

CHAPTER FIVE: JMCN THEOLOGY AND CENTER OF OPERATIONS

The spirituality of the controversial AICs was covered in Chapter 3. According to this study, the Black Ancestor Church of Malawi, the Herero Protestant Church of Namibia, and the Guta RaJehova/Guta raMwari were introduced in the preceding chapter. These churches were labelled as churches that provide non-Christian spirituality due of the way they incorporated spiritual aspects of African faith, confusing the role of Christ. The Black Ancestor Church of Malawi, for instance, was disregarded as a legitimate Christian church due to its inculturation of the Mbonga god and its cult centres. The Herero Protestant Church of Namibia was similarly denied Christian status due to its adoption of the Herero traditional holy fire as a venue of divine communion, a practice taken from the ATRs. The Guta raJehova and Guta raMwari churches in Zimbabwe were likewise disregarded as non-Christian churches since they rejected the Bible and suggested their own, in which Mai Chaza is equivalent to the Christian Bible's Jesus Christ. Because the aforementioned AICs do not fit into the category of legitimate AICs, the study identified them as disputed African churches. With this in mind the chapter discusses the location of the JMCN Church's historical background, its theology and its present geographical headquarters, theology and doctrine. Its location, history, theology and doctrine are discussed to reveal what influenced its Church spirituality.

We noted from Chapter 1 how JMCN that as a breakaway Church from the original Johane Masowe we Chishanu Church. The main reason for this breakway as highlighted before in Chapter 1 was the inconsistencies and deviation of Emanuweri from the original teaching of Johane causing people again to worship ancestors (Baba Gilbert 2014). Chapter I of the study revealed to us how Sandro embarked on a religious pilgrimage back to the origins Seke Chitungwiza to revive the original spirit of Johane Masowe Chishanu. Chitungwiza remained an icon for the Johane Masowe Chishanu because thus where this Church first settled after the Johane Masowe weChishanu members deported from South Africa as indicated in the first Chapter of the study.

According to Engelke the Johane Masowe weChishanu branch of Nyatsime continued to grow and attracting thousands of people from all corners of the country during the leadership of Sandro (Engelke 2007:79). Engelke describe Sandro as a liberal leader whose theology was not very secretive as compare to Johane and Emanuweri. For Engelke Sandro could interact with all age groups and different races, even press for the first time was able to interview him and some of the Church members about their faith, a phenomenon that was never before during the leadership of Johane and Emanuweri.(Engelke 2007:81). What is very important to note is that after Sandro died the Church splitted into many groups. The one Johane Masowe weChishanu led by Madzibaba Nzira went to Highfield which today is congregating at Coca cola area in Harare; the other Johane Masowe weChishanu led by Micho went back to Mazowe where Emanuweri received his call to lead Johane Masowe weChishanu after Johane died; the third one led by Wimbo went back to Guruve in Mashonaland Central where up to this day the Church has its headquarters there and the fourth group is the one that remained for a while at Nyatsime and this is the *Johane Masowe Chishanu inotungamirirarwa ne Nyenyedzi* (Baba Gilbert: 2014).

The researchers of this were aware that the history of the Johane Masowe Chishanu is shrouded with broken inconsistent disjointed stories. Perhaps it is because the Church does not have written documents hence a distorted history. Another report that the researchers of the study ready from the Herald Newspaper of 19 February 2015 “Johane Masowe Way of Worshipping and Life: The Truth versus Myths” portrays a different historical background from the one gathered for this research. However, what is undisputable in the study is the theology of the Johane Masowe weChishanu because the information was gathered through participant observation. We were very careful not to generalise our findings across all the Johane Masowe weChishanu because though they seem to be the same there are variables in their spiritualities.

We have outlined only four indentifiable Johane Masowe weChishanu that our research informants gave us, but it is undoubtable that many groups emerged after the death of Sandro. Therefore, the chapter interrogates the

theology of the JMCN Church in Zimbabwe. We noted that the doctrine of Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi is not complete without *mutumbi mitatu*, three sacred leaders. *Mutumbi mitatu* is part of their confessional statement *tiri Johane Masowe weChishanu inotungamitirirwa yeNyenyedzi inotenda paMitumbi mitatu*, we are the Johane Masowe weChishanu following the Star believing in three sacred leaders), (Madzimai Mergury 2016). Despite the fact that Emanuweri was accused of misleading people, the JMCN Church believes in Johane, Emanuweri and Nyenyedzi constituting the three sacred leaders. Asking them why do they believe in these three leaders, our informants told us that they don't believe in them as human beings, *panyama* but they believe in the Angels operated in them (Moris:2015). Below is the contribution each Church Father gave to the formation of JMCN Church spirituality in Zimbabwe.

According to Dillon-Malone (1978:3) Shonhiwa Masedza came from Gandanzara near Mutare in Manicaland province. Shonhiwa Masedza introduced a complete new face of Christianity in Zimbabwe. Baba (Father) Shonhiwa Masedza is credited of coining the religious name *masowe* (wilderness) which became more popular in the mid-1990s in Zimbabwe (Mukonyora 2007). Today, Zimbabwe is characterized by the mushrooming of many white garmented churches whose religious shrine is *masowe* (wilderness), recognizing Friday as the day of worship. He started this Church in the 1930s (Dillon-Malone 1978:11). From the beginnings the Church looked insignificant and was associated with those who were the marginalized and the poor people in society. But today the Church has a diverse following comprising the educated and less educated, rich and poor and is found in many African countries even in some parts of Europe and the Americas. It is this Church that gave birth to numerous *Vapositori* Churches among which Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church belongs to.

For Mukonyora (2007), the mission of Johane Masowe is a replica of John the Baptist but to a different audience. Masowe members argue that John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were sent by God to overseas people *mhiri yegungwa* - that is the white skinned community while Shonhiwa (Johane Masowe) was

sent by God to the Black skinned community to introduce *chinamoto chechipositori* (Apostolic Church for Black congregates), (Baba Givemore: 2014). The study argues that for Johane MasoweweChishanu Church members, revelation cannot cross boundaries. In their view, God deals with people and nations, exclusively, according to their spiritual, epistemological, cultural and theological contextual settings.

Thus, Baba Givemore argues that Johane Masowe was sent to the lost souls of Africa and not to the lost souls of Europe, *kudzora mweya yakarasika mumativi mana emu Africa* (to bring back the lost Souls of black Africans) (Baba Givemore: 2014). Engelke also confirmed that Johane Masowe established an African Church *Masowe* (wilderness) *weChishanu* (of the Friday) whose followers are all dark skinned who refer to themselves as *Vapositori* (Apostles) a designation now used by several other churches in Southern Africa (Engelke, 2007:2). From its inception Johane Masowe weChishanu Church, undoubtedly informed its adherents that the Bible was insignificant to African peoples. Hence, the followers of Johane Masowe weChishanu Churches claim to be Christians who do not read the Bible (Engelke, 2007:2). They claim that the Bible is a White man's book which the white man used to brainwash Africans and later colonized them (CliveM.Dillon-Malone 1978).

The Johane Masowe weChishanu Churches arrived at this position because prior to the arrival of white missionaries in Africa, Africans were not writers or book readers. It is generally agreed that missionaries introduced reading and writing to Africans. The study notes that the Johane Masowe weChishanu Churches apart from not reading the Bible in Church, shun all inventions attributed to whites such as immunization and modern contraception methods (Machingura 2014:179). Machingura adds that Johane Masowe radically proclaimed the message of withdrawal from all European things and the destruction of all religious books including the Holy Bible (Machingura 2014:179). Arguably the tension between blacks and whites emerged due to harsh conditions black Africans were facing during the colonial era. For Masowe Church members, most of this racial discrimination was as a result of what was written in the Bible. Africans were forced to obey

their masters (whites) as according to the Bible (Colossian 3:22, Ephesians 6:5 and 1 Peter 2:18).

