

**Women and Male Power: A Study of the Missional Policy of the  
African Independent Church in Northern Zambia**

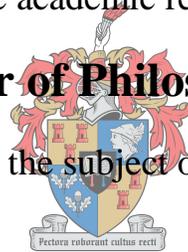
by

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**PROMOTOR**

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March 2018

## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

November 2017

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## ABSTRACT

This is a missiological study about the lived experiences of Bemba women in the Mutima Church in Northern Zambia. It seeks to interrogate how these women respond to the male-formulated policy in the church. The methodology of this study was guided by the feminist narrative methods of inquiry. It adopted a qualitative approach to answer the research question: “How does the male-formulated missional policy affect ordained women’s lives and influence their functions in the Mutima Church?” To make meaning of the life experiences of the women, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation and document review. The population of the study was female priests, male priests and former members of the church, comprising twenty female priests, five male priests and two former members of the church. In this study, data were analysed thematically.

The study found that the Mutima Church teachings are ingrained in the minds of members. This makes them not to question the teachings of the chief priest who is the founder of the church. For example, in the process of performing their ministerial duties, some ordained female priests, who vow not to get married, conceive and give birth to children known as *children of the spirit*. The belief is that the *children of the spirit* are gifts from God, since their biological father [who is the church founder] also receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is a religious ideology that is ingrained in the minds of Mutima Church members. The study has also shown that the founder of the church uses both Bemba culture and Biblical scriptures to formulate the church policy.

The findings also show that both holy patriarch and African [Bemba] patriarch are at work in the church founder’s teachings and formulation of the policy. These teachings and formulation of the Mutima Church policy are embedded in patriarchal ideologies, which include Biblical, cultural, policy and hegemony. In addition to the arguments by some feminist theologians in the study, I have shown that these patriarchal ideologies are power structures that interlock with each other. In the Biblical traditions, the church founder has portrayed himself as a patriarch, while in the royal Bemba tradition, he projected himself as royalty.

## OPSOMMING

Dit is 'n missiologiese studie van die ervarings van Bemba-vroue in die Mutima-kerk in Noord-Zambië. Dit beoog om die vraag te beantwoord hoe hierdie vroue reageer op die man-geformuleerde beleid in die kerk. Die metodologie van hierdie studie is gelei deur die feministiese narratiewe metodes van ondersoek. Dit het 'n kwalitatiewe benadering aangeneem om die navorsingsvraag te beantwoord: "Hoe beïnvloed die manlike geformuleerde sendingbeleid die lewens van die geordende vroue en beïnvloed hulle funksies in die Mutima-kerk?" Om sin te maak van die lewenservarings van vroue, word data ingesamel deur diepte onderhoude, deelnemende waarneming en dokumentêre hersiening. Die bevolking van die studie was vroulike priesters, manlike priesters en voormalige kerklede, bestaande uit twintig vroulike priesters, vyf manlike priesters en twee voormalige kerklede. In hierdie studie is data deeglik ontleed.

Die studie het bevind dat die leringe van die Mutima-kerk in die gedagtes van lede gebring is. Dit bevraagteken nie die leerstellings van die owerpriester wat die stigter van die kerk is nie. Byvoorbeeld, in die proses om hul ministeriële pligte uit te voer, is sommige voorgeskrewe vroulike priesters wat nie glo om te trou nie, geboorte gee aan kinders wat bekend staan as kinders van die heilige gees. Hulle glo dat die kinders van die gees geskenke van God is, aangesien hulle biologiese vader [wie die stigter van die kerk is] ook die gawe van die Heilige Gees ontvang. Dit is 'n religieuse ideologie wat in die gedagtes van lede van die Mutima-kerk gebring is. Die studie het ook getoon dat die stigter van die kerk beide Bemba-kultuur en Bybelse skrifte gebruik het om die kerkbeleid te formuleer.

Daarbenewens wys die bevindinge dat beide die heilige patriarg en die Afrika-[Bemba] patriarg in beheer is van die kerk se stigters se leerstellings en formulering van kerkbeleid. Hierdie leerstellings en formuleringe van die Mutima-kerkbeleid is ingebed in patriargale ideologieë, insluitende Bybelse, kulturele, beleid en hegemonie. Benewens die argumente van sommige feministiese teoloë in die studie het ek getoon dat hierdie patriargale ideologieë ineenstortbare strukture is. In die Bybelse tradisies het die kerk stigter homself as 'n patriarg uitgebeeld, terwyl hy in die koninklike Bemba-tradisie homself as koninkryk geprojekteer het.

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I have not forgotten my friends and colleagues in Pietermaritzburg, many of them holders of academic doctoral degrees. I would have loved to mention them by name - all those who helped me but – due to lack of space, let me thank you collectively. I value and treasure your support and encouragement.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to:

My late parents, Isaac Wampembe Sikazwe and Sarah Lunga Nakazwe. You would have loved to see your youngest daughter attain the highest academic qualification, but I know both of you have guided me in spirit.

All the innocent members of the Mutima Church. May God guide and protect you through and through.

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## MAP OF ZAMBIA

Map of Zambia showing its provinces and neighbouring countries.



Source: <http://www.zambiaflora.com/speciesdata/about.php><sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Flora of Zambia. 2017. [Online]. Available: <http://www.zambiaflora.com/speciesdata/about.php>. [2017, 22 October].

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

AICs	African Initiated Churches/African Independent Churches
AMWU	African Mineworkers Union
ANC	African National Congress
ATR	African Traditional Religions
ATUC	African Trade Union Congress
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CIRCLE	The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians
CMS	Church Missionary Society
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
LMS	London Missionary Society
NJs	Nurses of Jesus
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
UAWA	United African Welfare Associations
UMCA	The Universities' Mission to Central Africa
UNIP	United National Independence Party
WAs	Welfare Associations
WFs	White Fathers
SMA	Society of the Missionaries of Africa
ZANC	Zambia National Congress

## CHAPTER 1

# Women and Male Power in the African Independent Church of Zambia

### 1.1. Introduction and Focus of Study

This study is about Bemba women's experiences of policy in one of the African Independent Churches in Northern Zambia. It is a missiological study that seeks to interrogate some Bemba women's experiences of male power involved in that policy. The Church in question is officially called the Bamutima Church or Mutima Church. It was founded in Zambia in 1950 by Mr. Emilio Chishimba Mulolani<sup>2</sup>, a Bemba. Chishimba served for three years in a Roman Catholic Seminary.

This study is interdisciplinary. It integrates the process by which ideas, data and information, methods, tools, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines are connected or blended (Repko, 2012:54). Although the focus is on a theological/ethnological/ missiological perspective, the study is also informed by sociological, anthropological and psychological perspectives. Montgomery (2012:289) defines missiology as "an interdisciplinary field that draws on a variety of areas of study, including the social sciences. The social sciences, just as the natural sciences, are useful tools for increasing knowledge and benefiting humanity". In order to broaden our understanding, anthropologists live among the people, learn to speak their language, think in their concepts and feel their values. An anthropologist experiences, and critically interprets the categories of his or her own culture in terms of the general body of knowledge in his or her discipline. In so doing, an anthropologist may be able to translate from one culture to the next (Evans-Pritchard, 1962:148).

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<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Emilio Chishimba Mulolani died in February 2015. However, Chishimba had been interviewed by some missionaries who were interested in conducting research, for instance, Hugo Hinfelaar (1994), Marla Hinfelaar (2002) and Gary Burlington (2008 and 1998), to mention a few. These missionaries lived with the members of the Mutima Church for almost one year, at different times. They learnt some of the values and practices of the church and subsequently wrote articles concerning the Mutima Church. Before his death in February 2015, Chishimba had also written a book called *Kambelenge anga Nimpelwa*, meaning (Let me read, if I am given) and some other Church documents. All these documents were written in the Bemba language. They are sold within and outside the Church. At the moment, the researcher is in possession of some of these unpublished documents, such as *Kambelenge anga Nimpelwa* (1971).

This may be the only way by which an anthropologist translates from one culture to the next, without engaging and interacting with human beings. One may not study the religious beliefs of a particular group of people in isolation. According to Sidky (2015:2) religious practices and beliefs are not studied in isolation, as distinct categories of experience and action, but in terms of how they articulate with other aspects of culture such as economics, politics, social organization, family life, and artistic traditions. In Sidky's words, this is referred to as "...anthropology's holistic approach" (Sidky, 2015:2).

Sidky, (2015:1) also argues, that the work of an anthropologist is to familiarize oneself with the natives' values, logic, and beliefs, to allow oneself to understand the world from the participants' cultural point of view. The anthropologist has a variety of tasks to fulfill; building and broadening personal knowledge of cultural diversity and documenting certain particular religious traditions through field research. Sidky (2015:2) observes that this provides an in-depth, broad, comparative and cross-cultural analysis whereby generalizations are based upon the entire spectrum of religions called ethnology. An enterprise of ethnology, is where the systematic comparison of related and unrelated cultures around the globe examines similarities and differences in order to answer particular questions and produce useful theoretical generalizations (Sidky, 2015:2). This is the reason this study has to include some aspects of ethnological approach because it examines the Bemba culture and religious practices within the Christian sphere.

Since Bemba culture, customs and traditions constitute a critical component of the church's character, this study is also a missiological one, with ethnological dimensions which will be explored as the study advances in the successive chapters. The Mutima Church, like any other African Independent Church, operates within Bemba cultural settings and frameworks. This is a study of an African Initiated or Indigenous Church as a Church founded by a Zambian, and which in no sense receives any assistance from foreign missionaries or congregations. An Independent Church is one which has decided to isolate itself from Mainline Churches but receives assistance from foreign congregations. Sundkler (1961:18) defines African Initiated or Independent or Indigenous Churches (AICs) as churches initiated by Africans rather than foreign missionary agendas. He asserts that many AIC's still use Orthodox Christian beliefs as well as African cultural practices that are not found in the so-called Mainline Churches (Sundkler, 1961:18).

Since the focus of this study is the policy of the Mutima Church and women's experiences thereof, it is imperative that the study defines, explains and highlights which policy is entailed in the context of the study. Etymologically, the word "policy" is derived from the Latin root "polity". It denotes "governance", "direction" or "order". Haddad (1995:18) defines policy as "an explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions." In the light of this, policy is related to the act or the idea of "leadership" or the issue of governance. It is about the "governing" or "ordering" of people. Nakamura and Smallwood (1980:31) assert that "a policy can be thought of as a set of instructions from policy makers to policy implementers that spell out both goals and the means for achieving those goals." It relates to the way people are managed or ordered. Hence, policy and leadership are intrinsically inseparable. In this respect, policy is used as a tool or means to govern or lead.

For the purpose of this study, Church policy entails a "received" body of divine revelations from Chishimba, enshrined in documents which function as authoritative (teaching), and a belief system mediated by a pedagogical form. In other words, policy relates to the body of knowledge in the form of "divine revelation" cast within Bemba cultural mythology and Biblical tradition. There is a link between knowledge and power. What is implied is that behind the issue of revealed knowledge lies the issue of power, since knowledge is an issue of power, and people with knowledge seem to possess power in the Mutima Church.

Since policy in the Mutima Church is a set of instructions formulated by Chishimba, a male policy maker, issues pertaining to patriarchy undoubtedly underlie this study. However, Fiorenza (2009:110) strongly argues that patriarchy should be reconceptualised as *kyriarchy*. She observes that *kyriarchy* is a neologism derived from the Greek word *kyrios* (Lord, master, father, husband) and the word *archein* (to rule or dominate). According to Fiorenza (2009:112), "*Kyriarchy* is best theorized as a complex pyramidal system of intersecting multiplicative social and religious structures of superordination and subordination, of ruling and oppression. *Kyriarchal* relations of domination are built on elite male property rights, as well as on the exploitation, dependency, inferiority and obedience of wo/men".<sup>3</sup> In Fiorenza's case, *Kyriarchy* builds on the existing

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<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2011) explains that due to the brokenness and inadequacy of the human language, some readers read "woman" as a subject and/or object of inquiry. She refers to her own work as "decolonizing" the human language. She insists that women do not share a unitary essence but are multiple and fractured in many

structures of oppression and subordination. For Fiorenza, both patriarchal and *kyriarchal* structures are intertwined, since they both work to the detriment of women.

According to Fiorenza (1996:167), "...even feminist studies remain caught up in the kyriocentric horizon and preconstructed frame of meaning determined by hegemonic cultural and religious notions of femininity". Fiorenza's view is that a close look at women's studies reveal that there are issues of power that are ingrained in cultural and religious ideologies conceived by some women. These ideologies reveal that women are not able to outline the differences between what they ought to do as women, and what culture expects them to do. In the light of this exposition, it is evident that a very close nexus exists between, on the one hand knowledge, policy and leadership, and on the other, Bemba women.

## **1.2. Policy, Male Power, Leadership, and Mission**

In the Mutima Church, missional policy entails the transmission of doctrinal teachings and beliefs to the members. For example, in one of the *Sabbath Lessons documents*, Mary is called "Oh Precious Mother of King, the Parent of Power, our Redeemer who loves us so much..." (Chishimba, 1997:10). This is one of the doctrinal teachings that members recite in reverence to Mary, Mother of Jesus, every Saturday. It is from this perspective that Chishimba teaches the concept of Mariology<sup>4</sup> in his Church. What is entailed by the missional policy of teaching in this case is the Mutima Church's transmission of its enshrined Roman Catholic values, rituals and traditions, and how it engages these in a cross-cultural missional praxis amongst the Bemba people.

For instance, Burlington (1998:75) asserts that in the Mutima Church, Chishimba teaches that "...God is essentially androgynous in nature; five (rather than three) in person. Jesus embodies God's male nature and is the Savior for Europeans. Mary embodies God's feminine nature in her role as Africa's Savior".<sup>5</sup> However, what Chishimba means by stating that the nature of God is five rather than three is that in Bemba culture the clan is unique, because it constitutes an

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different ways by race, class, age, sexuality and gender (Fiorenza, 2011:6). To this end, Fiorenza's use of wo/man is one way of indicating this fracture.

<sup>4</sup> Mariology is the study of Mary, Mother of Jesus. This concept is explored further in Chapters Two and Four of this study.

<sup>5</sup> The teaching about Mary, Mother of Jesus, has been of great importance to members as the model that must be imitated in the Mutima Church. This is also stated by Fiorenza (2011:198).

extended family. Therefore, instead of referring to the Triune nature of God, that is, God the Father, Holy Spirit and Jesus, the Son, Mutima Church members are taught that the attributes of God consist of God the Father, the Holy Spirit, Jesus the Son, Grandfather and Grandmother (Chishimba, 1974:4-5).

The concept of involving the Grandfather and Grandmother also comes from the Bemba culture,<sup>6</sup> where Grandparents are recognized, respected and have more authority. It is not just the issue of Grandparents that is enshrined in Mutima Church practices and documents; members revere a variety of rituals and symbols. Commenting on African symbols and rituals, Majawa (2005:98) argues that “in all African cultures, symbols [and rituals] play a vital role in the life of the people. Our culture is a symbolic culture. We find symbols in our dances, in our language, in our art and craft, in our institutions such as marriage and chieftaincy everywhere”. Hence, in our cultures and religious circles, we find symbols of almost every activity. Cultures and religions are intertwined; they complement each other in the process of inculturation, just as rituals and symbols do.

To this end, the enshrined values and traditions may either be documented in official Church documents or may be orally communicated by church officials. In this respect, policy will entail either orally transmitted statutes, values and traditions or documented statements in the form of beliefs or teachings and practices that affect the Bemba people, especially women. This is offered as a form of agency. De Gruchy (2003:28) argues that for agency to mean anything it cannot be a question of mindless action. It is also a contribution at the level of theory to “values and priorities”, so that all the opportunities for political, social, psychological and economic life are to be shaped by all, including the poor, and not just the dominant elites.

There seems to be a natural affinity between missional praxis, policy and agency. De Gruchy’s argument is that people should be at liberty to choose the kind of lifestyle that is associated with

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<sup>6</sup> In referring to “Bemba women and culture”, this study uses Bemba as an umbrella term. The reason is that within the Mutima Church of Zambia there are different groups of Bemba people, coming from various provinces. For instance, the Luapula people(s) are also part of the large Bemba-speaking group in Zambia. The differences within the other groups are due mainly to the Luapula Bemba-speaking tribes being primarily fishermen. The Bemba people hold in common the feature of organization in matrilineal clans. They include the Bemba, Bisa, Aushi, Ngumbu, Chishinga, Mukulu, Kawendi, Shila, Tabwa and Lamba, to mention a few (Cunnison Ian, 1959:2). All these occupy much of North-Eastern Zambia, and extend into South-Eastern Katanga. This also includes the whole of Kasama, Mpika, Chinsali, Luwingu and Mporokoso. To the west, south and east are the Bisa. To the west, further into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), are the Aushi and their sub-groups. The Mambwe-Lungu are found in the northern provinces of North-Eastern Zambia (See Cunnison Ian. 1959 and Whiteley, W. 1951).

what they have, regardless of money or other social and political activities. To this end, agency relates to the implementation of the teachings which in fact relate to the aims and vision of the mission church. In dealing with agency there is a need to take into consideration the role of women, since some are mothers who deal with needy people (de Gruchy, 2003:28). Our mission is God's work, and love towards us. Since it is God's work, we should be rejoicing in carrying out God's own work, as Bosch asserts (2011:402).

Furthermore, de Gruchy (2003:28) is of the view that a concern with women's position in society is not enough. There ought to be other ways of empowering women. He asserts that women, in their own struggle for survival, use certain strategies that need to be recognized and documented. In this context, they are the teachings of the church, which in fact bear on family life. Implicit in these are issues of authority, power, policy and the leadership of the church and its relationship with women. Just as women's divisions are intertwined with class divisions, so are culture and nationality (Oduyoye, 1995:48). It is from this perspective that the topic under study seeks to investigate the experiences of some Bemba women and how they understand and interpret the missional policy of the Mutima Church. The study falls within the broader perspective of the relationship between women, and the policies of embedded male power within the Mutima Church.

This study will consider the interface between male power, leadership, mission and policy, which are all used as instruments interrelated to the ministerial duties of the members of the Mutima Church. As knowledge is generally linked to power, this study argues that power is also related to knowledge and influences specific people in social situations. For this reason, Purvis (1993:20) defines power as "the ability to accomplish desired ends and social power [or] the ability of one individual or group to affect the behavior of another individual or group". To this end, the study defines power as an instrument used by a male person to impart knowledge or teachings to others.

An African priest having power as knowledge has acquired such knowledge from certain sources, and is therefore using knowledge as a skill to teach and convert people to African Christianity.<sup>7</sup> Becker (1996:164) defines power as "the capacity to produce change". This means there are possibilities for changing or influencing the mindset of others. This kind of power is what is

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<sup>7</sup> The term "African Christianity" in this dissertation indicates the Good News of Jesus Christ and the world views of some Bemba people in the Mutima Church.

known as silent and subtle (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999:22). It is silent in some way and positive, because members are being taught how to read and understand the Bible and imitate the kind of lifestyle experienced by the Israelites in Old Testament times.

Malina (1983:26) defines power as "...the ability to exercise control over the behavior of others". He views power as a symbol that should not be confused with physical force. For Malina (1983:26), power is also associated with the weak. He states that some parents and teachers often control the behaviour of children without the use of physical force. But, in exercising their power, these characters create very real unpleasant consequences for those under their sway (Malina, 1983:26). However, Malina does not view power as a form of violence that is applied by some teachers and parents.

This study argues that power can also be associated with physical force, for example, as in the Biblical text of 2 Sam. 13:1-22. Because of lust, Amnon used his physical power, overpowering and raping Tamar, his half-sister. In this quotation, O'Donovan (1996:286) argues that "Tamar was actually willing to marry Amnon, if necessary, but Amnon was unwilling to wait for marriage to satisfy his desire for her (2 Sam. 13:13-14)". Malina (1986:82) also defines power as "the capacity to produce conformity". However, Chishimba does not use physical power in his Church. Instead, he uses his power to maintain the tradition of the Church. Malina (1986:82) further argues that power is the ability to get results from social interaction by simply requiring the performance of some binding obligation or duty. The person with power is perceived to have the right to require others to perform some obligation. This is because the use of power is of itself deemed necessary to satisfy members of that group.

This study defines male power as the capacity of a man to influence other people to perform some obligation because it is deemed necessary for society, in this case, the Mutima Church. Chishimba's use of power is invisible because he indirectly influences the attitudes and behaviour of his members who have become so submissive and obedient to him. This submissiveness and obedience become a hidden imperative, whereby *Holy patriarchy* plays its role through religious ideology, hegemony and culture (see Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991:22-23; Scott, 1990:4 and Ramphela, 1989:188).

Becker (1996:164) argues that there are two legitimate definitions of power, firstly as a capacity which she interprets as "power within" and secondly, a leader's ability to empower (or dominate)

others. Becker sees that power lies in the hands of those who are able to dominate. She continues to assert that “[p]ower *as commodity* is power over” (Becker, 1996:164). This kind of power is more authoritative. In the same way, Clegg (1975:1) defines power as “...an ability to do something...to control or influence others...to impose one’s will... something that power does. [I]ts ‘strength, force, vigour, energy’ [have]” it is suggested, is an ability which consists of controlling or influencing others.

Similarly, Weber (1968:2) provides two approaches to power that are constructed by human beings. These are institutionally-based and interpersonal types of power. In the first, Weber (1968:2) stresses that “persons who are in positions to employ an institution’s power resources are considered powerful...when kings were thought divine, power was adhered to kinship whether the incumbent was an idiot in his use of power, like George III, or a genius, like Peter the Great”. Weber (1968:2) suggests that “a second approach is to view power as the result of specific interpersonal relationships. Here, regardless of money, military...what is common to all is a relationship between two men, [or women], one of whom induces another to do the former’s will”. Both arguments approached by Weber may be relevant to this study, because Chishimba is believed to have received divine revelations from God. The second approach to power involves relationships or intra-relationships between Chishimba, who is a male, and various female priests. All these characteristics can be viewed within the interface of church and culture, as outlined in the following section.

### **1.3 Church and Culture**

The church in Africa has largely situated its congregations in the midst of variety of cultures. This has allowed mutual dialogue between Christianity and African cultures. Lee and Bevans (2016:201) observe that culture is similar to “a web of interconnected values, customs, practices, kinship relationship and the like, that create the ‘world’ in which people live”. This has been exemplified by Christian Doctrine as the Great Commission of Christ in which he sent his disciples to ‘Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations’ (Matt 28:19) by all appearances pertinent to the Mutima Church context. The latter redirects focus from missions relating to the Mutima Church, to how missions will relate to both the Bemba culture and Christianity. The lens of inculturation to interrogate the issues of policy, male power, leadership and mission in this study must therefore be applied.

Inculturation is defined as a process of reliving the incarnation itself, along with demanding the inculcation of the Gospel within the essence and heart of a culture. It is an interaction between two cultures that involves a process of exchange, for instance, where new insights are gained about the message of Christ, reflecting the inter-relation between the evangelist and evangelized with ensuing questions being posed by either. Inculturation is a process of dialogue between a community of faith and cultures (Arbuckle, 1990:18 -21). In the latter regard therefore with respect to inculturation, Chishimba's use of missional policy, leadership and power are to be perceived from his interaction with the Gospel, within the heart of the Bemba culture. The concept of inculturation is discussed further in chapter two ( see section 2.8). The following section defines the concept of leadership.

#### **1.4 Defining Leadership**

Willhauck and Thorpe (2001:142) are of the view that it is possible for leaders in a local, regional or national congregation to become followers and the "...usual followers will find themselves leading and getting things done. Leadership will recreate and 'make-over' the idea of following. Role reversal will mean that people who are used to taking charge will have to learn how to follow and support others". This means that the concept of leadership is about human beings taking turns in guiding others. Hence, the definition is wide and diverse. Willhauck and Thorpe (2001:99) state that leadership of this nature is proactive, and it responds to the needs of the congregants. In short, they state that this type of leadership allows the vision of God to direct it.

Willhauck and Thorpe (2001:98) further suggest that leadership is an effective web that recognizes and negotiates power dynamics between cultures and diverse groups, spinning ties among them, and modeling the hospitality mandated by [their] tradition. They contend that "[l]eadership for diversity is relational and transcends special interests and ideology and moves toward common interests and goals. It develops strategies for true conversation and turn-taking" (Willhauck and Thorpe, 2001:99). For Willhauck and Thorpe, leadership that is more operational is one that allows the contribution of decisions from all the members involved in a group. Leadership of this nature allows power dynamics among members to circulate effectively, so that each member is given a chance to experience them.

Leadership in the Mutima Church is essentially male-dominated. Chishimba is solely responsible for formulating policy through his teachings. Through divine revelations, Chishimba appoints

men and women who are ordained to leadership positions. Therefore, while there is an issue of empowering women by ordaining them in the Mutima Church, it should be noted that priests do not participate in formulating Church policy, as this is believed to be from God (Interview with male participant. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017). To the members of the Mutima Church this is considered sacred. It is a gift from God (Masaiti, 2008:78 and Masaiti, 2008:153)<sup>8</sup>. This is the positive side for both women and men in the Mutima Church, because they are ordained and given leadership positions and are placed in charge of the parishes. This supports the church as a social structure – a social structure which also constitutes the parents, priests, nurses of Jesus (NJs), deacons and deaconesses, prophets, women’s departments, men’s departments, the youth and children’s departments, to mention a few. These are visible to the people who are not members of the church (Interview with OFP8. *Namfumu*. 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Commenting on how leadership is exercised within various churches, and how outsiders view it, Green (2003:47) contends that “...outsiders...witness the daily performance of power [relations] between Church personnel occupying different tiers in the hierarchy and between Church personnel and parishioners, ritualized in the style of greeting as an index of submission, from the merest stoop of respect to kneeling and prostration”. In the same way, Ladkin (2010:11) is of the view that “leadership is seen to be a collective process, encompassing both those who would be known as “leaders” and those who would be known as “followers”. Ladkin views leadership as “a collective process” because it is an on-going venture between the persons appointed by their group members to represent, guide and direct them in various matters. In some cases, the people appointed act as leaders for some time and may hand over their leadership roles to other persons when their term is over.

Ladkin (2010:11) argues that “the experience of leadership is also assumed to emerge from particular social and historical contexts”. This is linked to the concept of power, from which authority emerges. Lingenfelter (1998:134) acknowledges that “[p]ower authority may also be

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<sup>8</sup> The researcher is not a member of the Mutima Church. The researcher is related to some of the members of the Mutima Church. It should be stated here that the current researcher conducted some Tamar Campaign Bible Studies with the Mutima Church members in 2003.<sup>8</sup> The outcome of the Bible studies motivated this researcher, as she sought to understand the policy of the Mutima Church. In 2006 the researcher conducted her Masters’ research with some members of the Mutima Church. The researcher was among the forty Masters students, from four African universities who were sponsored by the Swedish Institute of Mission Research. The Swedish Institute of Mission Research published a collection of essays by these Masters students from the four African academic institutions.

delegated by leaders to subordinates; these subordinate leaders hold delegated power, often legitimized by an institutional structure; in which the locus of power is held by leaders at the top”. What Lingenfelter seems to state is that within some organizations there are hierarchies that are formulated by human beings. These hierarchies constitute organizational plans where appointed members are placed more highly to rule over those who have lower positions.

#### **1.4.1 Leadership and Ritual Practices**

In the Mutima Church ritual practice is part of the norm. Arbuckle (2010:82) defines “a ritual [as] any prescribed or spontaneous action that follows a set pattern expressing through symbols a public or shared meaning”. A ritual is a repeated expression of some symbolic nature: for instance, in the Mutima Church, members bow or lie prostrate before they greet Chishimba. Some leadership roles are generally associated with rituals. Rituals tend to portray the power of leaders over their subordinates. In the Mutima Church, for instance, an ordained person is one who is supposed to initiate the greeting and not otherwise (Chishimba, 1976:7). Among those practised in the Mutima Church are baptism and the consecration of marriages, while others can be observed as greeting and leading the worship. Holy Communion is celebrated not by means of wine or bread as the main symbols, but by eating the staple *Zambian dish, nshima*, accompanied by various types of relish. Thus, the Mutima Church has inculturated Holy Communion.

However, those who are ordained as male or female priests vow not to get married because they swear “...an oath and are consecrated before the congregation” (Owanikin, 2001:208). The priests are in charge of running the church’s congregations or parishes in some parts of the country. What this points to is that, while male priests remain single, some of the female priests,<sup>9</sup> though made to swear an oath and consecrated before the larger congregation, in the process of carrying out their ministerial duties, conceive and give birth to the children known as *children of the spirit*.

In some ways, this is a secret that is maintained in the Mutima Church but, owing to the nature of children, some members maintain that it cannot be kept a secret. Foucault observes that there is a power that surrounds some secret in many groups or organizations. He argues that the power of “secrecy” surrounds sexual practices in the Church (Foucault, 1978:3), too. For example, in

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<sup>9</sup> Throughout this study, I will use the phrase “female priests” in referring to the ordained women of the Mutima Church. This phrase was uncovered during the Masters research that I conducted into the church in 2007.

the Mutima Church, female priests or members may not reveal who the fathers of the *children of the spirit* are, but must accept the belief within Church policy that they are of the Holy Spirit. Thus, members of the Mutima Church “...enforce [this] norm, safeguard the truth, and reserve the right to speak while retaining the principle of secrecy” (Foucault, 1978:3).

*Children of the spirit* are regarded as special gifts from God, because their mothers symbolize the secret image of Mary, mother of Jesus (Chishimba, 1971:83). Using West’s words, Chishimba’s Mutima Church has been constructed as a Church by using both the Bemba culture and Biblical stories (West, 2007:490). Not only does the Mutima Church appropriate Biblical stories, it also appropriates aspects of Bemba culture and incorporates them into the story. For instance, in one of the Church policy documents, Chishimba states (1974:5) that

when the people are newly made by God, they easily see God because they are pure during that period of time. “Blessed are the pure in heart (inside), for they shall see God” (Matt. Ch. 5-8). When Adam and Eve were made they used to see God because they had some purity. “And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Gen. Ch. 2 Verse 25).

This is one of the Biblical verses that Chishimba uses to teach his congregation that both male and female should enjoy the fullness of God’s love towards creation. In view of this, Oduyoye (2001:42) perceives that “[w]hat is central to our humanity, therefore, is that both female and male are akin to God, having received the same divine spirit”. Similarly, Kanyoro (2002:17) explains that “women, as well as men, are made in the divine image of God...”. Furthermore, Chishimba proposes that for God’s love to manifest equally in the Mutima Church, members should love one another, just as God has shown God’s love for humanity (John.13:34) (Chishimba, 1997a:17). Hence, members of the Mutima Church practice God’s love by caring for each other, sharing whatever items they have amongst themselves and practicing living a communal lifestyle.

In the *Mutima Walowa* policy document (1995:19), Chishimba states that this practice of living a communal life is a better way to imitate God’s love for humanity. Chishimba (1995:19) encourages us as follows: “...*ifwe natusungilile icitemwiko cesu fwe myeo e Lesa*” (a Bemba phrase meaning “let us maintain love towards each other because God is love”). So, the study seeks to investigate how a policy has been implemented as an issue of male power, and how women have been responding to that policy and to the influence of male power. Here, there is a

need to highlight the interface between Bemba culture and a Western form of Christianity, as manifested in the policy documents.

Chishimba uses Biblical references that purport to encourage equality between men and women because he believes that both are created in the image of God. He tries to strengthen the idea that both men and women are called to carry out mission work. For this reason, Chishimba ordains women in his church. This also stems from Bemba culture, which is purely matrilineal. In the Bemba culture, just like any other African culture, there are a number of myths and folktales. In his teachings and gleanings from Bemba culture, Chishimba uses myths<sup>10</sup> to strengthen Biblical references that point to equality between women and men in his Church.

For example, commenting on the myth of the Sonjo traditional religion in Tanzania, Vähökangas (2008:113) contends that the myths only change when they are orally spoken, but in cases where they have been written down and canonized, one can change only their interpretations. In the case of Chishimba, however, identifying the role of women and ordaining them stems from Bemba culture, where women are considered to be gate-keepers of shrines and homes (Badenberg, 2002:49). Accordingly, Chishimba embraces the role of women in his culture, based on Biblical stories, and gives them leadership positions in the Mutima Church. This matter is discussed further in Chapter Three (Section 3.2.2) of this study. However, in view of the matrilineal nature of the Bemba culture, hegemonic masculinities that converse with Chishimba's relationship with some female priests can be perceived.

### **1.5 Hegemonic Masculinities**

Chishimba's teachings can be described as a hidden Bemba Patriarchal discourse officially stated as 'purely' matrilineal. The issues raised suggest that the study employs perspectives of ecclesial hegemonic masculinities to converse with Chishimba's relationship with some female priests in the Mutima Church. Within the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), Chishimba presents himself as the current St. Joachim model of the envisioned, ideal Catholic manhood (See Klinken, 2013:61). An exploration of the complexity and ambiguity of religious gender discourses in contemporary

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<sup>10</sup> In his article, Vähökangas (2008:113) elucidates that myths are considered a human way of making sense of the world and organizing it. Myths are understood as narratives of a religious nature. They are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past to gods or cultural heroes. Oduyoye (1995:19) also explains that the term "myth" varies in its definition from people to people. The word "myth" has acquired several shades of meaning. She contends that ancient Greek *mythos*, as opposed to *logos* and *historia*, represented a fable, a tale, a talk, or a speech (Oduyoye, 1995:19).

African contexts, and in particular, Zambia, by Klinken (2013) reveals the fact that the model of St. Joachim is a Catholic Men's Organization, established in one of the RCC's parishes in Lusaka, Zambia. The St. Joachim is a group of men who at present model religious ideals of masculinity as that presented by an ancient saint figure—are believed to be addressing issues of masculinity in various ways, such as sexuality, injustices to women, alcoholism, infidelity in Marriage and perpetuating dysfunctionality in Family Life, and imply that they are proponents of headship and self-control (See Klinken, 2013:68-82).

With respect to matters related to sexuality, Klinken (2013:70) explains that although the RCC in Zambia has banned polygamy, this has not eradicated popular perceptions that a real man needs to have more than one woman. For Klinken, the validity of the explanation is not an issue, especially given the fact, that as women claim that male “infidelity on the man's part is one of the most common marital problems women are faced with” (Klinken, 2013:70). Some men in Zambia, willfully misconstrue and mis represent male headship, thereby abusing headship in order to impose male dominance in the family, church and community. Klinken (2013:80) indicates that according to some parishioners in Zambia, headship means that the man “...is responsible for the well-being of the family, materially as well as morally and spiritually. Headship is associated with sustaining roles, such as being the breadwinner, providing for the material needs of the family, showing leadership, providing guidance to the family, and leading the family in prayer”. Some associate the concept of headship with sexual prowess, a prevalence as well within the Mutima Church. These might be some of these reasons provided by Chishimba, in his marriage counselling sessions, where he explicitly addresses the role of men as heads of households.

## **1.6 Motivation for the Study**

The researcher's motivation for this study is derived from two premises. Firstly, the Masters research project that the researcher conducted in the Mutima Church in 2007 on polygamous marriages inspired the researcher to pursue this study. Secondly, the Masters project unearthed the Mutima Church members' belief that polygamous marriages are a gift from God.

In this study, the researcher seeks to understand the influence of male leadership on some ordained female priests. Here the researcher critically interrogates the role of male leadership with reference to Chishimba, founder of the Mutima Church.

The study is unique in the sense that some ordained women have children by the church founder. The children are known as the *children of the spirit* (Chishimba, 1971:84). However, this concept, and its symbolic significance, are discussed further in Chapters Four and Six of this study. There is also a greater need to understand the mission of the Mutima Church vis-à-vis the role of women. This study is the first of its kind to explore the interface between Bemba women, male power, mission policy and human sexuality.

