinsic Bounded sets" theory of Hiebert G.Paul as outlined in his book Anthropological Reflection on Missiological Issues (1994).

Bounded sets theory was used to determine religious boundaries in the study. The theory was first used by Georg Cantor (1845-1918) a German mathematician (Hiebert 1994:111). The essential point of this theory is that a collection of objects can be regarded as a single entity (a whole) if the objects share properties that define a whole (Hiebert 1994:111). In other words, an

Intrinsic Bounded sets theory suggest that it is possible to judge any object as part of the set or as out of the set by simply looking at the central features of the objects in a set. Thus, Hiebert provided the features of Bounded set theory as follows:

The category is created by listing the essential characteristics an object must have in itself to belong to the set. The category is defined by a clear boundary. Objects within a bounded set are uniform in their essential characteristics-they constitute a homogeneous group. Bounded sets are essentially static sets- they remain the same regardless of space and time. Bounded sets are ontological sets- Birds of the same furthers flock together. A dog is a dog because of what it is (Hiebert 1994:112-113).

The Bounded sets theory was supported by Centered sets theory which posited that grouping of things basically is done basing on how those things relate to the centre (Hiebert 1994:122). This theory posulates that things related to the centre belong to the set, and those not related to the centre do not belong to the set (Hiebert 1994:123). Therefore, applying this theory, we noted that Christians would be defined as followers of the Jesus Christ of the Bible, thus the centre. This suggests that any Church movement that denigrates Jesus Christ and the Bible as normatives of its spirituality does not belong to the set, henceforth a non-Christian religious movement (Holt 2005:13).

Basing on these theories the Bounded and centred sets theories, the distinctiveness of a religion is confined and centred on the central beliefs of that religion. This suggests that though there is mutual borrowing between religions there are certain features which characterized the uniqueness of each religion. For example, though Islam divided into many sects, what makes these sects Muslim distinctive from other religions of the World are Islamic central beliefs such like:

1. Belief in Allah;
2. Central Five Pillars of Islam;
3. Cardinal articles of Faith in Islam;
4. Belief in Muhhamad as Prophet of Allah;
5. Central belief in the Holy Quran (Chidester 2012).

This suggests uniformity among Muslim religions regardless of them being divided. Thus, as guided by the Bounded sets theory, any religion that does not relate to the central spiritual elements of Islamic beliefs as shown above is not a Muslim religion. Arguably, Hiebert posited that the inimitability of a religion is determined by the basic central spiritual elements that make up that religion (Hiebert 1994). We used this theory to conclude that Christianity as well though divided into many denominations has its central spiritual elements which distinguished it from other World religions such like:

1. Central belief in Trinitarian God.
2. Belief in the Bible.
3. Belief in Salvation through the salvific work of Jesus Christ.
4. Belief in the Body resurrection of Jesus Christ.
5. Belief in the subsequent second coming of Jesus Christ to judge the World

It is based on this criterion that Church spiritualities are being judged as Christian or non Christian Churches in the study. Therefore, using Phenomenological approach and Intrinsic Bounded/Centred sets theories one can draw a line between disputed and non disputed AICs in Zimbabwe.

The study is primarily limited to research on the inculturated African spiritual elements in JMCN church of Chirumhanzu District, Zimbabwe. There is a significant amount of information about AICs, predominantly on the growth and expansion of these churches. In the study the researcher is mostly interested with the interface between African spirituality and AICs' spiritualities in Zimbabwe. The study opines that Africans had already devised methods of expressing and celebrating their experience with the divine. These ways included priests and priestesses at holy shrines, prayers and forms of worship in shrines such as in sacred mountains, sacred caves, under sacred trees, sacred pools and a great reverence of their ancestors. What is central to the study is to investigate the impact and influence of traditional African ways of addressing their divinities as depicted by Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi spirituality in Zimbabwe. To be more precise how does Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi socialise itself with old African indigenous ways of worship god at Shrines such as Chivavarira hill, Chinhoyi caves, Matopo hills, Matonjeni, and sacred pools

such as Gonawapotera, Chirorodziva, Nyatsime and Hokoyo pools just to mention a few?