Further the tension was also fueled by Africans' aspiration for leadership positions within the missionary Churches which they were being denied (Mukonyora 2007:11). Most Africans were denied leadership and Church position because they were perceived as not obeying Bible laws such as that a man should have only one wife. Additionally the majority of African Church members were not educated according to the European standard and were therefore, deemed unfit to hold Church positions (Mukonyora 2007:10). This resulted in the African people perceiving the Bible as an evil white man's book. Consequently, the disciples of Johane emphasized on "live and direct" revelation from God without reading the Bible (Engelke, 2007:3). Above all, Johane Masowe introduced khaki short-trousers and white T-Shirts for male members while female members wear white skirts, white T-shirts and should cover their heads with white scuffs. Both men and women were also taught by Johane Masowe not to keep long hair or to stretch their hair. Besides, Johane Masowe introduced *mbiya* a key utensil to carry *miteuro*/prayers. After the death of Johane who died of cardiovascular disease in 1973, (Dillon-Malone 1978) a new leader emerged whose name was Mudyiwa Dzangara.

Mudyiwa Dzangara, took over the leadership of the church in the same year Johane Masowe died, 1973. Dzangara changed his name to Emanuweri following his claim that the spirit which was once operating in Emmanuel (Jesus) the son of Mary, was now upon him (Engelke, 2007:115). In other words, Dzangara claimed to be the new Black Messiah for Black Africans. He taught that God first sent to Africans Johane Masowe as a forerunner and later sent Him (Emanuweri) to take over from Johane Masowe. Likewise, Mudyiwa taught that John the Baptist and Jesus were sent by God to serve the white community (Engelke 2007). Critics of this Church movements question how Mudyiwa Dzangara came to know about the two; John the Baptist and Jesus Christ when he did not read the bible. They also question where he got such knowledge from if he did not read the Bible. The study maintains that while the Johane Masowe Churches do not read the Bible, this did not necessarily posit that the members of this Church have never read the

Bible in their lifetime as most of them would have at one point belonged to other Churches that read the Bible. This research study observes through interviews and participant observation that the majority of members in these Churches were at one point in time members in these renowned mission Churches such as the Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed Church or Anglican Church before they migrated to Masowe Churches. Some have read the Bible in schools (Madzibaba Tawona 2015a).

Accordingly, during his term of office Emanuweri encouraged his members not to read the Bible but to follow the teachings of Johane Masowe. Emanuweri also encouraged his Church members to revive African traditional practices such as, brewing of beer, ancestor veneration and polygamous marriages, practices which Johane condemned (Engelke, 2007:116). For him (Emanuweri), prohibiting people from such practices would inhibit prospective members from joining the Church. Polygamy is a traditional African marriage practice where a man is legally allowed to have more than one wife. Thus, for Emanuweri a man was permitted to marry up to maximum of six wives. (Morris: 2013). Emanuweri's reason for supporting polygamous marriage was that, though Johane Masowe did not teach members to have more than one wife, he (Johane) survived with six wives. This dispute of Johane Masowe marrying six wives was also recorded by Clive Mary Dillon-Malone in the book, *The Korsten Basketmakers: A study of Masowe Apostles, an Indigenous Church* (1978).

Also, veneration of ancestors was permitted by Emanuweri because, for him, one's parents will continue to be one's parents, even when the parents are dead. Thus, according to him, the dead parents should continue to receive respect from the living family members. This is how today in the doctrine of the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church Johane Masowe/Emanuweri Mudyiwa and Sanders Nhamoyebonde (Nyenyedzi) are always remembered. Songs are composed in memory of them. Emanuweri also revived the use of *mbiya* (small clay pots) as religious objects. These clay pots are used as containers of *muteuro* (small religious stones, water from sacred dams and honey for religious rituals). The origin of *mbiya* as a sacred object of worship has a long history.

According to our key informants, *mbiya* was first used by Johane Masowe right from the beginning of this religious movement. Baba Amos of Kwekwe narrated that, one Friday night in the 1930s, Johane Masowe was led by the Spirit to go and attend traditional ancestral ceremony, *bira* in a village known as Mhondoro Ngezi near Norton town in Mashonaland West province. That night it was a nightmare for the villagers because no Spirit medium received the word from the ancestors. Around 3am one Spirit medium spoke ecstatically saying “there is someone here who is a stranger (not the village man), we want to give him time to tell us what brings him here”. Thus, how Johane stood up to introduce himself to the people, telling the people that he was sent by God to turn people from worshipping ancestral spirits to worshipping of one true God. He asked everyone to follow him to a Muhacha tree and requested *mbiya* from the Spirit medium for him to use for prayers. Henceforth *mbiya* became an icon in all the Johane Masowe Churches. It is therefore, noteworthy that *mbiya* as a sacred object of worship in the Johane Masowe Churches was borrowed from Karanga spirituality. The Karanga used *mbiya* for traditional ancestral worship to pour beer and libation for the ancestors. This is how the Karanga way of approaching the divine was inculcated by the Johane Masowe Churches in Zimbabwe.

Emanuweri is also credited with introducing *kirawa* (not an English name) but a religious name which denotes a sacred *axis mundus* (*holy of holies*), (see figure 2 of Chapter 6). This is the most important sacred place, an *axis mundus* where prayers for the sick and exorcism of evil spirits are done. The place is marked by certain shrubs and plants that are grown there for religious purposes. An exhaustive discussion of *kirawa* will be take place in Chapter 6 of the study. Mudyiwa Emanuweri is also remembered for introducing the Ten Commandments (*gumi remitemo*) and laws and regulations (*miko nemirairo*), (Baba Gilbert: 2014). Additionally, Mudyiwa Emanuweri introduced full white garments for both men and women. Before Emanuweri the Johane Masowe members used to wear khaki three quarter shorts and white T-Shirts for men and white skirts, white T-shirts and white head gear for women.

Figure 5.1: The full garments introduced by Emanuweri for Church members



This is an online posted Image shows the full dress introduced to the JMCN Church by the late Emanuweri Mudyiwa. JMCN Church moved away from white T-shirt and Skirts for women and Khaki Shorts and White T-Shirts for Men to full garments during the leadership of Emanuweri Mudyiwa.

In 1989 Emanuweri died. Members of Johane Masowe weChishanu expected Emanuweri to resurrect because Emanuweri had promised his members that he will rise from the dead three days from his burial like what happened to Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, Emanuweri did not resurrect. According to the information gathered, the majority of church members lost faith and backslide because Emanuweri did not rise from the dead as he had promised (Father Gilbert: 2014). It is in the midst of despair that Sanders also known as Sandro Nhamoyebonde, who was third from Johane, moved from Guruve to establish another Johane Masowe weChishanu branch at Nyatsime River in Chitungwiza (Engelke, 2007:127). Many church members followed Sanders to Chitungwiza, while others remained to introduce a new Johane Masowe weChishanu Mudzimu Unoera Church (Baba Amos: 2014). This Mudzimu Unoera (Sacred Ancestor Church) was founded by one conservative follower of Emanuweri, Baba Nyanhete who claimed that the spirit which was operating in Emanuweri was now operating in his daughter (Nhambura 2015:4). This was done to authenticate Emanuweri resurrection. These

followers of Emanuweri interpreted the resurrection motif of Emanuweri to be incarnation of Emanuweri in Nyanhete's daughter of Guruve, in Mashonaland Central province. According to the Herald newspaper (11 April 2015) the girl was six (6) years old in 1989 when Mudyiwa Emanuweri died. The name of Nyanhete's daughter was since changed to Girl Jesus but her real name is Tepsy Nyanhete (Nhambura 2015:4). The study observes that Johane Masowe Chishanu Mudzimu Unoera Church is the first breakaway movement from Johane Masowe Chishanu Church in Zimbabwe.