Chishimba teaches the practice of celibacy to both ordained male and female priests, but since some female priests vow to continue imitating the example of Mary, they give birth to *children of the spirit*. Chishimba is believed to be led by the Holy Spirit. For this reason, it is believed that the Holy Spirit fathers the *children of the spirit*.<sup>11</sup> Male priests, however, practice celibacy, which Malina (1986:191) defines as “the non-use of sexual intercourse”. From the perspective of this study, celibacy is defined as the state of abstaining from marriage and sexual relations. Since it is believed that Chishimba is guided by the Holy Spirit, it is also believed that the Holy Spirit has chosen some female priests for him. Also, in this regard, some male priests are permitted to go and marry, being later re-called to resume their duties and continue practicing celibacy after having fathered a certain number of children.

Dowell (1996:25) comments that celibacy was consecrated to those who volunteered to remain unmarried in the early Christian church. He argues that “consecrated celibacy as a life-long, self-chosen discipline was instituted in the Christian Church in about the second century CE” (Dowell, 1996:25). However, this practice of celibacy has been going on for centuries. The Mutima Church has adopted the practice of celibacy. Dowell adds that “although not made an absolute requirement for priesthood in the Western Church until the eleventh century, celibacy has always been required of monks and nuns” (Dowell, 1996:25). The practice of celibacy between male and female priests also stems from Mutima Church missional policy, which indicates that as both are created in the image of God, both are equal and can perform mission

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<sup>11</sup> Interviews with some male and female priests reveal that through Chishimba some female priests conceive, though this conception is not as a result of lust, but because of Chishimba’s divine gift from God (June-July, 2017).

work (Chishimba, 1974:6). However, within this perspective, there is a need to critically examine the issue of male power relations between Chishimba, church policy and some ordained female priests in the Mutima Church.

The discussion is based essentially on Cultural Studies, with missiological dimensions such as male power (patriarchy), policy and how these bear on women's lives and ministry. Sexual intercourse is the factor that has justified the practice of power relations between men and women in the Mutima Church. It is stated by Richards (1950:15) that in Bemba society sexual intercourse is considered a human desire. It is also a pleasure to which all married people are entitled. Therefore, it is by probing the interpretations of these women that the study will uncover the inner dynamics of the power relations between women and men. In doing so, the study attempts also to uncover a more dynamic relationship between the female priests and the high priest who are the main role players (Mukuka, 2008:10).

Thirdly, African women theologians' literature has also been a major contributory factor towards my goal. Some African women theologians are critical of the way many AICs present women as agents of theology. Oduyoye (1994:363) observes that in many AICs, where the founder may be a man or a woman, incantations that accompany sacrifice and the recitation of prayers in sacramental rites, women are on a par with men in the matter of leading the service. She views women as the agents of developing theology in Africa. She asserts that many African women have been agents of, and have responded positively to, theology – a theology that is designed to cope with the European endeavour to Christianize Africa (Oduyoye, 2001:22). Hence, the motivation for the study to look critically at the interface between Christianity, Mutima Church policy and Bemba culture in the Mutima Church.

Thus inculturation, African theology and African Women's theology will be explored in this study. There are two reasons for this: firstly, the Church under scrutiny – that is, the Mutima Church of Zambia, which is an AIC that has its roots in the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). The Mutima Church later based itself on Zambian grounds, but still uses some liturgy that is currently used in the RCC, hence the involvement of inculturation theology. Secondly, the study will investigate the power relationships that are maintained between female priests and the high priest in the Mutima Church in accordance with a missional church policy. This study is an attempt to fill the gap about African women and their leadership roles in AICs.

## 1.7 A Statement of the Problem

Women (and men) in the Mutima Church have uncritically received Chishimba's teachings (so-called divine revelations) as authoritative. These teachings tend to foster attitudes, habits and practices of subordination to Chishimba, which in turn have a bearing on the dignity and human rights of women. He ordains some selected women who belong to the inner circle of Chishimba called *abasano* and, though they pledge themselves to celibacy, some of these women, are found to have children, called *children of the spirit*. Tremendous secrecy surrounds the issue of the paternity of these children. The issue of *holy* secrecy makes it very difficult for an outsider to enquire or understand what goes on in this small inner circle of women, as they are pledged to an oath of secrecy. More significantly, the issue of secrecy in the small circle also resonates with Chishimba's claims of the two "secrets" that he claims God has revealed to him.

These are about the "White Secret" pertaining to the White race and the "Black Secret" pertaining to the Black race. In Chishimba's understanding, when White people received the first doctrine (White Secret) it revealed the gospel of Jesus as having a masculine nature. The Black Secret refers to the divine revelation of the gospel to Black people through Chishimba. It is the second doctrine that completes the full image of God because it reveals the feminine nature of God (Chishimba, 1974:14). This is the policy of the Mutima Church that is believed to have been revealed to Chishimba by God. Thus Chishimba's interaction with women raises the issue of gender roles in the fostering and shaping of power relations between the two parties.

## 1.8 Research Question

The following research question has to be explored in this study: How does the male-formulated missional policy affect ordained women's lives and influence their functions in the Mutima Church?

## 1.9 Objectives of the Study

- i. To examine the relationship between women and male power in the Mutima Church.
- ii. To investigate the teachings of the Mutima Church and how they inform the missional policy of the Church.
- iii. To understand how the missional policy of the Mutima Church affects the lives of the women.

- iv. To examine the interface between some Bemba women and the missional policy of the Mutima Church, and investigate how they influence each other.
- v. To investigate any relationships between the traditional concept of marriage in Bemba culture, the Mutima Church and the Biblical concept of marriage.

#### **1.10. Data from Primary Sources**

A life history approach is the method that was used in my fieldwork. Chase (2005:655) asserts that “[l]ife histories and other personal narratives were primarily useful for gathering information about historical events, cultural change, or the impact of social structures on individual’s lives”. The study uses a life history approach as a way of gathering data from primary sources because it involves uncovering an individual’s historical experiences and religio-cultural knowledge.

With the objective of addressing the main research question, interviews were used to enquire how the women’s understanding, interpretation and their identity as belonging to the Church plausibly have been shaped by the Church’s teachings as a dimension of its policy. In this method, women were asked to narrate their understandings of what it meant for them to belong to the Mutima Church. Thus I employed an African women story-telling methodology which “...shapes and reshapes our identity, recasting the images we have of ourselves as women” (Phiri, Govinden & Nadar, 2002:6). Telling and narrating some African women’s faith journeys have proved to be healing to many women, hence “...embarking on... a narrative therapy” so that African women can experience some healing and continue to experience the positive effects of many forms of lifestyles in Church (Phiri, Govinden & Nadar, 2002:7). Along similar lines, Oduyoye (2001a:23) claims that storytelling is a way of “bringing to the centre of theological debate the perspectives of the disadvantaged persons”.

The life history approach was conducted primarily in the three parishes or congregations and has been carried out in a qualitative way. The names of the congregations have not been revealed for privacy reasons. Kelly (2006:287) emphasises that “qualitative researchers want to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations, or phenomena as they occur in the real world, and therefore want to study them in their natural setting”. Open-ended questions have been used with a view to unearthing issues around for instance, (a) what it means for women to belong to the Mutima Church, (b) Church teachings on marriage and (c) the consequences and implications of these for ecclesiology and missional praxis. All interviews were done in non-threatening

environments “where the participants could feel comfortable to discuss their opinions and experiences without fear that they will be judged or ridiculed” (Liamputtong, 2011:3).

### **1.11. Theoretical Frameworks**

The study uses theoretical frameworks located within power, cultural, Christianity and gender studies. The present study has adopted two frameworks: Oduyoye’s theoretical work on *Women in Aladura Churches* and James Scott’s theory on the hidden transcript. Since this study is located within African culture, the status of women in the AICs and Christianity will be explored. Oduyoye’s theoretical work, “*Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*”, is used as a conceptual framework which is also of much relevance to this study. Oduyoye (1995:125) observes that the involvement of women in ministry within AICs is important. However, Oduyoye (1995:125) calls African people to “inquire if these churches have succeeded in incorporating women’s insights into the will of God for human beings”. By “insights”, Oduyoye (1995:125) prompts investigation as to whether African women, who are members of Aladura Churches, are given more room to express leadership abilities than those churches that originated from the “Euro-American missionary enterprise”. Oduyoye (1995:126) is of the view that the Aladura and the Zionist churches follow the practices of African Traditional Religion (ATR) closely and many of the women display leadership abilities. These women are recognized by other followers as divine agents. Oduyoye states that “[I]t would not surprise any African woman to read that it is dangerous for a church leader to fall out with the women of the congregation” (Oduyoye, 1995:127). Oduyoye makes a point here, because although she does not state explicitly how a male church leader could become involved with the women in his congregation, her observation is that it is possible for women in some AICs to be subordinate to their male counterparts. Furthermore, as Oduyoye (1995:127) observes,

[the] status and involvement of women today in both church and society have closely followed women’s traditional roles. It has been shown that while the Cherubim and Seraphim churches have encouraged women’s participation, there is a keen awareness of the limits of this participation and its impact on the total community: Yet, there are still traces of traditional male superiority in the Cherubim and Seraphim arrangements...most members are women—but men have more opportunities.

It is the task of this study to explore and investigate, though not to offer solutions, but to bring to light what Oduyoye means by “male superiority and...men have more opportunities” in the above statement. While Oduyoye has rightly acknowledged that there are more women adherents in the AICs, she invites scholars to become critical of women’s participation in leadership roles, since both the church and society have adopted and followed closely women’s traditional roles, hence adopting Oduyoye’s (1995:125) desire to “inquire if these churches have succeeded in incorporating women’s insights into the will of God for human beings”. This framework is used as a tool of analysis to assess the roles of women, in line with the missional policy of the Mutima Church.

The second theory undergirding this study comes from Scott (1990): “*Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Public and Hidden Transcripts*”. Scott (1990:2) is of the view that ‘public transcript’ introduces a link between the dominant and those who are dominated. The public transcript is viewed as a public performance of people who are under the leadership of someone. Similarly, in African communities, one might find how certain groups of people submit to their chiefs, while in religious circles these subordinates also submit to those in authority, such as priests.

However, Scott (1990:2) maintains that, at times, the public transcript does not tell a complete story about power relations. In most cases in the public transcript the subordinates conduct themselves in a way that does not offend their masters, for fear of facing the punishment that it carries. Hence, as Scott (1990:3) rightly asserts, “...the greater the disparity in power between dominant and subordinates and the more arbitrarily it is exercised, the more the public transcript of subordinates will take on a stereotyped, ritualistic cast. In other words, the more menacing the power, the thicker the mask”. He avoids implying that the study on power relations in the public domain is false or insignificant, but observes that there is more to the public transcript that we wish to know about power (Scott, 1990:14). This refers to the “...discourse that takes place ‘offstage’, beyond direct observation by powerholders” (Scott, 1990:4). It means the power dynamics that occur behind closed doors, not visible to the public.

Little (1993) argues that it is impossible for an ordinary person to see “the hidden transcript” since it is open only to those who are in control, are familiar and are in charge of the subordinate groups. Is “it not inevitable then that historical sources will present only the public transcript

leaving the hidden transcript permanently unavailable to the investigator?” (Little, 1993:154). Brooks (1992:5) reminds us that there is indeed more to politics than the existence of a hidden transcript that cannot be observed in the public arena and that, as feminism teaches, the personal is also political.

Little is of the view that we can only glean information from the physical or “public transcript”, and may not be able to access actual information from the hidden transcript. He is of the view that investigators may end up accessing biased information because we are able to record only what our physical eyes can see and what the dominant group wishes to offer us (Little, 1993:154). The dominated groups have a lot to say when they meet in their own arena. They give their masters “names” and complain about the rules and policies that are imposed on them. The dominated groups speak openly amongst themselves only without the knowledge of the dominant group. In this regard, we can ascertain that wherever there is power, there is some underlying resistance from those who are dominated.

To uncover the hidden transcripts of the actors, it is important to assess the circumstances that are experienced by subordinate groups and what these would mean within the public transcript. Scott (1990:14) points out three dimensions in which these may occur. “First, the hidden transcript is specific to a given social site and to a particular set of actors” (Scott, 1990:14). Second, “...it does not contain only speech acts but a whole range of practices...for many peasants, activities such as poaching, pilfering, clandestine tax evasion, and intentionally shabby work for landlords are part and parcel of the hidden transcript” (Scott, 1990:14). Third, there is a thin line between public and hidden transcripts, and this exacerbates the struggle between dominant and subordinate groups. The capacity of dominant groups to define what may be called public transcripts and to maintain that which is hidden remains in their power to control. This struggle between the dominant and dominated groups is one of the common conflicts that exist in our daily lives (Scott, 1990:14).

An analysis of hidden transcripts between the two groups reveal the “contradiction and possibilities that looks well beneath the placid surface that the public accommodation to the existing distribution of power, wealth, and status often represent” (Scott, 1990:15). To this end, conditions under which female priests have not been able to express themselves are considered as hidden transcripts in this study. For example, while not all female priests were unwilling to

give an interpretation of the *children of the spirit*, some male priests interpreted the nature and role of the children in a more convincing manner. They stated that it is only the Holy Spirit who guides Chishimba and, because of this, the *children of the spirit* belong to God (Interview with MAMP4 and MAMP5. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2017). However, Fereirra is not in favour of Scott's framing of the hidden transcript. She points out that there are two different forms of resistance that come from women in different workplaces.<sup>12</sup> Fereirra<sup>13</sup> refers to the first form of resistance as more revolutionary because it is planned. She views this kind of resistance as one that does not permit others to dominate the group. The second form of resistance is not planned and members are self-motivated to join in the struggle.<sup>14</sup>

What Fereirra is saying is that, while there may be groups that are dominated by the dominant group, there are also some different types of resistance performed by dominated groups. The first is more formal, organized and is done in groups. The second may be informal, individualistic or of self-interest, without requiring one to attend any meetings. During analysis, the present study focused on the second type of resistance, because the aim is to assess whether there have been some unorganized, individual or self-interested female priests who also dominate their fellow women. This resonates with Rebera (1994:106), who affirms that power is in the hands of the powerful.

## 1.12 Research Design and Methodology

To carry out this research, the following methods were used to collect and analyze data. All methods of data collection are intended to achieve the objectives of the research and provide

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<sup>12</sup>Fereirra, S.S. [n.d.]. The Factory and the Street – Resistance Strategies of Women Workers. In Companhia. [Online]. Available: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QUEST/FileStore/Issue4PerspectiviesonPowerPapers/Filetoupload,71756,en.pdf> [2015, 15 August].

<sup>13</sup> Fereirra, S.S. [n.d.]. The Factory and the Street – Resistance Strategies of Women Workers. In Companhia. [Online]. Available: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QUEST/FileStore/Issue4PerspectiviesonPowerPapers/Filetoupload,71756,en.pdf> [2015, 15 August].

<sup>14</sup>Fereirra, S.S. [n.d.]. The Factory and the Street – Resistance Strategies of Women Workers. In Companhia. [Online]. Available: <https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QUEST/FileStore/Issue4PerspectiviesonPowerPapers/Filetoupload,71756,en.pdf> [2015, 15 August].

answers to the questions posed (Melville and Goddard, 1996:8). In this study both oral, as well as published and unpublished sources, were used to gather data.

### **1.12.1 Data Collection: The Pilot Study**

Before embarking on this major research project a pilot study was conducted. The researcher visited one congregation of the Mutima Church in the central part of the country. The main purpose of conducting a pilot study was to assess the feasibility of the study and to test my research question, How does the male-formulated missional policy affect ordained women's lives and influence their functions in the Mutima Church? This is also seen as a "dress rehearsal" which paves the way for the main investigation (Fouchè & Delport, 2011:73). The pilot study had a triple purpose. Firstly, it sought to verify whether the test instruments were structured in such a way that the questions were clear and explicit. Secondly, considering that the initial sample size was only twenty female priests, there were suggestions by some male priests to consider involving men. Thirdly, the researcher wanted to test some research questions to gauge how much time would be needed to plan for each interview.

For this reason, the results of this pilot study yielded considerable benefit. One consideration was that some of the male and female priests who could speak English assisted the researcher in reformulating some Bemba translations of some questions, to gain greater clarity of the test instruments. The second consideration led to an extension of the sample size, thereby including some male priests within the participants. This was done so as to include more participants who had more knowledge concerning the *children of the spirit* and also for a more inclusive outcome in the area of women's sexual knowledge and experiences. Finally, in planning the time for each method of data collection, it was discovered that we had to set aside at least two hours for individual interviews. It was also during this pilot study that both some male and female priests assisted the researcher to schedule her interviews, especially during their time of prayer.

### **1.12.2 Review of Documents**

Literature on various academic scholars have been reviewed, such as literature on AICs, such as Bengt Sundkler and Allan Anderson; literature on inculturation and the theology of missions from David Bosch, Stephen Bevans; literature from Gerald Arbuckle and John Mbiti; and literature on African Women theologians such as Mercy Amba Oduyoye, and Isabel Phiri, as well as literature on the Mutima Church from Emilio Chishimba and Hugo Hinfelaar. Literature

on theoretical frameworks from James Scott and Mercy Oduyoye provides analytical tools for Mutima Church members' understanding of their missional policy and how they interpret their experiences in the Church. More important, literature regarding the policy and doctrines of the Mutima Church has also been revised.

### **1.12.3 Participation and Observation**

The researcher attended Mutima Church services with the objective of building a rapport with members. Field notes were taken pertaining to church activities, and the way of worship of individuals. While attending church services, the researcher observed the way members conducted themselves during church services and then extrapolated this behaviour to the way they reacted during interviews.

### **1.12.4 Research Instruments**

The following research instruments were used: tape recorder and the interview. The role of the interview guide was to test some participants, to enable the researcher to put into practice her questions before conducting the main study (Fouchè & Delpont, 2011:75). The researcher considered all the implications when undertaking the pilot study because this is a sensitive topic. Due to the sensitive nature of the study, there was no research assistant in this study. A tape recorder was used to obtain data from primary sources.

### **1.12.5 Selection of Participants**

This study focuses on the female priests of the Mutima Church. However, five male participants were also approached during the interview. Three congregations were selected from three provinces in Zambia. Initially, the sample size of this study was twenty-two (22) women but, due to gender imbalances, five male priests were also included, though qualitative research does not require the sample to be representative (Cohen *et al.* 2011:155; Creswell, 2009:148). The sample is recruited by triangulation of two non-probabilistic sampling strategies: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The choice of purposive sampling allowed the researcher to hand-pick cases that would be included in the sample (Cohen *et al.* 2011:156; Babbie, 2010:193). The choice of snowball sampling is justified by its usefulness when a topic is sensitive and, therefore, it is difficult to identify eligible individuals to make up the sample (Cohen *et al.*

2011:158; Babbie. 2010:193). Informants were used to pinpoint the sample and refer them to the researcher for interviews.

The selection of research participants was based on the female priests' understanding of Mutima Church missional policy, and how the priests imparted this knowledge to other members of the church. The Mutima Church priests' committee was contacted prior to the fieldwork, and detailed explanation concerning the study was given in the Bemba language. Because of my initial research with them (Masaiti, 2008), and because of their experience with Burlington, who has written some articles about their church,<sup>15</sup> members were of the view that this was the time for the public to learn more about the teachings of their church. The senior male and female priests in the church approved of the topic of study. This is also viewed as another way of evangelizing, since the Mutima Church is open to convert more people. The aims and objectives of the study were explained to the priests. Later, we met with some elderly female and male priests. The consent forms were shown and explained to the female priests and explained in detail. Miller and Glassner (2004:127-128) argue that

the issue of how interviewees respond to us is based on who we are—in our lives, as well as the social categories to which we belong, such as age, gender, class, and race – is a practical concern as well as an epistemological or theoretical one. The issue may be exacerbated, for example, when we study groups with whom we do not share membership.

According to Miller and Glassner's views, it is important to note that some male priests were concerned as to why the research was being conducted by a woman on her fellow-women. For this reason they asked if they could be asked questions, as well. The field work was conducted from 23<sup>rd</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017. During this period, I lived in the first congregation or *Namfumumu*, in a rural area in Lusaka Province. I introduced myself to the congregation and I attended church services and ceremonies throughout the interview process. Although I had already established and strengthened the relationship of trust with members, there was still a need to follow proper protocol and procedure, and make appointments with twenty female priests in other *Namfumus* in the Copperbelt and Northern provinces.

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<sup>15</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2015, 2 March].

## 2.0 Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis comprises a “range of processes and procedures whereby move(s) from the qualitative data have been collected into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating”<sup>16</sup>. Since the present study involved a life history approach, the process of data analysis used was narrative analysis. There are various methods of narrative analysis. Sapsford (2006:269-270) is of the view that narrative analysis ranges from a traditional content analysis, through thematic analysis, to discourse analysis. This study utilized thematic analysis to analyze data. In this approach, researchers begin to identify and code statements, and group them thematically into coherent repertoires that express an underlying discourse (Sapsford, 2006:269). This study utilized themes such as, the Full Image of God, *children of the spirit*, Mariology, *The Parent of Truth* and others to analyse the data effectively (see Chapter seven).

Further, Flick (2014:400) argues that “concepts such as ‘trust,’ ‘identity,’... can be starting points for identifying relevant problems and conceptualizations in a field”. In this study, “data [was] coded so that it free[d] the researcher from entanglement in the details of the raw data and encourage[d] [her] to think about them at a higher level, moving toward theory and generalizations” (Neuman, 2014:480). Saldana (2013:3) explains that “code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data”. In the same line, Neuman (2014:480) observes that “in qualitative research you organize the raw data into conceptual categories and create themes or concepts...qualitative coding is an integral part of data analysis”.

### 2.1. Ethical Issues

Flick (2014:393) stresses that “for ethical reasons, I recommend developing a system of nicknames for anonymization of the interviewee and other persons mentioned in the interviews and for names of institutions, enterprises, and so on”. Ethical considerations indicate the extent to which the research processes meet the required professional, legal, and sociological obligations of the participants (Creswell, 2009:150). Due to the sensitive nature of the subject

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<sup>16</sup> Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA). [n.d.]. [Online]. Available: <http://www.onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/> [2011, 12 October].

matter under investigation, the study adhered to the University of Stellenbosch regulations, as well as the internationally recognized ethical principles of confidentiality and respect for human dignity. Before engaging in research, verbal informed consent was sought from the participants to ascertain their approval of their participation. Bless *et.al* (2014:31) advise that “[i]t is necessary therefore to ensure that the dignity and self-respect of participants is always preserved”. They continue to argue the importance of protecting people’s dignity by understanding and respecting their culture (Bless. *et.al*. 2014:31).

It should also be acknowledged that the participants’ ages and marital status remain anonymous, to avoid easy identification (Bless *et.al*. 2014:33). So, instead of using nicknames, as suggested by Flick (2014: 393), personal details of the participants will be protected by ensuring that letters and numbers, for example, OFP1, MAFP2 or OMP1, or MAMP3 are assigned to their data, so that their identities remain anonymous. For instance, OFP1 would mean Old Female Priest number one; MAFP2 would mean Middle-Aged Female Priest number two; OMP1 would mean Old Male Priest number 1, and MAMP3 would mean middle-aged priest number 3 [Refer to a Glossary of some sort that is attached as appendix iv].

The participants were not forced to take part in the research. They were informed that they were free to withdraw from participation when they wished to do so. Even though no one pulled out of the interviews, some female priests avoided answering some of the questions that were posed to them. For example, some older female priests could not interpret the nature of the *children of the spirit*. Because some female priests cannot read and write English, emphasis was placed on the need to be honest in what ought to be done in this research. The rights of the congregations were respected. Informed written consent to secure consent to conduct the study is part of the Annex to this study. In this way, the researcher abides by the Church’s requirements. The researcher refrained from misrepresentation of facts. Plagiarism, in whatever form, has been avoided and thorough referencing and acknowledging of information, both in the text and a full reference list in the written report, are included in this study.

Clandini (2007:239) advises that “a person whose life story it is should be consulted and he or she should have the final say before it is published”. The researcher was aware that in-depth semi-structured questions concerning women’s experiences might bring out some traumatic information, for instance, memories of the death of a husband, child, mother, father, close

relation or having gone through the pain of a divorce. For this reason, all participants were advised not to answer some questions with which they were uncomfortable (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007:44).

## **2.2. Delimitations of the Study and Membership**

This study is limited to the male-formulated missional policy, and teachings of the Mutima Church, with a focus on female priests' experiences. It has been limited to the members of the Mutima Church of Zambia. The time frame scheduled for the interviews had some effects on the findings, because the research was conducted in Zambia. In this case, the researcher ought to understand the participant, as well as the context from which she operated.

Burlington (2010:1997) is of the opinion that the Mutima Church was initiated in Zambia. The population of its members is unknown. However, by the time he conducted his research, Hinfelaar (1994:102) "estimate[d] the number at 5,000, but church leaders claim the number to be 50,000 to 100,000". Burlington (1998) stresses that "at its high point in the mid-60s the Mutima Church claimed 15,000 followers, many of them from prominent Catholic families of the Bemba ethnicity".<sup>17</sup> By 1994, however, "the Mutima Church had a core membership of about 5,000 Bemba people".<sup>18</sup> By 2006, when the current researcher conducted her Masters research in the same church, leadership participants claimed a membership of about 11,700, of which the majority were Bemba people and the rest from the Eastern and Luapula Provinces of Zambia, respectively (Masaiti, 2008:6). For the purposes of this study, the population of Mutima Church members is estimated between 7,000 and 9,000 respectively.<sup>19</sup>

## **2.3. Confidentiality**

Flick (2014:393) argues that "confidentiality also requires managing data in such a way that the risk of any, possibly unintended, identification of a participant is treated in a very reflective way

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<sup>17</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian Storyland. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2015, 2 March]. p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2015, 2 March]. p. 75.

<sup>19</sup> Male Priest – This is the estimated figure given by the pastor who signed the Consent Letter from the Mutima Church.

by all involved in research”. Due to ethical reasons, the names and age-groups of participants and names of the parishes are not mentioned.

#### **2.4. The potential impact of study**

The results of the study will possibly empower Bemba women, as their stories will be reflected upon from an academic perspective. As there is a scarcity of literature surrounding the experiences of women in AICs, especially in Zambia, this study will contribute to critical reflection on this topic. The Mutima Church will also be placed on a wider map, so that researchers can reflect on the missiological aspect of ecclesiology from the Mutima Church’s perspective. It will also contribute to literature on AICs in Zambia.

#### **2.5. The Geographical Location of Zambia**

Zambia is a landlocked country. The country shares an area of 752, 614 square kilometres. It lies between the latitudes of 10° and 18° South and longitudes 22° and 33° East. The country has a tropical, modified altitude type of climate and has a rainy season from October to April.<sup>20</sup> Research shows that the country has “three seasons-cool and dry from May to August, hot and dry from September to November, and warm and wet from December to April”.<sup>21</sup>

Zambia has eight neighbours. It borders the Democratic Republic of Congo in the North and North-West, Tanzania in the North-East, Zimbabwe in the South, Botswana and Namibia in the South-West, Angola in the West, Mozambique in the South-East and Malawi in the East.<sup>22</sup> The country became a republic on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1964. The first president of the Republic of Zambia was Kenneth David Kaunda. There have been, however, three (3) other presidents who succeeded Kenneth David Kaunda. The current president of Zambia is Edgar Chagwa Lungu.

#### **2.6. Population Estimates**

The capital city of Zambia is Lusaka. The country comprises ten (10) provinces. The 2017 Country Report estimated the population of 17.2 million, stating that this has risen from 16.7

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<sup>20</sup> Zambia. [n.d.] [Online]. Available: <http://www.zambiatourism.com/about-zambia/geography> [2016, 6 June].

<sup>21</sup> Zambia. [n.d.] [Online]. Available: <http://www.zambiatourism.com/about-zambia/geography> [2016, 6 June].

<sup>22</sup> Zambia. [n.d.] [Online]. Available: <http://www.zambiatourism.com/about-zambia/geography> [2016, 6 June].

million in 2016 (Country Report, 2017:6)<sup>23</sup>. Additionally, the Zambia Population Clock estimates the figure for 2017 at 17,343,828.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.7. Ethnic Groups

There are 73 ethnic groups in Zambia. The Bembas, who are also called *ababemba*, constitute the largest group. Hinfelaar (1994:2) argues that the Northern Province is part of the Lunda high plateau in Central Africa, comprising extensive woodlands and shallow marshes. This area is inhabited by the Bemba-speaking people. Bemba-speaking people originate from the Bantu-<sup>25</sup> speaking people that inhabit the north-eastern plateau of Zambia and neighbouring areas of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zimbabwe. The Bantu language of the Bemba has become one of the major languages in Zambia.

## 2.8 Religion

Although there are a number of other religions in the country, Christianity is the largest group of religions that constitutes 80% of the population of the country. It is recorded that the Protestant constitutes 75.3%, the Roman Catholic Church constitutes 20.2%. There are other religions such as the Buddhist, Hindu and Baha'i.<sup>26</sup> Muslims comprise 1% of the population (Kettani, 2010). Christianity, being the largest religion in Zambia and also the core of this study, will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

## 2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the topic of a study that is an ethnological/missiological study. The focus is on male formulated policy and some Bemba women, who are priests, in the Mutima Church of Zambia. This study is an interdisciplinary one. This is because the study uses the

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<sup>23</sup> Country Report 2017. 2017. Zambia: By the Numbers. A Macroeconomic Data and Trends Report on Zambia. [Online] Available: [www.AnalyseAfrica.com](http://www.AnalyseAfrica.com) [2017, 20 September].

<sup>24</sup> Zambia Population Clock, [Live, 12:40 hours]. 2017. [Online] Available: <http://countrymeters.info/en/Zambia> [2017, 20 October].

<sup>25</sup> Saunders & Southey (1998) explain that the term *Abantu* or *Bantu* is a Zulu word for people. The term is used in both archaeological and anthropological terms. The term *Bantu* identifies a sizeable group of Nguni languages spoken by many Africans in Sub-Saharan Africa. It identifies the *Bantu*-speakers who spoke that group of closely-related languages. The term *Bantu* has slowly been replaced by “black” since 1977. The term *Bantu* is no longer used, except in its original context when referring to *Bantu* languages. Instead, the term African is more desirable and appropriate.

<sup>26</sup> Geographical Names: Zambia People. 2017. [Online] Available: [https://theodora.com/wfbcurrent/zambia/zambia\\_people.html](https://theodora.com/wfbcurrent/zambia/zambia_people.html) [2017, 2 September].

process of integration whereby ideas, data and information, methods, concepts and theories from more disciplines are synthesized and connected. The study also uses an anthropological model that aims to maintain the cultural identity of the Christian faith.

Furthermore, the chapter covers issues such as the nature and goal of the study, motivation for the study, problem statement and focus, exploratory research question, sub-questions guiding the research, research hypothesis, theoretical frameworks, research design and methodology, problem statement, focus, location of Zambia, describing the background, population estimates, ethnic groups and religions. The following chapter highlights the conceptual framework of the study.

## **2.10 An Outline of the Chapters**

Chapter One presents a comprehensive map that guides my work. In this chapter, the ethnographic/missiological study of the present work is highlighted. Issues relating to socio-cultural factors and some religious teachings of the Mutima Church are presented. The other issues covered in this chapter are: nature and goal of the study, motivation for the study, problem statement and focus, exploratory research question, sub-questions guiding the research, research hypothesis, theoretical frameworks, the research design and methodology, the problem statement and focus, the profile of Zambia, giving the background, population estimates, ethnic groups and religions. The present chapter ends with a section reflecting the outline of the study and gives a conclusion.

Chapter Two gives an overview of the conceptual frameworks. The theories that have been tackled are Scott's (1990), Oduyoye's (1995), Nuckolls' (1996) and Fiorenza's (2011 and 1996). The theories will be used as lenses in this study to help deconstruct the formation of the Mutima Church missional policy with regard to male power.

Chapter Three gives a brief background of the history of Christianity in Zambia. An introduction to the Lumpa and Mutima Churches and their missional policies is outlined. It is this chapter that opens the discussion on the issue of missional policy in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four is an interpretation of the policy documents in the Mutima Church in terms of relationships between policy and power. The chapter examines Mutima Church Policy through the Concept of Culture and Paradoxical-Dialectical Knowledge Systems. Using Charles Nuckolls' (1996) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's (2011) lenses, the chapter interprets

Mutima Church policy documents on the basis of the following objectives, which examine the interface between Bemba culture and ecclesiology, interrogating how they influence each other.

Chapters Five and Six present the findings of the study, such as what it means for women to be members of the Mutima Church, the meaning of the *children of the spirit*, the role of Chishimba and other key themes such as the Mutima Church's teaching on marriage and the Mutima Church's theological interpretation of Mary, as given by the church members. It gives voices to the female and male priests who were interviewed. The chapters seek to answer the questions raised by this study.

Chapter Seven analyses the findings of the study, employing the frameworks of James Scott, Mercy Oduyoye and other theorists. Drawing from the women's answers, the chapter explores whether the women under study are subordinate groups or dominant groups. Scott (1990:3) observes that

[as] one of the key survival skills of subordinate groups has been impression management in power-laden situations, the performance aspect of their conduct has escaped the more observant members of the dominant group.

The chapter examines the role of Chishimba and the women in ministry, by specifically analyzing the responses of the women and how these have an impact on the relationships between them.

In Chapter Eight I conclude by outlining a summary of the entire study. By using the "hidden transcript" to "inquire if [the AICs] have succeeded in incorporating women's insights into the will of God for human beings", the chapter identifies the gap in literature and provides insights for new knowledge. The chapter provides four sections. The first section unmask the missional church policy, focusing on issues of women and male power. The second section highlights the gap in literature, with regard to *children of the spirit*. The third section draws on the relationship of Biblical and the Bemba culture concept of marriages. The fourth section contains suggestions for future research, a summary and a conclusion.

## CHAPTER 2

### Conceptual Frameworks

#### 2.1 Introduction

Chapter One presented the background to the study. That chapter highlighted that this is an ethnological/missiological study that investigates how the policy of the Mutima Church affects the lives of women. It outlined the motivation for conducting this study, the research question, objectives, the research methodology and the design. At the centre of all the factors is the issue of women's experiences in relation to policy, leadership and male power. For it is the policy of the Mutima Church that determines the way women and men pledge themselves to the celibate, vocation and ministry, where some female priests who have sexual intercourse with Chishimba conceive in the name of Mary and bear children known as *children of the spirit*.

This chapter outlines certain sociological, historical, and psychological as well as theological theories that will shed light on women and male power in the Mutima Church. These theories help to discuss the processes of emergence, power and formulation of the missional policies of some AICs such as the Mutima and Lumpa Churches. For this chapter, some theories such as those expounded by James Scott (1990), Mercy Oduyoye (1995), Charles Nuckolls (1996) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's (2011) were chosen. While Scott's (1990) and Oduyoye's (1995) concepts of power relations undergird this study, the studies of Michel Foucault (1978) and Jean and John Comaroff (1991) on the concept of power will also be useful in understanding how it is portrayed in the Mutima Church. Furthermore, this chapter will expound on four theories that highlight issues around the process of inculturation and *Missio Dei*, given that the Church under study has inculturated the Christian message into the Bemba culture.

The aim of these theories is to deconstruct the formation of the Mutima Church missional policy with regard to male power. However, one has also to examine the situation of relationships between women and male power within the specific religio-cultural contexts of the Mutima Church. There is also a need to understand sexual relations between the High Priest and female priests in the Mutima Church. Foucault's (1978) and Fiorenza's (2011) work is used to explore these theories further, and the following section highlights Scott's theory on the hidden and the public transcripts.

## **2.2. The Public and the Hidden Transcripts as observed by Scott**

For Scott (1990:5) the public and the hidden transcripts are at complete odds with each other. The characters of the subordinates performed in the public domains are the complete opposite of their performance in the hidden transcripts. He contends that if the performance of the subordinates as observed in the public arena reveals that of humility and respect, this does not happen in the hidden transcripts. Within the hidden transcripts, the subordinates perform not only speech acts, but a variety of "...hidden-transcript practices..." such as the use of vulgar language and disrespectful actions (Scott, 1990:14). Further, Scott (1990:45) admits that relations of domination are also relations of resistance. The use of vulgar language and disrespectful actions show the attitudes of resistance.