The study is limited in Chirumhanzu District in the Midlands Province in Zimbabwe. Most of these *Vapostori* (apostolic) Churches are predominantly found in Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, and Manicaland Provinces. It is for this reason that the research is restricted to the Midlands Province's Chirumhanzu district. Additionally, there has been little research on Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi done in this province. Some other key places outside Midlands will be referred to for referencing purposes because this Church started from Chitungwiza in 1990 at Nyatsime pool and gradually moved to Chirumhanzu (Baba Gilbert: 2014). Since 2000 Chirumhanzu became the headquarters of JMCN up to the time of this research. Every October most pilgrims attend JMCN annual pilgrimage in Chirumhanzu at Gonawapotera pool for baptismal and other rituals and ceremonies. Therefore, the research was prompted by the ever-increasing population of congregants in the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi in Chirumhanzu District which started off as a small seed in early 2000 and now has grown to have thousands of members following this new faith in Zimbabwe. The study endeavors to examine Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi spirituality in the search for the imprint of African spirituality on its Church spirituality in Zimbabwe. Also, it is imperative to note that this research was conducted between 2013-2016, a period where *Vapostori* Churches were being accused of using powers from water spirits, abusing Children and female members among other allegations. Thus, we indicate the research time phrase because African Churches are dynamic and not static.

Limitations are foreseeable challenges in your study and are out of your control (Simon 2011). In every research one intent to embark on; one must identify potential challenges and put in place possible solutions ahead of the delinquent. This will guarantee the accomplishment of the study intended to be done. Thus for the study the biggest limitation was time, balancing between research works and lecturing at a just started University, Zimbabwe Ezekiel Guti University, a private Christian University which opened its doors to enrol students in May 2012. In 2013 the researcher started to do field work at the same time lecturing at this University. Another foreseeable

limitation was, the distance between Chirumhanzu my research area and Bindura where the researcher was working. Approximately Bindura and Chirumhanzu are 312km apart. The fact that Chirumhanzu is far from Bindura attracted more funds for transport and upkeep being away from home. Over and above researching about spirituality of other people's religion is always a risk. One possible risk expected was unavailability of information since JMCN Church does not have written documents. It means that the research on JMCN spirituality was going to be entirely gathered through interviews and participant observation. Having anticipated all these limitations the researcher applied for a three year study leave to be able to embark fully on research. The researcher also applied for funds research and a letter from the University which states that the purpose of the research was just for academics.

The major theory of the study is the assumption that every religion should or has its own unique landmarks and boundaries or religious spiritual elements of faith which should be maintained to keep the identity and essence of that religion. These landmarks define the essence of a practice by distinguishing one religion from the other. However, though the study acknowledges that a religion cannot survive in seclusion of other religion; mutual borrowing is inevitable, the study posits that there are certain 'incompatible' spiritual elements of faith that should be avoided. The study proposes that, in the process of inculturation, indigenisation, contextualisation or Africanisation of Christianity, certain indigenous spiritual elements of faith should be avoided so as not to obfuscate major Christian spiritual elements of faith such as the centrality of Jesus Christ and the Bible as normative of Christian spirituality (Holt 2005:13). These are the 'central features of Christianity' that distinguish Christian spirituality from Islam spirituality, Hindu spirituality, African spirituality among other Religious spiritualities.

To sum up, the following is chapter summary with Chapter One being an introductory chapter of research Study. The chapter discusses, the statement of the Problem, Justification of the study, Aims and Objectives of the study, Literature that shaped the study and the Research method used for the study. Chapter Two discusses the history of Christianisation of Zimbabwe that gave rise to the emergence of AICs in Zimbabwe. Chapter Two also outlined two major groups of AICs the undisputed and disputed AICs in Zimbabwe.

Chapter Three discusses the selected disputed AICs outlining their beliefs and practices. Chapter Four discusses African spiritual elements highlighting the central spiritual elements that makes African spirituality distinct from other spiritualities. Chapter Five discusses the Origin and theology of the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi in Zimbabwe. Chapter Six discusses the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi sacred places, objects of worship, Church symbols and ceremonies. And Chapter Seven gives a conclusion of the study based on the research findings.