Sanders/Sandros Nhamoyebonde started preaching against the brewing of beer and polygamous practices which were legalized by Emanuweri. For Sanders brewing of beer, ancestor veneration and polygamous marriages were practices which were condemned by the founding Father Baba Johane. Thus, Sanders became a shining star (*Nyenyedzi*) that was leading people from darkness to light (Baba Gilbert: 2014). The Church grew and many people became members of Johane Masowe Chishanu under the leadership of Sanders. However, to date there are numerous religious groups designated Johane Masowe Chishanu starting from Nyatsime in Chitungwiza province. The study noted that more schematic movements emerged immediately after the death of Sanders Nhamoyebonde in July 1994. It can be argued that these schematic incidences were as a result of power politics within the Church. Father Sanders (*Nyenyedzi*) died and was buried in Chitungwiza (Engelke 2007:89). The following year witnessed more Johane Masowe Chishanu erupting in Chitungwiza. Today we have many Johane Masowe weChishanu Church such as:

- Johane Masowe weChishanu Mwedzi minomwe;
- Vadzidzi, Johane Masowe weChishanu nguvo tsvuku;
- Johane Masowe weChishanu Jerusarema;
- Johane Masowe weChishanu Gaburona; and
- Johane Masowe Chishanu Chiedza Chavatendi and many more.

It is also against this background that Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church emerged. It is quite interesting to note that Chitungwiza historically is the birth place not only for *Vapostori* Churches but also for most powerful Zimbabwean Pentecostal prophets such as; Prophet Makandiwa and First Name Magaya all from the Aquatic complex in Chitungwiza. To date Prophet

Emmanuel Makandiwa is in the process of building a massive Church structure for United Family International Church (UFIC) in Chitungwiza.

It was noted earlier in the study that this new Church emerged during the leadership crisis after the death of Sanders in July 1994. The study also noted that Nyatsime (Chitungwiza) was now the Headquarters of the Johane Masowe Chishanu Church in Zimbabwe representing a shift from Mhondoro and Guruve. In an interview Baba Gilbert one of the longest member of the original Johane Masowe and now a member of this newly established church narrated in detail how the newly established church emerged. The emergence of JMCN Church took place during a prayer retreat at Nyatsime in May 1997 (Baba Gilbert: 2014). Church members were divided over the succession of Sanders (Nyenyedzi faction). The contestation was among the three long serving members of the Church; Baba Micho of Mazowe, Baba Godfrey Nzira of Mhondoro, and Baba Wimbo of Guruve (Baba Gilbert : 2014). It was during this decisive moment that Baba Anthony of Gweru stood up and spoke ecstatically saying “those who want to follow Micho, Nzira and Wimbo can do so, but the spirit is saying *mweya haucha gari pamutumbi sezvawakaita pana Shonhiwa, Mudyiwa kana Sanders* (the spirit is no longer going to reside in an individual as his host like what he did during the era of Shonhiwa, Mudyiwa and Sanders). He further stated that henceforth the Spirit was going to use anyone available for the holy use”, (Baba Gilbert: 2014). He continued to say “no human flesh will lead this church but the star, Nyenyedzi” (Baba Gilbert: 2015).

This is how the people who followed Baba Anthony rebranded their Church to be Johane Masowe weChishanu ye Nyenyedzi in Zimbabwe. Others who followed Micho began calling themselves Johane Masowe weChishanu nguwo tsvuku (red garments). Those who followed Wimbo called themselves Johane Masowe weChishanu Vadzidzi (the disciples) and those who followed Godfrey Nzira called themselves Johane Masowe weChishanu Madzibaba. It is imperative to note that all these breakaway churches maintained the designation ‘Johane Masowe Chishanu’. However, for identity purposes some are Johane Masowe Chishanu Jerusalem, *venguwo tsvuku* (red garments), *Mudzimu unoera* (Sacred Ancestor), *Vadzidzi* (Disciples), and many more. All these groups and factions of Johane Masowe weChishanu observe Friday as

their Sabbath day.. All of them do not eat meat on Fridays; do not read the Bible and they congregate in the open spaces, *masowe*.

The study notes that Baba Sanders/Sandros Nhamoyebonde is the first person to talk about seeing a star leading Masowe people. This happened in Chitungwiza at Nyatsime River in 1994 (Engelke, 2007:150). However, the name Masowe yeNyenyedzi as a church name was popularized by his disciples after his death. Baba Antony of Gweru and Baba Tawanda of Chirumhanzu both from Midlands province popularized the name Masowe yeNyenyedzi (Apostolic Church of the Wilderness led by the star) (Baba Gilbert: 2014). It is on this background that Father Antony and Father Tawanda promoted the phrase '*tinotevera Nyenyedzi*' 'we follow the star'. This emphasis on 'we follow the star' can be viewed as at the Church's quest for an identity. The study argues that 'identity crisis' is very crucial particularly in the light of the Zimbabwean religious landscape where Churches are mushrooming nearly on daily bases. It is on this basis that Baba Antony and Baba Tawanda, with the fear of losing members to Baba Micho, Baba Nzira and Baba Wimbo emphasized that they were the real followers of the recently deceased leader Sandros.

According to de Gruchy (2014:15) the quest for identity is the search for self-understanding. This suggests that this millennium Church by designating itself as Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi, intends to send a signal to other denominations (white garmented) that though they wear white garments like them they are not the same. The designation Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi denotes true followers of a recent departed leader-Sanders/Sandros. In Karanga spirituality a recent departed elder qualifies to be an ancestor and mediator between the living and God (Idowu 1996). This suggests that the newly established church is heavily influenced by African spirituality.

It was also noted that "identity has to do with certain images, the way in which people communicate who they are, the way in which the media represent them, and the way in which others relate to them. (de Gruchy 2014). This implies that the quest for identity is inextricably linked to the reason for one's existence. It is from this understanding that Johane Masowe

weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church designed flags that have stars which they hoist during prayers at Masowe. The reason for having this flag is to tell apart from other Johane Masowe weChishanu and hence identify themselves to passers-by as Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church (see fig 5-the *Kirawa* Image in Chapter 6).

Data gathered revealed that in August 1998 JMCN church moved its headquarters from Chitungwiza to a remote part of Gokwe district (Madzimai_Mergury: 2013). This church stayed there for about two years before its final move to Chirumhanzu district in May 2000 (Morris: 2013). JMCN was welcomed in Midlands's province from 2000 up to this day. The study observes that this new faith was accepted by the Chirumhanzu people because the villagers had experienced spiritual attacks during the night which they could not solve. During that time the only popular Church that was there in Chirumhanzu was the Roman Catholic. According to Shoko (2008:28), the Roman Catholic Church failed to bring lasting solutions to this spiritual problem (Shoko 2008). The white Roman Catholic priests shared a different worldview with their African Church members. This is why Oborji (2005:2) observed that in spite of the influence of modernity and of other world religions such as Christianity and Islam, Karanga worldview continue to be the determining factor in the people's search for ultimate reality and meaning for life. For Orobator (2008), the Karanga people are highly spiritual. For them nothing just happens without being caused and they believe in the world of spirits. The Roman Catholic Church's attitude towards witchcraft and sorcery was very dismissive of the institution of witchcraft. This created a tension between the indigenes of Chirumhanzu and the Catholic doctrine. In a Karanga worldview, witchcraft and sorcery constitute a real and imminent threat against which one needed to be protected. Shoko noted an attempt to mitigate this spiritual dilemma by one African Roman Catholic priest who was stationed at Chinyuni in Chirumhanzu (Shoko 2008:27). The priest organized a prayerful group of both men and women to cast out evil spirits from victims of witchcraft and sorcery (Shoko, 2008:27).