Scott (1990) acknowledges that the moment those acquiring power exercise it to obtain work, production, services and taxes, it accumulates friction that is sustained only by its continuous use. Scott (1990:45) is of the view that those in power would rather reinforce the domination, thereby tightening the loopholes. In so doing, the dominant will be performing their services in a manner that would "...reinforce a hierarchical order" (Scott, 1990:45). In this way, the silence of those who are dominated is sealed, for without their voices being heard, no power or idea can be received from them. Therefore, the status of the subordinate groups can be evaluated as one of being shunned. In this regard, and as stated in Chapter One (section 1.11), the subordinate groups have no other choice but to continue submitting and presenting themselves to the so-called "powerholders". In this view, they present their behaviours and actions in public discourse as humble characters. In Scott's view, the "powerholders" also present themselves to the public in a respectful manner, which the subordinate groups also reflects based on the presence of the power that monitors them. It is from this view that Foucault (1978) argues that the "powerholders" desire to seize power by physical force.

Foucault (1978) admits that some relations of power can be acquired by physical strength. But once it is acquired in this manner, it is exercised in an invisible way. According to Foucault (1978:94), power can be obtained by force, and it can be shared among human beings, for instance, those in the dominant positions. It is likely that one group may decide to take control of others. With regard to human beings, Foucault's view is that the concept of power plays a role in relationships. Once power is obtained by force, it is preserved in the same way. For example,

power can be shared among relatives. It can be passed on from one generation to another, thereby being maintained and preserved. But one cannot easily foresee the dynamic of power relations in various groups. Foucault (1978:94) contends that “relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations...)”. As Scott (1990:12) states, “[d]ominant groups often have much to conceal, and typically they also have the wherewithal to conceal what they wish”. For Scott, and in view of the power relations discussed, dominant groups hide their true performances from public domains. For Scott, it is not only the subordinates who perform certain acts in the hidden transcripts, but also the “powerholders”. The “powerholders” only expose that part of public expression which is acceptable, yet what they expose to the subordinate groups is unacceptable and inhumane.

Both Scott and Foucault maintain that there are some power relations that are hidden and seem not to exist between human beings. In the hidden transcripts, however, the subordinates have a lot to say when they are not monitored by their superiors. For example, in economic processes, it is easier to identify the gap between the two groups, that is, the rich and the poor. Poor people have their own way of identifying their superiors by the names that they give them (Scott, 1990:12). In knowledge relationships, one can identify power relations between teacher and pupil; and in sexual relationships, power relations may simply be observed in such a way that the man or woman has more authority to use power. Commenting on Foucault’s publication entitled “*Of Other Spaces*”, Cilliers (2013:2) contends that

Foucault systemically questions the nature, claims and discourses of all dominant epistemologies in terms of their traditions, spaces, authorities, and powers, proposing that the latter are inevitably influenced and formed by the dominant regimes of knowledge operating within the particular phases of history. In the same way, theology and culture cannot be separated. Issues such as exegesis, revelation, self-understanding, and God-images are all moulded by culture and context.

Cilliers views Foucault as one who examines and questions all those dominating structures and their origins by critically considering their nature. He brings these into the context of theology and culture, where he argues strongly that the two are inseparable. From this point of view, Scott (1990) observes that those in power have their own way of exercising it. He argues that “the members of dominant groups, one supposes, learn the knack of acting the authority and self-

assurance in the course of socialization” (Scott, 1990:49). Both Cilliers (2013) and Scott (1990) seem to agree that members of the dominant groups operate through particular phases of history. Members of dominant groups exchange power relations as they continue to rule over their subordinates.

Within the society or church, human beings can exercise power that is visible or invisible. As observed by Foucault (1978), in sexual relations the concept of power is deep, it is ingrained; it is only felt by the bearers of those in the relationship – which means that power within this type of relationship is subtle. It has its own effects. It causes “divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums”, Foucault asserts (1978:94). Such is the case in the Mutima Church, where female priests are not all treated alike. Those who belong to the Royal clan have more power than those who do not belong to the circle. Some female priests who have *children of the spirit* seem to understand the revelations of Chishimba more than those who are ordinary female priests. Keshgegian (2006:78) supports Foucault by stating that power is a fluid form that moves throughout systems. When it is blocked in one direction, for instance, by legislation, power will always find other means of domination. Foucault’s views are that wherever the relations of power are at play, they are not always destructive, but sometimes “...play a directly productive role...” because they allow an understanding to exist among human beings (Foucault, 1978:94).

This is why Scott (1990:138) argues that “subordinate groups must find ways of getting their message across, while staying somehow within the law”. In Scott’s terms, some power relations are transparent, and where such power relations exist, subordinate groups are at liberty to negotiate their decisions. Scott seems to be advocating for subordinate groups. He sees that subordinate groups should not have to live according to the conditions of those in power. Subordinate groups should, therefore, be critical of the way they adhere to the rules and regulations of the powerful. In doing this, they may find ways of articulating their opinions and knowledge, so that their ideas are adopted and acted upon.

For example, the case of *children of the spirit* in the Mutima Church shows that there is no transparency in the power relations between Chishimba and some female priests. The latter cannot negotiate their sexuality because of the work of the Holy Spirit that is at play. In this case, the study is keen to investigate the survival skills of some female priests who may also be referred to as subordinate groups in terms of their sexuality. Although female priests and members of the

Mutima Church maintain a silence regarding the issue of sex and sexuality, the suspicion is that church members are aware that *children of the spirit* are fathered by Chishimba, who is also believed to be filled by the Holy Spirit.

### **2.2.1 The Silence Surrounding Sex and Sexuality**

Commenting on the issue of sex, Foucault (1978) suggests that there is a lot of silence surrounding the concept of sex and sexuality among human beings. He argues that sex as it is employs “the cycle of prohibition”, such as “thou shalt not go near, thou shalt not touch, thou shalt not consume, thou shalt not experience pleasure, thou shalt not speak, thou shalt not show thyself, ultimately thou shalt not exist, except in darkness and secrecy” (Foucault, 1978:84).

For Foucault (1978), the silence that surrounds sex is mainly associated with much restriction. Within these systems, power is involved that may empower or disempower human beings. In the Mutima Church, for instance, where members are given strict orders or instructions, such as “no person may understand the role played by Chishimba because he receives divine revelations from God”, there is reason to examine why such orders are instituted. For example, Scott (1990:77) elucidates that “...any ideology which makes a claim to hegemony must, in effect, make promises to subordinate groups by way of explaining why a particular social order is also in their best interests”. This resonates with Chishimba’s ideas and the hegemonic claims he preaches to his church members. Chishimba teaches that all those who have faith, and believe before they see will inherit the Kingdom of God (Chishimba, 1971:3). And because the members believe that Chishimba has supernatural and divine powers, his wishes and interests should be maintained. Therefore, as Scott (1990:4) has observed, the wishes of the dominant parties prevail. Members believe that these claims and their socio-religious order are in their interests because they are based on their religious belief systems and their faith. This claim is explained in detail in Chapter Four of this study.

In similar terms, Foucault (1978:6) claims freedom of sexual desire and the power and knowledge gained from sex, as well as the right of speech concerning it, which are linked with “the honor of a political cause: sex too is placed on the agenda for the future”. Foucault holds that placing sex on the agenda ensures that the term is not widely discussed, being unacknowledged in various circles, such as homes, the church and the community. With this kind of expression and teaching in the Mutima Church, there is much silence surrounding the

beliefs that pertain to Chishimba's theological role. Regarding some female priests who have *children of the spirit*, some members grow up believing that the Holy Spirit is the father of the children. And no member may say otherwise, as the belief is that Chishimba is guided by the Holy Spirit.

Thus, Foucault's (1978:83) argument is that "power is essentially what dictates its law to sex. Which means first of all that sex is placed by power in a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden". According to Foucault's (1978:83) argument, in the Mutima Church the belief is that the Holy Spirit has power to dictate which female priests should have sex with Chishimba. But in this event, if one breaks the rule by going "near", "touches" the forbidden order and "speaks out", the person is subject to punishment and must face the consequences. It means those in power [Chishimba, for example] have laid "...down the rule[s]" (Foucault, 1978:83). And the rules ought not to be broken.

As Chishimba is guided by the Holy Spirit to formulate Church policy, there is a lot of silence surrounding this belief. Keshgegian (2000:21) argues that this kind of silence is not empty, but it is pregnant with meaning, since it is filled with yearning. In the same way, the silence surrounding the belief in the Mutima Church has a lot of meaning. In short, it is recommended that since the revelation received by Chishimba is divine, there is no need to question this, since God is the author of everything. For the Comaroffs (1991:22), Chishimba has the kind of power that is known as non-agentive because it

proliferates outside the realm of institutional politics, saturating such things as aesthetics and ethics, built form and bodily representation, medical knowledge and mundane usage. What is more, it may not be experienced as power at all, since its effects are rarely wrought by overt compulsion. They are internalized, in their negative guise, as constraints; in their neutral guise, as conventions; and, in their positive guise, as values. Yet the silent power of the sign, the unspoken authority of habit, may be as effective as the most violent coercion in shaping, directing, even dominating social thought and action.

To substantiate the Comaroffs' argument, this kind of power builds upon already existing oppressive structures. It is not visible and it builds on the lived experiences of the people who maintain it. It is ingrained in their minds, bodies and souls. Those in power are respected, even without the actual words coming from their subjects. While there are significant exceptions to

this kind of power, one needs to be conscious of the way one gets into power. This is because nonagentive power is exercised unconsciously, with or without any knowledge of oppressing the people under oneself.

However, Foucault (1978:94) dismisses the idea that power comes from the top and contends that “power comes from below”. He explains that those who rule do not start from the top, but that they build their foundations from the bottom. For Foucault, mutual power relationships between the rulers and the ruled do not exist. Rulers were once made to follow orders before they were placed in power. This is in line with Chishimba, who was once a member of the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) and is now a leader in his own church. Hence Scott’s (1990:203) argument that charismatic acts are reinforced by virtue of their roots in the hidden transcript of those who are dominated. It is through prehistory that these charismatic acts seem possible. They help human beings understand how easy it would be for a political or religious breakthrough, so that even the revolutionary elites find themselves overthrown.

For this reason, both Scott’s (1990) and Foucault’s (1978) propositions help us understand the movement of power from below. In this study the church founder started from below, and eventually gained power and formed a variety of relationships, as for instance, in the case of Chishimba, where he maintains his own trusted groups. These are mainly from the middle-aged female priests who benefit from fulfilling their sexual desires when travelling with him, wherever he might be going. The diverse “relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole” (Foucault, 1978:95). As these bodies form groups or associations, they are likely to appoint someone who would be responsible to move with them in a formal direction. Rahman (1993:151) is of the view that “organization or formal power then becomes the instrument through which people’s power is exercised in order to achieve the objective in question”.

Organizations and formal institutions are the commonest places where power relations are exercised. Foucault (1978:96) argues that “power relations are both intentional and nonsubjective”. Human beings can use power willingly or abusively. To illustrate this point, in the Mutima Church, some female priests stand at the crossroads. Being ordained gives female priests a space to exercise their leadership positions, their identity in being mothers and having

power. Within the church's circle, there are some female priests who perform their duties wholeheartedly. To use the words of Scott, some female priests, however, who are in similar positions, use their roles "...under different constraints of power than..." their counterparts (Scott, 1990:5). Using Sumner's words, some female priests use their positions to "...dominate the [church's] arena" (Sumner, 2003:83).

Once they are placed in higher positions, and are in charge of the parishes, some female priests gain power by seizing ownership of some parishes or "by controlling the access of others to [some] resources" (Lingenfelter, 1998:134). They may even act as gate-keepers to Chishimba, hindering those who would want to see him for various purposes. This is how the concept of power is shared within the church: some are aware of what they are expected to do, but do not perform their duties, while others perform their duties unconsciously and unsatisfactorily. Using Oduyoye's words, as they move up through certain designated stages, they gather with them the "conventions that govern women-men relations, [that are] both customary and legislated" and apply them when they gain power (Oduyoye, 1995:160).

Given the shift of power from below in the church under study, Foucault (1978:96) asserts that "there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives". For Foucault, power is important, whether it is exercised within a headquarters, or within the caste that governs, or within a community, a society or within a church. His own perspective is that power is important in any given setup, even within relationships. But Foucault's further argument is that within power relations there are numerous objectives and aims, or a set of rules and regulations or certain goals that members aim to achieve. He is of the view that in every relationship there are power relations, guided by certain strategies and principles. Although the strategies and principles are different, they are in some ways interlinked, because they support one another, they circulate and they are all connected to a major source. They form categories "and yet it is often the case that no one is there to have invented them" (Foucault, 1978:96). And some of these strategies are operated in silence by other human beings.

Human beings are interactive beings. Normally, they do not operate in isolation. Even when there is no leader in a group, human beings will appoint one among themselves who would be responsible for bringing the group to order. Thus, Foucault (1978:96) is of the view that "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a

position of exteriority in relation to power”. It is important to underline some issues regarding resistance with reference to the current study. If, according to Foucault, where there is power there is resistance, then this phrase is of much importance to this study, because we will seek to investigate the experiences of women with regard to missional policy, thereby examining some of their resistance strategies.

Therefore, while the statement that “one is always ‘inside’ power, there is no escaping it” may refer to some female priests’ acceptance of the missional policy in this study (Foucault, 1978:96), it does not exclude male members. Pondering on the different images of power, Purvis (1993) seems to agree with Foucault (1978) about the phrase “where there is power there is resistance”. Writing from a feminist perspective, Purvis (1993:12) observes that “any attempt to reorder relationships, be they internal, between two people, communal, institutional, national, or international, must take account of the images of power that are part of the assumed reality”. Through her approach, Purvis’s point will help explore power relations within the two: female and male power, with a focus on Bemba culture.

It is possible for one to claim that Chishimba and his members’ actions are similar to those groups of people who convert to religious cults. This study maintains the view that an African Initiated Church being studied is different from a cult. Pargament (1997:255) elaborates on this, and says that “examples of people who convert to religious cults provide vivid illustrations of the group conversion process: Attributions of divine power to the leader, the group, and its mission are commonplace, and dramatically different lifestyles replace old routines, commitments, and relationships. But religious group conversion is not limited to cults”. In Pargament’s view, cultism does not only convert religious groups, but any person willing to become a member of the cult. For Pargament (1997:258), conversion to cultism “...unfolds within a field of forces that puts the person under considerable pressure. In some instances these forces may become coercive”. The characteristics and structure of a religious cult give honour and acknowledgements to the group leader as well as the group members themselves. Their mission is the same and they change their old lifestyles to suit new lifestyles. The way the cult members relate to each other is different from the way they would relate to an outsider.

By contrast, the Mutima Church is different from a cult in the way members relate to outsiders. The relationship with outsiders is not different from the way they relate to each other. The

Mutima Church members would willingly explain to outsiders how God has revealed Godself to their leader. The Mutima Church do not force people to become members, but are keen to explain their own understanding of how God has revealed Godself to them. Furthermore, a number of scholars such as Hinfelaar (1994), Burlington(2008; 1998) and Turner (1979) (to mention a few) who have conducted research within the Mutima Church, have not mentioned anything that classifies Chishimba as a cult leader. Major arguments presented by these scholars are that this is an African Initiated Church (AIC) that sought to preach and understand the Word of God in the Bemba language.

### **2.3 Oduyoye's Theory on Women's Participation in AICs: Breaking Women's Silence**

As stated in Chapter One (section 1.11), Oduyoye (1995) asserts that AICs such as the Aladura Churches of West Africa have recognized women's participation and leadership abilities more often than some mainline churches. She acknowledges that her reading of the women founders and leaders of some AICs have convinced her that many African women reflect a leadership of women in African Traditional Religions (ATR) (Oduyoye, 1995:126). As such, one might suggest that Oduyoye's work provides an African woman-centred critique of African Christianity, as well as a spring-board for many African women theologians' voices to be heard more widely.

For example, Kanyoro (2002:63) elucidates that "through centuries of being made to believe that "anatomy is destiny", women were for ages treated as incapable of experiencing God on their own". In this regard, Kanyoro calls the church to account. She argues that "unless the church changes and opts to hold gospel and culture in tension with one another, the women and men of Africa will continue to have crises of identity" (Kanyoro, 2002:65). For many African women theologians, such as Kanyoro, culture is an issue that reinforces the subordination of many African women, and many African women theologians believe that they have the power to formulate and lead some of the churches. African women theologians do not critique culture and Christianity in an attempt to abolish them, but they intend to remain true to African roots, using story-telling methods to unravel the oppressive issues that affect them.

As stated in Chapter One, Oduyoye's (1995:126) views are that the Aladura and the Zionist Churches follow the practices of African Traditional Religions (ATRs), and many women who are adherents of these churches are found in the hierarchy of the Cherubim and Seraphim as

superintending mothers. Although the followers of these women leaders recognize them as divine agents<sup>27</sup>, Oduyoye sees to it that even though they are given leadership positions, they are still hindered from participating in some of the church rituals. Challenges faced by some of the women leaders in the Aladura and Zionist Churches are that their "...participation is curtailed even more by the application of 'levitical laws' which, like traditional menstruation avoidances, exclude women in their menses and those who have just given birth" (Oduyoye, 1995:127).

In line with Oduyoye's argument, Claassens (2012:11), who examines the Book of Leviticus, observes that the socio-cultural context of the book offers harmful gender stereotypes. In this regard, many male priests have used the Book of Leviticus in some ways that have excluded women from participating in church leadership roles. Further, Claassens (2012:11) argues that the important thing is to be aware that some texts "reflect the patriarchal context in which these texts were conceived – a context in which men held positions of power and privilege and where male priests made the rules".

It is in this regard that Oduyoye's theory is relevant to the present study, in that some female priests, who are also in leadership positions, are considered the "Marys" and therefore, conceive in the name of the Holy Spirit and bear children known as *children of the spirit*. The study argues that even though these female priests are in leadership positions, they are not actually able to negotiate their sexual desires, since the *Holy Spirit* is at play within the domain of male power. Worse still, we might state that on the one hand, female priests are ordained and empowered and run leadership positions, while on the other hand, they are victims of sexual violence, though they themselves do not see it in this way. What this points to is that Mutima Church missional policy needs to be examined to ensure that all female priests' insights or sexual desires are recognized as the will of God, since they, too, are human beings (Oduyoye, 1995:125).

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<sup>27</sup> In his work, James Amanze (1998) has encountered various Southern African women who have initiated African Independent Churches, such as Mrs Boammaruri Mmolotsi, founder of the St. Faith Holy Church in 1958 in Francistown in Botswana. Amanze (1998:203-205) substantiates his point by citing a few examples of women who have founded their own churches. Among these are Mrs Evelyn Koboto, who was instrumental in the formation of the St. Matthew's Apostolic Faith Mission at Sefhare in 1964; Mrs Kebuang Modutwa and Miss K. Photonono. It is believed that Mrs Modutwa and Miss Photonono received the power of the Holy Spirit and that God sent them to preach a message of repentance to the chief of the tribe and his people. They preached that Jesus is the Healer and everyone, including the chief and the London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries, should repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ. This message angered both the chief and the LMS missionaries, and this resulted in the expulsion of both Mrs Modutwa and Miss Photonono from the LMS in Kanye (See Amanze, 1998:205).

For many African women theologians, there is a need for some African Churches to redeem Christianity from the beliefs that force many African women to accept practices that hinder their freedom and the fullness of their lives. Thus, Oduyoye (1995:172) argues that to say that Christian circles have liberated the African woman is a myth that is difficult to prove. Oduyoye (1995:173) maintains that

[i]ssues such as the ordination of clergy and ecumenism are prime examples...Faced with the vastly complicated, hydra-headed challenges of living in today's world, Africa finds little sustenance in the continuing importation of uncritical forms of Christianity with answers that were neatly packaged in another part of the world. These churches, which most often take the form of patriarchal hierarchies, accept the material services of women but do not listen to their voices, seek their leadership, or welcome their initiatives.

Drawing on the above, Oduyoye's views are that Christianity landed on the African continent with so much power that it silenced the voices of many who wanted to challenge some portions of the Bible. Instead of examining Christianity with critical eyes and gendered lenses, many churches cultivated the existing patriarchal structures of African societies. That is why this study explores why women are ordained and put into leadership positions. There is a need to examine whether there is mutual participation of men and women in many African Initiated or Independent Churches. Using Oduyoye's words, there is a need to examine whether some African Initiated or Independent Churches "...make men the innocent victims of women's sexuality" (Oduyoye, 2001a:19).

Thus, in comparison to the Western form of feminist approach to patriarchal structures, some feminist theologians such as Fiorenza have sought to interrogate the forms of knowledge structures that oppress other human beings. For instance, Fiorenza (2016:26) recognizes some tools that postmodernity has offered feminists to help them deconstruct some stereotypical forms of power and pervasive ideologies. She insists that it is not only a matter of deconstructing and critical struggles in which women need to be involved. She advocates that women should engage in "...reconstructing and revisioning, articulating methods and practices of dekyriarchalizing the imagination, deimperializing scripture and theology, and decolonizing the Divine" (Fiorenza, 2016:26). Like Oduyoye (1995), Fiorenza (2016) considers involving women in overcoming the stereotypical aspects of social injustice that do not cause violence to humanity, but which have other undesirable consequences. Fiorenza sees that women should be involved in the

transformation of change, be it in the formation of policies or the decolonization of scripture, and that women should be given a voice in identifying the Divine.

In trying to break the silence surrounding the Divine, the concerns about men's positions and power in some West African secret societies are being explored and questioned by many concerned women. For instance, Oduyoye (1995:33) advocates that women should not close their eyes and seal their lips if they need to denounce injustice. She elucidates that prophetic works are not just meant for men in communities. She advises that denouncing social and religious injustice is necessary to allow the prophetic works that calls communities to healing. Oduyoye (1995:33) observes that as nurturers of the generations, women should mediate a sense of urgency in which they should "...share the powers and mysteries of life without resorting to violence". In Oduyoye's (1995:33) view, women are not created to be violent, and they should work peacefully to restore their position and power. By doing this, women will save not only themselves and their families, but will save and heal the whole community, since "it is one person who kills the elephant for the whole people to feast on" (Oduyoye, 1995:33). This resonates with the fact that women, too, should be bearers of knowledge, power and wisdom, since they are the nurturers of generations. It should not be seen as a surprise, then, to see some women being bearers of power and knowledge when the divine revelations of the *Holy Spirit* are upon them.

Chishimba has acquired knowledge and power in the name of the *Holy Spirit*. Hence, the question that has been asked in this study, 'How does the male-formulated missional policy affect ordained women's lives and influence their functions in the Mutima Church?' Similar comments are highlighted by some African women theologians. For example, Oduyoye (2001:20-21) argues that some AICs accept the material services of women, such as giving them leadership roles. Yet, because of "prudishness", Western anthropologists have misinterpreted African sexuality and this has led to sexuality being a non-debatable issue in the church and in other Christian circles.

Because it is believed that Chishimba is led by the power of the Holy Spirit, some female priests gain their identities by having his *children of the spirit*. For those female priests who have never had children, for example, conceiving in the "name of the Holy Spirit" and bearing *children of the spirit* give them the power to be recognized as mothers. This has been a way in which some African cultures have sought to affirm women who are able to conceive. Oduyoye (1995) argues

that, in our attempt to understand African culture, there is a need to explore both religious and cultural aspects. It is important to understand the two when considering “motherhood” because this is the “...focal image of the African woman in the cultural arena” (Oduyoye, 1995:159). In this regard, argues Oduyoye (1995:159), “motherhood that is truly satisfying for a woman also works to benefit the society as a whole”. Oduyoye sees that it is actually the norm for every African woman to live to the standard of bearing children and being called a mother. For the pride of many African women lies in being called “mother” by their children. But, due to this, many feminist scholars argue that it is in the sense of “motherhood” that some women’s hospitality has been abused by their male counterparts.<sup>28</sup> The following section illustrates Nuckolls’ theory on the paradox of psychoanalysis and cultural knowledge.

#### **2.4 The Paradox of Psychoanalysis and Cultural Knowledge as Perceived by Nuckolls**

In advancing the arguments on psychoanalysis and cultural knowledge, Burlington (2008) draws on Nuckolls (1996) as his principal theoretical lens, thus allowing a focus on the nexus of Chishimba’s own consciousness and his own socio-cultural background. In his writings, Nuckolls (1996:4) rejects the idea that cultural knowledge should be studied on its own, without engaging the minds of the people and their religious understanding. For Nuckolls (1996) culture, knowledge and the human mind are intertwined. He therefore argues that

[n]o theory of cultural knowledge is adequate which does not take into account the insights of cognitive theory and psychoanalytic terms as a religious value. The two in combination provide a more powerful approach than either does individually, and the development of a combined approach is desirable and possible (Nuckolls, 1996:4).

Nuckolls is of the view that every theory pertaining to cultural knowledge should be handled with rational treatment or analysis, to produce a holistic approach to any particular cultural milieu. Without considering the two, then, cultural theory is incomplete. In Nuckolls’ (1996) terms, psychoanalysis and cultural knowledge should not just be considered in Christian circles, but should also be factored into other religions, such as Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. When cultural knowledge is considered in conjunction with the insights of cognitive theory and psychoanalysis in religious terms, they produce a powerful and well-developed approach towards humanity. They work hand in hand, as these are associated with the people’s

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<sup>28</sup> See Oduyoye Mercy, *Introductions to Feminist Theologies*. (2001).

worldviews, and he favours psychodynamic approaches, including the ones that focus on culturally variable knowledge structures (Nuckolls, 1976:4). In this sense, Chishimba, with his Bemba cultural background and his psycho-understanding of the world, coupled with his RCC conversion and three-year seminary training for the priesthood, could create what Nuckolls (1996) terms a theory of cultural knowledge.

The other possible way to understand Chishimba's knowledge or theological perceptions is by examining his directive goals. "It is impossible to understand the structure of knowledge without understanding the *directive goals* in terms of which it is rationalized" (Nuckolls, 1996:4). Understanding a particular form of knowledge can be easier than focusing on a wide range of ideas. Knowledge itself is vast, so it is difficult for one to grasp it in its various areas. Therefore, Nuckolls (1996) is of the view that human beings should be aware of the type of area of information they are interested in, such as social, religious or psychological, so that it will be easier to reach the desired goals. In Chishimba's case, for instance, his knowledge derived from his Bemba cultural background, Bemba religious worldviews, and his RCC seminary teachings. It is from these that Chishimba achieved his directive goals in terms of his reasoning and his mindset. This, then, is similar to the model of anthropology that involves cultural identity. Bevans (1992:27) suggests that the anthropological model is one which "emphasizes cultural identity and its relevance for theology more than scripture which it considers important but a product of culturally relative theologies that have been hammered out in very particular contexts".

Since in Chapter One it has been highlighted that Chishimba is a Bemba, and also a former RCC seminarian, his teachings, too, have to be understood against the background of colonial Northern Rhodesia, where there was polarization between Blacks and Whites. Chishimba's teachings have to be understood against his background of a Bemba religious and traditional understanding of the relationships between women and men. These are deep cultural-religious worldviews that may have been created by Chishimba's personal and colonial histories. That is why, in trying to assess the issue of male power, there is a need to understand the contexts in which Chishimba's story is being told, be it in a cultural or spiritual form.

Thus, in many AICs, it seems there is the matrix of oppression emanating from structures of the Holy Spirit. The issue of the Spirit is a powerful concept in many AICs. In this study, it can be

identified with theories of identity (Fiorenza, 2009:108). Theories of identity are ideologically constructed and they reinvigorate some female priests to regain their identity by agreeing to be mothers of the *children of the spirit*. Within these versions, issues of race, sex, gender, class and imperialism are vectors of dominating power that create constitutive social processes that engender the differential simultaneity of dominations and subordinations (Fiorenza, 2009:108). Therefore, just as the issue of the Holy Spirit is prominent in many AICs, it is also significant in the Mutima Church, where it is believed that Chishimba himself does not do things using his own power, but the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is what Nuckolls (1996:28) terms temporary integrations. Chishimba asserts that Christ's role on earth is provisional (Chishimba, 1974:2), but Chishimba's role has diminished that of Christ since Chishimba reentered Mary's womb and was taken back to Heaven (Burlington, 2008:442). With these kinds of explanations, Nuckolls (1996:28) argues that "temporary integrations create new knowledge structures of paradox, and the whole process begins all over". To this end, Chishimba has created new paradoxical knowledge structures that he uses to influence his members, in trying to reach some stages within some of these knowledge structures.

In Chishimba's paradoxical knowledge structures, he [Chishimba] refers to the Europeans (White people) as our elder brothers and sisters, who are descendants of Esau. Chishimba refers to the Black people of Africa as the descendants of Jacob, naming them the *last born* or *children of the last Israel* (Chishimba, 1974:2). This is what Nuckolls (1996:46) terms the paradox. In Nuckolls' views, these are contradictory emotional orientations that Chishimba aims to achieve and paradoxical knowledge structures with which he tries to reach a solution. In this paradox, Chishimba is of the view that God revealed Godself as having a masculine nature through the European races. In the same way, God has revealed God's feminine side to Africans through Mary (Burlington, 2008:440) and it is also from *Mother Mary* that Chishimba claims to have received divine revelation (Burlington, 2008:441).

For Nuckolls, cultural goals [similar to that of Chishimba] cannot be reached since they represent values that contradict each other. Such kinds of contradictory cultural goals "generate dialectics, and such dialectics become the framework of knowledge systems" (Nuckolls, 1996:117). In this sense, Chishimba is motivated to reach a cultural goal that cannot be reached, making his aim to teach the concept of Mariology to his members difficult, unless he welcomes and exploits a

dialectic (instead of a static position), where members imitate the lifestyle of Old Testament times when they are among themselves in the *Namfumu[s]*, but also prefer to live and experience a modern kind of lifestyle.

Based on this kind of belief, Nuckolls (1996:5) asserts that “it is the social pragmatics of this knowledge—its ‘contestation’ and ‘negotiation’—which constitute the subject matter of ethnopsychological inquiry in this form”. In this setup, members are overwhelmed by the teachings they have received, and revert to the language and values they have been taught, which are static. Therefore, the implications of this discourse suggest that Nuckolls’ (1996) has effectively engaged with Chishimba’s Bemba religious and traditional understanding of relationship between men and women. The only problem is that Chishimba needs to offer his church members a sensible way to move forward, while not questioning basic teachings that may seem to disrespect their founder. It is against this contradictory background that some feminist scholars such as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argue that, in many cases, it is the language (not just the practices) of some churches which is more male oriented and tends to be oppressive to women.

## **2.5 Oppressive Kyriarchal Practices**

In her publication entitled *Transforming Vision: Explorations in Feminist Theology*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2011) divides her work into four sections. The first section deals with feminist theory and theology. The second section outlines feminist theology and struggle. The third section deals with Catholicism as a site of feminist struggle and the fourth section concentrates on feminist revisions of the divine. While it is not the intention of this study to explore the entire book, the study situates itself mainly in the fourth section. Here Fiorenza (2011) explores a wide range of issues, such as violence against women, anti-Judaism in feminist theology, the concept of Mariology and the concept of monotheism.

Since, in Chishimba’s view, Christ has played the major role of Saviour on this earth, Christ’s role may be seen as diminished, since conceiving and giving birth to *children of the spirit* is an imitation of Mary, who conceived through the Holy Spirit. Fiorenza (2011:199) is critical of some churches who imitate the role of Mary, arguing that this is mainstream Mariology that continues to inscribe a weaker sociocultural image of the feminine and sanctifies the marginalization and exploitation of wo/men. While Fiorenza sees this as one way of exploiting

women, some women in the Mutima Church believe that this is positive, empowering some female priests to appreciate their motherhood. Furthermore, Fiorenza (2011:198) argues that “in holding up to wo/men the image of the perpetual virgin and sorrowful mother Mary, churchmen are preaching a model of femininity that ordinary wo/men cannot imitate”. Fiorenza advocates the abandonment of a Mariological type of preaching, since imitating Mary in a modernist society has turned into a postmodern issue. But this is a challenging thing to do, since Mary and her characteristics are unique symbols that Chishimba teaches to his members.

Such conceptions are ideological. Fiorenza (2011:199) argues that “it is overlooked that these ideologizing and mythologizing forms of *kyriarchal* Mariology often go hand in hand with a conservative politics of ecclesiastical and societal restoration that is contrary to the vision of the discipleship of equals”. The possibility of finding a vision of the discipleship of equals among members in the Mutima Church is rare, as the doctrines often seem to surpass the members’ natural human understanding. It is therefore, considered a privilege for the Mutima Church members to direct all their prayers to Mary, whom they strongly believe is their senior Saviour.

For Fiorenza (2009), the theory of intersectionality is articulated in three phases. Firstly, it is a theory of marginalized subjectivity, secondly a theory of identity, and thirdly, it is a theory composed of a matrix of oppression (Fiorenza, 2009:108)<sup>29</sup>. Fiorenza (2009:106-107) proposes “...the analytic concept of *kyriarchy* to theorize the intersecting dominations and subordinations engendered by race, class, gender, heterosexuality, age, ableism, or imperialism-colonialism...”.

However, within the mainstream, statements which perceive Africa as showing the feminine nature of God lie in *kyriarchal* situations. According to Fiorenza (1994:173-174),

...in *kyriarchal* situations even the image and cult of a woman who is worshipped by [both men] and women can cement structures of oppression. Insofar as the mariological dogmas tend to make Mary the great exception among women, they reinforce *kyriocentric* attitudes and structures.

Fiorenza is of the view that structures of oppression do not occur only where men operate. She observes that even in structures that are formulated by women themselves, structures of

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<sup>29</sup> Fiorenza (2009:108) argues that there are three versions. The first version is the theory of marginalized subjectivity, but this intersectional theory refers only to multiply the number of marginalized subjects. The second version seeks to illuminate how identity is constructed at the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, and imperialism. The third version stresses intersectional theory as a theory of structures and sites of oppression.

dominance and oppression do occur. In religious communities, for example, that are formulated by women and where the image of Mary is mostly idolized, structures of dominance and oppression among women themselves are propagated. Similarly, in the Mutima Church, where Chishimba preaches a model of Mary that all members are asked to imitate, the structures of dominance and oppression are experienced. These are experienced more among some female priests who seek favours from Chishimba, and they tend to dominate the other female priests.

Fiorenza (1996:166) suggests that feminist attempts to revise mainstream Mariology and to rearticulate it as liberating for women should not scrutinize only doctrinal language and cultic imagery, but should also confront socio-historical contexts and their politically conservative dominant Mariology if they do not want to contribute to the further marginalization and exploitation of women. However, in this study, instead of confronting the socio-historical context from which the concept of Mariology came, I will confront the socio-cultural historical context of the Bemba people and the historical religious context of the Mutima Church.

The theories above will form the basis of this study's theoretical underpinnings. These theories shed light on the current argument about the relationships between women and male power in the Mutima Church. By using these conceptual tools, the chapter will go beyond the ordinary arguments which highlight some theories of inculturation and *Missio Dei* because the church has used concepts of inculturation whilst trying to engage in God's mission. In the following sections, I discuss theories taken from the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, hereafter the 'Circle'. Their theories are relevant to this study because they contain many of the various experiences encountered by African women theologians.

## **2.6 Theories from the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians**

The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians was inaugurated in 1989 under the leadership of Mercy Amba Oduyoye. The concerned African women theologians are women "...in touch with the realities of the African Continent – a land richly endowed with natural resources and beautiful peoples, but a land despoiled by religio-cultural and sociopolitical structures that have denied [some] women the fullness of life" (Kinoti, 1996:xi). African women theologians critique old theologies because they are of the view that these pave a way for African Christianity that is also dependent on cultic forms which mediate a societal order and practices that burden African women with oppressive structures (Cannon, 2001:vii).

Kanyoro (2002:64) argues for caution when, in their quest for an explanation of *Missio Dei* and the process of inculturation, African women theologians seek causes of oppression. She believes that much of history implies that most religions are expressions of male cultures that have marginalized women (Kanyoro, 2002:63). She argues that women theologians in Africa want culture to be scrutinized to the extent that it gives African women a voice. Kanyoro (2002:64), like other African women theologians, "...insist[s] that culture [as a whole] is not static and it, too, has to change for the well-being of women as persons created by God". In the same way, Oduyoye (2001:17) suggests that theology has developed in "...consciously multi-cultural and multi-religious contexts", and "it is culture-sensitive and intentionally dialogue oriented. It undertakes dialogue between cultures as well as within cultures". What this points to is that African women theologians are advocating for women to start experiencing the love of God in a fuller way, since they, too, are created in God's image.

Because theology undertakes dialogue between and within cultures, Oduyoye (2001:17) calls for the church in Africa to be involved in advocating the enhancement of cultural liberation. Oduyoye is of the view that theology is a story that has to be told. When the multi-faceted story of theology is told, for instance, in an African context, "...believers may become aware of God's presence in day-to-day life, and believers [may] make a choice [as to] whether or not they will walk with God" (Oduyoye, 2001:17).

Phiri and Nadar (2006:3) observe that some African women theologians are not explicit in the way they name their theologies, and they are not keen to be referred to "as feminist theologians". They argue that although many women theologians have been trained within Western theologies, there has to be a systematic and theoretical interrogation of the implications of this within the contexts of African women (Phiri and Nadar, 2006:3). African women theologians are of the view that while other women are naming their theologies "womanist", "feminist", and or "black", and "white", there is a need to integrate race and class as being discourses surrounding gender, without marginalizing any of them (Phiri and Nadar, 2006:4).

For this reason, African women theologians argue that "We do not want to be called feminist, because of its seeming neglect of race and class; neither do we want to be called womanist because, as some have argued, the experiences of African-American women are different from those of African women" (Phiri, 1997; Oduyoye, 1990). Some African women theologians

observe that the experiences of women theologians, for example, such as experiences of the women within the current study, where a number of ordained women have children with the church founder, may sound too awkward to an African-American. Yet, in our context, this exercise is essentially a cultural-religio one. To this end, African women theologians are advocating for constant dialogue with all the theologies which are respected and practised by women (Oduyoye, 2001a).

### **2.6.1 Feminist Theology**

Ruether (1983:18) defines feminist theology as "...the promotion of the full humanity of Women". Similarly, Rakoczy (2004:4) defines feminist theology as a discipline in Christian circles which is part of the world-wide movement of women of faith that should be engaged with in a radical critique of Christian life. Rakoczy (2004:4) views feminist theologies as the kind of theology that affirms the dignity of women. She contends that it is a critique of the past and present theology and praxis, challenging presuppositions, beliefs, dogmas and the whole of Christian life from the perspective of women's dignity (Rakoczy, 2004:4). Rakoczy (2004) presents an overview of the theological contributions of women around the world, yet paying much attention to theologies of women.

In feminist theology women's experiences are considered as a source and one of the practical credible norms for theology. According to Young (1990:67), "Women's feminist experience exposes a patriarchal theology for what it is, half a theology, and judges it accordingly". In support of this, Nadar (2005:61) affirms that "... we wish to hear women's voices and visions of being Church so that we can affirm those aspects of the church which women find liberating, but also so that we may engage and address those aspects which women..." find unfulfilling. Young and Nadar point out that, for many women, the relationship in the church between female and male leadership is still seen by many as a hindrance to women's participation in the church's leadership. Oduyoye (2001a:4) asserts that within the church structure the question a feminist ecclesiology has to answer is not whether or not women ought to "leave" or "stay", but to rethink what it means for one to be church within a theological paradigm that aims at reconsidering the basics of Christian theology and practice in feminist terms.

## 2.7 An Integration of African Culture

Shorter (1988:5), a White Father (W.F.) and a Catholic missionary priest in East Africa, define culture as "...a transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a pattern capable of development and change, and it belongs to the concept of humanness itself. It follows that, if religion is a human phenomenon or human activity, it must affect, and be affected by, culture". In the same line and, writing from an American context, Benedict (1957:1) acknowledges that the study of anthropology is concerned with the physical characteristics and industrial techniques, conventions and values that distinguish one community from others. In both Shorter's and Benedict's views, culture is a human concept, a process that is full of activities and that is constantly changing. Further, Benedict (1957:14) argues that "culture is not a biologically transmitted complex".

Benedict views culture as that which binds human beings together. She argues that the cultural heritage of human beings is not a gene that can be passed on from parents to children. Culture is a way of recognizing different values that may develop from human beings. Shorter's work is relevant to this study because although it highlights the concept of culture, it shows that culture is also one of the elements of power in the midst of human beings.

Similarly, Lukken (2005:183) asserts that "culture is ... an extremely inclusive entity, which encompasses the whole of human life, in all its layers". Benedict (1957:16) elucidates that culture binds human beings together because of the ideas and the standards they have in common. In Lukken's view, however, (2005:174) almost every culture is exposed to the danger of becoming manipulative. Like Foucault (1978) and Purvis (1993), Lukken seems to bring a new understanding of power. In her view, Purvis asserts that interpreting power as a negative instrument should be avoided. Instead, power should be given a new way of understanding elements such as God's power and the power of the Cross, that give people life (Purvis, 1993:13). Further, Lukken (2005:174) states that culture becomes manipulative when we question how power is distributed among human beings. Therefore, he argues that

[t]he more power is divided up and shared out together, the smaller that risk is.

The more power is in the hands of a few, the more the culture is in danger of becoming an ideology, and instrument of domination. As a cultural phenomenon, religious ritual, including liturgy, contains this risk too; liturgy can become an ideology and instrument of power that oppresses people. If this occurs, they can

no longer express their deepest religious feelings and convictions, and become religiously frustrated or search for other ways, for their own religious subculture (Lukken, 2005:174).

Lukken proposes that in a given culture, when power is divided equally among human beings, it reduces the amount of domination and allows people to express their “deepest feelings and convictions”. In this way, power creates an atmosphere of mutual understanding. Langa (1999:295) argues that “the church in Southern Africa has realized that she cannot minister effectively to the people of God if she does not understand the cultures of the people within a particular framework”. He asserts that culture is a powerful element because many Southern African people are identified through their cultures. He maintains that, “understanding culture helps the church to decipher the identity of the people to whom the gospel is addressed” (Langa, 1999:295).

In the same way, Bevans (1992:20) supports the view that understanding culture is important because it gives people an identity for doing contextual theology. However, this has its own implications. He implies that “one such drawback in seeking cultural identity as a theological source is falling into a kind of cultural romanticism...” (Bevans, 1992:20). Thus, Bevans is of the view that in our time people should base their theologies on cultures that respond positively to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and should not allow “assumptions about the nature of power” in cultures [to] function “...as an instrument of violence” (Purvis, 1993:13-14). Furthermore, Arbuckle (2010:7) defines culture as “...a system of shared symbols and meanings; symbolic action needs to be interpreted, read, or deciphered in order to be understood”.

Arbuckle insists that these shared symbols and meanings have power and are important to human beings. They shape our lifestyles (Arbuckle, 2010:19). He asserts that “without symbols we simply cannot converse with one another. In fact, we are in chaos!” (Arbuckle. 2010:19). Similarly, Lukken (2005:19) asserts that, “in one way or another, the thing that is a symbol refers to itself, because it participates in the reality to which it refers”. Human beings in turn interpret the symbolic actions of other people from a different culture, so that symbols have power, are embedded in cultures and carry with them a lot of meanings. Arbuckle (2010:20) stresses that a symbol is not just a “thing” ... [and] “because symbols are so much part of our lives it is difficult to analyze them and appreciate their enormous importance in our daily lives”. Hence, symbols are powerful instruments that form part of our cultures as they give us meanings.

Cobb (2005:41) defines culture from a Latin perspective as *cultura*, with its root translation as *colere* meaning to till or cultivate the soil, conjuring the image of human labour massaging nature into crops, while Tanner (1997:x), presents the postmodern modification of an anthropological notion of culture. Cobb (2005:42) is of the view that cultures are spiritual entities that embody and integrate portions of God's ideas. The practice of God's ideas used by Cobb, is "...the ground and the source of the Christian community, including its understanding and embodiment of power" (Purvis, 1993:73). However, Cobb (2005:42) divides his opinions on culture into three disciplines: first, the humanities, second, cultural anthropology and, third, cultural studies. Firstly, Cobb (2005:44) observes that human beings realize that they are created as artifacts that try to overcome certain spiritual and values that have the power to lift them beyond themselves and make them better persons. He defines this "culture as a standard of excellence". Secondly, Cobb (2005) is of the view that people look for a coherence that can embrace all attitudes and activities, those that come from their everyday lives and those that are in exalted places. Cobb (2005:44) refers this to as "culture as a way of life". Thirdly, Cobb (2005:44) recognizes aspects of cultures that are 'inferior', which he refers to as *subaltern*. He suggests that these theorists of inferior cultures instruct human beings to encounter the power of culture that offers class interest where some resentment towards cultural artifacts is perceived as instrumental.

For Tanner (1997), Christianity is a particular culture that is established with reference to, or in contradiction to, other ways of life. As the present study seeks to investigate, among other things, how women interpret the teachings of the Mutima Church, Tanner's book explores the identity of one's Christian way of life. Tanner is not explicit in outlining the roles of men and women as being God's creations, yet he brings out issues of Christian identity and modern anthropology (Tanner, 1997:95). Pobee (1996:25) outlines a variety of definitions of culture. For instance, that culture is a collective tradition and that it becomes "culture" only when members of a specific group recognize themselves in it. Like Cobb (2005), Pobee asserts that culture is a realm of meanings and values, as distinct from ephemeral behavioural patterns. These meanings and values are transmitted and embodied in symbols which communicate and perpetuate certain attitudes towards life (Pobee, 1996:25).

Like Cobb (2005), Oduyoye (2003:41) views culture as one of the instruments that have different faces of power. She defines culture as a way of being and thinking, including the activities,

attitudes, and world-views that together constitute the difference that exists between one people and another. It is gathered and carried in language, symbols, and rituals, and gives expression to, whilst also expressed in, religious beliefs. Like Shorter, Oduyoye (2003:41) conceives culture as a kind of lifestyle conceived by a particular tribe or group: what people do, how they behave, speak and plan, including their world-views altogether form a definition of culture. Thus, power also revolves around cultures because cultures give meaning and identities to human beings. Oduyoye's writings are of much importance in this study, as she writes from an African woman's perspective about many of the experiences related to the present study. Oduyoye (1986:68) further points out that the missionaries' way of coming to perform mission work in Africa reflected their own culture in the symbols they brought along and in their telling of the story of salvation. The following section sheds light on the process of inculturation.

## **2.8 The Process of Inculturation: *The Gaudium et Spes* (The GS)**

“The *Gaudium et spes* hereafter referred to as the ‘GS’ is the longest document” written by the Vatican II (Hinks, 2014<sup>30</sup>). The GS is the Pastoral Constitution of the Roman Catholic Church. It is also known in English as the “Joys and Hopes” of the Pastoral Constitution of the Roman Catholic Church. The GS looks at the Catholic's Church's teachings about humanity's relationship to society. The document also presents Jesus Christ as the Light of the World (Rosica, 2015:2)

Therefore, and in arguing their case for inculturation<sup>31</sup>, Tuckson & Wijssen cite *Gaudium et Spes*, stating that, “there are many links between the message of salvation and human culture. In his [*sic*] self-revelation to his [*sic*] people, culminating in the fullness of manifestation in his [*sic*] incarnate Son, God spoke according to the culture proper to each age” (Tuckson & Wijssen, 1994:1-2). Continuing their arguments, Tuckson & Wijssen (1994:2) observe that in 1969, after Vatican II, Pope Paul VI, addressed the bishops of SECAM in Kampala as follows:

You may, and you must have an African Christianity. Indeed, you possess human values and characteristic forms of culture which can rise up to perfection, such as to find in Christianity a truer superior fullness, and prove to be capable of richness

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<sup>30</sup> Hinks, Matthew Fr. 2014. [Online] Available: [https://www.opusangelorum.org/English/2013\\_4.html](https://www.opusangelorum.org/English/2013_4.html), [2017, 30 August].

<sup>31</sup> In this study, the concept of inculturation is included because the church under study uses both Bemba cultural values and the Bible to formulate the missional policy.

of expression, all its own, and genuinely African...you will be able to remain sincerely African even in your own interpretation of Christian life; you will be capable of bringing to the Catholic Church the precious and original contribution of “negritude” which she needs, particularly in this historic hour.

In the light of the above, the Pope calls all African Catholics to maintain their values and characteristic forms of culture, with the view that one can possess in oneself values of Christianity. The idea is that one’s Africanness would not be taken away. Though the Pope was speaking to Catholics, it is essential to relate this statement to all African people who abide in the Word of God. This gives an African the power of life. To illustrate this point, Purvis (1993) reminds us that the power of life is not to control, but simply to issue invitations whereby we acknowledge God to be in ultimate control. According to Purvis (1993:40), “we are at home in God, and God is at home in us. God is our relational power”. God is in control of everything including us, for God has entrusted us to take care of ourselves and God’s Word. As much as the AICs are numerous and diverse, there are also similar elements which they use in praying, healing and baptizing.

Viewing the process of inculturation, an African woman theologian poses the question: “How can one be African and Christian at the same time?” (Oduyoye, 1986:73). Oduyoye seeks ways of helping African people to understand that even though they are Africans, they should embrace the Christian message as well. With regard to this, the theology of inculturation is an aspect that may not be ignored. Since the Mutima Church is a product of the RCC, it is argued that the church uses the African heritage to maintain “...the stature of humanity that is in Christ...” so its members are “...presented blameless before God” (Oduyoye, 1986:73). Oduyoye concedes that many African people do not understand whether they belong in Christian circles or are still in African circles. They struggle to position themselves as Africans as well as Christians, at the same time. For this reason, many African people tend to engage their Christian understandings with their African way of life.

Shorter (1988:4) defines inculturation as that which has to do with the interaction of what, for the present, may be referred to as “faith”, on the one hand, and culture, on the other. Shorter is careful not to confuse his readers when he separates faith and culture. He highlights the fact that the insertion of “faith” in a particular culture (which is a developing process) is an extremely important and significant moment in the process. Therefore, there must be “a continuous

dialogue between faith and culture” (Shorter, 1988:11). For Shorter, inculturation entails “the on-going dialogue between faith and culture or cultures. It is a creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and a culture or cultures, (Shorter, 1988:11). It is important to note that Shorter is not only looking at a particular culture, or our “African cultures” so to speak, but is bringing forth his definition, derived from a wide range of human cultures across the world.

Commenting on the issue of inculturation as viewed by Charles Nyamiti, Vöhökangas (1999:20) observes that Nyamiti respected African values and traditions. For instance, Vöhökangas (1999:20) acknowledges that, being an African, Nyamiti respected the elders, regardless of their being church leaders or parents. For this reason, he argues that it would be inappropriate to disrespect the elders, such as church leaders or parents, because doing so would mean ignoring both the African elders and those of the Christian type. Vöhökangas (1999:20) argues strongly that the solution to this would be the process of inculturation. But he observes that African cultures include both negative and positive aspects, among their elements and values. On the negative side, these aspects may hinder the process of inculturation within them. Then cultures would remain intact and Christian and traditional life would remain two parallel spheres of life that may not meet, causing “...a dual religious system” (Vöhökangas, 1999:20). For Vöhökangas (1999:20), it is important for African cultures to be flexible, especially within the whole process of inculturation, because this would allow cultures to have a dialogue with the Christian influence (Vöhökangas, 1999:20).

Anderson (2000) writes from his personal experience with the AICs in the South African context. He further comments extensively on traditional healing methods and rituals in the AICs. He observes that one significant element used in the AICs is water. Anderson (2000:205) asserts that, “[t]he most common symbol found in these churches is water ‘blessed’ by a bishop or prophet for use by congregants, either as a healing potion itself or else in large quantities to induce vomiting, and sometimes mixed with ash”. Water itself is a powerful element that has been used in many AICs. In the Mutima Church, for instance, water that is blessed by Chishimba is considered sacred, and as a source of life. “Water is used as a symbol of the power of the *Holy Spirit* of God. Most important is the prayer made to the water before administering the cure” (Maboea, 2002:92). Hence, the water that is used to wash Chishimba’s feet [in the Mutima Church], is regarded as “holy water” which members keep in their homes. The water is used for various purposes, such as cooking, bathing and also used for healing and purposes of protection.

Anderson (2000:205) observes that in many AICs “the water is seen to represent cleansing and purification from evil, sin, sickness and ritual pollution – concepts familiar to indigenous thought. The holy water is taken home and sprinkled as a ritual of purification or protection, or is drunk or washed in for healing purposes”. Sickness, ritual pollution and evil are situations which are uncontrollable and occur often in our societies (Lukken, 2005:124-125), hence protection is desirable. Lukken (2005:125) terms these uncontrollable situations “crisis rituals”. With regard to the Mutima Church, “holy water” is a symbol of life, because members conceive that the water is filled with the presence of God in the form of the Holy Spirit. They believe that there is a power of healing in the water that has been blessed by Chishimba. This ritual of practicing “holy water” is also a powerful symbol found in the RCC.

Water is one of the powerful elements that play a role in symbolism (Lukken, 2005:16). In both the Mutima and RCCs, the use of holy water means or brings purity. For example, in the Mutima Church and RCCs, water is used during baptism and on some holy days that mark the death of remarkable people. A story is told in the Mungwi District in Zambia, of a certain woman who was a member of the Mutima Church. One day, she decided to attend the RCC Sunday service. It is said that the RCC priest who was leading the service was not pleased to see this woman in their midst, as he was aware that she was a member of the Mutima Church. The RCC priest started insulting the Mutima Church to an extent that the woman was both psychologically and emotionally disturbed. She then decided to leave the church. Even though she went back to her place, the woman did not stop thinking about what she had heard from the RCC priest. Whilst in her house, she took a cup, filled it with cold water and prayed to God. The prayer was directed to the “Mother of Creation,” literally, *Mayo Nakabumba*. She prayed, *Mayo ntalalikilakofye mba ku menshi aya?*, literally, “May you calm me down with this water, Mother of Creation”. She drank the water and, eventually, this made her feel comfortable and whole-hearted again (Chishimba, 1976: 16).

In the Mutima Church teachings or prayers, members have been taught to pay reverence to the Mother of Creation, but also to everything that is considered holy. For instance, in John 1, it is written that “In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God”. In John 1:3, it is written that through “Jesus, God made all things [and] not one thing in all creation was made without him”. John 1:3 shows that Jesus is the Creator, so if this is the

case, then Mary mother of Jesus is the “Mother of the Creator”. Of much importance in the Mutima Church is the reference to Mother of Creation. This has been acknowledged in Bembaland, where motherhood is much appreciated and glorified in the royal family, and special respect is paid to mothers of the Bemba Paramount Chief[s] Chitimukulu (Badenberg, 2001:42). This is discussed further in Chapter Three of this study.

The story of the Mungwi woman represents a number of faces of power that were experienced by the Mutima Church woman. Firstly, because the RCC priest was, at that moment, in control of the pulpit, he used words which impacted negatively on the religious understanding of the ‘nameless woman’. While he sustained the power to control and rebuke, the woman was on the receiving end, and she sustained emotional and psychological abuse. Secondly, the water is used as a powerful symbol that helps the woman regain her strength, and helped her to connect herself with the “...sensual, erotic connectedness of persons with one another and...” with prayer (Purvis, 1993:55). Thirdly, she directed her prayer at the Mother of Creation, which is also how Mutima Church Members are taught – that prayer to God should be directed through *Mayo Nakabumba*, literally, Mother of Creation. In this story, prayer, faith and the Mother of Creation are used to sustain life in a practical way.

There is a special service that is performed in memory of the pain that the woman from Mungwi experienced. In the Bemba language this service is called *Ilyashi palwa mwanakashi ku Mungwi* literally, “Prayer concerning the Mungwi woman.” During this service, jars of water and cups are placed at the altar. As the time for singing approaches, members are assigned to take turns at moving forward and pouring some water in their cup for drinking.<sup>32</sup> Water as an element is a powerful symbol that brings peace and strength to members of the Mutima Church. Some members even shed tears, because it is believed that tears also symbolise the act of remembering the Mungwi woman. In the light of this, Lukken (2005:19) asserts that “the symbol brings together, unites and gives continuity to what is dispersed. It brings past and future together in the present. It helps one not to react incoherently”.

Seemingly, using holy water for healing and other purposes in the Mutima Church is an attempt to reclaim the African heritage and also engage with the RCC, which also uses holy water. It is

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<sup>32</sup> This service is called “*Ilyashi palwa Mwanakashi ku Mungwi*” literally, “Prayer in remembrance of the Mungwi Woman”.

an attempt to revive and unite African and Christian cultures. Commenting on African and Christian cultures, Makhubu (1988:24) asserts that

[t]he blacks were stripped of their customs, and in exchange were forced into a culture they could never embrace. When black [people] read the Bible and found something about polygamy and circumcision they were puzzled. The very things condemned by missionaries were found right there in the Bible. The black leaders gave their own interpretation to those portions of the Bible which confirmed aspects of their culture and customs.

Returning to the earlier discussion on the concept of power, then, Makhubu's observations on Africans' encounters with the Bible highlight the power of Biblical texts for Africans. Given the privilege of the practice of polygamy and circumcision, some Black Africans sought to use the Bible as a powerful tool to reclaim their heritage. Kisija (2001:28) a Tanzanian theologian argues that "many Sukuma men marry more than one wife. The more money he has, the more women he marries". The Bible has given "power to control" to some Black Africans, as in the matter of polygamy, yet do African women also have that increased sense of power? The Bible has also introduced the "power of life and strength" to help initiate churches for Black Africans. And the response of Appiah-Kubi (1987:69) to this seems ambiguous, since he suggests that at the core of the churches initiated by Africans to accommodate their fellow Africans "... lies the alien character of Christianity as inherited from Euro-American missionaries. Their emergence is an answer to the quest of identifying Christianity with African culture".

What is interesting is that to many Africans, Jesus Christ has been understood through different lenses. To some Africans, Jesus Christ seems to be missing, or foreign. Jesus Christ "...seems to be absent in several crisis situations of African life – birth, puberty, marriage, illness and death" (Appiah-Kubi, 1987:69). This affects the life-cycle of many African people. According to Appiah-Kubi (1987:70), "one has to go through birth, initiation, marriage and death to be accepted in many African societies as a perfect man or woman". Power as life assumes that in the AICs "Jesus Christ seems to be a spiritual, intellectual or philosophical entity in the missionary Churches instead of being a dynamic personal reality in all life situations" (Appiah-Kubi, 1987:69).

While every preaching and teaching on the conception, until the death of Jesus, is central to many members in main line Churches, it is also central to the members of African Independent

Christian Churches. What this points to is that “the concepts of Christology of such traditional African Christians are practical, dynamic, living and basically based on real life experience...” and “...revolve around the genealogy; the Rites of passage – birth, baptism, eucharist and death; kinship and community aspects...” of the members (Appiah-Kubi, 1987:79). To substantiate this, in the Mutima Church, the genealogy of the Biblical Jesus is equated to that of Chishimba and his mother, Chilufya.

In line with this, Guder and Barrett (1998:6) asserts that “the gospel is always translated into a culture, and God’s people are formed in that culture in response to the translated and spirit-empowered Word. All ecclesiologies function relative to their context”. There is a need to record that the theological concept of inculturation is desirable in African theology because “...it is the response of culture to a challenge issued by the gospel of Christ...” (Ukpong, 1984:505). This is also in line with Chishimba who translates the gospel into the Bemba language. As indicated earlier, culture has to do with the ideas, habits, attitudes and images of people. Inculturation involves the Christian renewal of cultures, that is, transforming the dialogue of some cultures with the Gospel and the people concerned, including Jesus Christ (Shorter, 1988:268).

The Gospel, and Jesus Christ as a person are mentioned as ways in which communities should engage with the Bible. It is important to note that Shorter advocates for communities to join the struggle in order for them to become what he terms “effective agents of inculturation” (Shorter, 1988:269). Further, Shorter suggests that inculturation can correctly be called a way of life in itself. This is because dialogue and transformation should be experienced by the people concerned. It is important that people in basic communities who experience a great deal of cultural life should also experience the dialogical nature of the Bible (Shorter, 1988:268).

In Shorter’s work, there appears a sense of involving communities with Christian values. Shorter recognizes the importance of reading the Bible in communities, to enable the reader to understand God’s word. Shorter’s use of the concept of “community” captures the reality of culture and the Bible, as this shows full participation and inclusiveness. Similarly, it is from this perspective that the Mutima Church has adopted the concept of inculturation so as to engage its Bemba cultural beliefs with that of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The following section highlights aspects of the concept of contextualization.

### 2.8.1 Contextualization

In trying to understand the concept of inculturation, which entails dialogue between the Christian faith and African cultures, there is a need to include the concept of contextualization. As Majawa (2005:54) says, the term “contextualization” comes from the word “context”, and context is linked with “text”. Therefore, “context” and “text” are Biblically hermeneutic words. Majawa (2005:16) is of the view that contextualisation is a method of communication in which one text is made comprehensible in terms of another. The first context is assumed to be the original one, that is the text from the Bible itself.

The second sense of “context” refers to the place where the text is to be preached and understood, that is in the “mind of the interpreter”, “the reader” or the “listeners” if the text is to become a source of evangelizing or missionizing activity. These are the two complicated “poles” within which communication is to be established by means of contextualization (Majawa, 2005:16). So, contextualization refers to interpreting the gospel message in a particular place and for a particular Christian group of people. Contextualization needs to be done in the form of inculturation.

In this respect, West (2001:176) indicates that many “...rural communities of poor and marginalized believers have their own hermeneutics of resistance and survival with which they re-member” the Bible and construct their “lived” and “working theologies”. In West’s views, the poor or marginalized communities connect their “own” experiences with some Biblical texts, to give them hope and strength, because they know that “...their lived realities are connected with the lived realities of those who have gone before them in the faith...” (West, 2005:128). This is the case in many rural communities in Zambia. Communities have their own way of reading and understanding the Bible. However, Scott (1990:19) observes that such groups of communities also contain “a wide variety of low-profile forms of resistance that dare not speak their own name”. For Scott, these dominated communities have their own space in which they give names to their superiors and, in their own space, they do not always accept being defined in the way their superiors relate to them.

West (2001:176) observes that these local communities of poor and marginalized believers “...may be naïve and pre-critical, unsystematic and scattered, and they may draw incongruously on a range of symbols, rituals, readings and ideas, but they are theirs – they are what they live

by”. While West (2001:177) calls the poor and marginalized communities “ordinary ‘readers’ of the Bible”, Scott (1990:19) refers to them as “the *infrapolitics* of subordinate groups”. In Scott’s view, by analyzing the *infrapolitics* of groups, one might find that they not only accept domination, but they also resist it by disguising themselves in different forms.

West refers to them as “ordinary readers of the Bible” because not only do they listen to someone interpreting or preaching the gospel to them, but they easily relate their own lived experiences to certain biblical stories and are therefore, able to interpret them on their own. In many instances, ordinary readers of the Bible disguise themselves because their own understandings of the Bible do not resonate with those of their churches (West, 2001:176). Only a minimum percentage of what is preached in mainline churches, what is proclaimed in pulpits, what is sung in hymns and songs, what is listened to in the liturgy, and what is performed in cultic rituals resonates with the “working” readings and theologies of these ordinary people (West, 2001:176). In spite of all this, West (2001:176) concludes that “people then, for example, belong to the Anglican Church by day and to a Zionist church by night – if they are fortunate enough to find a place to belong to by night where their incipient “working” theology resonates with the “official” theology of the church”.

While the above is one way of doing theology, Bevans (1992:1) suggests different models of doing a theology that is more contextual. He states that “a contextual approach to theology is a departure from the notion of traditional theology, but at the same time it is very much in continuity with it”. Bevans’ view is not different from West’s, who also observes that ordinary readers of the Bible in a given community want to relate their experiences to those in their own journeys of faith. Bevans states that a contextual theology is the recognition of the validity of another *locus theologicus*, and the presence of human experience. This means that a contextual theology takes into account the culture, history and contemporary thought forms of a particular people, considered together with their scripture, tradition and their valuable historical sources that help interpret some of their theological experiences (Bevans, 1992:2). The following section discusses the process of inculturation as perceived by several male theologians.

## **2.9 Male Theologians’ Views on the Process of Inculturation**

This section discusses the views of some male theologians on the process of inculturation. The study acknowledges several male theologians with regard to the process of inculturation. These

are, Ukpong (1984), Opuku, (1986), Magesa (2004) and Antonio (2006). The aim of using these four theologians is to understand how the process of inculturation is viewed from an African male perspective. For example, Ukpong (1984:516) defines inculturation as the process that has to do with the interaction or dialogue between Christian faith and African culture. He describes it as the task of a theologian that involves reconsidering and re-interpreting the originality of the Christian message in an African context. He sees the integration of faith and culture as a newly-born theological expression that incorporates both Christian and African experiences (Ukpong, 1984:516).

For male theologians, inculturation has been viewed as embracing the Christian way of life and the mindsets of other people. It is not just a question of adapting the liturgy or bringing new ideas that may be incorporated by the use of drums and other materials. Opuku (1986:25) defines inculturation as a dialogue between African Traditional Religion (ATR) and Christianity, because whilst some AICs continue to offer symbols such as the cross, kneeling down and altars in their buildings, they have failed to embrace the Bible completely in their Churches. Instead, they find the Bible more enriching when they practice polygamy and fasting, and they find the Bible more empowering when they engage the Holy Spirit in their prayers.

Some male theologians believe that Africans need a new way of thinking, that is, whilst one re-thinks in his or her African way, one ought at the same time be referring to the Bible. Like Ukpong (1984:30), Magesa points out that the concept is a process that embodies having faith in an intimate and particular encounter with both cultures. He explains that when faith has encountered the new culture, the two are fused in a single, new culture. At the same time, both are transformed into a new religio-cultural reality (Magesa, 2004:5). Furthermore, Magesa (2004:6) points out that "...strictly speaking, Christian proclaimers of the gospel anywhere do not preach "the Gospel," or "the message of Christ," or "revelation," or whatever other expression may be used to explain this task". This seems to sound a cautionary note, reminding potential seekers after new experiences that it is the Holy Spirit, rather than human beings, who accomplishes spiritual communion between two people.

As for Magesa, the Gospel will not have been a "pure emanation from God" (2004:6). He argues that "the gospel is a cultural reality" because Christian missionaries transmit to listeners "...their own understanding of the gospel", according to the way it has developed in "their own

communities”. At the same time, this also has an influence on their own “...interpretation of the message” (Magesa, 2004:6) since, as Antonio (2006:29) points out, in Africa, inculturation is not a “monolithic practice”. He asserts that this is because theologians from different parts of the continent have approached the term differently. The differences defining their approaches are as much cultural as they are both theological and denominational. He contends that inculturation should not find ways of inserting the identity of Christianity into its original hegemonic dogmas. Rather, inculturation should act as an apparatus of difference, where the ‘cultural imaginary’ has been inscribed as the consciousness, a particular self-representation in the performance of theological practice (Antonio, 2006:29).

Furthermore, Antonio (2006:30) insists that African theologians endorse two important approaches during the process of inculturation. The first is that African theologians should be involved in mobilizing the symbolic structures of some religious contexts, which would be their own contexts, as well as the contexts of their colonizers and missionaries where Christianity was initially established in Africa. There are also the ancient cultures which shaped and influenced the translations of the Bible, including modern and post-modern approaches (Antonio, 2006:30-31). Antonio also protests against African theologians giving hermeneutical primacy to cultural meanings, as opposed to dogmatic or philosophical meanings. He asserts that, “it is the impact of culture – not the logical coherence of ideas – on doctrine, beliefs and on the explanation of ritual practices which is their central concern” (Antonio, 2006:31).

With regard to Antonio’s conceptualization, different cultures play a vital role in the inculturation process of African theologians that has largely been influenced by one’s own cultural context. For Antonio, African theologians are trying to put together some symbolic cultural structures – from their own context, the biblical context, early Christianity, the missionaries’ context, as well as cultures of the modern and post-modern today. Some of the symbolic cultural structures that can be pointed out here are singing and the erection of altars. But some African women theologians critique the concept of ‘inculturation’ by stating that inculturation alone is simply not enough. The following section highlights African Women Theologians’ views on the concept of inculturation.

### **2.9.1 African Women Theologians' Views on Inculturation**

Kanyoro (2001:158) argues that African women theologians observe that many African women are the custodians of culture and religion. African women hold some aspects of culture in one hand and those of Christianity or other religions on the other, depending on the religion to which one has been converted. Kanyoro postulates that “the African Christian often walks with one foot in African[Traditional] religion and culture and another in the church and western culture...Christian women of Africa are part of these two worlds” (2001:158). Kanyoro views this as the dilemma in which many African women find themselves since they have divided themselves in many ways by dipping into both Christianity and African cultures. Therefore, in the process of inculturation, Kanyoro (2002:64) argues, “in Africa, for example, male theologians were active in pointing out the problems that inter-religious issues raised for Africa. Yet, they were silent on how women were treated in African cultures”.

Some African women theologians are of the view that although culture and religion are not static, there are some non-liberating cultural values that are more oppressive to women, due to their contacts with culture and religion in other cultures and religions outside the continent. Some African women theologians explain that it is not entirely Christianity as a foreign religion that has embedded itself in African cultures, as there are also other religions such as Islam and Judaism. Hence, African women theologians have incorporated other religions, such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, into the “Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians”, hereinafter “the Circle”. This was done in order to give themselves voices, dignity and wholeness (Kanyoro, 2001:64).

Kanyoro (2001:64) argues that while many African women theologians have agreed with the concept of inculturation, some are of the view that African cultures should be “scrutinized under a strong microscope”, because it is in these that some practices and the oppression of women exist. When some cultures are reclaimed through the theology of inculturation, Kanyoro (2001:167) argues, “we African women theologians make the claim that inculturation is not sufficient unless the cultures we reclaim are analyzed and are deemed worthy in terms of promoting justice and support for life and the dignity of women”. Kanyoro’s (2001:167) view is that the theology of inculturation attempts to “Africanize” by trying to sustain African culture and positing itself as a basis for developing “African liberation theology”. Although this process

of inculturation was introduced to understand the dialogue between Christian faith and African culture, this is to some extent, not acknowledged by some African women theologians.

Kanyoro (2001:167) is of the view that the concept of inculturation will continue to oppress and deprive African women of their dignity and humanity. She accentuates this by stressing that “the dominant participants in the theory of inculturation – whether they were novelists, politicians or theologians - were men, but were perceived to be speaking for all African people”. She further portrays African women theologians as coming late to the scene, as they seem to have had doubts about accepting inculturation as a tool for liberating them (Kanyoro, 2001:167). But Kanyoro advocates for a theology of inculturation drawn from the wisdom shown by many feminist theologies of liberation. She argues that:

[w]hile drawing upon these theologies, methods of analysis and systemization, we also employ an African method of story-telling familiar to our communities. In using these methods, we seek to examine the cultural conditioning of African women’s thinking in order to discover the roots of the belief system of which they are a part. We choose feminist methodology because it challenges cultural socialization by rejecting the assumption that the roles of men and women have been fixed, either by the Creator or by culture (Kanyoro, 2001:167-168).

The above quotation embodies the reason for the study in question being a woman’s narrative approach that is familiar to one’s community and faith journey. Kanyoro informs us that African women include an African method of “storytelling” that is familiar to our communities. What Kanyoro stresses is that, when reading the Bible in communities, it is important for one to begin by telling one’s own story, whether it be one’s faith journey or one’s cultural journey. This in turn opens up the wounds of other people, who may decide to share their experience with us. Thus, one of the aims of the study is to interrogate the broader issues that can be encapsulated within the relationships of marriage, culture, religion and mission of the women in the Mutima Church of Zambia.