This group fasted every Wednesday, seeking power to cast out evil spirits from victims of witchcraft and sorcery. However, that attempt was seen as

misgivings by the Roman Catholic superiors resulting the African Roman Catholic priest being transferred to Gutu mission (Shoko, 2008:28) The name of this African priest was Father Augustine Urayai Madyauta who was a resident of Chirumhanzu. As a priest stationed at Chinyuni, Father Madyauta also oversees the parish at St Joseph Hama Mission, Mapiravana Mission and Driefontein Dioceses all in Chirumhanzu district. The group he had organized was called 'Supper Roma' (Shoko, 2008:28).

The study observes that it is this spiritual crisis that necessitates the acceptance of the new faith in the district of Chirumhanzu district. Many people were attracted by the new faith's claim that *tinoshandira* (we pray for people and exorcise demons). Vengeyi observed that there was an eruption of the phenomenon of *kushandirwa* (prophecy) by so called prophets who performed 'strange' miracles (Vengeyi, 2013:29) in Zimbabwe. These Churches fit into the fundamental African worldview of the cosmos, with its rigid belief in innumerable spirits and powers (Chitando 2013:98).

It is against this background that any Zimbabwean church that do not subscribe to this worldview and does not appreciate this phenomenon of the day 'gift of prophecy' is on will lose members to the ones where prophecy is done. This is evidenced by the continuous migration of Christians from so called mainline Churches to these newer prophetic churches (Mpofu 2013:13). The study posits that it is now an 'in thing' for most Zimbabweans to socialise themselves with churches which claim that they can provide solutions for social, economic and spiritual ills such as healing of Human Immuno Virus and Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (HIV and AIDS), give people prayers that they can be promoted at work, deliver people from the spirit of barrenness, poverty and misfortunes. Therefore, the arrival of Masowe yeNyenyedzi in Chirumhanzu with such a package ushered the locals into a new dispensation, the dispensation of the operation '*mweya kumasowe*' the Spirit in wilderness.

Geographically, Chirumhanzu district is located in Midlands Province in the southern part of Zimbabwe. It is a rural district where subsistence farming and cattle rearing are the main sources of livelihood (Masinire, 2013:15). This is the district that is situated at the border of Midlands and Masvingo

Provinces. The district consists of a majority of Shona speaking people with a few Ndebele speaking people. The two provinces, Masvingo and Midlands, are divided by a river called Shashe. Though the study has highlighted earlier that Chirumhanzu is the birth place for Baba Tawanda Ndaidza, religiously Chirumhanzu becomes an icon for Masowe yeNyenyedzi because of its two traditional sacred places, Gonawapotera and Chivavarira hill. According to the key informant interviews, after the Nyatsime baptism episode in 1997, the Spirit instructed the church leaders that time has come for the Church to migrate to other places. At first Masowe yeNyenyedzi moved its headquarters to Gokwe and baptise its members in a dam nicknamed Hokoyo (beware) but the original name for this dam is Gwehava in Gokwe central 12km out of the township (Bulawayo 24 News 2012). In 1998 converts were baptised in that pool. After the baptism at Hokoyo, Masowe yeNyenyedzi spent the whole year not knowing where to take their new members for baptism because the church claims to be led by *mweya* the spirit. It was at their annual prayer (*muteuro wegore*) in Gokwe at the end of 1999 when it was alleged that the Spirit said 'go to Chirumhanzu and possess Gonawapotera and Chivavarira hill' (Tsitsi: 2014). With this historical background and present location of the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church, the next paragraphs deal with the theology and doctrine of this newly established Church in Zimbabwe.

A reflection on the Masowe yeNyenyedzi Church doctrine is by no means an easy endeavor. There are an inconceivable number of different doctrinal views. This is due to data collection that has always depended on members who claim that they were there when it happened without proper documents or original testimony to refer to. This makes this an extremely delicate and intricate undertaking. Apart from lack of evidence researchers are not allowed to take pictures or record videos during church services. This research was almost abandoned because of the secretiveness of the church, but for the assistance of friends who are members of this Church. They continued inviting us and facilitating interviews. Thus this research was made possible by means of participant observation and interviews.

The researchers of the study attended almost all critical conferences of the JMCN Church such as; *muteuro wegore* annual prayer conference held in

Masvingo heroes' acre on 15-17 May 2014; *kuverengwa neNyenyedzi* the census by the star conference, on 21-23 August 2014 in Gweru; *rubhabhatidzo rweNyenyedzi* (the baptism of the Star in the Gonawapotera pool) on 16-18 October 2014 at Shashe river; *rupawo rweNyenyedzi* the seal of the Star conference held in December 11-13 at Mapiravana in Chirumhanzu and their Easter commemorations in lower Gweru on 2-5 April 2015. All these conferences started on Thursday at 3pm and end on Sunday 12noon. During these conferences the researchers had sufficient time for interviews fielding many questions. Based on these participant observations, this research is a true reflection of what was gathered from insiders of the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church in Zimbabwe. Thus, the following passages discuss Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church doctrine.

The study maintains that in the process of Africanisation of Christianity certain Indigenous religious elements must be avoided to avoid obfuscating authentic Christian spirituality in the process. This suggests that any Christian Church must maintain fundamental Christian doctrines for it to be regarded as an authentic Christian church. As alluded to earlier on in the study, there are some selected fundamental Christian biblical doctrines which differentiate Christianity from other religions of the world. These selected Christian doctrines or tenets are efficacious in test the authenticity of the Masowe yeNyenyedzi Church spirituality as Christian spirituality or has fallen out of the scope. The question raised in the study is: is the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi spirituality influenced by Biblical spirituality or by Karanga spirituality today? To answer this question again, we need to use the same criteria used previous in the study to judge the spirituality of the four (4) sampled disputed AICs. The criteria for judging Church spiritualities as Christian or non Christian ready; Does the Church; Accept the divinity of Jesus Christ (Christology) Believe in the Holy Trinity; Believe the Bible to the True word of God; Believe that Salvation comes through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; Believe in the Second coming of Jesus to judge the world.

Having established the holistic and integral central Christian spiritual elements the next section interrogates how the JMCN Church approaches to the above central selected Christian spiritual elements of faith. Does it going

fall into the same pit of the discussed disputed AICs? This shall be discovered through the research findings as presented in the next section of the chapter.

The doctrine of Christ is commonly known as Christology. Christology is the discourse about the person and work of Jesus Christ (Macquarrie 1990:3). This term is derived from a Latin term *Christus* and from Greek *Kristos* meaning the 'anointed one' (Macquarrie 1990:3). Thus, Christus is a title and not a name. For van Niekerk, Christology can be defined as;

- What Christ teaches about God; or
- What do we mean when we say that Jesus is both God and Man and that in Him human salvation is realized? (van Niekerk 1982:4).

Thus Christology deals with who Jesus was and what Jesus did (Macquarrie 1990:3). The study posits that the person and work of Jesus Christ is of central significance to Christian doctrine. Christ is the historical point of departure for Christianity as he made salvation possible for humanity. His death is sufficient for all sinners who have ever lived, for it was not merely a finite human, but an infinite God who died (Erickson 1992:213). It is against this background that any Church that does not present Christ as normative for salvation offers a questionable Christian spirituality. Macquarrie posits that Peter's response to the Christological question 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' (Mark 8:29) (KJV) is the beginning of Christianity (Macquarrie 1990:3). This denotes that every Church that claims to be a Christian must respond to this Christological question - Jesus is the *Christos* without which there is no human salvation.