Similarly, Oduyoye, (2003) gives an account on inculturation from an African woman’s point of view. Oduyoye’s views and arguments are not different from those of Kanyoro. Drawing on the plight of African women, Oduyoye (2003:57) argues that inculturation of Christianity into the life of Africans, together with the enculturation of the Gospel, have greatly affected women in Africa, negatively or positively. On the negative side, she discusses how some African women

have had to make practical adjustments to their lives, some of which have been quite traumatizing. She gives an example of how an African man with ten wives converted to Christianity, with his desire to be baptized and attain full membership of the Church, including participation in the Eucharist, entailed divorcing his nine wives, leaving them single mothers. In this example, Oduyoye (2003:53) argues that “women bear the brunt of shock of a Christianization that imposes a culture of monogamous marriage”.

Supporting Oduyoye’s argument, Hinga (2001:188) and Bahemuka (2001:127) acknowledge that in accepting the “Pauline Privilege” the Church agreed to dissolve valid natural marriages when only one partner was being baptized. These Pauline privileges are also known as the ‘favour of the faith’. In these Pauline Privileges, issues such as polygyny and female circumcision were deemed to be obstacles by some missionaries in their quest for the evangelization of Africans. More often than not, the polygamist would be asked to abandon all but one of his wives as a condition for baptism. It is further noted with interest by Bahemuka (2001:127) that it was after the Reformation that things started taking a different shape. The Protestant churches, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, had for a long time no clear-cut stand on polygyny, but it is for this reason that the use of Scripture that excludes women from ordination into the sacramental ministry, for example, should be examined. Oduyoye (2003:57) discusses how the doctrine of obedience has been used to sustain wife-battering and spousal abuse. She is concerned about how those in positions of authority have failed to take action against spousal abuse, but has instead sought approval from African culture to reinforce it. In the light of this experience, she views the Gospel as being domesticated and, as such, the effects of inculturation as ineffective (Oduyoye, 2003:57).

Furthermore, she asserts that equality, partnership, love, compassion, and justice are spoken of in the Gospels, but what could have been infused into African culture is thus rendered ineffective (Oduyoye, 2003:57). Oduyoye (2003:46) argues that the people are agents of inculturation, and not the theologians who try to probe the meaning of the practices. Oduyoye (2003:60), who is not against the concept of inculturation, asserts that when it comes to the study of inculturation and the study of the Christian Gospel in Africa, areas of assimilation, ambivalence, and outright rejection of women are revealed and all of them apply to women’s experiences.

Oduyoye's views are that in order to go through the process of inculturation in Africa, these undeniable facts have to be faced and taken into account. "For the sake of the universality of the Christian gospel, Africans were made to go through a process of de-culturalization. Africa was considered a 'dark' continent—darkness having been invested with the meaning of all that is negative..." (Oduyoye, 2003:53). For an African to become a Christian, one has to be cleansed and washed white in the blood of Jesus. For the sake of particularity, Oduyoye draws from issues of race and class, as these have contributed to the further differentiation of Christian communities. She also observes the symbolism that attaches a moral quality to skin colour which undermines our common humanity, and says to dark-skinned people that the norm is to be pale (Oduyoye, 2003:54). She points out that "Particularity and difference must be acknowledged... This applies to all the other yard-sticks by which we categorize human beings: black, white, female, male, rich, and poor" (Oduyoye, 2003:54).

Kanyoro (2001) and Shorter (1988) advocate for reading the Bible with the people in their communities in order to carry out the process of inculturation. Oduyoye (2003:54) is unwavering in pinpointing issues such as particularity and universality that need to be accounted for in order to carry out the process of inculturating the Christian community. However, both Kanyoro (2001) and Oduyoye (2003) suggest that one needs to be aware that with certain aspects of African culture the Bible has to be re-interpreted. Writing from an African woman's point of view, Kanyoro (2001:169) also advocates that engendering cultural hermeneutics is a useful tool for pursuing a theology of inculturation, coming from a gender and feminist perspective.

Furthermore, Oduyoye (2003:54) advocates for transparency, a world where trust, love and justice prevail and create a peaceful home for us. She states that we can meet the challenge that we have by admitting and embracing our differences, admitting that we can learn from each other, and that "the other is worthy. The goal of reaching towards universality, even as we live out of our particularity, is that of achieving mutual spiritual enrichment" (Oduyoye, 2003:54). According to Kanyoro (2001b:168), "as Christian women in Africa, we see the need to take responsibility for ourselves to illustrate the consequences of reading the Bible with cultural lenses by bringing our own experiences to bear on the texts of the Bible. In so doing, we address the place of women in the story of faith".

Not only does inculturation play a role in African theology and AICs, it also plays a role in the Mutima Church of Zambia, which is the focal point of this study. The appropriation of some Hebrew Scriptures by Chishimba has been mostly pronounced on, and the implications for implementation of inculturation debated. For instance, some Biblical Scriptures such as Genesis 29, Genesis 36 and Exodus 2:21 portray men as polygamists. This is in line with the Mutima Church where one man is allowed to marry two or more wives. To offer a clear understanding of the theological concepts pertaining to inculturation, the following sections on *missio Dei* will now be discussed.

### **2.9.2 Missio Dei and Inculturation**

Bevans (2016:463-464) argues that “God’s mission calls for a missionary church: ‘God invites us into the life-giving mission of the Triune God and empowers us to bear witness to the vision of abundant life for all in the new heaven and new earth’”. Bevans’ view is that the church has been privileged to lead a task that gives life and joy to humanity. This is regardless of the culture in which the church finds itself. Beyond culture, however, missiology plays an important role in inculturation. Verkuyl (1978:5) defines missiology as “...the study of the salvation activities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit throughout the world geared toward bringing the Kingdom of God into existence”. Verkuyl (1978:277) states that “it goes without saying that African theology does all the things which theology in general does, but in African theology (as in Asian) all these other functions are embraced in the missionary or communicative function”. Further, “missiology studies the movement of Christianity in the world, the ways in which Christian faith becomes attached to different contexts” (Camps *et.al.* 1995:2).

Camps’ views are similar to Guder and Barrett’s (1998) observation on mission. Writing from an American context, Guder and Barrett (1998:6) argue that it has taken humanity ages to come to terms with the realization that mission maintains people who are sent by God to perform God’s duties. For this reason, Guder and Barrett’s perspectives are that the church is double-sided. Firstly, human beings should accept that mission defines us, and, secondly, mission should not aim to minimize the scope of the Gospel and the Church’s instruction. The challenges for the church in this era are, therefore, moving from the mission of the Church to that of the missional churches (Guder and Barrett, 1998:6).

Guder reminds us that moving from the church with mission to missional church gives us the “...power of life, of love, to change the terms of the conflict [in our societies], to bring life out of the ravages of violence and destruction that are so often the result of our ‘power’” as stated by Purvis (1993:94). Similarly, Bosch (2014:191) adds that “scripture comes to us in the shape of human words, which are already ‘contextual’ (in the sense of being written for very specific historical contexts) and are, moreover, open to different interpretations”. With this approach, Bosch is of the view that scripture should be open to dialogue “...in which Christians (and theologians) from different contexts challenge one another’s cultural, social, and ideological biases” (Bosch, 2014:191). It is the duty of human beings to share scripture in relation to God’s activities, such as the Son and the Holy Spirit, so that “...dialogue between them becomes possible” (Bosch, 2014:191). Mutual dialogue between Christians and theologians from different contexts calls for the enhancement of a liberative mission that is not only for women, but for the whole community (Oduyoye, 2001a:17).

Both the Bemba culture and Christianity play an important role in carrying out mission work in the Mutima Church. Both are powerful instruments used in theology. Bosch (2011:9) outlines various ways of defining mission. He argues that “ultimately, mission remains undefinable; it should never be incarcerated in the narrow confines of our own predilections. The most we can hope for is to formulate some *approximations* of what mission is all about.” For instance, missional policy in the context of the Mutima Church is defined as God’s fairness and God’s good judgment towards humanity.<sup>33</sup> Burlington asserts that “[f]or the Mutima, God himself [*sic*] is a perfect blending of male and female influences”.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, mission in the Mutima Church entails both men and women preaching the Word of God. This, in the Mutima Church, implies equality between the genders.

Bosch (2011:11) maintains that “mission includes evangelism as one of its essential dimensions”. The church’s study of the Gospel will help to translate the truth of the Gospel as good news for the whole of society. The church needs to assess its culture critically in terms of discernment, unmasking its philosophical foundations and values (Bosch, 1992:18). It is from

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<sup>33</sup> The Constitution of the Mutima Church of Zambia. (1971:14)

<sup>34</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 79.

these two insights that missional policy is viewed as the rules and regulations that assist in governing the church, by which its members should abide. These rules are attached to evangelism and God's mission, which are also affected or influenced by them. For example, members need to be aware how they carry out the teachings of the church in the outside world.

In addition, Bosch (1992) provides a thorough study of the Christian mission. The term "mission", Bosch (1992:1) asserts, means a person or people who have been sent by the sender, to carry out an assignment. In this way, the authority to send lies within the sender. This sender is God, because God has the authority to inspire people to perform God's work. Bosch anticipates some of the views on mission that emerge, giving a clear understanding of the term and developing aspects within the framework of what he calls the "emerging ecumenical paradigm of mission" (Bosch, 1992:8). Furthermore, while Bosch (2011:11) argues that "mission includes evangelism as one of its essential dimensions". Guder & Barrett (1998:5) observe that "God's mission embraces all of creation". To this end, the mission of God is not limited, but calls all human beings who have the desire to preach the Word. Hence, this study critically investigates relationships between women and male power in the context of the missional policy of the Mutima Church in Zambia, and possibly its consequences and implications for mission in the church.

Bosch (1992:9), however, realizes that "*foreign mission*" is not an isolated entity. He describes the missionary nature of the church as one that does not focus on the situation in which the church finds itself at that given moment, but that which is embedded in the Gospel. This is central to the church within the locus of this study and the Mutima Church, because the church is grounded in the Gospel itself. The Mutima Church incorporates "mission work", where ordained priests are sent by Chishimba to go and proclaim the Gospel to the interior areas of some villages in Zambia. "Thus, Christian mission, as a matter of course, presupposed the disintegration of the cultures into which it penetrated" (Bosch, 2011:458).

## **2.10 The Mission of the Church**

Hewitt (2016:483) observes that the missional challenge of the church is more urgent given the intricate, intertwined and diverse threats to life in the Global South. Yet, in the midst of all threats to life, people do not surrender to any of the life-defying forces that are at work. He contends that the World Council of Churches document entitled, *Together Towards Life: The Changing*

*Landscape of Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (hereafter TTL)* "...introduced 'mission from the margins' as a fresh understanding of the contemporary mission of the church" (Hewitt, 2016: 482). Hewitt's argument is that people living on the margins usually experience a permanent state of vulnerability, because they are excluded from active involvement in the political and economic decisions that help shape their lives. In this way, Hewitt (2016:482) observes that the church community largely consists of people from the margins. Although the majority of congregants in churches are people from the margins, Hewitt (2016:482) claims that these people "...are often objects rather than subjects of the church's mission. In some cases, those that live on the margins are deceived by corrupt 'prosperity preachers' with promises of healing and financial well-being, but often they are then fleeced through religious systems of greed that benefit the few powerful elites within the group".

In his article regarding the challenges faced by the missional and conversational relationship within the church, Hewitt (2014:209) contends that "the focus of the church's mission and evangelism mandate and affirmation (sanctity, integrity and dignity) of all life because all lives on earth are sacred". In this sense, Hewitt acknowledges that both women and men's lives are unique and devoted to God the Creator. Therefore, if the lives of women and men are sacred, this is an indication that both are God's creation. They are both entitled to perform God's mission. To this end, the ministry of the church should be inclusive and call upon God's people to be mature and flexible. He asserts that "people are looking to the God of life for fullness of life (John 10:10) that is best expressed in the life and work of Jesus" (Hewitt, 2014:210).

Idowu's (1965:25) views are that unless evangelism is based upon the foundation that the God of our redemption is the same as the God of creation, then anyone may make an ultimate success of it. Idowu (1965:25) realizes that Christianity has indeed been accepted in Africa. The foundation that is based upon the Christian movement, meaning the God of the missionaries, is indeed the same God of the African people. In support, Mofokeng (1990:179) observes that the Christian community should be at the centre of the struggle for liberation, and take the project of those who have suffered seriously as something worth crusading and praying for. This community should not remain a prisoner of God's coming kingdom. The reign of God and its imperatives should at all times form and inform the critical consciousness of this community inside the historical project. The dialectic between the two will enable mission theology to find its new content (Mofokeng, 1990:179). What Mofokeng is saying is that the historical project of

the oppressed, the Kingdom of God, and the reading of Scripture should help find new contents by which mission is to be defined in the modern context.

Kwesi (1984:115) argues that “so far it has been argued that theology has been, and is being done in the church in Africa in an informal way. The question is, how is this informal theologizing to be sustained and organized?” Pobee (1987:33) seems to highlight an answer to Kwesi’s question. He observes that it is only by allowing African theology to be ecumenical that we can help sustain and organize a formal theology. According to Pobee (1987:31-33) “it is the power of the Holy Spirit, which gives life to the witness and mission of the church. Whatever else we may say, it is important to start with the Bible. For Christianity starts with God through Christ; the Christian faith starts from what is given”.

Pobee’s suggestion is that there is another face of power within Christian circles; that is, the Holy Spirit. With regard to Pobee’s argument, the Holy Spirit also gives life to the Mutima Church. The Holy Spirit surrounds the issue of *the children of the spirit*. In their attempt to define the nature of these children, members are of the view that they are gifts from God, through God’s power of the Holy Spirit<sup>35</sup>. The ideology behind it cannot be questioned. Hence the question is given that the Christian faith starts from what is given, how then do women function effectively in the Mutima Church?

In trying to start from what is given, however, Parratt (1987:143) outlines a different way of doing theology in the African context. This theology is called “oral theology” (Parratt, 1987:143), and it is considered to be “...closer to the heart of the Church’s spiritual life in Africa as it struggles to relate the Christian faith to African experience. Such theology is usually done in the vernacular...” (Parratt, 1987:143-144). This kind of theology is also associated with the power of life and language, because it is usually found in the rural or marginalized communities of Africa. It is usually done in the vernacular, which is similar to that of the Mutima Church, where this kind of theology is practiced in the Bemba language. This is the case with people who cannot read the Bible, but have heard and mastered Biblical stories.

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<sup>35</sup> Members would mention who the father of the “children” is, except that all members refer to this as God’s gift of power through the Holy Spirit. They would rather state that it is ‘God’s secret’ than the Mutima Church’s secret.

## 2.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have dealt with the four conceptual frameworks that undergird this study. The first conceptual framework was from Scott (1990). In his argument, Scott states that there is a frontier between the “powerholders”, that is, the people in powerful positions, and those who are their subordinates. In Scott’s view, the “powerholders” always have something to hide, as they do not intend to expose their behaviour to the public arena. Scott’s theory presents one of the theories in this study as one which tries to explore the relationships between women and male power in the Mutima Church.

The second conceptual framework was from Oduyoye. Oduyoye bases her argument on the fact that in many AICs women are given leadership positions. But she also calls for the Church in Africa to investigate if the women who are in leadership positions in AICs perform the same functions as their male counterparts. Oduyoye suggests that it would shed more light to investigate the position of women in AICs, as compared to their male counterparts. This is because the current study, which is investigating the relationships between women and male power in the Mutima Church, foresees that some women in leadership positions are actually not able to negotiate their sexual desires. This is because of the presence of the Holy Spirit that is at work in the Mutima Church.

The third conceptual framework was from Nuckolls. Nuckolls’ lenses have been utilized in this study because they shed light on the world-views and Christian understanding of Chishimba, who is the founder of the Mutima Church. Based on Nuckolls’ terms, the study shows that Chishimba uses dialectical knowledge systems to try and reach certain directive goals. But these goals cannot be reached since they base their foundations on cultural values that keep contradicting one other. As a result, it is argued that Chishimba has interlocking world-views.

The fourth conceptual framework was from Fiorenza. The study utilizes this framework because the Mutima Church bases its teachings on the concept of Mary. Thus, the concept of Mariology is fundamental to this study. Chishimba teaches his members to imitate Mary because she conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, some female priests in the Mutima Church believe that they conceive through the power of the Holy Spirit and give birth to *children of the spirit*. Fiorenza is of the view that all these are malestream ways of preaching the concept of Mariology to people, and yet, in actual terms, Mary’s humility cannot be reached by some human beings.

Furthermore, the chapter sheds light on the concept of inculturation and the mission of God, for it is upon these concepts that the Mutima Church bases its foundation and teachings. In this chapter, *Gaudium es Spes*, which in English is translated as the joys and hopes of the people of God, has been explored. *Gaudium es Spes* is one of the four constitutions of the Roman Catholic Church and was established during Vatican II. Because the document presents Jesus Christ as the light of the world, the concept of inculturation creates a dialogue between the faith of a Christian person and the strength of their cultures.

The next chapter offers a brief outline of the historical background of Zambia, from an historical background of missionary Christianity. Insights into the role played by missionaries in relation to the Bemba people and the conversion of the Bemba people by the RCC in Zambia are examined. The chapter also outlines the rise of the Mutima Church, the missional policies of the AICs, vis-à-vis the Lumpa and the Mutima Churches in Zambia.

## CHAPTER 3

### AICS in Zambia and the Rise of the Mutima Church

#### 3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the four conceptual frameworks undergirding this study. These were mainly from James Scott (1990), Mercy Oduyoye (1995), Charles Nuckolls (1996) and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2011). However, the chapter went beyond applying the conceptual frameworks and included the concept of inculturation and *Missio Dei*. This was to confirm that part of the foundation of the Mutima Church lies between the concepts of inculturation and *Missio Dei*.

This chapter presents an in-depth overview of the Bemba people and the development of Christianity in Zambia. There is a need to explain the background of the Bemba people so that one might understand Chishimba's world-view. The chapter also deals with the rise of the Lumpa and Mutima Churches, as this gives the background to the current study.

#### 3.2. Historical Background of the Bemba People

According to Fagan and Phillipson, (1966:24) archaeological evidence reveals that Zambia holds the longest history pertaining to the Bantu people. In Zambia, the ethnic groups started coming to settle more than a million years ago (Fagan and Phillipson, 1966:24). Many of these groups are believed to be descendants of the Bantu people from the Great Lakes Region of East Africa. They came into the region through the Luba-Lunda Empire of the southern Democratic Republic of Congo and Northern Angola. The date of their arrival in Zambia is not explicitly stated (Brelsford, 1954:48). The Bemba people established a strong kingdom under the authority of their Paramount Chief known as Chitimukulu. Whiteley (1950:5) argues that the "...Bemba [people] have a centralized form of government, a single paramount chief with secular and ritual functions, a royal dynasty and chiefs with fixed titles".

In oral tradition, elderly people tell stories of the origins of the Bemba people in a country called Kola. The tradition asserts that *Kale twali ku kola*, meaning "a very long time ago we were in Kola". It is said that as they were moving from Kola, the Mubemba people took with them four ornaments, which they called *nsalamu*. *Nsalamu* means *lobola* (Lumbwe, 2004:14). Three of the *nsalamu* represented males, and were called *Chitimuluba*, *Kanabesa* and *Kabemba*. The other

one represented a female holding a child in her hands and this female *nsalamu* has no particular name. This female *nsalamu* portrays the matriarchal society of the Bemba people (Lumbwe, 2004:15).

Lumbwe (2004:15) narrates that the three *nsalamu[s]* can still be found today at Chitimukulu village which is found in Kasama, the Northern part of Zambia. As they were travelling, the Mubemba people arrived in Luba land and they mixed and interacted with the people they found there. They became part of the Luba group and began to speak the Luba language. By then the Luba people were led by a very rude chief called Kapopo.<sup>36</sup> Apparently *Kola* is the country now called Angola. Research also shows that the Bemba-speaking people in Zambia originated from the Kola region that is currently known as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Bemba people are part of the ancient Luba Empire. They settled in the high plateau area of north-eastern Zambia, from Lake Bangweulu to the Malawi border, during the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.2.1. Traditional Power of the Bemba Women

According to Lumbwe (2004:2), “Kapopo-Iapwa, one of Kapopo’s sons, Mukulumpe, was against his father’s cruel and tyrannical leadership, so he decided to leave Luba land and headed northwards with some followers along the Congo River, which was known as the Lualaba River and established his own kingdom”. They founded a new place and settled there with Mukulumpe as their chief. One day Mukulumpe’s men went hunting in the bush. They came across a beautiful woman with very large ears and took her to their Chief. The beautiful woman disclosed that her name was Mumbi Lyulu Mukasa. Mumbi claimed to have dropped from the sky. She had no relatives<sup>38</sup>. It is believed that Chief Mukulumpe took Mumbi Lyulu Mukasa to be his wife.

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<sup>36</sup> For more information on the origins of the Bemba people, refer to *Kapambwe Lumbwe* (2004), who wrote his dissertation entitled “*The Role of Music in the Traditional Marriage Ceremonies of the Bemba-Speaking people of Northern Zambia*”. MMus Dissertation.

<sup>37</sup> Bemba, [n.d.] [Online] Available: <http://lang.nalrc.wisc.edu/nalrc> [2015, 20 December].

<sup>38</sup> This Bemba myth about Mumbi is similar to the myth of Ghambageu of the Sonjo of Tanzania. Ghambageu is believed to have come into the world without having a mother or a father (see Vähäkangas, 2008:117). While Mumbi was found in the forest by Bemba hunters, she is said to have been beautiful, with mysterious powers that made the chief marry her and become vulnerable to her powers. Similarly, Ghambageu, who was from the village of Tinaga, also had mysterious powers. It is believed that when Ghambageu refused to participate in communal labour, such as fixing irrigation channels, the Tinagans became angry with him and plotted to kill him. Ghambageu heard about the plot and fled to a Samunge village. Ghambageu won the inhabitants of Samunge to his side by shooting the burning bird feathers at Tinagans. It was from this point that the Samunge perceived him as a god who had mysterious powers (see Vähäkangas, 2008:117).

Mumbi bore him three sons namely, Katongo, Nkole and Chiti and one daughter called Chilufya-Mulenga (Lumbwe, 2004:2). Mumbi Lyulu could not have been the only wife of Chief Mukulumpe. According to Whiteley, (1950:18) it is a common practice for chiefs to marry many wives in Bembaland.

To confirm this myth, Kaunda and Kaunda (2016:164) assert that because Mumbi Mukasa was mysteriously found in the forest, she had ultimate powers over the mysteries of the forest, the sky, the seas and the earth. They argue that for this reason, Mumbi Mukasa was not sexually vulnerable, but her husband, Chief Mukulumpe, became vulnerable to the powers of the sacred Queen [Mumbi] (Kaunda and Kaunda, 2016:164). It is believed that when the three sons (Katongo, Nkole and Chiti) of Queen Mumbi grew up, they were each given a section of the kingdom to rule over. But after some time, Mukulumpe had differences with his sons to the extent that he divorced their mother, Mumbi Lyulu. The sons took their mother away and crossed the Luapula River, where they took care of their mother (Lumbwe, 2004:2). It is from this venture that Bemba women have benefitted from being in possession of leadership positions. To this day, Queen Mumbi Mukasa's praises are sung by Bemba women (Lumbwe, 2004:2-3). This marked the beginning of Bemba matrilineal society. After some years, the son of their sister, who was known as Chilufya, succeeded to the throne of Chiti.

When Chilufya took over, he gave some members of the royal family sections to rule over, and because of this, the Bemba people spread and covered three quarters of Northern Zambia (Lumbwe, 2004:32). With the coming of the colonialists and also after Zambia's independence, the whole country was divided into provinces, cities, towns and districts. Northern Zambia was divided into the Northern and Luapula Provinces, while the Northern Province was further subdivided into districts (Lumbwe, 2004:33). There have been other chiefs who took over the reign of Chitimukulu, such as Chief Chilufya.

In the Bemba Kingdom "all political power is centered [on] the Paramount Chief Chitimukulu. He is surrounded by the Royal Councilors (*bakabilo*) who form the Bemba Aristocracy. Entrance to the Bemba Aristocracy is through inheritance" (Badenberg, 2002:43). Under the reign of Chief Chitimukulu, the Bemba kingdom expanded towards North-Eastern Zambia until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the first European missionaries and fortune-seekers began to visit the

area.<sup>39</sup> Unlike the smaller tribes in the Northern Province, the Bemba people were highly organized with regard to religion and governance. Both entities were under the jurisdiction of Chief Chitimukulu, their Paramount Chief (Badenberg, 2002:40). Bemba is a matriarchal society. Further details of Bemba matriarchal society are discussed in the following section.

### **3.2.2 Bemba Matrilineal System**

In Africa the clan systems of some tribes are uniform. For the Bemba people, however, it is “through the clan affiliation [that] a man traces his descent, his rank, [and], if he belongs to the royal clan, he has the right to succeed to chieftainship” (Whiteley, 1950:16). The clans are uniform in the sense that some clans are patriarchal and others are matriarchal (Mbiti, 1999:105). The Bemba tribe is matrilineal. According to Badenberg (2002:21-22), “matrilineal is when a person’s lineage is defined through the mother, and patrilineal is where a person’s lineage is defined through the father”.<sup>40</sup> In a matrilineal lineage, when a man gets married, he has to leave his father and mother and go and settle in his wife’s area.

The wife’s relatives will build a house or small hut for him and his wife and, during his stay, he has to work for his in-laws (Badenberg, 2002:21-22). Badenberg further asserts that, “a unique feature of the Bemba matrilineal system is the fact that it is not embedded in agriculture, but in war and conquest. This feature has a definite impact on how inheritance is treated” (2002:21-22). To date, a woman has a very central role in the Bemba tribe. Hence, in matriarchal societies, women have power in the house to carry out special tasks when certain rituals are practised.

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<sup>39</sup> Bemba, [n.d.] [Online] Available: <http://lang.nalrc.wisc.edu/nalrc> [2015, 20 December].

<sup>40</sup> The Bemba attitude to married life is matrilineal or matrilocal and a description of the ideal wife is here given by some Bemba men. They usually say that a wife should be hard-working, a good hostess, obedient to her husband, slow to answer back and of a gentle temper so that she does not easily initiate quarrels in a village. This is similar to the description of a husband. Bemba women say that an ideal husband is one who makes big gardens for his wife and provides liberally for his wife and children. He must be patient, and one who does not beat his wife without cause (for more information, see Richards Audrey, 1940:22).

### 3.2.3 Significance of Traditional Bemba Culture

Whiteley (1950:15) “observes that [m]atrilineal [d]escent is one of the cultural characteristics of Bemba people. Amongst all these people affiliation is traced through the mother and a man belongs to his mother’s clan”. Mbiti (1999:100-101) asserts that “most of the indigenous peoples of Africa have lived for hundreds of years, and continue to live, in units of clusters commonly referred to as tribes”. In the same way, the Bemba people live in groups or clusters within their communities. The people believe in working together and helping each other from the time one gives birth to the time one departs to join the ancestors. As in many other African cultures (Mbiti, 1999:101), every activity in Bemband revolved around the community. Badenberg (2002:62), who lived and studied the Bemba people for a year, argues that they have a high regard for human life. Most of all, the Bemba people’s daily activities engage others in their work and they believe in engaging oneself by requesting favours from others, and engaging in communal activities. This kind of communal life provides an intimate knowledge of one’s neighbours and inevitably leads to the regulation of each others’ behaviour (Badenberg, 2002: 62). This suggests the power of Bemba women in Zambian society, as well as the role that women play in that society, and in the Mutima Church.

Similarly, Richards (1940:iii) asserts that for

the [Bemba], domestic life of the man takes precedence. But descent is matrilineal in Bemba society and for this reason women often hold high position by virtue of lineage. They may wield political authority as chieftainess (*banamfumu*), or heads of village or hereditary guardians of shrines (*bamukabenye*).

The sisters, nieces and granddaughters of chiefs are called *banamfumu*<sup>41</sup>. This can be translated as *mothers of kings*. Theologically, this is the main reason why Chishimba has named his parishes *Namfumu* meaning *Mother of King* and he has named the *Namfumu* steads according to the names of his mother, sister’s children and so on. Oral tradition entails that emphasis is laid on the sons of the chief’s sisters or his sister’s daughter’s sons, because of the bloodline and that it is only the woman who knows who the biological father of the unborn child is. For this reason, the lineage cannot be disturbed by appointing someone from the man’s family.

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<sup>41</sup> The words *bana* means “mother of” and “*mfumu*” means king, so this is referred to as mother of king, hence Chishimba names his parishes *Namfumu we Sunga* meaning mother of king that cares and embraces people.

The sisters, nieces and granddaughters (*banamfumu*) of a chief enjoy the benefits of being the gate-keepers of the homes and shrines. The sisters, nieces and granddaughters are entitled to decision-making, and they enjoy tribal law, since they are also privileged to reign over territories in their own right (Badenberg, 2002:41-42). As indicated in Chapter Two, a special role is given to the Paramount Chief's (Chitimukulu) mother, since motherhood is glorified in many cultures. To support this view, Chishimba has given more recognition to his mother, Chilufya (Badenberg, 2002:41-42). Because of the importance of motherhood, Bemba women were in charge of home-shrines before the coming of Christianity.

Mbiti (1991:1) asserts that "Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices". Similarly, Badenber, (2002:57) asserts that the Bemba people are religious. He confirms that in Bemba society, the human heart is the most important organ. He states that whenever a Bemba speaks of one's feelings and emotions, one points to the upper half of the belly—where the pit of the stomach lies—to his chest, or to where the heart is located. Anger, fear, joy and so forth are all identified with the heart. However, the heart is not only the seat of emotions such as anger, fear, or joy, but also the faculty which is responsible for thought, consideration, intention, memories and exercising will-power (Badenberg, 2002:58).

### **3.2.4 Three Pillars of the Bemba**

Bemba people have three traditional pillars that they treasure. The first pillar is that they appreciate the clan system. Bemba people place their emphasis on people. For instance, "when Fr. Patrick Peyton's organizing secretary visited Kasama in August, 1955, it was pointed out to him that the Bemba society revolved around the concept of clan rather than that of the unitary family..." (Garvey, 2003:160). It is a normal trend to find that there are many clans that are situated within Bembaland. In all these, membership within a clan should follow one's mother, because women are the most important people among Bemba people. Badenber (2002:41-42) stresses that "within the boundaries of [the] Bembaland, some twenty-eight clans can be found". The clan is also under the establishment of the four *nsalamus*, whereby the three of them represented males and the fourth *nsalamu* represented a woman carrying a child. This shows the uniqueness of women among the Bemba people (Tanguy, 1996:10).

The second pillar of the Bemba people is their emphasis on the matrilineal. Tanguy (1996:10) observes that the matrilineal system was favoured because Bemba people respected and valued the fact that women were the custodians of (ethnic) culture, motherhood, traditions and customs. Therefore, mothers play a fundamental role in imparting knowledge to their children in family life because they spend more time with them in the formative years of their socialisation. This suggests that the first successors to a chief are usually his brothers, followed by the Chief's sisters' sons and then the chief's nieces' sons.

The third pillar of the Bemba matrilineal system is marriage (Badenberg, 2002:41-42). In this way, the man offers fieldwork to the father-in-law and other relatives of his wife. Richards (1940:29) conducted her fieldwork among the Bemba—once in 1930-31 and again in 1933-34. She asserts that “marriage is matrilocal among the Bemba...that is to say a man goes to live in his wife's village...there is a good deal of evidence to show that in the old days when conditions of life were more precarious marriages often remained matrilocal throughout the couple's life”. This is the reason the succession of chieftaincy does not come from the chief's sons, but starts from his brothers, because they share the same biological mother and so on. The bond of marriage obliges the couple to stay within the village of the wife.

### **3.2.5 The Home-Shrines**

Before Christianity was introduced to the Bemba people, the tribe adhered to a house religion, where married women had authority over all domestic rituals, as well as access to the Divine through the intercession of her forebears (Hinfelaar, 1994: xi). Similarly, Whiteley (1950:16) says that “within the Bemba clan a loosely organized group called ‘the house’ (*inganda*) is recognized which is composed of the descendants of one woman”. Bemba women were referred to as *kabumba wa mapepo*, meaning the initiator of prayers (Hinfelaar, 1994:15). Bemba women were in-charge of the veneration of the recent dead and led remembrance services to the ancient guardians of the land. It is believed that a knowledge of the community's religious heritage, coupled with the guidelines for worshipping the transcendent, were passed on by women during the ceremonies of initiation (Hinfelaar, 1994: xi).

As discussed, Bembas are a matriarchal society, which is why women play an important role as key-holders of the homes and shrines. Whiteley (1950:29) asserts that “shrines are put up in the Bemba country to a hunting god, Mulenga, thought to be the spirit of a forgotten ancestor”. The

concept of marriage in Bemba culture is vital, because, traditionally, women are the ones who maintain homes and shrines. Van Binsbergen (1981:110) defines a shrine as "...a spot in the landscape where a concentration takes place of activities directed to invisible entities who are supposed to be capable of influencing the visible world in one way or another". In this case, this may be in a village or place which the local people have termed a "sacred" place. In Zambia, just as in many African societies, a sacred place may appear to be a river, waterfalls, a very big tree, a very big rock, a mountain place, a cave or a forest. Many married women among the Bemba people were gate-keepers of shrines (Badenberg, 2002:42).

Since the shrines were considered sacred places, it was important for the gate-keeper to be more "spiritual" to influence the physical realm, and also to invoke the spirits of those who had died in recent years (Badenberg, 2002:42). This was done by mentioning the names of those who died recently, who were told to speak to those who died earlier (the living dead) so that they could ask forgiveness on their behalf from God (Badenberg, 2002:42). When approaching a shrine, the gate-keepers and those who could be accompanying them needed to carry with them some gifts that they might leave at the shrine. The gifts were mainly in the form of foodstuffs prepared by women. There was also some livestock that was meant to be offered as a sacrifice (Van Binsbergen, 1981:182). Furthermore, it was during the time of the missionaries that the Bemba women's sacred positions came under attack by what was called "the New Way" (Hinfelaar, 1994: xi).

### **3.3 The Missionaries in Bembaland**

It was during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that the London Missionary Society (LMS) established missionary centres in Southern and Central Africa, that is, in Kuruman and then Zambia (Holmes, 1993:18). Hastings (1976:4) comments that "the year 1785 was a significant year for the penetration of some missionaries in Central Africa". In the light of the missionaries' aim to convert the Bemba people to Christianity, there were other projects such as commerce that opposed inhuman practices such as slavery. Garvey (2003:62) argues that "the more urbanized Protestant missionaries sought to develop commerce both as a means of opposing slavery and of development". However, these developments in economic prosperity "[were] stimulated by links to European markets and led by mission stations which introduce[d] new agricultural techniques" in Central Africa (Larmer, 2003:24).

West and Central Africa were placed under the pastoral charge of St. Daniel Comboni, an Italian Catholic Priest from the Seminary of Verona (founder of the Comboni Missionaries), and Charles Martial Allemand Lavigerie, the French Archbishop of Algiers (Hastings, 1994:253). Livingstone, who was not a Roman Catholic but a Protestant missionary, contributed towards building a peaceful and holistic community in Central and Southern Africa. Research suggests that both the Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries, as well as their supporters, campaigned towards, the abolition of slavery and other forms of forced labour in many African colonies. The British Empire participated massively in banning slavery in many colonies. Both the Catholic and Protestant missionaries were more often than not, involved in mass education and preaching of the gospel in many African colonies (Woodberry and Shah, 2004:55-56). It is into this background that Livingstone, from the LMS, and subsequently the Society of the Missionaries (SMA) came to Bembaland during the nineteenth-century. It is also within the context of the missionaries' approach to the Bemba people that the role played by David Livingstone is discussed in this study.

### **3.3.1 David Livingstone**

David Livingstone was a Scot from the London Missionary Society, (LMS). He was born in Scotland in 1813. He worked in the cotton industry and later applied to the LMS to study as a missionary. The LMS was founded in 1795, firmly rooted in the tradition of the Evangelical Revival which saw denomination as a secondary issue for truly converted Christians (Ross, 2002: 27). At this stage in Europe there was great interest among missionaries to sail out and convert people of other continents to Christianity. Livingstone had heard so much about Africa and he wished to sail to Africa.

Murphy (2003:61) states that “[t]ravel into the interior was slow and tedious and [was] usually either by ox-cart or on foot. In some instances, large navigable rivers were used”. The missionaries were also not ready to lose their lives “...for the cause of gaining souls to be hoped for, that superiors [were] well justified in accepting the generous offers of their subjects in order to gain so great a conquest for [the] Lord” (Weld, 2003:101).

O'Brien (2003:137) argues that other missionaries followed Livingstone, such as Fred Arnot and Francis Coillard in the west of Barotseland. O'Brien (2003:137) comments that “Livingstone's own spiritual descendants in the east—the London Missionary Society and the Church of

Scotland, and the Jesuits from the south...had set up or attempted to set up missionary endeavours in [Africa] before the end of that same century”. As for the LMS missionaries, their famous entry point into Central Africa was Cape Town. The LMS had already sent earlier missionaries, who arrived in Cape Town on 31 March 1799. These missionaries were led by Dr. Johannes van der Kemp (Ross, 2002:27).

### 3.3.2 The Journeys of David Livingstone

Livingstone and his counterpart, William Cotton Oswell (a wealthy hunter), arrived at the Mosi-oa-Tunya Falls, meaning, “the smoke that thunders” in 1851. Livingstone was the first white missionary to see the waterfalls and he named it after the Queen of England, Queen Victoria (Ross, 2002:27). To date, the Falls are still called the ‘Victoria Falls’ or ‘Mosi-oa Tunya’ and they are famous as a natural resource in the town known as Livingstone. Ross (2002:61) states that when Livingstone and his counterpart Oswell reached Barotseland<sup>42</sup> on 21 June 1851, they were attended by one of the local kings of the Makololo people, called Sebitwane.

The warm welcome that the two missionaries received from Sebitwane impressed them, but they were also depressed to see that Sebitwane and his people were already dressed in imported cotton cloth brought to the place earlier by “the Portuguese who were already present in the area and were trading for slaves” (Ross, 2002:61). Despite all this, Sebitwane allowed the missionaries to establish a mission in his area. Sebitwane, however, died before the mission was established. In addition, Ross states that the establishment of the mission in Sebitwane’s Kingdom was not by any plan associated with the LMS, and it is believed that Livingstone was working on his own plan without the knowledge of the LMS (Ross, 2002:61).

On the left bank of the Zambezi, no Protestant mission had ever been established in the interior on that side of the river (Weld, 2003:101). However, Weld (2003:101) says that “Livingstone passed freely through it in 1853 and 1855 and again in 1860 and 1861, and not only found no hostility, but generally a good-natured and often a hearty, though not unfrequently, a timid welcome...”. Among some of his exploratory journeys, Livingstone visited what is today Zambia. He established relationships with chiefs such as “...the *Bemba* Paramount Chitimukulu

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<sup>42</sup> Barotseland is a province commonly known as the Western Province, because it is located in the western part of Zambia. Lozi (Kololo) was the common language of the Barotse Province.

and other principal chiefs of the area: Nsama of the Tabwa, Tafuna of the Lungu and Matipa of the Bisa in the Bangweulu marshes” (Garvey, 1994:22).

Furthermore, Larmer (2003:26) states that “Chitimukulu Chitapankwa had welcomed Livingstone in 1867...”. Murphy (2003:63) observes that the “Southern region was described by Livingstone as being populated by peaceful and industrious people who showed little sign of the ravages of the slave trade”. Hastings (1994:250) states that Livingstone went back to England in 1856, after fifteen years of working for the LMS in Southern Africa. He had completed a crossing of the heart of the continent on foot from Loanda to Quelimane. He later resigned from the LMS to become a “professional explorer, an anti-slave-trade propagandist...” (Hastings, 1994:251).

However, the LMS was a body different from the RCC. Contrary to the LMS, the RCC had two requirements for the success of a missionary venture. The first “...was a measure of independence, so that the missionaries could form their own communities without interference from local petty governments or colonial administrators...” (Garvey, 1994:40). The RCC missionaries were able to use other methods of negotiating and relating to the local governments of that time. Garvey (1994:62) states that the RCC missionaries followed their establishments at Kayambi, Chilubula with new stations at Chilonga in 1899, Chilubi Island in 1903 and Lubwe on the Western shore of Lake Bangweulu in 1905. In all of these stations, a minimum of three missionaries were stationed and represented a considerable foreign presence in the territory of some traditional chiefs (Garvey, 1994:62).

Then there was the second venture. According to Garvey (1994:40),

[t]he second was a sufficiency of prestige, emanating partly from their independence, which would enable them to penetrate the socio-religious systems of the area with an evangelism which would prove what in later parlance might be called revolutionary.

In view of this, independence and prestige meant that the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (SMA) White Fathers were privileged to negotiate for new opportunities for labour with the local village headmen. Because there were missionaries from various denominations, for instance, the Catholic and Protestant missionaries, their approach to evangelization was not the same. According to Murphy (2003:62), “Catholic missionaries were often from more rural

backgrounds and were inclined to establish Christian villages, taught improved farming techniques and maintained traditional social structures.” Because of their background and status, the RCC missionaries found it easier to associate with local communities.

### **3.3.3 Livingstone’s Vision and Strategy**

Larmer (2003:24) argues that “Livingstone believed the African slave trade would be undermined by supporting the development of alternative forms of economic prosperity”. Introducing Christianity and civilization through commerce in Africa was the vision undertaken by Livingstone (Hastings, 1994:251). With regard to this, the aims of the missionaries were twofold: to convert native people to Christianity and, at the same time, to make Christianity open doors for commerce and civilisation in Africa. Christianity, commerce and civilization were fused and referred to as the three Cs. The fusion of the three Cs had little to do with mission.

According to Hastings (1996:284),

[h]ere we have, in the late eighteenth century, and essentially unconnected with the missionary movement, the “Three Cs” firmly in place, put there by a group of philanthropic businessmen and public figures. For them it was less a matter of making money than of exercising their public Christian responsibility.

Livingstone was the bearer of the above ideas, for instance, the ideas to combat the slave trade in Central Africa. It was Livingstone who embodied the ideals of the British Empire to open Africa to Christianity, civilisation and commerce, commonly called three Cs. The three Cs represented the public values of the mid-Victorian age, together with science, for “Civilization and Science” that could easily be linked as “Civilization and Commerce” (Hastings, 1996:283). While Livingstone’s intentions were to create an open path for Christianity, civilisation and commerce, “the result of his year-long advocacy was not only a British government expedition up the Zambezi [and] not only two new LMS missions to be set up north and south of the Zambezi, but also the foundation of a wholly new missionary society—the Universities’ Mission to Central Africa (UMCA)” (Hastings, 1996:252).

Livingstone died in the northern part of Zambia in 1873, and as yet nothing much had been done to spread the gospel to central Africa. The expedition of the UMCA that was led by Bishop Charles Frederick Mackenzie to the Lower Shire was withdrawn after Bishop Mackenzie’s death (Hastings, 1976:4). By 1875, the UMCA decided to embark on a new venture to the interior and

struck inland from Zanzibar to Magila in the hill country of northern Tanzania. There were other missionaries who were inspired by Livingstone. By 1876 Anglican missionaries, for example, belonging to the Church Missionary Society (CMS) reached the court of King Mutesa, of Buganda, followed by the RCC SMA White Fathers of Cardinal Lavigerie (Hastings, 1976:4). Furthermore, Hastings (1976:4) observes that, “it was the year in which a Scottish Presbyterian party set out to establish the mission of Livingstonia on the shores of Lake Malawi; it included Robert Laws who was to be the presiding genius of Livingstonia, perhaps the most decisive influential institution in the whole of central Africa, and he [was] still at work there in the 1930s”.

However, Garvey (1994:21) states that “the British government was originally interested in South Africa only because of its strategic importance on the sea route to India...” The sea route proved to be a convenient way of trading with countries that still had ports or harbours such as Zanzibar in Kenya. Therefore, after witnessing the slave trade in the interior of Africa, Livingstone had other visions for the LMS. Livingstone’s visions were to open up Africa for commerce and Christianity. He saw these trends as the tool to overcome slavery. He also was willing to connect Christianity with the African cultures (Garvey, 1994:21). Furthermore, Murphy (2003:62) observes that even though Christianity is based on the Bible, the LMS missionaries, from where Livingstone came from, naturally set up a network of schools instead of prayer centres. For Livingstone, education was as important as trade. The Protestant missionaries were more inclined to teaching local people how to read so that they could communicate effectively about the works of God. The following section outlines the history of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (SMA), hereafter the White Fathers in Zambia.

### **3.4 Society of the Missionaries of Africa (SMA): The White Fathers in Zambia**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of great turmoil in Bembaland. Garvey (1994:40) states that there was a well-established traffic of missionaries between lakes Malawi and Tanganyika. Mambwe people resided along the areas of Lake Tanganyika long before the British South Africa Company (BSAC) was established. As a result, the lives of Mambwe people in the Northern part of Zambia had changed considerably since their Chief Nsokolo had been visited by two Society of the Missionaries of Africa (SMA) hereafter the White Fathers missionaries namely, James Stewart and by Joseph Thompson in 1879.

Hinfelaar and Macola, (2001-2002:2) also comment that the SMA Fathers were also one of the earliest missionaries to settle in the country, their first station being built among the small ethnic group called the Mambwe people, having been inaugurated in 1891 before the effective inception of British rule. In one part of the Northern Province, the SMA Fathers set out the establishment of Chilubula Mission by the Bishop of the constituted Nyasa Vicariate, Joseph Dupont, in 1898. This marked the beginning of the SMA Fathers' evangelization of Bembaland (Hinfelaar and Macola, 2001-2002:3). Another strategic plan made by the SMA White Fathers was that they "were able to expand their work far more extensively than that of any other missionary society in Northern Rhodesia" (Hinfelaar and Macola, 2001-2002:3). According to Garvey (1994:25) "this however, was after the London Missionary Society had already established posts in the corridor area and the SMA White Fathers were initiating their first establishment in Bembaland".

Larmer (2003:130) is of the view that the establishment of colonial control led to a new influx of missionaries into Northern Rhodesia. Many missionaries were welcomed by the Chartered Administration. They were given small grants of land, encouraging their presence in areas that did not already have a mission presence. He continues, noting that "initially, most missions focused on evangelizing, promoting Christian beliefs, and teaching literacy primarily to make the Bible available to Africans" (Larmer, 2003:130). Among other priests, Lavigerie's SMA Fathers and Comboni's priests were some of the most specialized of the new Catholic groups at work (Hastings, 1994:255). The SMA Fathers were more strategic in their mission work so that they could be placed even in harsh conditions. For instance, Hastings (1994:255) argues that "the Society of the Missionaries of Africa [hereafter the SMA Fathers] were based quite deliberately not in France but in North Africa—in Algiers and in Carthage, outside Tunis". These areas were densely populated by Muslims and it was this place that the SMA Fathers sought to evangelize.

The SMA Fathers' first mission was to work with the Muslims in North Africa, but they were given another mission, which was "...the evangelization of the far interior of Africa, both west and east" (Hastings, 1994:255). Similarly, Garvey (1994:28) concedes that "Charles Martial Allemand Lavigerie was an important French dignitary in 1868. He was a Basque who had risen to high office in the Church by a conventional route: scholarship (two doctorates in Paris and a professorship of Church history at the Sorbonne) ...". Lavigerie was an energetic and active character who designed his own tomb in a style of hideous triumphalism, and he was also a devoted servant of the papacy (Garvey, 1994:29). Therefore, in the West of Africa, Lavigerie

was appointed Archbishop of Algiers in 1867. In 1868, he founded a society of men called the Missionary of Our Lady of Africa, who became known as the White Fathers, on account of the Arab dress they were given to wear. Lavigerie later founded the Missionary Sisters of our Lady of Africa, which is often referred to as the White Sisters which was established in 1869 (Hastings, 1994:254).

According to Garvey (1994:29), “Lavigerie had insisted from the beginning of his episcopate in Algiers that he was archbishop to the Arabs as much as to the French, but he did not have in 1868 any specific strategy of missionary proselytism much less any intention of founding a religious order”. Further, while Lavigerie’s initial focus was on the evangelization of Muslims in North Africa, the two societies he founded extended their work into Central Africa. They stressed the importance of love and care for villages of children orphaned after epidemics of cholera and typhus, and they established an extensive communal catechetical process that would eventually influence the reinstatement of the catechumenate<sup>43</sup> after the Vatican II Council (Bevans and Schroeder, 2005:224). Lavigerie possessed a strong faith in the ability of African Christians because this seemed a great deal more important to him than anything else (Hastings, 1994:255).

Lavigerie saw this as an opportunity to build seminaries in Africa. He asked his SMA Fathers to look out for vocations among the orphaned children and, in 1878, he started a minor seminary in Jerusalem for Catholic students of the Greek Melchite rite (Burrige, 1966:113). But since this was Moslem territory the experiment did not last very long. Yet, it was clear that he considered seminaries a priority (Mukuka, 2000:99). The other project initiated by Lavigerie was to initiate the agricultural brothers. This had been part of his vision for the settlement of those Christian Arabs who would move from the diocesan orphanages into their own agricultural communities. However, the brothers who were to provide technical assistance to the agricultural communities became, instead, a class of prayerful domestics in the religious houses, or foremen in the building and farming activities at the mission stations (Garvey, 1994:32). This was not what Lavigerie

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<sup>43</sup> A catechumenate is a ministry that supports people as they grow in commitment to Christ. People pass through the following stages: (a) The inquiry, which is questioning one’s faith, (b) Apprenticeship, which is learning to hear the Word of God and exploring Christian practices; (c) Candidacy, that is, coming to terms with one’s commitment to Christ; and (d) Commitment, which is deepening the appreciation of the sacramental way of life. These stages assist the believer to be awake and question false notions of the church, such as authoritarianism, oppression and insubordination (see Garvey, 1994).

planned to do because he “...was not interested in ‘industrial missions’ and with the experience of his failure in Algiers...he was careful not to confuse the works of evangelization with those devoted to economic or social ‘progress’, for example” (Garvey, 1994:32).

Garvey (1994:88) asserts that “Lavigerie also re-imposed the ancient rule of a patristic catechumenate whereby only the baptized could attend the whole of the mass, postulants<sup>44</sup> and catechumens leaving after the sermon and creed, and he suggested...that crosses or medals should be given ‘as an external sign of religion’”. He encouraged the practice that catechumens be obliged to attend Sunday Mass if they lived at the mission or within the vicinity of the mission. The catechumens who lived further away should attend prayers in their village chapels. The rosary around the neck was a visible sign of baptism (Garvey, 1994:92). The practice of reciting the rosary while on long and dangerous journeys was a unifying ritual which resulted in new requests for instruction by the villagers. The most influential of them all was the community rite, the baptism of the dying, which united Christians and catechumens in an apostolic endeavor (Garvey, 1994:92). When Lavigerie “(1825-1892), sent out his SMA Fathers to Africa, he reminded them, ‘*Nous travaillons aussi pour la France*’, meaning, we are working for France [as well as for the kingdom of God]” (Burrige, 1966:111; Bosch, 1992:304; and Mukuka, 2000:70).

The same applied to the British United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (USPG). The book commemorating two centuries of their work outlines the SMA Fathers’ praise for the expansion of the empire on the one hand, and its imperial spiritual side on the other (Bosch, 2014:304). The empire was built on the foundation that is politics and religion (Bosch, 1992:304; and Mukuka, 2000:70). Furthermore Hastings (1994:281) comments that “on nothing was Lavigerie more insistent than that his missionaries should be masters of the local language, and they were actually forbidden to speak to each other in anything else after being six months in a place”. Hastings (1994:267) also points out that “more than anything else it was the instruction of Lavigerie and the practice of the early SMA Fathers from the 1870s which put a considerable

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<sup>44</sup> A postulant is mainly found in the Roman Catholic Church. The term refers to an individual who has made a request or demand to serve in an institution of monasticism. The term is generally used to people who are asking for admission into a monastery or a religious institute. The preliminary stage in which the candidate has to wait is referred to as postulancy. During the time the candidate is awaiting admission, one is requested to participate as fully as possible in the life of the community, joining the novices and working and praying with community members.

segment of the Catholic Missionary force in the forefront of the struggle to understand both language and custom”.

Lavigerie was very strategic in his work because he insisted on the adaptations to clothes, language, and food (Hastings, 1994:254). Lavigerie was certain about what he wanted to achieve, spreading the Word of God to other parts of the world, at the same time winning more colonies for his country. He “had maintained that the Africans themselves would eventually have to establish the Catholic Church in Africa...” (Garvey, 1994:94). Furthermore, Mukuka (2000:97) is of the view that the methods used by Lavigerie did encompass many aspects, such as prayer, for example, encouraging his missionaries to get to know the people they were to work with, since this was encouraged by Rome throughout the evangelization period.

Burridge (1966:111) states that Lavigerie encouraged his missionaries to focus on “...Charity as the chief weapon. It is the weapon which pierces hearts and heals the wounds for eternal life. Let that be the sole secret of your approach to souls”. Mukuka (2000:97) suggests that although this was important for evangelization, to some degree, it also helped the expansion of imperial powers. Christianization derives from the art of converting people to Christianity, making them accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord. Lavigerie had given his missionaries detailed rules of community living, based on a shared experience of prayer and zealous collaboration for the conversion of the heathen (Garvey, 1994:34). The following section discusses the effects of Christianity in Bembaland.

### **3.4.1 Christian Evangelism in Bembaland**

Garvey (1994:87) concedes that “Christian evangelism in Bembaland had commenced while the British South Africa Company (BSA) was beginning to extend its political control over the territory...”. Furthermore, Hastings (1994:566) implies that a Dutchman by the name of Jan van Sambeek (1886-1966) was ordained a White Father in 1911. Van Sambeek arrived in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) in 1919 at the Chilubula mission in the Vicariate<sup>45</sup> of Bangweolo [Bangweulu]. Van Sambeek was responsible for building up the Catholic school system, in close co-operation with the government, for twelve years. He would attend educational meetings in

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<sup>45</sup>An apostolic vicariate is led by a vicar apostolic. An apostolic vicariate is a form of territorial jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church. In most cases an apostolic vicariate is centered in missionary regions and countries where a diocese has not yet been established. It is essentially provisional, though it may last for a century or more. The goal is to Christianize sufficient numbers of Catholics for the Church to create a diocese (See Hastings, 1994).

Livingstone, and he worked closely with the Bemba people (Hastings, 1994:566). In the same period, he wrote, edited, and published a whole series of books in the Bemba language, including three school-readers, *Ifya Bukaya*, written by African teachers at his college, and they contained a mixture of Bemba history, games, songs, and fables, as well as gospel stories. The concept of *Ifya Bukaya* was later taken up in a radio drama in the 1980s. These enormously influenced the way the Bemba saw themselves (Hastings, 1994:566).

However, Hastings (1994:566) acknowledges that Van Sambeek was moved to the Tukuyu area of Tanganyika in 1930, where he set about producing a dictionary in Kinyakusa and a grammar in Kisafwa. In 1933, he was sent back to Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) to become the superior of the new mission territory of Luangwa (later Abercorn, then Mbala). Whilst there in Abercorn Van Sambeek founded the great mission of Ilondola. He also found time to compose a Bemba grammar (Hastings, 1994:566). He then returned to Tanganyika to become Vicar-Apostolic of the whole western part of Northern Rhodesia, in succession to Monsignor<sup>46</sup> Birraux, who had just been elected Superior-General of the SMA Fathers (Hastings, 1994:566). By the mid-1930s the SMA Fathers had taken charge of twenty odd missions, all of which are located in present-day Northern, Luapula and, to a lesser extent, Eastern Provinces of Zambia (Hinfelaar and Macola, 2000-2001:2).

The SMA Fathers' strategy included a priest to be in charge of twenty odd missions. They established themselves amongst the Bemba people, which was the largest and dominant tribe in the Northern part of Zambia. This was to ensure that they converted the largest group to following the Catholic Faith in the region. Even after the death of Cardinal Lavigerie in 1892, the SMA Fathers were entrusted by the Catholic Church with such a huge area of East Central Africa, extending southwards to the northern parts of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland and west into the Belgian Congo (Hastings, 1994:475).

However, owing to the conversion and interpretations of the Scriptures into the primal cultures of Africa, particularly to the Bemba people in Zambia, there has been some belief that the White people neither revealed the full secrets of their Christianity nor give the local peoples the full or

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<sup>46</sup> Monsignor is the title of various senior Roman Catholic posts, for example, an officer of the papal court. Monsignor is abbreviated as Mgr. The title refers to a priest whose Church services have been honoured by the Pope. It is an honorary title (see Hastings 1994).

the true Bible (Turner, 1979:272)<sup>47</sup>. As for the Bemba, they assumed that the White people “... [were] withholding something important from [them]” (Turner, 1979:272). This is also reflected in one of Chishimba’s (1974) documents, where he asserts that there is the White Secret that has been withheld from Black people. The introduction to colonial governments, the coming of both the Protestant Missionaries and SMA Fathers to Zambia, contributed to the different reactions of the local people to White settlers.

### **3.4.2 The British South African Company (BSAC) in Zambia**

As indicated in the previous section, the commencement of Christian evangelisation in the Bemba land was happening at almost the same time of colonial rule. To this end, this section outlines a brief overview of British South Africa Company (BSAC) rule in Northern Zambia. The history of modern Zambia (formally known as Northern Rhodesia) is very closely interwoven with the colonial history in which the Scottish explorer and missionary David Livingstone played a very important role, as stated earlier. Livingstone came to Southern and Central Africa under the aegis of the LMS. Larmer (2003:115) narrates that the British South Africa Company (BSAC) presided over Northern Rhodesia from 1902 until 1924. By then Zambia was formally known as Northern Rhodesia.

By 1924, Northern Rhodesia hosted a variety of European settlers some, of whom started farming in the country. Whiteley (1950:28) acknowledges that Northern Rhodesia became a British Protectorate in 1924. In 1929 this became a revised form of “indirect rule” that was introduced into the areas by the Native Authority and the Native Courts Ordinance of 1929. It was, however, subsequently modified in 1936 (Whiteley, 1950:28).

Larmer (2003:115) states that “in many respects, the primary impact of Company rule was the transfer of control over African labour from chiefs and elders to the Company and its allies”. Many powerful African chiefs lost their wealth and power. Using its power measures, the BSAC forced African people to pay hut taxes, with the conscious aim of pushing males into cash labour, especially in the Southern Rhodesian mines (Larmer, 2003:115). Continuing his argument, Larmer (2003:117) points out that some smaller mines were established in Northern Rhodesia at

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<sup>47</sup> Turner argues that the weaker primal cultures make their own selection from the Scriptures of what is offered to them, and add their own interpretations and modifications. They assume that there is more to the Scriptures than what they have been told or seen. Turner is of the view that this situation has occurred on all five continents of White Christian expansion and missionary activity. See Turner (1979:272).

Bwana Mkubwa (Ndola), Broken Hill (Kabwe), Kansanshi and the hook of Kafue in Northern Rhodesia. The minerals that were discovered, however, were low-grade minerals and intermittently profitable.

Moffat Thomson, who was the secretary of Native Affairs, declared that the establishment of Indirect Rule “[c]ould allow more advanced form[s] of native administration, which [gave] to the chiefs the management of their own affairs within their tribal areas and it... hoped it w[ould] preserve and maintain all that is good in native custom and tribal organization” (Larmer, 2003:243). Sidney James Webb was appointed to the peerage as Baron Passfield, a Passfield coroner in the County of Southampton in 1929. Webb was the first Baron Passfield. By 1930, Webb was the Secretary of State for Colonies, Lord Passfield<sup>48</sup>. He issued a memorandum that set down the basis for Indirect Rule in East and Central Africa (Larmer, 2003:243). There was no way the natives could resist Indirect Rule but adapt and conform to the situation. Larmer (2003:243) suggests that

the establishment of Indirect Rule, and the additional powers granted, prompted a series of heightened disputes over chiefly succession; colonial authorities increasingly intervened to appoint many “chiefs” and headmen, which further reduced the traditional legitimacy of many of them.

What this suggests is that some chiefs welcomed the establishment of Indirect Rule, “and some smaller tribes used it to reassert their identity against more dominant powers, for example the Bisa [people who were afraid of] the Bemba” (Larmer, 2003:243-244). As this brought a lot of unequal distribution of resources amongst the chiefs, it also caused major divisions among the people. Larmer (2003:244) asserts that “recognized chiefs were provided with modest salaries, together with paid court clerks and tax assessors, although headmen were unpaid”. This paved the way for recognized chiefs to acquire more power to reign over the weaker tribes. For example, the Bemba paramount chiefs became more powerful and conquered the weaker tribes such as the Bisa, Aushi, Ngumbu, Mambwe-Lungu and the Lamba people.

By 1937 there was substantial investment in terms of schools in the Copperbelt Province of Northern Rhodesia, in partnership with the United Missions and the mine companies. The first

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<sup>48</sup> Lord Passfield, Sidney James Webb issued the Passfield White Paper. It was a formal statement of British Policy in Palestine that was made in the aftermath of the 1929 riots. The paper was issued in October 1930. It was considered favourable to the Arab nations (Larmer, 2003:243).

junior secondary school for African boys was opened in 1939. By 1942, almost 86,000 African children were at school, with just thirty-five in secondary education (Larmer, 2003:251). In sum, this brought about a lot of migration, because many Africans or (Northern Rhodesians) who received education were able to form societies. As many educated Africans from rural societies migrated to towns in search of employment, they established welfare associations (WAs) in the mostly line-of-rail towns and Boma centres from 1929 to 1931 (Larmer, 2003:251).

### **3.4.3 Responses to Colonial Rule**

The Welfare Associations (WAs) were dominated by teachers, clerks and traders, and although they may not have seen themselves as consciously elite organizations, their methods and immediate concerns were not identified with by most Africans (Larmer, 2003:251). The WAs were closely watched by the colonial authorities because they were viewed as threats to them. Moffat Thomson understood the aspirations of mission-educated Africans. He believed that the WAs could play a moderate and constructive role (Larmer, 2003:252). According to Larmer (2003:252) “in 1933, the first meeting of the nationwide United African Welfare Associations (UAWA) of Northern Rhodesia took place; amongst its leading figures was Godwin Lewanika, the new Secretary of the Livingstone WA”.

Kaunda was elected UNIP President in January 1960. Kaunda pledged UNIP to non-violence, but insisted that the country would achieve self-government (Larmer, 2003:262). According to Larmer (2003:264), “in 1962, the British Government put forward improved election proposals. These were accepted by UNIP, which now channelled its organization into registering more than 100,000 eligible African voters”.

### **3.5 Independence in Zambia**

On 24th October 1964, Northern Rhodesia became the Republic of Zambia, with the United National Independence Party's (UNIP) first President, Kenneth Kaunda, (Gifford, 1998:181). Garvey (1994:184) concedes that “Independence Day, 24 October 1964, was greeted with religious solemnity in the Catholic parishes of Northern Zambia”. Furthermore, Gifford (1998: 181) states that, “Kaunda...” the “most prominent nationalist leader and already head of the transitional government, came to power with considerable legitimacy” (Gifford, 1998:181). Larmer (2003:265) narrates that “The new UNIP Government, which negotiated a transition to

full Independence at a London conference in May 1964, faced a number of challenges in the run up to independence”. Some of the challenges were associated with religion.

### 3.5.1 The Religious Challenges

Although Northern Rhodesia was granted its independence under the leadership of Kaunda, there were other challenges that were faced by the UNIP Party. Some of the examples were the religious challenges that Kaunda faced from the leaders of AICs, such as Alice Mulenga Lenshina. Larmer (2003:256) is of the view that

the union movement, which believed it had played a vital role in the independence struggle, complained about its under-representation amongst UNIP candidates in the 1964 elections, and there were clashes over UNIP attempts to control the trade union movement, an issue that would arise again after Independence. In July 1964, Alice Lenshina’s Lumpa Church clashed with UNIP youths seeking to force its members to register to vote, against their beliefs. Clashes between youths and church members led to the use of security forces, and to over 700 deaths.

In view of this, Gifford (1998:183) states that Zambia has its own unique configuration of Churches. Apart from the RCC that is by far the most influential denomination, “the Bembaland Church had been part of that colonial experience but was ready to survive into the new era with little change” (Garvey, 1994:184). He argues that, “like Uganda, where different areas are dominated by the Mill Hills and [SMA Fathers], Zambia has been divided geographically into Jesuit, White Fathers and Franciscan areas. Zambia’s Anglicans ...are Anglo-Catholic or high Church, but they are relatively few in number” (Gifford, 1998:183). The missionaries from both the Protestants and the Catholics did not comprehend the religious set-up of the Bemba people. This resulted in stiff competition between the Protestants and the Catholics as they attempted to win both men and women to join their Churches. Hinfelaar (1994: xiii) argues that

[t]he Protestant missionaries held up the ideal of the self-made man, while the Catholics, with their insistence on celibacy, had fostered the ideal of [a] Latin concept of ‘Juvenis’ meaning [a young man or youth]. Both groups saw the religious role of women as reactionary and dangerous. Their teaching was called pagan and had therefore to be discouraged as much as possible.

In the light of the preceding argument, there were some Bemba women who were custodians of shrines. These women revolted against the Protestants’ and Catholics’ preachings. For example,

Lenshina founded the Lumpa Church, which is further discussed in detail in the following section.

### **3.6 The Lumpa Church**

Alice Lenshina “was the first Bemba woman to challenge the status quo within the Bemba mission Christianity and developed her own mission paradigm...” (Kaunda and Nadar, 2012:352). Lenshina was born of a polygamous father who was believed not to have taken care of his children. The Protestant missionaries converted Lenshina to Christianity. She was given the Christian name Alice during her baptism at the Presbyterian Mission of Lubwa in 1953 (Hinfelaar, 1994:73). Like Beatrice, Lenshina was a peasant woman who claimed to have died and risen again. In her death, she claimed she saw Jesus Christ, who told her to go back to life and tell the people that “Jesus is coming again”. At that time, Lenshina knew nothing about reading the Bible. Hastings (1994:533) points out that even if many African people could not read the Bible, the book remained central in many cultures, including the Bemba culture. The Bible was used in many ways to convert and baptize Africans.

Lenshina initiated a movement called ‘Lumpa’ (which means, “to be superior”), among many of her adherents were from the Bemba culture (Kaunda and Nadar, 2012:348). Furthermore, Lenshina’s movement swept over hundreds of thousands of Christians from the Protestant and Catholic missions in the area (Amanze, 1998:203). In her preaching, Lenshina emphasized the powerful work of the Holy Spirit. For this reason, Kaunda and Phiri (2016:7) argue “...that the experience of the Holy Spirit in the AICs must be underpinned in its liberating power in bringing about gender justice for women and men”. Furthermore, Kaunda and Nadar (2012) point out three areas in re-telling the Lenshina story. They stress that Lenshina’s story has to be re-told. Firstly, it should be told in a way so as to demonstrate the agency of women. Secondly, it is stated that the story represents the status of women in the Church and society, their religious life as well as in their homes. Thirdly, they state that Lenshina’s story shows some resistance to both colonial forces, and the indigenous cultures that seem to diminish the roles and status of many women (Kaunda and Nadar, 2012:346). Therefore, in many AICs, the legacies, agency and

presence of women and the presence of the Holy Spirit are some of the unique features that are emphasized<sup>49</sup>.

In addition, apart from both Beatrice and Lenshina's stories, the resistance of the founders to accepting some of the missionaries' teachings is observed. Both women resisted colonial rule, for instance, and Lenshina prohibited her members to pay taxes (Amanze, 1998:203). They show that the rise of the AICs is only one example where African cultures and traditions have demonstrated their "power with" Christianity. This is referred to as "power with" because "it is based on the interaction of [African cultures] and [Christianity] to accomplish its ends" (Becker, 1976:164). The following section discusses the rise of the Lumpa Church.

### **3.6.1 The Initiated Church Movement in Zambia: The Lumpa Church**

The Lumpa Church, initiated by a prophetess (Lenshina), started as a result of resistance to colonial and local government rule. It is believed that the Lumpa Church was also in alliance with Kaunda and his party, because many members in the said party were Bemba, like most of the Lumpa Church members (Turner, 1979:136). Not only is the Lumpa Church an exceptional one, but it also portrays the power of women in the church and society. Lenshina's initiation of the Lumpa Church did not mean that she was an illiterate woman. She was a brave and intelligent woman who maintained the power of Bemba women through oral knowledge of the Biblical texts. Like Beatrice Kimpa Vita of Kongo in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century (Thornton, 1999:322), Lenshina was also brave because she managed to challenge the missionaries' interpretation of Biblical texts.

Commenting on the conversion of Lenshina, Hastings (1994:533) asserts that the Bible was as powerful as it proved to be, because of the mystique of the heavenly Book of Revelation that was studied in prophetic traditions. Lenshina claimed that the Bible was given to her by God

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<sup>49</sup> The contention of this study is that, in most African Initiated Churches (AICs), many women have been allocated positions that are endowed with certain privileges and supernatural powers. The history of one powerful African woman leader called Donna Beatrice Kimpa Vita needs to be discussed. Thornton (1999:321) narrates that between 1704 and 1706 the country referred to as Kongo is currently known as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is stated that Portuguese people first made contact with the Kongo Kingdom in 1483 (see Okeke, 1997). During the year 1704, Beatrice was 20 years old. She was a convert to the RCC (Thornton, 1999:321). She died of a fever but was resuscitated. While she was dead, Beatrice dreamed that she heard the voice of the patron Saint of Kongo, as well as the patron Saint of Portugal known as St. Anthony. Beatrice further recognized the leadership of women in carrying out God's mission. Beatrice died a painful death, but left a legacy in which she is remembered as one of the powerful African women who resisted the preachings of the missionaries.

when she was resurrected when she was ordered to return to earth. Along similar lines, it is believed that when Lenshina died and went to heaven, she was given the Book of Life upon her resurrection. But Lenshina's members claimed not to have seen the book of Life (Turner, 1979:274). When she narrated her story to the Free Church of Scotland missionaries at Lubwa Mission near Chinsali, the missionaries blessed her and allowed her to "revive the faith of the people" (Gifford, 1998:183). Lenshina was given permission to preach to the people. In addition, so powerful and meaningful was Lenshina's preaching to the Bemba people that her Church was empowered to resist Western missionaries' hegemony (Kaunda and Nadar, 2012:354). As indicated in section 3.2.1 of this chapter, Lenshina retained the positions of women by ordaining them as priests, prophetesses and diviners among certain groups in her Church (Hastings, 1994:533). Her own missional policy called both women and men to account to practice a sense of equality.

### **3.6.2 The Mission Documents of the Lumpa Church: Alice Lenshina**

Hinfelaar (1994:99) states that in her preaching she emphasized the coming of Jesus Christ, which eventually earned her many adherents. After preaching for two years, Lenshina became independent. In her preaching, Lenshina represented womanhood. Hinfelaar (1994:99) comments that

[s]he accepted Jesus Christ as her husband, and her brother. Access to Him was based on the traditional dogma of the married woman being the mediatrix of the Divine. Sanctity and wholesome living could only be reached through an undefiled union of husband and wife within a legal marriage.

Drawing on the above, Lenshina's acceptance of Jesus as her husband symbolized the power and value of perfecting the marriage between a man and a woman. Born from a polygamous father, Lenshina rejected polygamy and believed in a one man, one wife marital relationship that should not be defiled. Kaunda and Nadar (2012:354) contend that "...Lenshina was creative in her approach to [the] Bemba culture, for she rejected the sexual cleansing of widows and polygamy". This attracted a lot of the Bemba people, especially women, in the northern part of Zambia. According to Hastings (1994:533), "Even in Northern Rhodesia at the end of the 1950s it looks as if the progressively-minded were turning to nationalist politics and even a mission Church, while the unschooled, often from the same families, went for Lumpa". It is observed that Lenshina recognized the humanity of both men and women, for she helped women to decline all

rituals that were designed for the benefit of men, and this resulted in the growth of her Church (Kaunda and Nadar, 2012:354).