Thus, the study observes that Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi seems to have replaced the doctrine of Jesus Christ with their spiritual leaders such as Shonhiwa, Mudyiwa and Sanders. This position has been arrived at because for this Church movement, Jesus Christ was sent by God to the lost souls of Israel and to the white communities, not to the black communities of Africa (Baba_Amos: 2014). Thus, for them God sent Johane Masowe, Emanuweri Mudyiwa and Sanders Nyenyedzi to serve Africans hence the doctrine of replacement. For other AICs in Zimbabwe Jesus Christ is seen as God incarnate to save all humankind. In contrasting views, the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church sees Jesus Christ as the savior for

Whites not for Blacks. The study observes that the term Whiteman represents all other nationalities excluding Black Africans. Thus anyone who is not a Black African is referred to as Whiteman, including the Chinese, Arabs, Japanese and other non-Europeans with fair skin.

The study observes that though these three leaders are all dead, Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church continues to revere them as sacred spiritual leaders. During a key informant interview, one of the Church member said “*tinotenda mitumbi mitatu*,” literally, “we believe in three divine bodies which are *Johane Masowe*, *Emanuweri Mudyiwa* and *Sanders Nyenyedzi* for the salvation of Africans (Madzimai Melissa: 2014). In their prayers, they continue to mention the above names as intermediaries between the living and God. This research posits that this doctrine of deification of human Church leaders was introduced by Mudyiwa Dzangara who led the Church after Johane Masowe. In his teachings Emanuweri Mudyiwa taught that dead family elders continue to be inter-mediators between the living and God. Songs are composed and sung especially for the *muteuro wegore* (annual prayer).

- *Baba Johane vana venyu vaunguna muvatungamire murwendo*
(Father Johane your Children have gathered lead them)
- *Murwendo rune makwidza ne makwidza*
(This journey which has ups and downs)
- *Baba Emanuweri vana venyu vaungana muvatungamire murwendo*
(Father Emanuweri your children have gathered led them)
- *Nyenyedzi vana vako vaungana uvatungamire murwedzo*
(Star your children have gathered leads them)

A close analysis of this song denotes that this African Church has developed a new Church Doctrine that depicts a complete new way of salvation. The majority of African Indigenous Churches follow the Biblical Christian doctrine of salvation that says in part: there is no salvation in any other name except through the name of Jesus Christ (Mbiti 1986:138). On contrary views, Masowe yeNyenyedzi believes that the departed leaders mediate between the living and God. When other Christians believed that salvation was made possible through Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross of Calvary, the JMCN

posits that Jesus was only sent to White communities and not to Black communities.

It has been also noted that JMCN Church does not even commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Rather they have introduced a new doctrine *tsoro yaJohane* replacing the passion narratives and *Christus victor* during their Easter celebration. *Tsoro ya Johane* denotes a theological reflection on to the salvific work done by Johane Masowe, Emanuweri Mudyiwa and Sanders Nyenyedzi respectively. During the JMCN Easter celebrations, a narration of how God used these three leaders to establish an African Church is given on every Easter Friday. Composed songs in memory of these sacred leaders are sung throughout the whole Easter weekend. Below is one song sung during Easter celebrations:

- Kwakatanga Baba Johane (There came Father Johane);
- Ndokuzouya Emanuweri (followed by Emmanuel);
- Kwazouya Nyenyedzi (lastly the Star)⁷; and
- Denga rose raombera (And heavens celebrated)

The content of the song and the doctrine of *tsoro yaJohane* are two important considerations in the study which summarized the Church doctrine of the JMCN Church. As other Christian Churches such as the Roman Catholic, Anglican Methodist, Dutch reformed Church, *inter alia*, dramatize the passion narratives of Jesus by carrying a wooden cross, the JMCN Church dramatize the release from the suffering of their spiritual leaders from the then colonial government of Rhodesia by trying to introduce this African Church *chinamoto chechipositori* (Roswense: 2015).

According to Daneel (1987:250) a Christian Church is measured by certain criteria which are unwavering proclamation of the word (Bible), proclamation of the risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the belief in the holy Trinity and celebration of sacraments. Adding to that Maposa & Sibanda (2013:97-109) posit that, “Christian Churches are normally identified by acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and savior; by preaching a gospel that is rooted in a clear doctrine of Christology and their thrust of soteriology concerning human salvation is biblically inspired”. One of the study’s findings was that with the criterion given above, Johane Masowe weChishanu

yeNyenyedzi Church gravitated away from this Biblical Christological position. The simple reason for this pronouncement is that by and large the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church inculturated non compatible African spiritual elements and denigrate the salvific work of Jesus Christ for the human race. Thus the study submits that there is a doctrine of Christology in the Masowe yeNyenyedzi Church which renders the church unauthentic.

It was also found out that the JMCN Church also re-defined the theology of the cross by dismissing the relevance of Jesus Christ's death for the salvation of Black Africans. Though this Church acknowledges that Jesus was crucified and was buried they do not subscribe to the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. The resurrection motif of the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church is different from the Orthodoxy Christian concept of bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to key informant interviews conducted in April 2015, Masowe yeNyenyedzi believe that both John the Baptist and Jesus were just ordinary human beings whom God selected to bring salvation to the White communities. For them, because both were killed by Whites, God was not happy and abandoned the White community forever (Baba Andrea: 2015). At first God sent John the Baptist who was killed by Whites, the argument goes. Later God sent Jesus to proclaim good news to the Whites. Again the Whites killed him. It was after all this that God abandoned the White community in preference of Africa by raising three sacred leaders; Johane, Emanuweri and Nyenyedzi. Today all the Johane Masowe Churches do not mix with Whites. For them whites are the enemies of the gospel of salvation.

According to the church's doctrine, after John the Baptist and Jesus Christ were killed, God decided to send HIS spirit to Africa. This is how the spirit came from God and entered an African man who was a shoe-maker, Shonhiwa Masedza Tandi Moyo in the then Rhodesia to serve the Black community. For Baba Moris (2014) *mweya wakaburikira pana Shonhiwa ne zuva reChishanu rinova zuva rakatambudzika Mwanakomana mhiri yegungwa* (the Spirit descended and struck Shonhiwa on a Friday the same day Jesus was killed).

Thus, for JMCN Church, Friday is sacred day because this was the day God transferred the spirit which was operating in Jesus the son of Mary and Joseph (both Whites) to Johane Masowe (Black) for the salvation of Black Africans. On that note every Thursday from 3pm up to Saturday 3pm, Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi members observe certain rituals such as not eating meat; not bathing and do not changing their clothes. According to the interviews this ritual is known as in their semantic *kubatidza amai Maria kuchema mwana wavo wakabaiwa mhiri yegungwa* (helping Mary the mother of Jesus to mourn her beloved son who was killed overseas).

It was found out that the practice of helping Mary the mother of Jesus to mourn her son Jesus is a practice borrowed from two worlds, the Traditional African worldview and the Christian worldview. First, the concept of not bathing is a practice borrowed from African worldview because neither in most African countries the bereaved do not change clothes nor bathing until after burial. Secondly the practice of sitting around the fire is a borrowed phenomenon from Christian worldview because for instance, the Roman Catholic practice what is called *moto waPetros* (fire of Peter) as they dramatize the night Peter denied Jesus Christ three times before the cock crows. Likewise the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church sits around the fire from Thursday night till Friday morning. This fire is sometimes referred to as *choto chaPetrosi* (fire of Peter) *pacharara* or *pazambara* (no English equivalence). (Melissa: 2013).

Convincingly, the study observes that, Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church's interpretation of the *passio* narratives is different from other Christian denominations. For instance, for them Jesus' death was an accident of history. His death was not God's pre-ordained to serve human beings but jealous whites killed him. However, they believed that the spirit which was operating in Jesus after his death embarked on a journey to Africa. This spiritual journey is sometimes referred to as wilderness journey, *rwendo rwemurenje*. This is the wilderness journey of the Spirit, *rwendo rwemweya murenje* where the same spirit which worked through Jesus was in search for a house in Africa. At first the spirit entered Shonhiwa then Mudyiwa and lastly Sandros. (Baba Moris, 2014).