Hinfelaar (1994:9) observes that “She preached against polygyny and adultery”. Much has been said in Zambia about the Lumpa Church always being a movement known for its eradication of witchcraft, sorcery, adultery, rejection of widowhood cleansing and polygyny. Hinfelaar (1994:94) states that

[h]er denunciation of witchcraft was however but a part of the way in which Lenshina primarily called the people to a genuine and personal conversion. The reconciliation in the marital home, between husband and wife, was publicly expressed during a pilgrimage to Kasomo, the Jordan of the BenaLumpa meaning (Lumpa adherents) where the couples and their children underwent a ritual of repentance and the baptism of St. John.

There were a number of rituals in the Lumpa Church, and most of them were performed by women. As indicated earlier in section 3.2.4 of the current chapter, the life-style of the Bemba is centred on three pillars namely, the clan and an emphasis on both the matrilineal and issues of marriage. Apart from marriage, there is also a central responsibility for the woman of the house to bear, because she is the one who maintains and controls the household (Hinfelaar, 1994:94).

The Lumpa movement composed hymns in *iciBemba* that called people to conversion (Hinfelaar, 1994:97). Doing this meant that both husband and wife had to repent of their wrong-doings inside their home-shrine before they were taken outside on the pilgrimage to Kasomo. Both the husband and the wife had to agree to get rid of all the charms and love-potions, and this had to be done in public. This was a symbol of total repentance in the Lumpa movement (Hinfelaar, 1994:97). The evidence considered so far is that women hold a powerful and an important role in society and in the home. Hence, the Lumpa church regarded marriage rituals as sacred. Their rituals were mainly conducted by women.

Furthermore, Lenshina also recognized the power of women in her church. The women in the Lumpa movement had moved from being the traditional gate-keepers of the village shrines (of their forebears) to “...a new territorial shrine of Jesus Christ, the Light Envoy from the East, in Kasomo and its replicas in the villages” (Hinfelaar, 1994:98). Hinfelaar, (1994:100) stresses that “Lenshina restored women’s religious roles as intercessors, as placed between Christ and the

World, and as the initiators of the Christian cult”. In sum, this was Lenshina’s resistance to missionary teachings that forbade “...women [to] be near God” (Musopole, 2001:200).

Hinfelaar (1994:98) comments that women in the Lumpa Church had the gift of leadership, both in their homes and in the church. The women were given certain roles as teachers, intercessors and deaconesses. He continues that the whole essence of including women was that they should be seen as having the power to lead, encourage and motivate people to join the movement. Membership was universal, and people came to be baptized, not only from the Bemba-speaking areas, but from other parts of the country, even from places as far as Bulawayo (Hinfelaar, 1994:98). Lenshina’s movement is an example of a movement in which women occupied powerful roles.

Further, Gifford (1998:183-184) states that Lenshina built an enormous Church. Since Lenshina preached according to the Bible that Jesus rose from the dead, they should expect his second coming. This brought a lot of suspicions from Lenshina’s members who, during the opening of their Church, were looking forward to seeing Jesus Christ rise from the dead. But when the adherents realized that Jesus had failed to appear as promised by the then Prophetess Lenshina, membership of her Church began to decline. The Church was finally destroyed as a result of clashes in 1963 with supporters of UNIP. The latter was at that time busy eliminating possible alternative centres of allegiance (Gifford,1998:184) and the Lumpa Church had misunderstandings with the UNIP government because Lenshina forbade her members to pay taxes. The Lumpa Church is one of the churches that raised the issue of AICs functioning as political movements, in response to the political context in Zambia. The resistance against paying taxes for example is a major political act of revolt.

In many respects in Africa, the formation of some AICs was a result of the relevant governments in those respective areas. Turner argues that many of these governments “were almost all colonial governments” (Turner, 1979:136). In Lenshina’s case however, the alliance between Lenshina and UNIP was strengthened. They worked together to strengthen the party in its civil disobedience campaigns in 1959 and in 1962 (Turner, 1979:136). Lenshina broke away from the party in the late 1962. In 1964, she declared armed resistance against the UNIP government, which was by then in power. The UNIP government, in turn, launched a major military operation which claimed almost 1000 lives, with 40 villages burnt down. Lenshina was imprisoned “... and Kenneth Kaunda’s government [was] deeply embarrassed” because his members were

armed with automatic rifles whilst the Lumpa Church adherents had only sticks, spears and pangas to fight battles (Turner, 1979:136). In many respects, the Lumpa Church was like the Mutima Church, but with some uniquely exceptional features, which are explored in the following sections.

### **3.7 The Mutima Church**

The founder of the Mutima Church, named, Emilio Chishimba, was born in Ipusukilo in the Luwingu district around 1921 into a family of Bemba priests. His mother, Chilufya, had previously been married to a white trader called William Stuart and had two children named Abraham and Bernadetta. However, Stuart had left the family because he had been called to take part in the First World War. Stuart did not communicate with his wife, Chilufya, and children during the time he was away at war. He never showed up after the war ended, which made people assume that Stuart had been killed during the War<sup>50</sup> (Chishimba, 1976:3).

However, after mourning her late husband Stuart, Chilufya, (Chishimba's mother), re-married – to a man called Mulolani, who was from the Kasama district. Since marriage is one of the pillars of the Bemba people<sup>51</sup>, Chilufya, had been advised not to live as a widow forever. Mulolani was a Bemba man and the biological father of Chishimba. Eventually, observes Hinfelaar (1994:101), “Stuart reappeared and claimed his wife and children”. Chishimba was not accepted by Stuart, who was now his step-father and was consequently mistreating him and threatening to kill Chishimba. Chishimba's mother and his half-sister, Bernadette, were always offering aid to him, such that Chishimba became closer to the women than to his step-father.

Burlington asserts that Chishimba was the source of conflict between Chilufya and Stuart. One of the typical complaints in Bemba society is that children fathered by another man are not treated well by step-fathers<sup>52</sup>. According to Hinfelaar (1994:102), after some years Stuart went away for a second time and no one revealed any further news of Stuart. Chishimba's mother, Chilufya, was left to fend for her children. Since Chilufya was still young, she married another

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<sup>50</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 78.

<sup>51</sup> This falls under the history of the Bemba people and is further discussed in Section 3.2.4 of Chapter Three.

<sup>52</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 78.

man called Makumbi, who was a traditional priest at a local shrine. Chilufya had five children with this man, bringing the total number of all her children to eight (Hinfelaar, 1994:102).

During the period when Chilufya was still married to Makumbi, the Society of Missionaries of Africa (SMAs), hereafter the White Fathers, made strategic plans to establish themselves within the largest tribe, which was the Bemba. Chishimba's parents were also Bemba and were Roman Catholic Church converts. Seemingly they were a religious couple. They embraced Catholicism to the extent that Benadetta, Chishimba's sister, joined the first Zambian religious congregation of Religious Sisters, the sisters of the Child of Jesus. Chishimba joined the minor seminary at Lubushi when he was ten years old and was later sent to the major seminary of Kipalapala in Tanzania in 1940. He spent three years studying scholastic Philosophy and Theology. During that time, he was increasingly beset by the fear that he was not holy enough to receive the priesthood of Jesus Christ (Hinfelaar, 1994:102).

Hinfelaar (1994:102) argues that it was in the final year of Chishimba's studies at the seminary of Kipalapala when problems arose between the staff and the students. The Bemba-speaking students were singled out as causing much trouble and were suspended from the seminary. Chishimba was one of the suspended students. He then migrated to Lusaka in the early 1950s and found employment as a primary school teacher and catechist (Hinfelaar, 1994:102). Whilst in Lusaka, Chishimba got married. He had two children. By then most of the Bemba-speaking people from the Northern Province of Zambia had received a Christian education from the Southern SMAs White Fathers. In Lusaka, they formed small Catholic communities where they could easily identify with the Jesuits from the Kasisi mission. There were three parishes in Lusaka, namely: Matero, Kabwata and St. Francis in Northmead. The majority of members were Bemba and Chewa-speaking Christians (Hinfelaar, 1994:103). Chishimba also started catechism classes and had discussions with the adult Christians in the homes of Catholics, teaching them about Mary, Mother of Jesus and God. Many adults would discuss problems with Chishimba, especially marital problems (Hinfelaar, 1994:105).

### **3.7.1 The Married Life of Chishimba**

Various studies show that Chishimba's wife, Rosa, had three children. Chishimba's married life brought liberation from the anxieties and scruples he had experienced at the seminary (Hinfelaar, 1994:107). Further, Hinfelaar (1994:108) points out that by the time Chishimba began to preach

to the people about his new-found faith, he would leave his wife behind and embark on apostolic journeys with members of either sex. They would go for a long time and leave their legal wives at home. They used to walk along the roads unisexually dressed in army trench coats and called each other brother and sister (Hinfelaar, 1994:108). According to Hinfelaar (1994:108), “many got involved in controlled ritual intercourse which they assumed was an act of love and kindness”. News of their engaging in unprotected sex spread and reached Chishimba’s wife, who advocated for a divorce. Chishimba and Rosa divorced after they had had three children. Chishimba never re-married, but instead preached celibacy to his members. This was a practice that he seemingly adopted from the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) (Hinfelaar, 1994:109).

### **3.7.2 The Rise of the Mutima Church**

In some of the Bemba documents that he wrote for his Church members, Chishimba explains how he caught the attention of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ. Gazing at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ made Chishimba see himself as a searcher for Truth, known in the Bemba language as *Ukufwaisha ichishinka* (Chishimba, 1976:7). Chishimba initiated families into the practice of gazing at the Sacred Heart that was found in most Christian homes. As Hinfelaar (1994:104) writes,

[Chishimba] exhorted them [members] to fast from time to time, to abstain from alcohol, and amidst the noise of life in the compounds to spend long hours in deep silence in order to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony...The white missionaries, whose primary goal was to plant the visible church and had little time to introduce their neophytes to the mystical aspect of Christian prayer, had taught them to express their new religion through the recitation of long prayers and singing of hymns.

This type of conversion did not please the white missionaries at all. They became suspicious of Chishimba’s teaching and preaching to the extent that some Bishops such as the Italian Conventual Monsignor Francis Constantin and Monsignor (Mgr) Mazzieri started to enquire from other Bishops about Chishimba’s background (Hinfelaar, 1994:104). Mazzieri forbade Chishimba to preach in the diocese of Ndola and, in October 1955, Chishimba was sent back to his home village in the Northern part of Zambia by Monsignor Mazzieri (Hinfelaar, 1994:105). Chishimba was considered insane by his Bishops, (Hinfelaar, 1994:105).

In trying to integrate Christianity and traditional religions, many Bemba and Chewa people acknowledged his preaching and admired Chishimba's teaching. In this regard, Hinfelaar asserts that Chishimba attracted the cream of the teachers, catechists, and other lay-leaders of the Catholic Church, who were trying to integrate their own religious background with the teaching of Christian belief and morality (Hinfelaar, 1994:105).

Furthermore, Garvey (1994:164) concedes that "during 1957 Emilio Chishimba Mulolani's League of the Sacred Heart gradually separated itself from the Roman Catholic community of Northern Rhodesia". Hastings suggests that Chishimba and his followers did not leave the RCC of their own will. He asserts that

Emilio's (Chishimba's) followers were forced out of the Catholic Church and became in 1958 the independent *Bana ba Mutima*, but his sister and close confidant for many years, Mother Bernadetta Stuart Chanda, became the first Mother-General of the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, and his brother, Leo Makumbi, President of the Third Order of St. Francis (Hastings, 1994:601).

They had been forced out of the Catholic Church, but the Mutima Church members still claimed that they were not Roman Catholics, but Catholics<sup>53</sup>. Mutima Church members would pray in their homes because homes were designed as links to divinity<sup>54</sup>. Turner (1979:136) argues that in 1960 Chishimba's Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was declared illegal and his followers were dispersed. Chishimba was detained for medical observation. But Chishimba was released and "...before charges deriving from refusal to pay taxes or to observe traditional morality could be brought, he escaped and vanished" (Turner, 1979:136). The Church's practices were considered to be illegal, so Chishimba had no problem in teaching his followers to pray in their homes. With his Roman Catholic experience of establishing parishes, Chishimba later started to acquire land in the remote areas of some provinces, such as Lusaka, Central, Northern, Luapula, Copperbelt, Eastern, Southern and Muchinga provinces. He established some parishes which in

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<sup>53</sup> The differences between the Roman Catholics and Catholics are that Roman Catholics, being a larger group, believe in papal authority. Catholics do not believe in papal authority and they are a smaller group. Catholics do not see the canons as laws, but Roman Catholics regard the canons as laws and give authority to the bishop to apply them. Roman Catholics believe in purgatory after death, while Catholics believe that souls are sent to the house of death after death. Catholics do not support the theory of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, but Roman Catholics support this theory. But both Roman Catholics and Catholics [including the Mutima Church members], imitate Mary's full completion of faith in God. They honour her and give reverence to Mary (See Sendapu, 2016, Garvey, 1994 and Hinfelaar, 1994).

<sup>54</sup> This concept of considering a "Home as a Divinity" is a Bemba concept that supports marriage between a man and a woman.

the Bemba language are known as “*Namfumum[s]*” meaning Mothers of Kings<sup>55</sup>. The following section discusses why both Lenshina and Chishimba considered a home as a link with Divinity.

### 3.7.3 The Home as a Link to Divinity

Hinfelaar (1994:108) argues that since marriage between a man and a woman is very essential in the Bemba tribe, both Lenshina and Chishimba did not hesitate to recognize homes that had a husband, a wife and children. The latter ultimately recognized homes where there was husband, wife, and children as places where his members were to seek Divine intervention (Hinfelaar, 1994:108). Chishimba stresses in some of his unpublished documents that it was a revelation to him to realise that the first link with the Divine was established in a home. He notes that a home was the basic Christian community. Chishimba emphasises his teaching of the divine and insists on the celebration of marital sexuality (Hinfelaar, 1994:108).

In as much as Chishimba could travel to preach the Word of God, the centrality of the family was very unique and this brought about the success of his church. Garvey (1994:160) is of the view that Chishimba “was a popular preacher in the Bemba and some of his congregation attested that ‘they had never before had religion explained to them so clearly’”. This was a kind of resistance to the RCC, which placed an emphasis on celibacy. While the RCC preached that people should be having their Church services in the Church or parishes, Chishimba taught members to conduct Church services in their homes (Garvey, 1994:160). In view of the three pillars of Bemba society, they retained the third pillar about marriage. Both Chishimba and Lenshina did not want to lose Bemba marriage traditions and they preached about them, which made more Bemba people join their movements. Like Lenshina, Chishimba recognized the power of women in a home.

Over the years, what became the distinctive sign by which the Ba Mutima (those of the Heart), could be recognized was the way they symbolically expressed themselves in public (Hinfelaar, 1994:107). For instance, to date, the way they greet each other is still not by shaking hands, but in a way more biblical, as they aim to imitate how Joseph and his brothers hugged each other after they discovered that Joseph was not an Egyptian, but actually their blood brother. This is

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<sup>55</sup> Chishimba used the Bemba titles, where sisters of the Bemba chiefs and their girl-children are called *banamfumum*, meaning mothers of kings (See Whiteley, 1951 and Richards, 1940). He also derived this from the concept of Mariology, since Mary Mother of Jesus is referred to as Mother of King in the Council of Ephesus, (See Rakozcy, 2004 and Fiorenza, 2011).

also linked to the third pillar of the Bemba people – marriage life – since this emphasizes the notion of the family with women at the centre of power (Chishimba, 1976:9).

Chishimba stressed the unity of husband and wife sitting, eating, walking and praying together in their homes as another distinctive symbol that could be expressed in public. He urged his members to be working, sitting, eating, praying, and walking together (Hinfelaar, 1994:107). Chishimba taught his followers not to build churches or chapels, but to regard their homes as shrines. Hinfelaar comments that

[t]hey began to stress the sacramental presence of God before, during and after marital union. Before the conjugal act both husband and wife had to be purified by being reconciled to each other in all sincerity and truth: “*mufya cine nefya chishinka...* [in reality and in truth]”. Slowly, the proper celebration of sexuality became one of the main preoccupations of the movement (Hinfelaar, 1994:108).

Chishimba and Lenshina had both similarities and differences. Chishimba taught his members to celebrate the issue of sexuality. They both preached in *ciBemba*, and emphasized members to be divinely linked with home-shrines. They taught members to be sitting together when eating, as a sign of celebrating Holy Communion. They both regarded a woman as a unique figure in the house. They both based their departure points on the Bible. Garvey observes that one expression of brotherly love in Chishimba’s preaching was an element that was famous among the AICs, and even among some political independence movements. Moreover, the followers of Chishimba were known to address each other as *bamunyanane* (brothers) (Garvey, 1994:170).

In the light of Hinfelaar’s (1994:109) assertion, the movement developed quickly. The issue of sexuality was not tackled equally between men and women by Chishimba. This is where Hinfelaar has also left a gap, because the “proper celebration of sexuality by Chishimba” meant the celebration of procreation (Chishimba, 1971:7). To this end, Chishimba has adopted the Bemba concept of marriage. Richards’ (1950:15) research on the tribal attitude to marriage and sex among the Bemba people asserts that “...sex[ual] intercourse is itself considered necessary to normal well-being, and a pleasure to which all are entitled. More continence is expected of women than of men, as the adultery laws prove...but both sexes are thought to have a right to a full sex life” (Richards, 1940:15).

It is here that Chishimba has used the concept of “cultural power” (Purvis, 1993:64). According to Mbiti (1975:106), “in traditional society, [such as that of the Bemba], the family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters who may have their own children, and other immediate relatives”. Chishimba and Lenshina had one major difference, in that while Lenshina forbade polygamy in the Lumpa Church, Chishimba has allowed polygamy in the Mutima Church. This also empowered his uncles, nephews and sons to marry more than one wife.

Chishimba taught his members not to build Churches but to use their houses as shrines, and women are in charge of shrines, which meant that the issue of sexuality allowed women to be the central point (Hinfelaar, 1994:109). The Mutima movement in Zambia became very independent, yet some of its practices, such as the proper celebration of sexuality, were questioned by the public, as well as, by then, the Government of the Republic of Zambia. The movement also became famous for practicing kindness, giving and sharing. During the years that followed, the movement acquired a vast amount of land in the remote areas of different towns (Hinfelaar, 1994:102). It was because of Chishimba’s political stance, and the disorderly behaviour of his followers towards the proper celebration of sexuality, that the Zambian government forbade Mutima Church membership as illegal in 1974, but the members of that church continued their underground activities. In 1984 the courts sanctioned such secret assemblies with fines and imprisonment. This made Chishimba start to purchase large hectares of land in some parts of Zambia, where his members would live and worship (Hinfelaar, 1994:114).

The RCC has built many parishes in the country. In the same way, the Mutima Church has “parishes” that are called *Namfumumu* steads, where some members live and farm, and others go to meet and worship (Chishimba, 1971:12). The term *Namfumumu* in the Bemba culture is referred to as “mother of the king”, who may be the chief’s sister’s children, or his nieces or sisters’ daughters’ children. The person has to related to the chief’s mother, since Bemba culture is matrilineal. There are no restrictions as to who should go to worship or to seek refuge. Any person is allowed to interact with the members, as long as the person is willing to worship with them. The following section analyses the three symbols that are more significant and give power to meaning in the Mutima Church (Chishimba. 1976:13).

### 3.7.4 The Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ

Embedded in the Bemba culture is the notion that the heart is the power and centre of all emotions, as stated earlier.<sup>56</sup> Hence, coupled with the heart of Jesus Christ, Chishimba places his emphasis on the heart of Jesus, that also relates to the Bemba concept of the heart. Chishimba dedicated himself to the symbol of the Sacred Heart (Hinfelaar, 1994:107). The heart is one of the powerful symbols of human organs, and because of this Chishimba named his church “Sweetheart”. As mentioned earlier, the Jesuit Fathers also had a special devotion to the Sacred Heart. Many Christians were assigned to dedicate their homes to the Sacred Heart mounted on the wall with a large picture of Jesus, showing his Heart in a place of honour (Hinfelaar, 1994:107). Kabwata Parish in Lusaka was dedicated to the Sacred Heart and Matero Church had a large mural of the Sacred Heart behind the altar (Hinfelaar, 1994:105). Chishimba became so attached to the symbol of the Sacred Heart that he spent time gazing at the Sacred Heart, both in his house and in the Roman Catholic Church (RCC).

The Catholic Bishops issued a ban against Chishimba that caused him mental anguish similar to his experience of dismissal from the seminary. Chishimba decided to leave the country and headed southwards, to Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa (Hinfelaar, 1994:107). He left his wife and children in Zambia. However, he could not stay for long there because of the inequalities and harsh treatment he witnessed through the deep racism that was happening in this part of the world (Chishimba, 1976:9).

Chishimba records his experiences on his journey back to Zambia in one of his documents. Hinfelaar (1994:106) narrates that whilst Chishimba was in Livingstone he had a strange dream in which the entire continent of Africa was shown as united as the hearts of Jesus and Mary. In this vision, he heard a voice that encouraged him to continue with his given task. He was commanded to change his name to Peter, the Rock. Chishimba saw what he termed “an awakening” and went further to Lusaka and applied to the Registrar of Societies for the legal registration of what he understood the term “Catholic” meant, which was “Universal”, hence the idea of universality in order to enhance the image of the new Church that would take up the

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<sup>56</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 79.

Universal appeal. His refusal to relate to the “Roman Catholic” church became a symbol of resistance by Chishimba against the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) (Hinfelaar, 1994:106-107).

### **3.7.5 The Symbolic Significance of the Heart**

Chishimba adopted the Bemba heart symbol and related this to the heart of Jesus Christ. Mutima Church members became so attracted to the heart of Jesus Christ that it united their Church. Chishimba preached that the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ be put into every member’s home, (Chishimba, 1976:15). This also became important in the members’ understanding of the Divine. Chishimba preached that almost everything on earth is incomplete, but complementary, (Chishimba, 1976:4). For instance, he taught that the heart has two parts, the left and the right side, there is night and day, light and darkness, heaven and earth, man and woman, white people and black people. This also applies to the sets of the human body that are in pairs: two eyes, hands, legs, lips, lungs, ears, and so forth. One of the documents written in the Bemba language states, (*fyonse fyaba fibili fibili*) meaning, almost everything is created in duplicate (Chishimba, 1976:8; Chishimba, 1974:18).

Genuinely, the heart is unique because it is the organ of the body that holds everything together yet, at the same time, it comprises two perfectly united elements: blood (*umulopa*) and body (*umubili*). Chishimba saw the Heart as the sign of God’s perfection on earth and only by embracing it or by entering it and passing through it, could the Transcendent be reached (Hinfelaar, 1994:112). In practice, it meant that in order to come to total integration as a person, one had to be united with the heart of one’s opposite gender which offers a person total wholeness, meaning, in the Bemba language, *Ubutuntulu* (Hinfelaar, 1994:112). It is only death that can separate the heart from the body. The child derived from the two hearts of a man and woman has symbolic meaning within the Mutima Church. The following section outlines why the symbol of a child is powerful in the Mutima Church.

### **3.7.6 The Symbolic Significance of a Child**

Children are gifts from God. Therefore, children are, as every person is aware, innocent in some of the things that they do. Many children enjoy being nude and when they live near a river or lake they are not ashamed to practise the communal bathing. The behaviour of children impressed Chishimba and he preached that his members should aim to adopt this childhood

mentality in order to enter the state of innocence in which there was no knowledge of sin, and not to give up in spite of weaknesses and failures (Hinfelaar, 1994:116). In the Mutima Church some male members plait their hair (which is not common in the Zambian context), men would do women's chores such as pounding maize, cassava and cooking, and collect firewood. Women would also be carrying out men's chores, such as building houses and cutting firewood. Hinfelaar (1994:117) explains that in the Mutima set up children were regarded as cold, in the sense that they are sexually neutral and almost genderless. It was normal for boys and girls to play together and even their imitations of parental and conjugal living were regarded as innocent.

### **3.7.7 The Sign of Perfection as Wholeness**

Among other things, men and women would be seen seated next to each other during church services, and believed to be worshipping together. This is also regarded as a sign of perfection (*ubuntuntulu*) wholeness, when elderly persons obtained the qualities of the opposite gender. They were also seen as close to their forebears, who were genderless and near to the perfection of God in which the masculine and feminine forces were perfectly united (Hinfelaar, 1994:117). In summing this up, Hinfelaar (1994:116) comments that

[t]he followers of Emilio (Chishimba) were of the opinion that the relations between husband and wife were the concern of the couple themselves. In their view the primary aim of marriage was the union of man and woman as the symbol of the original state of humanity as one and not as being divided into male and female.

The conclusion is that it is the concern of the husband and the wife to respect their marriage. This also means that if the husband or wife felt like engaging in extra-marital affairs, it is negotiable, and it shows that marriage in the Mutima Church is not sacred. The other symbol that gives meaning to Mutima Church members is the significance of Mary or the symbol of Mary, Mother of Jesus.

### **3.7.8 The Symbolic Significance of Mother of King**

In one of the Church's unpublished documents, Chishimba argues that if Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, and God exalted Jesus to the highest place, then Mary's position is much higher than that of her Son, Jesus Christ, because Mary had never been tempted by Satan the way Jesus was tempted (Chishimba, 1974:8). Mary was created by God without sin. Mary did not have doubts about her role in the plan of God. She accepted her pregnancy without knowing any man

(as the Bible puts it). Jesus had doubts when he cried out on the Cross: “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” Chishimba calls Mary, “Mother of God”. If the Roman Catholic Church gave titles to Mary such as *Mater Dei* the mother of God and *Mater Creatoris*, the mother of the Creator, then surely this puts Mary in a unique position visa-a-vis the human race (Chishimba, 1971; also Hinfelaar, 1994:119).

Mary is the door to Divinity, while Jesus carries the key to open the door. Chishimba teaches that this does not mean that divine worship should be given to Mary, but that both Mary and Jesus had been given tasks by God. In order to form a symbol of *Namfumu* (Mother of the King) Chishimba and his members had acquired enough land in many provinces in Zambia, where they had built ‘parishes’, or *Namfumu* steads (Chishimba, 1971:17). These are usually found in the remote areas of towns or villages and there are many hectares of land where members go for training, to worship and for farming. There may be two or three in one town, for example, in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia, in Kitwe Town, where there is *Namfumu wa Mikoti*. In Ndola there is *Namfumu wa Nkama*, *Namfumu we Tuna* in Kasama and so on. The rule is that any stranded person or people may go there to seek refuge and worship with the members there. If one is happy with the way the members worship and wishes to join, one is most welcome.

Chishimba urges his members to be always praying, fasting, working, evangelising and giving, especially in the *Namfumu* steads. In relation to *Bemba* society that practises communal life, one would not visit Mutima Church members without being offered something to eat and water to bath, no matter what time one gets there. The staple food of *Nshima* is usually provided to any visitor, regardless of how young or old one may be or how many they may be. Usually this is eaten by the visitor with some of the members of the church who are willing to join them. This is also done as a sign of love and harmony. It is stated by Hinfelaar (1994:119) that

Ubwali or *Nshima* was the staple diet of the people, but in this ceremony it became the symbol of the Body of Christ. It was taken along with a cup of fresh water, symbol of the fluid that flowed from the pierced heart of Christ on the Cross. The holy unity of this life-giving fluid, with the parental Body, constituted Wholeness (Butuntulu) and Divinity (Bulungu) within the womb of the family.

This is one reason why female priests are in-charge of some *Namfumu* steads. The other reason is that women in the Mutima Church are the centre of powerful symbols. Many of Chishimba’s children are brought up in the house-shrines or *Namfumus*. Normally, these children do not refer

to him as 'Father' but they are taught to refer to him as *Umufyashi wa chishinka* (Parent of Truth), (Hinfelaar, 1994:122).

### 3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the historical background of the Bemba people. As stated, Bemba culture gives women recognition, which has been acquired from time immemorial. For the Bemba people women are significant, in that they were in charge of home shrines before the coming of the missionaries. The Bemba people are believed to be occupants of three pillars, namely, the clan system, matrilineal family arrangements and the marriage system. With regard to the matrilineal system, the Bemba people respect and honour their paramount chiefs. But not only do they respect and honour their paramount chiefs, they also respect the mothers of their chiefs. It is in this regard that the sisters and nieces of the paramount chiefs are called mothers of kings. In the Bemba language, this is called *banamfumu*.

Furthermore, the chapter has highlighted the history of Christianity in Zambia, in which there has been a discussion about the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (SMA Fathers), involving the important works of Cardinal Lavigerie, who was also a founder of the SMA Fathers in Africa. In Zambia, however, the SMA Fathers were also pillars of the RCC in the Bemba land. It is upon their arrival that many Bemba people were converted. Alice Lenshina, the founder of the Lumpa Church, was one of the women who, after being converted to Christianity, founded her own Church. Also of importance are the parents of Chishimba, Chishimba's conversion and his three-year seminary training in the RCC.

The chapter presented the mission policies of two initiated Churches namely, the Lumpa and the Mutima Churches. The mission of the Lumpa Church was presented to give an insight into the focal point of this study, the Mutima Church. While Alice Lenshina, the founder of the Lumpa Church, forbade polygamy in her Church, Chishimba Mulolani has accepted polygamy in his Church.

The chapter highlights the history and the married life of Chishimba Mulolani. Furthermore, the three major symbols that are practised in the Mutima Church namely, the sacred heart of Jesus, the symbol of a child and the symbol of Mary Mother of Jesus, are discussed. As discussed in this chapter, the RCC refers to Mary as *Mater Dei*, the Mother of God and *Mater Creatoris*, meaning the Mother of the Creator – concepts which have also been taken up in the Mutima

Church. These concepts put Mary in a place of exaltation. For Mutima Church members, Mary is referred to as Mother of the Creator. In the following chapter, I use Nuckolls' and Fiorenza's lenses to analyse Mutima Church policy, showing us how power is inculcated in the Mutima Church.

## CHAPTER 4

# Relationships between Policy and Power: Examining Mutima Church Policy through the Concept of Culture and Paradoxical-Dialectical Knowledge Systems<sup>57</sup>

### 4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the historical background of the Bemba people was discussed. It discussed the three pillars of the Bemba people, namely, the matrilineal system, the clan system and the marriage system. The chapter highlighted the coming of the missionaries to the Bemba land and how the Bemba people responded to Christianity. This was done to create a basis for the initiation of the Mutima Church.

The present chapter outlines some of the unpublished mission documents of the Mutima Church, authored by Chishimba. Since the subject of this study is about policy embedded in male power and how some Bemba women respond to it, there is a need to interpret the policy documents because some of them are written in the Bemba language. The chapter is divided into five sections. The first section looks at the interpretation of the *Full Image of God Revealed in Africa: The Keys to the Full Bible* (Chishimba, 1974). The second section outlines Chishimba's faith journey, how Chishimba narrates the revelations of his visions and dreams to establish his Church. The section consists mainly of Chishimba's interpretations of visions and dreams from his unpublished document entitled "*Kambelenge Nga Ni Mpelwa*" meaning "Let me Read What Happened to a Fellow Zambian..." (Chishimba, 1971).

The third section interprets extracts from the *Umutima Walowa uwa Makumbi* document. These extracts interpret the order of liturgy and worship of the Church where the praises of Mary, mother of Jesus, and Joseph, father of Jesus are outlined. The fourth section interprets the being of Chilufya Chilondola, the mother of Chishimba, and the praises of Chishimba. Regarding inculturation, Chishimba selects Christian items to fit into the Bemba liturgy. To this end, the

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<sup>57</sup>Nuckolls, W. C. (1996) in his book, takes the view that knowledge systems are fundamentally antinomian, and are usually founded on paradox and dialectical systems. I presume that since Chishimba is aware of the values in Bemba culture, he was aware that values cannot be reached within the system. Chishimba has achieved his goals in affirming the Bemba culture in the Christian circles.

final section interprets and modifies some of the items in accordance with Christian Church values.

Using the lenses of Charles W. Nuckolls' "Concept of Culture and Paradoxical-Dialectical Knowledge Systems" (1996), as well as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's (2009; 1994; 2011), Mercy Oduyoye (1995), and James Scott's (1990) works will help us to interpret the Mutima Church documents. Questions that will guide this chapter, firstly, is there a relationship between the Mutima Church policy, power and women's experiences and the Bemba culture? Secondly, are female priests part of the Mutima Church policy-making decision?

#### **4.2. Presentation of the Mutima Church's Policy Documents**

As earlier stated in Chapters 1 and 2, Chishimba, who served for three years as an RCC Seminarian and aspired to become a Catholic priest, attended both minor and major seminaries (Burlington, 2008:436). He has successfully become one of the founders of secret wisdom and knowledge in his church. Because of the knowledge he has gained from the Roman Catholic missionaries, teachers and the sacred Christian books, Chishimba is believed to be receiving divine revelations, and he imparts these in teachings and writing to his followers. In line with this, it is argued by Turner (1979:272-273) that, as cultural factors, the belief is that power is related to secret knowledge which is possessed only by the magician or the priest, or the members who are initiated into one of the secret societies that are so often found within primal groups. The following sections interpret the first document of the Mutima Church, entitled "*Full Image of God Revealed in Africa: The Keys to the Full Bible*". In this document, Chishimba refers to two secrets, the White and the Black secrets.

#### **4.3 *Full Image of God Revealed in Africa: The Keys to the Full Bible (The White Secret)***

This document is written in English. It is addressed to the Director of Public Prosecutions and the officials concerned. Chishimba (1974:1) puts forward his appeal to the officials stating that

[a]s one of your insignificant, but faithful servants with the Virtue of God, I am trying the level best to express in a nutshell the principles and foundations of the two religious Doctrines on earth as a whole, in order to facilitate the harmony between us, you our prominent Official members of the Government and ourselves the Religious members of the [Sweetheart of Makumbi] Society.

Chishimba directs this document to the officials of Zambia, informing them of his revelations and positions on earth. These words suggest that Chishimba considers himself to be a loyal and true servant of God, who has been given authority to spread the Word of God. Chishimba explains his encounter with the divine revelations of God to the authorities on earth. However, Burlington (2008:440) argues that in referring to the two religious Doctrines on earth, in Chishimba's ideology, there is an elder-junior social hierarchy that has been established between Africans and Europeans. In Chishimba's theological sense, Adam and Eve are Europeans. Jesus was also a European, and these also reveal God's masculine nature to the Europeans.

For this reason, the Europeans are referred to as *abakalamba besu*, literally meaning "our elders" (Chishimba, 1976:21). Because of this, and in Chishimba's view, the Europeans proved to have spiritual priority over Africans because they are the ones who revealed the gospel in the context of slavery and colonialism (Burlington, 2008:440). This is the first doctrine. The second doctrine is that Africans are the last-borns, because they are the Israel of the last times. However, as indicated in Chapter 2 (section 2.4) in Nuckolls' (1996) terms, this is referred to as the paradoxical knowledge structure that moves up and down in trying to reach a solution.

The document "The Full Image of God Revealed in Africa" is central to Mutima Church members. Members refer to this book whenever they are being interviewed or when they are explaining some church-related issues to outsiders. In this particular book, Chishimba (1974:2) refers to the White people as "our elder brothers" [*sic*]. Burlington (2008:436) argues that ideas like Chishimba's are surrounded by a general lack of discussion concerning the formation of interlocking worldviews, the role of undecidedly non-rational factors as historical contingency and personal psychological motivations in their creation. In his view, Burlington seems to imagine that Chishimba has both the Bemba and RCC worldviews. The two are in tension and as a result they are interlocking.

Furthermore, Burlington (2008:436) asserts that Chishimba's non-rational contributions to world-views should be understood by missiologists, because they are the ones who face the challenges of not only preaching the gospel within compelling contextualizations of it, but also the analysis of particular anthropological contexts. He cautions missiologists to understand that human beings "... arrive at views of reality through processes that are not wholly rational" and it

is therefore difficult to change the knowledge that is acquired in this manner including perceptions, intuitions and reasoning (Burlington, 2008:436).