The study notes that JMCN's understanding of the resurrection of Jesus was informed by elements of Karanga spirituality. Generally, The Shona and the Ndebele people believe in a different form of resurrection. They believe that the spirit of a dead person comes back and dwells among the living, to look after the living; this is African spirituality (Banana 1991:31). The human spirit cannot die but exists in spiritual form having physical traits because it can assume a physical form through its possession of spirit mediums, *masvikiro* (Banana 1991:31). Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church, therefore, believe that the spirit which was in John the Baptist and in Jesus *mhiri yegungwa* (overseas) is the same spirit operating in the three African human bodies, *mutumbi mitatu* ; first in Shonhiwa Masedza, Mudyiwa Dzangara then lastly Sanders Nhamoyebonde.

The study notes that resurrection in Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church is not the resurrection of the body but it is the “re-introduction of the living timeless (spirit) into the ranks of the family through spiritual presence” (Banana 1991:31). JMCN members are taught that there is only one spirit that worked through Johane, Emanuweri and Sanders/Sandros. The study argues that the fundamental theological belief among all Johane Masowe traditions is that; if a leader dies will proceed to hold an influential position in heaven and is accountable and responsible for interceding for the remaining church members. Church leaders like Johane, Emanuweri and Sanders/Sandros are believed to be now part of the angelic beings whose responsible is to help and guide Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church members.

A Shona popular song from Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church members summarizes this belief. The song is called *Pandimire pakaoma* (I'm in danger). It goes like:

- *Jehovha ndibatsireiwo Baba pandimire pakaoma* (God help me I'm danger);
- *Verudzi rwangu vakandigare dare* (my family members are planning evil against me);
- *Vane Chikwambo chinondisveta ropa* (they have a goblin that sucks blood from me);
- *Vatsvene vanobva kudenga ndibatsireiwo* (Holy saints from heaven help me);
- *VaMutinhimha ndibatsireiwo* (Saint Mutinhima help me I'm in danger);

- *Baba vaChindenga ndibastireiwo* (Saint Chindenga help me I'm in danger);
- *Baba Madziya ndibatsireiwo* (Saint Madziya help me I'm in danger);
- *Baba Chimhundu ndibatsireiwo* (Saint Chimhundu help me I'm in danger);
- and
- *Ndinotambudzika chikwambo chinondisveta ropa* (I'm suffering because there is a goblin that sucks my blood)

The analysis of the song shows that all Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church in Zimbabwean conceptualizes the concept of the resurrection of the dead from an African worldview. According to this perspective, any family member who dies becomes an intercessor for the remaining family members. The singer mentioned names such as Baba Mutinhima, Chindenga, Madziya and Chimhundu. These are church leaders who died in recent years and are being called upon to assist free the singer from the goblin's afflictions. According to Mbiti (1975:69) the departed of recent generations are called 'the living dead' and in some way they form a link in the chain of contact between their living family members and the invisible God. It is against this orientation that the JMCN sees Johane, Emanuweri, Sanders/Sandros like Chindenga, Mutinhima in song as 'conveyor belts, helpers or assistants'(Mbiti 1975:69) in their spiritual journey. Therefore, the study observes that Christ of the Bible's mediatorship role especially in relation to life after death is totally usurped by Shonhiwa (Johane) Mudyiwa (Emanuweri) Sanders/Sandros (Nyenyedzi) which makes the person and work of Jesus trivial for the JMCN Church in Zimbabwe.

The study noted the demeaning and downplaying of the role of Jesus Christ for human salvation in the Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi Church. For Hearne (1990:89-96), any talk or action about "inculturating" the Christian faith must be seen in the light of the mystery of Jesus Christ and not just as efforts to make a system or an institution more "meaningful" to people of different cultures. This denotes that Christology is at the very heart of any Christian theology of inculturation. Thus, by Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church lacking this fundamental doctrine of the person and work of Jesus Christ, the study posits that its Church spirituality was influenced by African spiritual elements such as veneration of the long dead African Church leaders.

African Christians observe the Bible as the inspired word of God. Most AICs uphold the traditional view of inspiration which observes that the Bible was written by God through human authors. God worked through human authors so that, what they wrote was that which God intended to communicate with his people. In Greek inspiration is described as *theopneustos* that literally means "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16) (Sulistyawati 2014:11). It is on the basis of this definition that some theologians argue that this "God-breath" makes the Bibles to be infallible or of limited inerrancy that affirms that the Bible is free of errors as a guide to salvation (Sulistyawati 2014:11). This suggests that the Bible should be taken literally (to mean what it says). This position informs the practice of most African Indigenous Churches. They normally preach from Revelation 22:18-19 where the Bible warns people not to add or take away from the words of the book of the prophecy. Literally they interpret Revelation 22:18-19 to mean 'the Bible should be taken as it is and not to be interpreted' (Togarasei 2009). For these AICs, the Bible does not contain scriptures, the Bible is scripture itself (Gunda 2014:147). However, the study does not dwell much on how other AICs interpret the Bible. Instead the study is more concerned about the position of the Bible in JMCN Church.

It can be asked, why so much emphasis on the Bible? For Dickson (1995:47), the Bible is the fundamental source of theology (Dickson, 1995:47). Dickson further argues that any Christian Theology that does not refer to the Bible as its central source is fallacious. Mbiti (1986:53), complements Dickson on that point when he said "the Bible is the principal benchmark for determining the validity of any Christian theology professing to be African". Adding to that Holt (2005:13), argues that any Church spirituality that does not take the centrality of the Bible and Jesus Christ as its norm presents a questionable Church spirituality. Fashole Luke quoted by Mugambi declared that "the Bible is the basic and primary source for the development of African Christian Theology" (Mugambi, 1997:97). Chitando (2010:6) argues that 'indeed one of the significant aspects of the Christian heritage in Africa has been the centrality of the Bible'. Most African Churches are therefore, Churches who are not only comfortable to declare the Bible as the word of God but also take seriously what the Bible says that Jesus himself is the word of God (Gunda 2014).

In contrasting views the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi rejected the Bible outrightly. This is because Johane Masowe taught them that the Bible is irrelevant to Africans. Below is a direct quotation from one member interviewed by Dillon Malone:

He Johane preached that he was the Baptist sent by God to earth. He argued everyone present to adapt the religion of their forefathers, to drink plenty of kaffir beer and eat the meat blessed by our forefathers; further, that we should burn the religious books of the European, as our forefathers did not have books. He suggested that the Bible hymn books and the New Testament should be destroyed, together with all other religious books. He promised that he would carry out baptising after which he would foretell the end of the World (Dillon-Malone 1978).

This theology of Johane Masowe was later supported by a renowned Zimbabwe liberation theologian Canaan Sodidho Banana. For Banana the Bible should be re written it has become irrelevant to people in post-colonial communities. According to him, there are portions of the Bible where the oppressor used to make other people suffer. He also noted that the Bible was written for certain people in a certain community hence we need to come up with our own Bible that speaks highly of our sacred Mountains (Banana 1993:18). Not only Banana subscribe to that view of disregarding the Bible. This notion of the 'Bible as the instrument of oppression' was supported by Mapuranga (2013:1-8) who highlighted how the Bible was rejected by African Women Church leaders such as Mai Chaza of the Guta raJehovah Church in Zimbabwe. Mai Chaza rejected the Bible because for her it was used as the final authority by the western mission Churches to oppress women (Mapuranga 2013:8). In the same manner the JMCN rejected the Bible. Whether they are going to change their position in favor of the Bible, but from the time of this research 2013-2016, the JMCN were not using the Bible as a source of their Church spirituality.

Accordingly, the JMCN Church was in the process of compiling its own sacred Scriptures (Baba Nicholas: 2014). The argument raised by JMCN Church members is that- since there was a time when the Bible was not in existence as a written document but was orally transmitted until a certain period when many eye witnesses were dying like-wise it is also important for them(JMCN) to start compiling the sayings of the spirit for future generations (Nicholas:2014). They also maintained that the Bible was not

written with Africans in mind but was compiled as a historical book for the Ancient near East. Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church members argue that the stories in the Bible are irrelevant to Africans. Africans have their own story to tell, how they encountered God in sacred mountains, pools, caves and under sacred trees.

During their Friday services, Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi always repeat and remind each other on what was taught by Johane, Emanuweri and Sanders/Sandros. On one occasion during my participant observation a certain old man stood up to correct members on how to sit at Masowe (seating arrangement). He started by chanting the church slogan *Rufaro kwamuri, Rufaro kwamuri, Rufarooo* (Joy unto you, Joy unto you, Joyeeeeee.) Then he proceeded:

Men and Women have we forgotten what Emanuweri taught us; how we should sit at Masowe? We were taught that we should sit in straight lines so that the Angel *Gaburona* (Gabriel) will be able to take nice pictures from heaven.” (Anonymous member: 2014).

After his address members of church started reorganizing themselves into the proper sitting arrangement. The whole service which runs from 9am to 3pm is punctuated by songs, reciting of their formulated Ten Commandments, *gumi remitemo*, the sayings of the spirit, *tsanangudzo dzemweya*,) Masowe law and regulations, *miko nemirairo* that constitute the teachings of Johane, Emanuweri and Sanders. The service will end with healing and exorcism, *kushandirwa*. There is no reading of the Bible for they believe that they receive ‘live and direct’(Engelke 2007:55) from God.

The study noted that although Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Churches rejects the reading of the Bible, there are similar occurrences and Biblical references. A notable example for Bishau (2010) is the *gumi remitemo*, Ten Commandments. Johane Masowe Chishanu yeNyenyedzi observes the Biblical Ten Commandments with some slight changes in the order and phraseology. Their Ten Commandments are as follow:

- Do not have other gods before Me;
- Honor your Father and Mother;
- Keep Friday as a scared day of worship;

- You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain;
- You shall not murder;
- You shall not steal;
- You shall not covet;
- You shall not commit adultery;
- You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour; and
- Love your neighbor as yourself (Baba Morris: 2014).

The implication of these Ten Commandments is that Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi accepted the centrality of the Biblical Ten Commandments. Contrastingly, from the data gathered from the interviews conducted the Church insiders argue that the similarity between the Ten Commandments in the Bible with Masowe yeNyenyedzi *gumi remitemo* is a clear testimony that God's revelation is in continuous process; as God was with Moses so is He with African Prophets and Church Leaders (Madzibaba Painos: 2014). These Ten Commandments are repeated over and over again and that makes part of their main preaching. *Gumi remitemo* was introduced by *Mudyiwa Dzangara (Emanuweri)*. These Ten Commandments are part of the scripture in the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church. Congregants confess their sins, those who will be found missing the mark in accordance to Ten Commandments are also called upon by the Church leadership to confess to their sins. Congregants will confess to their sins in turns; chanting the slogan then confessing their sins publicly. The common sins confessed were: *ruchiva* (lust), hatred *ruvengo*, and un-forgiveness *kusaregerera*.

Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church observes certain dietary laws rigorously. The dietary Laws are referred to as *miko* in Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church religious semantic. According to Baba Painos (2014) a member who deviates from *miko* (dietary laws), *mutumwa* (Angel) *Gaburona (Masowe semantic)* will remove the protection from such individuals (Baba Painos: 2014). Accordingly, a true member of Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church observes the following dietary laws among others:

- They do not eat animals whose hoofs are not divided;
- They do not eat animals which do not chew the cud;

- They do not eat animals that stay under the water that do not have fins nor scales;
- They do not eat meat that was dedicated to the worship of ancestors; and
- They do not smoke or drink alcohol.

Again the study observes similarity with the Old Testament dietary laws given to Israelites by God (Leviticus 11:1ff). The study argues that the above mentioned dietary laws must be strictly observed in this new religious movement in Zimbabwe. During *musangano weNyenyedzi*, the Star Conference held in Gweru, members were encouraged to confess everything including sin of disobeying the dietary laws in one way or the other. If you leave out sin unconfessed the Star, Nyenyedzi will not consider you as a registered member in the Masowe spiritual world (Baba Morris: 2014).

On a critical note though Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church claims to be Christian who do not read the Bible the Biblical yet their dietary laws and the Ten Commandment are clear evidence that this new religious movement selectively reads and applies the Bible. This therefore, typifies notable features of a New Religious Movement or what can termed a syncretic movement. A New Religious Movement is a religious movement that promotes double standards in terms of its doctrine. In this case Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi cannot be fully referred to as a Christian church, neither can it be referred to as fully African Traditional religious movement hence its classification as a New Religious Movement. Apart from the dietary laws Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church doctrine is centered on what is referred to as *mirairo paMasowe*, General regulations.

There is what they call *mirairo paMasowe* (general regulations of Johane Masowe yeNyenyedzi Church). It was found out that These Johane Masowe yeNyenyedzi Church have the following general regulations;

- Marriage laws, i.e. courtship and paying of brides price (lobola)
- Burial rituals for a member
- What to eat and what not to eat during funerals and fasting
- What to wear for men and women during service
- Sitting arrangements at Masowe and their justification
- Water baptism in sacred dams and pools.

The study also observed that these general laws and regulations in the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church constitute the Church's Spirituality. Members of these new religious movements are so observatory and religious to these laws in addition to the dietary laws. These general regulations will be discussed in Chapter 6 of the study when a discussion on the spirituality of the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church in Zimbabwe. The following section deals with the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church and its perspectives on the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

The doctrine of Trinity originated from the patristic tradition. Initially the doctrine sought to reconcile particular understandings of Jesus Christ with monotheistic views of God (Parker 1965). Thus in the Trinitarian doctrine, God is three persons in one - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This term Trinity was first used by Tertullian (160-225, CE) (McGrath 1994:66). He was the first of the church fathers with a typically "western style", and in many respects he was the founder of the western theological tradition (McGrath 1994:67). The idea of the Trinity came up because the early church was worshipping Jesus Christ alongside His Father and the Holy Spirit. For the early church, Jesus was a unique being who had come to save the people such that HE became the focus of worship (Parker 1965). Apart from Jesus Christ and God, the Holy Spirit was valued as part of the God-head. The Holy Spirit was regarded by the church as representative of the resurrection of Christ.

The Old Testament does not have an elaborate idea of the Trinity except for some few glimpses of the Trinity (Genesis 1:2-2, Exodus 3:13-14, Number 6:22-27, Isaiah 6:3). However it is in the New Testament where one finds the idea of the Trinitarian God in its totality. For example, in Mathew 28:19, it is stated: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit". Thus, for the person to be fully Christian one has to be baptised in these three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The same idea about the Trinitarian God is also contained in II Corinthians 13: 4. Therefore, the New Testament gives us a clear connection between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Wherever the Holy Spirit is mentioned, the Father and the Son are also mentioned (I Corinthians 12: 4-16, II Corinthians 1: 20, Galatians 4:6, Ephesians 2: 20-22,

Thessalonians 2: 13-14, Titus 3: 4-6, I Peter 1: 2). All these scriptures reflect the connection between these three Beings.

However, for the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi doctrine, Jesus Christ is not considered equal to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. For them Jesus Christ was not God but just a messenger, *mutumwa waMwari* of God. To them, Jesus Christ is just like Johane Masowe, Emanuweri Mudyiwa or Sanders Nhamoyebonde Nyenyedzi. The only difference between them is that Jesus Christ was sent by God to the white communities while the three, Johane, Emanuweri and Sanders were sent by God to black communities. Mabvurira et al. (2015:14) observed that the Johane Masowe we Chishanu's Trinitarian doctrine is shrouded by *mutumbi mitatu* such that even when they give muteuro at most three is the dividing number. They give three stones to go and put in bathing water for healing and cleansing from *minyama*.

It is against this background that the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church's Trinitarian doctrine is not aligned to the Biblical Trinitarian teaching of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is not God for them but is just like any other Prophet God sent to the white communities. However, the Holy Spirit features more vividly in their Church doctrine than Jesus Christ. Hence, for Amanze, any Church movement that does not appreciate the divinity of Jesus Christ presents a Christian spirituality which cannot be classified as authentic (Amanze 1998:56). In his study on Christianity in Botswana, Amanze noted one Church Guta RaJehovah, a Church founded in Zimbabwe by Mai Chaza where he found out that this Church presented a questionable form of Christian spirituality due to its Trinitarian doctrine.

This conclusion was based on the Church's teachings which center around Mai Chaza who was renamed *Musiki/Creator* as one of the God heads who was present during the creation of the world (Amanze 1998a) Thus, for Guta raJehovah the Trinity comprises God the Father, God Mai Chaza and God the Holy Spirit. It is in the same vain that the study debates the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church spirituality. Comparing the Trinitarian doctrines presented in the JMCN and in the Guta Ra Jehovah we concluded that these two Zimbabwean Churches present questionable

Church spiritualities. Christian Spirituality in simple terms is the spirituality of Christ of which JMCN and Guta Ra Jehovah rejected contesting for live and direct communication with God the Father. The next section deals with the doctrine of Salvation in the JMCN Church of Zimbabwe.

The etymology of the term soteriology is from the Greek words *soter*, “savior” and *soteria*, “salvation” (McGrath 1994:318). It is generally accepted that Christians believe that through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary human beings were saved from their sins (McGrath 1994:319). As a result of this position, the study investigates the doctrine of salvation in the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church in Zimbabwe.

For most AICs the Old Testament was a precursor pointing to the coming of Jesus Christ who was God incarnate to save human beings from their sins and the power of death. Thus, salvation is summarized in AICs as the spiritual and physical liberation or deliverance of Church members in times of trouble during their earthly lives. Salvation is thus expressed in such acts of healing, exorcising of evil spirits, enablement of the individual self, fertility and promotion in one’s earthly ventures (Masondo 2014:3). It is also expressed as deliverance from physical evils such as poverty and the general lack of material provisions such as housing. It is on these grounds that the prosperity Gospel Churches resonate with the populace hence their prominence in most AICs in Zimbabwe. Scriptures such as (2 Corinthians 8:9) are literally translated to mean that since Jesus Christ became materially poor today’s Christians need to become materially rich. Salvation in these churches also denotes victory over one’s earthly enemies (Numbers 23-24). In most AICs enemies are witches and evil spirits which threaten good health, prosperity and longevity of life.

Besides linking to the New Testament, AICs use and identify themselves with the Old Testament’s literal teachings. Hence concerning revelation and salvation, God’s self-revelation and agency are argued to exist in and through Jesus Christ. As such, the Christ-event (incarnation, life, teaching death, resurrection and ascension) is the centre of redemptive history in most of these African Indigenous Churches today.

While other AICs put Christ Jesus at the centre for salvation the study observed that the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi replaced the salvific work of Jesus Christ with the works of their Church fathers-Johane, Emanuweri and Nyenyedzi. For them, God sent black Messianic figures to black communities as he did sending the white messianic figures as John the Baptist and Jesus Christ respectively. Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church invited strong criticisms to itself particularly regarding their understanding and interpreting of the person and work of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of Christology.

It has been argued that because of their overemphasis on the work of Johane Masowe, Emanuweri Mudyiwa and Sanders Nyenyedzi, these Churches presented what can be termed a weak Christology. Jesus Christ is not mentioned throughout Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi Church services. The over 50 sermons preached in the Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi during all my participant observation services, not even one sermon mentioned the importance of Jesus Christ. Even in their prayers though they draw the cross sign like the Roman Catholic Church does they do not mention the name of Jesus Christ. Additionally, the name of Jesus Christ was not even called upon even when they prayed for the sick and those in need for spiritual deliverance like other AICs do. As mentioned earlier on, there was no Bible reading throughout the day during the church service. Instead of reading the Bible, various preachers talk about the importance of the founders of the Church, Johane, Emanuweri and Nyenyedzi. Another noteworthy finding is that the Church did not mention the Lord's Supper in any of their teachings and rituals.

It was argued elsewhere in these pages that African Indigenous Churches (AICs) present authentic Christian churches. The reason for that submission is the finding that all AICs are biblically oriented and worshipping the Christian Trinitarian God. This is the popular subscription amongst many African theologians such as Chitando (2013), Gunda (2013) and Maposa (2014). They argue that the worshipping of a Triune God is evidenced in almost all AICs. These scholars argue that the earlier scholars who studied AICs misjudged AICs as either post-Christian, Non-Christian or New Religious movements because they failed to account for AICs' legitimate concern of contextualising the Christian message into African cultural and

religious background. For Clarke (2006:72) AICs are in fact genuine Christian churches with a presupposed doctrine of a Triune God, clear Christology, prominent pneumatology, and a realized-futuristic eschatology.

Earlier paragraphs of the study demonstrated that JMCN Church completely substituted the mediator-ship role of Jesus Christ with their African spiritual leaders. It was also highlighted that the Church presents a Trinitarian doctrine that is not original but rather adulterated. The major criticism raised in the study against the JMCN Church spirituality are; neglecting Christ for salvation; neglecting the Bible for Church Theology and neglecting Lord's Supper a sacrament that reminds Christians that Jesus Christ died and rose again. It is against this background that the following sub-section deals with the doctrine of Pneumatology in the JMCN Church in Zimbabwe.

From data collected through key informant interviews and participant observation, the study observed that the only doctrine of Pneumatology dominated in the theology of this Church movement. The bulk of the time during their church services were allocated to the Spirit that in their religious semantic is termed *nguva ye tsanangudzo* (time for explanations). This event is second to what they call *nhoroondo ya Johane* (the call of Johane Masowe). This call of Johane Masowe is for them the major preaching of each day as they gather at *Masowe* (open space for worship). They take turns to remind one another about the spiritual journeys of Johane Masowe, Emanuweri Mudyiwa up to the time of the star (*Nyenyedzi*).

After this long service members of the Church embark on a short break as they prepare for another long section of *tsanangudzo dzemweya* a session that normally takes three hours while members sit and listen to the Spirit. Likewise *vakokeri vomweya* (those with the gift of prophecy) will be given turns to tell the congregation what they claim to have received from God. For Engelke (2007:55) the doctrine of Pneumatology is very central in all Masowe Churches as they emphasize "live and direct" communication with God. Engelke further argues that *Masowe* tradition is unique in making the claim that God communicates with his people through the spirit (*mweya*) (Engelke 2007:56). The study prescribes to the view that the doctrine of Pneumatology

is at the heart of the JMCN resulting in the doctrine of the Bible, Trinity and Christology being sidelined.

The central argument of the study as presented in this chapter and other preceding chapters is that the JMCN Church in Zimbabwe in its efforts to inculcate African spiritual elements of faith into Christianity created for questioning its authenticity. Following the description given in the study, it can be concluded that the JMCN replaced the doctrine of the Bible; the doctrine of Christ; the doctrine of Biblical salvation and the doctrine of Trinity with African spiritual elements. The Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi in its process of inculturating African spiritual elements of faith ended up minimizing the centrality of the gospel by ignoring the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; downplaying the role of the salvific role of Jesus Christ; denying the doctrine of Trinity and neglecting the authority of the Bible. For them Christ of the Bible was sent by God to White communities and not to Black Africans. The following Chapter deals with sacred places, religious rituals and objects of worship used by the JMCN Church. This following Chapter presents some of the study's key findings and it also shades more light on the Church spirituality.