For this reason, Chishimba's interlocking world-views have been adopted, cognitively and psychologically, by members of his Church. It is important to note that interlocking worldviews refer to both the Biblical and the Bemba cultural worldviews. Chishimba has not resisted the Christian message, but received it through the RCC and integrated this into the Bemba culture.

As indicated earlier, Chishimba does not reject the message brought to Africa by the missionaries. Instead he strongly argues that there are some White Secrets concerning religious doctrine that God revealed to the elders (Chishimba, 1974:2). These secrets have not been revealed by the missionaries. Turner's point is valid here. He argues that "...the important idea running through so many different mythologies and legends is that the whites outwitted or cheated the other peoples either at the creation or in subsequent allotments of spiritual and powerful gifts to men [*sic*]; and they are still doing so within the Christian religion" (Turner, 1979:274).

Similarly, there are two doctrines that can be referred to as a paradox here, as the doctrines do not complement each other. According to Nuckolls (1996:46), "[t]he fact that [the two doctrines] cannot simultaneously and satisfactorily fulfill all normative obligations" in the religious ambivalences, but find expression in religious forms including myth and divination results in their being called a paradox. In Chishimba's terms, these are the White and Black Doctrines. Chishimba, however, positions himself and his Church within the Black doctrine. The White Secret is the coming of the Son of God (Jesus). Chishimba argues that God used some people amongst the elected ones: "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Chishimba, 1974:2). In his interpretation, Chishimba is of the view that the Alpha is Christ in another name, and that there are other names such as: "Eternal life, life, light, truth, Charity and Wisdom of his father the Omega" (Chishimba, 1974:2). Since Christ is the son of Omega who is God, Christ becomes a father to all of us, including the angels, since we all share the breath of Christ. This makes the Omega (God) to be our Grandfather (Gen. 2: 7) (Chishimba, 1974:2). Christ, the Son of Omega, has been given a role to play here on earth. For example, Chishimba (1974:2) argues that

it is the duty of this Alpha, being the parent, to choose one from his Elect[ed ones] and anoint him as his Spirit, so that he works as his Representative. Any that

believes in him, believes in the Alpha. The son of Omega, at the same time that person has also already believed in the Omega, e.g. Enoch during his time was a Christ (Gen. 5: 22-24).

For Chishimba, humanity has lost God's glory. Chishimba admits that the parent (Christ) of all humanity has identified one among his children to represent Christ [Alpha] on earth. The identified child has to proclaim the divine message to the children of Alpha. Whoever believes in the identified child's message believes in the Alpha. The Alpha who is Christ the Eternal power and Wisdom of God, the Omega, is in turn used by Jesus of Nazareth because he was prophesied to be the Redeemer of the elected people to his side. He was born of a Virgin, Mary, who was conceived by the Spirit of God (Chishimba, 1974:3).

In this kind of paradox, Nuckolls (1996) points out that a person moves forward and backward, between arguments of one law as opposed to the other, forever, with no end. This is referred to as a dialectical movement. This is the main aim of a dialectical movement, with paradoxes at its core (Nuckolls, 1996:25). Chishimba moves to and forth, trying to situate himself in this paradox with no end. Chishimba, however, admits that Jesus was a Christ, a new Adam, who elected some apostles and disciples and taught them to work with him. He explains that reading the Bible with an "awake or watchful tracing", would make some people agree with Chishimba's views that there is literally nothing in the White Secret. The White Secret, in Chishimba's view, portrays the "...male side of the image of God that includes Father God and Grandfather God" (Chishimba, 1974:3). For Chishimba, the White Secret belongs to our masculine origins.

In Chishimba's view, Jesus used sexist language because he was referring to the male image of God, such as the 'Father'. For instance, "Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then like this": "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name... (Matt. 6: 8-15)"; (Chishimba, 1974:4). For Chishimba, the words show the difference between the two Secrets. He argues that the White Secret deals mainly with God as man. Even God's Angels are portrayed as men. God also used to appear to "the Blessed people" as man, for instance, to Abraham and Sara his wife (Chishimba, 1974:4). In this way, Chishimba is convinced that the White Secret is meant for White people and refers to a "male God". Turner (1979) asserts that even though Chishimba was an educated and sincere man, he was an unbalanced African. In Turner's perspective, Chishimba seems to place much emphasis on how

God has revealed Godself among the Blacks rather than the White people. Chishimba “gave a new mystical interpretation to Catholic teaching and moved in a perfectionist and antinomian direction that neither the Christian nor the traditional community could tolerate” (Turner, 1979:151).

Because of the new spiritual interpretation of Catholic teaching, Chishimba’s use of his temporary integrations to create new knowledge reveals a new dialectical movement. Chishimba’s argument is that all those who have been faithful to the White Secret doctrine, such as Prophets, Deaconesses, Priests, Bishops, Apostles, Disciples and ordinary lay people have taken God as male in nature (Gen. 18:1-33) (Chishimba, 1974:4). For this reason, Chishimba views missionaries as coming from a traditional masculine lifestyle. He strongly argues that nearly all the countries of the Whites are one land and have been given to Jesus, who is the new Adam. Since the land of the White people was handed down to Jesus, who referred to God as Father, they represent the male nature of God (Chishimba, 1974:4). In his use of temporary integrations to create new knowledge, Chishimba observes that the Epistles of Saint Paul reveal Jesus as the new Adam (Chishimba, 1974:5). This, however, is significant, because it is a critique of the RCC. This is also another dialectical movement in which both the Old and New Testaments are perceived to be masculine.

Similarly, one of the male participants in the research project explained that Chishimba’s interpretation is simple. He argues that first Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, and caused humanity to fall, but because God is a fair and just God, God has created a new Adam, who is Jesus (Interview with OMP1. Namfumu. 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017). For Chishimba, when people are created in God’s image, they are pure in heart during that period and they can easily see God. They are not ashamed of walking naked, as in Matt. 5-8; Gen. 2: 25; Job. 1: 20-21; Isaiah 20:2; Isaiah 47: 1-4 (Chishimba, 1974:5-6). These Biblical texts portray the “...purity of hearts of people in the olden days of the prophets so that they might see God their Creator, Spiritual light and Supreme parent... This is called the Spiritual Oval Circle” (Chishimba, 1974:6). Similarly, when people lose God, their Spiritual lives and clothing, they become half dead and naked spiritually. They notice that their bodies are naked and this makes them feel ashamed (Chishimba, 1974:6). Chishimba contends that this is evidence of the White Secret that the Alpha, the Father of all humanity including the Angels’ has revealed to the elected ones. This is seen as a dialectical exercise in process. As Murphy (1971:9) explains it,

[t]he dialectical exercise is simple in the extreme, for it requires only that the analyst of society question everything that he [sic] sees and hears, examine phenomena fully and from every angle, seek and evaluate the contradiction of any proposition, and consider every category from the viewpoint of its noncontents as well as its positive attributes. It requires us to also look for paradox as much as complementarity, for opposition as much as accommodation. It portrays a universe of dissonance underlying apparent order and seeks deeper orders beyond the dissonance.

In his study, Murphy critically advises the analysts' need to examine the way issues are portrayed in society: whether there is peace or conflict in that particular society, justice has to be maintained. For this reason, one would state that Chishimba sees the White people as being the cause of the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden. Since Chishimba sees that God is portrayed as a male God by the missionaries, Chishimba's teachings are that the White people are Esau's descendants. The Black people or Africans are descendants of Jacob. This is because Jacob's mother, Rebecca, is perceived as the 'new Rebecca' of Africa, who is also Mary the Saviour and Mother of the Creator (Chishimba, 1974:16). Therefore, in Chishimba's teachings, Africans come from the feminine side. Chishimba has used paradoxical dialectical systems in teaching God's judgment and fairness. In Chishimba's view, and because the first Adam sinned, God has revealed God's divine plan through the Black Secret in Africa.

#### **4.3.1 The Black Secret in Africa**

As indicated earlier, one of the teachings that the Mutima Church members claim to believe is that they are the last Israelites. They claim that since they were the last to hear the Word of God during the period of the White Secret, God has chosen them through Chishimba to be the first in terms of Spiritual Wisdom (Interview with OMP2. Namfumu. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Using the theory of cultural knowledge (Nuckolls, 1996), Chishimba has used the insights of cognitive theory and psychoanalysis and imparted this to his members. Combining both cognitive and psychoanalysis theories helps to provide a more powerful approach than using each of them individually. Nuckolls (1996:4) confirms that the development of a combined approach is desirable and makes the process easier. Mutima Church members believe that *Umulondoshi*, literally, their Redeemer, who is Chishimba, is the one who has completed the second doctrine, which is the Black doctrine. This doctrine reveals the Secret of God through the document *The Full Image of God*, as well as

the male nature and the female nature of God, hence, the title *The Full Image of God* (Interview with OMP2. Namfumu. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017). According to Chishimba (1974:14),

introducerily speaking, when the Spirit of God inspired me and gave me the name ‘Rock of the Society’, from 1955 to 1972, the Spirit by using me led the Society through the Bible again so that the religious members might understand more than they did by Missionary preachings, and at the same time might pick out what was necessary for them as prophesied by our Elders – the Whites.

In this quotation, Chishimba is believed to have been chosen by God. He claims that the Spirit of God has given Chishimba the name “Rock of the Society”. It is on this rock that Chishimba has established his Church. The members refer to Chishimba as Peter the Rock. Chishimba’s use of temporary integrations to create new knowledge introduces the other name for him. Chishimba claims to have been given the name ‘Rock’, for it is upon the revelation from the Holy Spirit of God that the Mutima Church is established. It is also from this line of Anderson’s (2000) conceptual understanding that in many AICs the source of their power is believed to be the Holy Spirit, and as a consequence they claim to receive divine revelations from the Holy Spirit as well. This reinforces the ability of the Holy Spirit to overcome many African problems, including sickness and other kinds of evil. It is believed that through the prophet or prophecy, the Holy Spirit releases healing against sickness and other kinds of evil that affect human beings emotionally, physically and also psychologically. With this kind of healing from the Holy Spirit, all forms of pain, fear and suffering that human beings experience are overcome by salvation (Anderson, 2000:150).

To this end, Nuckolls (1996:5) argues that “in what makes up an ethnopsychology, then, a metaphor whose reference is language controls the search for rule-governed sequences. These sequences are taken to represent cultural knowledge”. The knowledge systems imparted to the members of the Mutima Church have helped them to conceptualize Chishimba as the one whom God has revealed to them. It is for this reason that members of the Mutima Church use language that expresses the terms referred to by Chishimba. For example, members refer to Chishimba as the Rock of Wonder, Rock of Wisdom, or the Redeemer. It is believed that the same Spirit of God that has used Chishimba overshadows the members of the “Sacred Heart of Jesus”<sup>58</sup>. This makes members welcome and they believe all the mysteries that surround Chishimba. This is

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<sup>58</sup> Initially, the Mutima Church was called ‘*The Sacred Heart of Jesus*’.

why Reynolds (2006:15) acknowledges that by being members of various groups “...we also strive to fathom all the mysteries affecting our lives, demanding access to information that has been denied us, whatever the motive”.

Chishimba teaches that God guided him to re-read the Bible with his members, using an African lens so that the members would understand the Word of God more than they did with the missionaries. Whilst they were re-reading the text, the society pursued a study of the Secret of Mary in 1973 (Chishimba, 1974:14). In Chishimba’s documents, he acknowledges that Mary disclosed herself to a certain girl called Bernadette, in France. Bernadette was being commanded to smear her face with some black mud as a sign of deep humility. In Bernadette’s revelation Mary spoke of the three children, namely, Jester, Francis, and Lucy in Fatima, Portugal, where she [Mary] forbade them to reveal anything to White people until the time was proclaimed ready by the Africans, who are the owners of this privilege (Chishimba, 1974:14). This is a dialectical paradox because this kind of teaching is derived from the RCC tradition.

Furthermore, Chishimba stresses that, through the Holy Ghost, God has revealed many things concerning God’s Kingdom, such as eternal, while earthly things are only shadows. For example, Chishimba (1974:15) gives an example of a child’s language. Chishimba concedes that, in many cases, the initial stages of the baby’s speech is *mpupu mpupu*, and next the baby utters Tata, Ta-ta. Chishimba is convinced that these words mean Alpha, Father God, because the baby is not aware of worldly things. What speaks inside the Child, according to Chishimba, is “the Spirit of God re-using God the Father” (Chishimba, 1974:15). What follows this is “Mama”, which in other words means Omegaria, the Grandmother God. It is only taught by the “Spirit of God” (Chishimba, 1974:15). These are termed spirit beliefs that are habit-forming. Nuckolls (1996:6) argues that “spirit beliefs are thus functional. They do something that needs to be done to ensure the maintenance of psychological and social well-being”. As the child grows, he or she becomes acquainted with the learning environments surrounding it, and begins to know who the father and mother are in the flesh, Grandfather and Grandmother by blood (Chishimba, 1974:15).

Burlington (2008:438) asserts that “Chishimba’s God is tripartite”. This means that God owns the entire Kingdom. God is Spirit and God is also the Son. This shows that Chishimba teaches about the Triune God. In the Mutima Church, the Triune is applied as a Cross sign made by members using the right hand tilted in the air, directed to the sky. Members use the Cross sign

three times, reflecting the Trinity. However, each time the sign of the Cross is applied on the body, the Quintinity is conceived. This is referred to as the Quintinity, because the application involves the human body.

As discussed earlier in Chapter One (Section 1.2), Chishimba has added the concepts of Grandfather and Grandmother, making this five in reality and three in the spirit. This is where Burlington (2008:438) argues that, “by contrast, Chishimba’s [Quintinity] provides the model for physical embodiment and social hierarchy. It is composed of Grandfather, Grandmother, Father, Mother and Spirit”. From a sociological point of view, the generation of the Grandparents has a greater authority than the parental generation. These five are perceived indirectly by the soul salvation through its relation to human bodies. From a soteriological point of view, however, the masculine has revelational priority whenever the Quintinity is disclosed. The masculine is always disclosed first, followed by the feminine (Chishimba, 1985:8; Burlington, 2008:438).

Chishimba is of the view that children on earth pass through the kind of wisdom of knowing Alpha as Father God by the name “Tata”. They also pass through the same wisdom of knowing Omegaria, as the Grandmother God by the name “Mama”. “As Omega becomes [...] female Omegaria, [so] does Alpha in [the] female Alpharia. These four plus their Spirit, [make]the number...5” (Chishimba, 1974:15). All these, the Alpha and Alpharia, Omega and Omegaria, as well as their Living Word, make five persons in one God. Thus, the Father God, the Mother God, the Grandfather God, the Grandmother God and their Spirit. As preached by Chishimba, that is why God has blessed every human being on earth with five material senses, five toes on each foot, five fingers on each hand with the thumb that signifies the Spirit. Each of the Spirits in a human being has five Spiritual senses (Chishimba, 1974:16).

The principle of all these things is that this completes the full image of God, where both male and female are created in God’s own image (Genesis, 1:26-27). This completeness is the reason all living things have two sides, such as “Plant Kingdom, Insect Kingdom, Fish Kingdom, Bird Kingdom and Animal Kingdom” (Chishimba, 1974:16). In each of these kingdoms, there are males and females. Where there is the father, there should be the son and the opposite of the father, which is mother. It is written that for Redemption purposes, when Alpha took Jesus as new Adam, Alpharia took Mary the Mother as the new Eve, to crush Satan (Luke 1:28), (Chishimba, 1974:16). Thus Chishimba has taught his members, who also believe that God has

chosen Chishimba to come and fulfil the full image of God to the Black people. According to Chishimba (1974:18),

I had been struggling for many years with the hope of gaining something from the Religious Doctrine, which deals with Jesus the new Adam and Redeemer, but all that was in vain, until I devoted myself to the Mother of Jesus, the new Eva, but not knowing that she is the Redeemer to us. But having been taught by the Spirit that had inspired [...]me, I have realized the matter, seeing is believing.

This quotation is very significant, as it shows the influence of the RCC on Chishimba. In Chishimba's view, the conviction that Jesus is the Redeemer was something that his inner emotions never accepted. Chishimba narrates that he sought to seek advice from Mary, Mother of Jesus, and his experience was then peaceful. It is believed that the help of the Spirit of God that overshadowed Chishimba made him realise that Mary was the Senior Saviour or Redeemer. However, Burlington (2008) asserts that Chishimba failed to find peace when he discovered that he was overshadowed by the power of sinful guilt within him. Symbolically, Chishimba "rejected Jesus, asking him to vacate his heart and make room for his mother, Mary. In response, he received a visitation from Mary, in which he was lifted into heaven and given a new revelation" (Burlington, 2008:436). This ideology is known as *Uwasenaminwa kuli mayo namfumu*, meaning the one who is uplifted or anointed by our Mother of King. This is the process that the Church members claim to have been Chishimba's experience.

In the Mutima Church, Mary has many functions. As the mother of Creator, Mary is exalted for this. She is regarded as the Female Redeemer who is a tree of life for the Society (Rev. 2:7) (Chishimba, 1974:18). Her purpose is to liberate the Mutima Church members and move with them to the Paradise stage of life, so that they re-claim that which has been taken away from humanity. For various reasons, Mary is exalted with many names, such as "The Dawn" or "Morning Star" (Rev. 2: 28-29), and the "Seat of Wisdom" and "the real Pot of Prayer". Because the knowledge of "Truth" that Chishimba teaches his members is regarded as "The Eternal Wisdom," Mary is exalted using this name. There are many other names used to exalt Mary, such as the Redeemer. But "...most of them are found in her praises used on Sabbath day during the Worship" (Chishimba, 1974:18-19). To this end, the feminine element is very strong in Chishimba's teachings. Nuckolls (1996:5) argues that "if sequences that resemble natural

language are the structures which bear cultural knowledge—... then this must be demonstrated with reference to what we know about [the church]”.

In addition, Fiorenza (2011) observes that in modern times, the myth pertaining to Mariology formulations has legitimized not only the otherness, inferiority, deficiency, and second-class status of all wo/men, but also that of oppressed men who were categorized as “feminine” (Fiorenza, 2011:201). In Fiorenza’s views, it is not only the women that experience *kyriarchal* structures and kyriocentric ideologies of the Mariology tradition, but some men experience such structures as well. Chishimba teaches that all countries in Africa are on one land that is called *Matria*. *Matria* means Motherland. To this end, all the inhabitants are *Matriates*, and once we leave our Motherland and go overseas, we are then referred to as *Ex-Matriates* (Chishimba, 1974:19). This is also part of the RCC teachings. In Chishimba’s sense, all Africans are children of one Mother, and their foundation, that is, of good behaviours is derived from *Matriotism*, while in the case of our elders, who are the White people, their land is referred to as Patriotism (Chishimba, 1974:19). And as such, all Africans belong to Matriarchy, where Africa will enjoy prophetic blessings and will prosper, with spiritual treasures and earthly riches.

Chishimba (1974:21) argues that “therefore when I reveal our prophecy and blessings, I don’t promise that they will be fulfilled next year or after two years, No”. Chishimba approaches the “motherland” or “Matriarchal” issue from a feminine point of view. It seems that apart from the RCC teachings, these ideas were also influenced by the colonial atmosphere, the political struggle for independence. These teachings reflect Chishimba’s response to European contact on two levels. Firstly, Chishimba’s resistance and accommodation of RCC teachings, and secondly, the rejection of White colonial rule in Africa, particularly in Zambia.

However, Chishimba rejects the fact that his Church is controlled by human beings. He emphasizes that the Mutima Church is guided by the Spirit of God, the Spirit that uses Mother Mary to reveal Divine messages to him. He asserts that if the Mutima Church had been built upon the earthly law, it could have lost the beginning of wisdom that is the fear of God. In this sense, the Mutima Church could have been rendered ineffective (Chishimba, 1974:22). He concludes that the Mutima Church is a pure religion of God, led by the female Redeemer, who is discovering the redeemed children. “Therefore, we are very lucky in Africa, beginning with Zambia. Make hay while the sun shines. Forewarned is forearmed. There is no rule without

exception” (Chishimba, 1974:23). In his concluding chapter in the *Full Image of God Revealed in Africa* (1974), Chishimba uses a number of proverbs to show how lucky the land of Africa has been, blessed by Mother Mary, and also how Black people are blessed by God through Mary. With this understanding, Chishimba recommends that Africans should stand in mutual relationship. Regarding the issue of relationships, Nuckolls (1996:6) recommends the use of psychoanalytic theory, more about desires than about actual needs. These may be considered in the abstract as “instincts”.

To this end, since it is believed and was prophesied through the Holy Spirit of God that Africans are actually the “last-borns”, it also proves that Africans themselves are the Jacobs (Yacobo) or the last Israelites. This makes Africans proud. Through the Black Secret, Africans are aware that the fall of humanity started with both the man and the woman, and the one who was tempted first was the woman (Chishimba, 1976:1). But, because of God’s justice and fairness, the Redeemers were supposed to be two – that is Jesus Christ and Chishimba. The Black Secret concerning the Redeemer has come out in the end, as one Bemba proverb states: “*Ubutete bwa mwaice bwisa icungulo*” meaning a sick child does not feel pain during the day, but cries during the night when he or she cannot endure the pain (Chishimba, 1976:1). To this end and in Chishimba’s sense, Africans are considered as the sick children, for they have endured the pain. They are now ready to proclaim what God has revealed to them. Similarly, Burlington (1998:77) argues that “since the salvation history of Europeans began in the distant past and involved a royal lineage, the redemption of Africans must follow the same path”. Burlington acknowledges that Chishimba resonates with his own journeys to that of the White people. Chishimba equates his own lineage of the Bemba Paramount Chief *Chitimukulu* with Jesus’ lineage of David.

In summary, the proverb of a sick child refers to Africans, who are the last Israelites because the first people to receive the prophesy of the Redeemer were the White people. God sent Jesus to them and in Chishimba’s sense, they are the elders. But for Chishimba, God does not just end with the White Messiah. The principle of fairness and good judgment in Chishimba’s sense means that the Africans are God’s children. But since God is fair and just, Chishimba is of the view that the Spiritual revelation of appointing the Redeemer cannot just end with the White people (Burlington, 1998:77). God, through the Holy Spirit, has appointed a Black Messiah, who is Chishimba, to redeem Africans. Because Chishimba preaches that Africans are the last borns, they have been given a female Saviour who is Mary Mother, of Jesus. This is the fairness of God,

who gave a male Saviour to the White people. Through Mary, Africans are supposed to ask for forgiveness and repentance of sins, and they will be liberated. Africans are supposed to be honouring, respecting and having faith in their female Saviour (Chishimba, 1976:1). In the following section, there is a summary of Chishimba's narration on what he went through, where visions and dreams that helped to form his Church are outlined. These are from Chishimba's major book called *Kambelenge Nga Ni Mpelwa...* (1971).

**4.4 *Kambelenge nga Nimpelwa Ukucushako Amenso ya Mubili pa Kumfwa Icafikila Munyinefwe umo mu Calo ca Zambia* (1971) – (Let me Read What Happened Here in Zambia to a Fellow African and by the Inconveniencing of the Eyes of my Body Discover if I am Among those Chosen to Fully Understand)<sup>59</sup>**

This document was written by Chishimba, who narrates (1971:1) his faith journey initially by praising the greatness of God and the good things God has done for human beings in Africa. Chishimba emphasizes the fruit of faithfulness. He stresses that the target of this book are literate people. In Chishimba's view, the literate are not only those who have been to school, but also those who have been granted the spiritual sight and hearing in proclaiming God's message. As in any other initiated Church in Africa, the Mutima Church has different ways and days of fasting and prayer. Through fasting and prayer, some members claim to overcome their sense of sinfulness (Chishimba, 1971:1). It is believed that fasting helps them to remain faithful in meditating and imparting the Word of God. Sendapu's (2016:43) research with the Mutima Church members states that "fasting and praying at dawn, are necessary to purify the souls of believers".<sup>60</sup> For instance, with regard to conceiving and giving birth *to the children of the spirit*, Chishimba refers to the RCC message that was written by a French Catholic priest, by the name of Grignon de Montfort, though in the Mutima sense, he is referred to as 'Maria Montiford' because this is the vernacular way of addressing that name. This is because of his dedication to Mary, and also because of Montfort's revelations that Chishimba's claims were meant for Mutima Church members (Chishimba, 1971:82).

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<sup>59</sup> The details of some of the Mutima Church documents can be found on the following website: [Online]. Available: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/009182960803600403> [2017, 12 April].

<sup>60</sup> Sendapu, Vincent. 2016. *Religious Teachings and Rituals of the Mutima Church in Kasama District, Zambia*. [Online]. Available: <http://dspace.unza.zm:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/4777/MAIN%20DOCUMENT.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> [2017, 3 August].

According to D’Ascanio (2004:7), Saint Louis Mary Grignion de Montfort lived from 1673 to 1716. Although there were other saints who have advocated for the Church of Christ, Saint Louis Mary Grignion de Montfort has been a priest who looked and asked God in prayer for the future of the RCC. He spoke about the apostles of the last times, who would prepare the glorious return of Jesus by fighting the last apocalyptic battle which would precede the coming of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ (D’Ascanio, 2004:7). In his thesis entitled *The Apostles of the Last Times in Montfort’s and Today*, he aims to examine the works of the Saint by re-reading his works in the light of Scriptures in the passages that deal with the last times. He compares these with Fatima’s and with Pope John Paul II’s teachings or the Apostolic Letter known as the *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, meaning Rosary of the Virgin Mary (D’Ascanio, 2004:7). Similarly, with the background of the RCC teachings, Chishimba uses some of the information of Montfort to acquire his knowledge systems.

Nuckolls (1996:28) argues that “knowledge systems are fundamentally antinomian, founded on paradox and dialectical”. In this sense, Nuckolls is of the view that knowledge systems always have set motives, or goals that they seek to achieve. It is not possible for one to acquire knowledge without having actually used the information attached to it. Using Nuckolls’ terms, Chishimba has subjectified the knowledge of Saint Montfort in a new knowledge system that only he could understand. Nuckolls contends that “one cannot know the rationality of a system without knowing the values or goals which that system upholds and directs itself to. No predictions can be made about what those values will be[.] They can be anything” (1996:31).

For Chishimba, the works of Montfort<sup>61</sup> have shown the secret of the Black people. In his narrative, Chishimba (1971:82) argues that Montfort sacrificed his whole life and deeds to the Mother of Creation, Mary. For this reason, he was known as Maria Montfort. Quoting Montfort’s words, Chishimba states: “*Kukulekelesha kukaba iChilonganino ico abakabamo bakalatungululwa ku mupashi muli Nyina wa kwa Jesu...bakala imitwa muli Mariaku Mupashi muli Ena elyo no kufyalwa kuli uyu wine*” meaning ‘in the end a movement will arise that will be led by the Holy Spirit of the Mother of Jesus...female members will be conceiving in the

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<sup>61</sup> Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort was a French Roman Catholic priest and Confessor. He was born on 31 January 1673. He died on 28 April 1716. He was known as a preacher and Pope Clement XI made him an Apostolic missionary. St. Louis Montfort’s documents are written in French. He also founded a religious order known as the Montfort fathers, i.e., Society of Mary Montfort (SMM) (see D’Ascanio, 2004). Under the guidance of some other priests, he began to develop his strong devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This information has been expounded by some RCC priests such as Gaffney Patrick (1984) in the *Marian Studies Journals*.

name of Mary through the Holy Spirit and giving birth through Mary' (Chishimba, 1971:82-83). This is a paradox, because while Saint Montfort was using this as a revelation elsewhere, Chishimba adopted this revelation and established it in his church. It seems, however, that Chishimba avoided disclosing that this religious congregation was founded by Montfort.<sup>62</sup>

The quotation is also significant because of the way the Mutima Church members make use of the Holy Spirit. Chishimba (1971:83) further asserts that Mary would treat these children the way Rebecca treated her son, Jacob. Saint Montfort also revealed that in this movement members would not rush to build Churches, but they would worship and praise God anywhere; in most cases, in the open spaces, but this would not destroy the movement (Chishimba, 1971:83). Adopting all these revelations from Saint Montfort, Chishimba has made use of them in his teachings in which members are the beneficiary. Similarly, Gaffney also uses Montfort's words that may have influenced Chishimba. He states that

Mary is also, therefore, always the Spouse of the Holy Spirit: ...his indissoluble Spouse...The Holy Spirit chose to make use of Our Blessed Lady though he had no absolute need of her, to bring His fruitfulness into action by producing in her and by her Jesus Christ and His members-a mystery of grace unknown to even the wisest and most spiritual of Christians. (Gaffney, 1984:126).

In this quote, Gaffney is using Montfort's words which revealed and declared that Mary would always be the wife of the Holy Spirit. However, even though the Holy Spirit did not need Mary, the Holy Spirit chose her because of Mary's honesty and fear of the Lord. In similar terms, Chishimba teaches his members to imitate Mary. It is from this venture that Chishimba teaches his members that being the wife of the Holy Spirit and having *children of the spirit* is a gift from God. According to Gaffney (1984:126), [she] [Mary] is forever, therefore, the Daughter of God the Father [*sic*], for having willed to "communicate to Mary His [*sic*] fruitfulness inasmuch as a mere creature was capable of it, in order that He [*sic*] might give her the power to produce His [*sic*] Son," then she also forever is given the power freely willed by the Father [*sic*] to produce "the members of His mystical Body". As he says even more explicitly, "God the Father [*sic*]

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<sup>62</sup> In his works, Chishimba has not mentioned that St. Louis Montfort had founded a congregation, an Institute and a religious organization. The Company of Mary is a missionary religious congregation within the Roman Catholic Church that was founded by St. Louis Montfort. The Daughters of Wisdom is also an organization that was founded by Montfort and the Brothers of Christian Instruction of St. Gabriel is a religious institute founded by St. Louis Montfort (See DiNoia, J. Augustine. 1996).

wishes to have children by Mary till the consummation of the world,” for if we do not have Mary for Mother, then we simply do not have God as Father [*sic*], so indissolubly are they united in the plan of salvation. Again, this is the free will of the Father [*sic*] who lovingly deigns to bring into the very core of salvation history a woman of our race.

Drawing from this quotation, Chishimba’s understanding or conception of the whole idea has been literal, because women are taught to humble themselves as they imitate the character of Mary, and prepare themselves to be “spouses of the Holy Spirit”. Chishimba has accepted this idea, though he realized that as a male, he will have his own conflicting desires (Nuckolls, 1996:28). It is argued that “Chishimba was ambivalent about his masculine identity and especially what it implied for his relatedness with women in general and mothers in particular” (Burlington, 2008:441). To this end, Chishimba uses paradoxical dialectical knowledge systems (Nuckolls, 1976:28). While Chishimba is aware of his masculine identity, he adopts a feminine nature and dresses himself in women’s clothes. Chishimba teaches Mary’s attributes in the Mutima Church, to inspire and act as a liberator to the members. According to Fiorenza (2011:198), “Mary, the pure, self-sacrificing, humble handmaiden of the Lord and patient mother full of sorrows, is preached to wo/men as the model that must be imitated but can never be quite reached”. While the nature and characteristics of Mary are preached, and imitated, they in reality cannot be reached by mere human beings.

In his thesis, D’Ascanio (2004:16) describes Montfort’s stages of writing. Among them are the two adopted by Chishimba as he teaches that they were revealed to the Mutima Church. According to D’Ascanio (2004:16), the writings of Montfort revealed that

...the second coming and kingdom of Jesus Christ which – with Mary and through Mary – will essentially be fulfilled “in the hearts” and in the depths of all men [*sic*]: “But as the kingdom of Jesus Christ exists primarily in the heart or interior of man [*sic*], according to the words of the Gospel, “The kingdom of God is within you”, so the kingdom of the Blessed Virgin is principally in the interior of man [*sic*], that is, in his [*sic*] soul”; “in the near or distant future the Blessed Virgin will have more children, servants and slaves of love than ever before, and that through them Jesus, my dear Lord, will reign more than ever in the hearts of men [*sic*]”; “When will that happy day come, when God’s Mother is enthroned

in men's [*sic*] hearts as Queen, subjecting them to the dominion of her great and princely Son Jesus?"

Chishimba claims that when Saint Montfort declared the second coming of the Kingdom [using his sexist language], he did not literally mean it would be the Kingdom of Jesus. In Chishimba's sense, this kingdom of Jesus must be destroyed, and then that of his Mother, Mary, would be given to God's children. Because Mary is the Redeemer given to the last borns [Africans], who are the Israel of the last times, God's Kingdom will continue (Burlington, 2008:440; Chishimba, 1992: 8). Chishimba further points out that Montfort's explanation was valid. But Chishimba further argues that what Montfort did not realise was that the Mother of Creator or Mary herself, was the Saviour of the Alienated Africa (Chishimba, 1971:83). This is because of the belief that Chishimba is chosen by the Holy Spirit and is the appointed apostle of Mary (Burlington, 2008:440). To this end, the members are taught that there is a secret that has been revealed to the African people, especially to them, the Mutima Church members, through Chishimba. The notion of having many *children of the spirit* is that they will remain servants and slaves of God and preach the Word of God throughout the world. To this end, some of the children of the spirit have started practicing being servants in the Word of God. They preach the Word of God according to what they have been taught in the Mutima Church.

#### **4.4.1 The Revelation of the Secret**

Chishimba (1971:85) argues that the year 1960 was the beginning of revealing the secret. The secret is that the Saviour is Mother of Creator and the on-going strength in humanity is the True God, good God, Joyful God, Merciful and loving God. Chishimba calls Adam and Eve 'the old Adam and the old Eve'. He ascertains that they were created in human flesh. In Chishimba's sense, both the old Adam and old Eve were not filled with holiness (Chishimba, 1971:85). For this reason, Eve was easily tempted and she also influenced Adam to the fall of humanity. Because they sinned and they were shy, they gave the devil power to tempt them further. This made the devil show Adam and Eve's private parts. Chishimba argues that the devil stated that '*amamba ni aya*' meaning 'this is the woman's vagina and this is the man's penis, and this is what you must do' (Chishimba, 1971:85). Adam and Eve thought that by falling for the second temptation, they would remove the shame, but instead they reinforced the spirit of darkness on their bodies and in their lives. This was the beginning of the hatred of the Word of God by humanity (Chishimba, 1971:85).

To this end, members of the Mutima Church are advised to strive for repentance. They are called to a re-birth. What this means is that, for one to become a confirmed member of the Mutima Church, one has to join other members in the worship called ‘*Ukusuntinkana*’,<sup>63</sup> meaning to worship in the nude, from head to toe. This is a sign of repentance and also encourages members to remain pure. There is a liturgy that takes place with prayers accompanied by singing. After a number of prayers and singing, the congregation or members are advised to stand up. Then both males and females take turns to bath, so that they would crush or demolish the works of the devil that brought shyness upon humanity by tempting Adam and Eve. After attending this type of worship, members are considered to be born-again (Chishimba, 1976:18). He contends that it is in their nudity that God has to fulfil humanity’s fairness and faithfulness between males and females and pave way for the fulfilment of Truth in which God has created all humanity with equal parts to their bodies (Chishimba, 1971:86).

Chishimba (1971:1) emphasizes the fruit of faithfulness to the Mutima Church. He stresses that the document (*Kambelenge Nga Nimpelwa*) is meant for the people that God has shown to be literate. The book is also meant for people who obey the Word of God and are ready to grasp some knowledge and impart this to others. If a person is able to read and understand, then it will be easy for one to tell Chishimba’s story as it is written. Chishimba warns us that there is no need for one to include information that is not found in the document or to exclude what is found in the book (Chishimba, 1971:2). With this in his mind, Chishimba is of the view that *icisumino mwishiwi lyapakubala kusumina ico ushilati umone*, literally, the importance of having faith is associated with accepting conversion without seeing the result of being converted (Chishimba, 1971:2). Accepting conversion in the Mutima Church also means that one accepts that God is an everlasting God. For the purpose of this on-going study, only relevant information pertaining to the research question is used.

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<sup>63</sup> *Ukusuntinkanya* is a confidential kind of worship in the Mutima Church. In this kind of worship, members meet for prayer. Both men and women are advised to strip naked and pair themselves. There is no sexual intercourse involved but each member is supposed to mention all the parts of the other member’s body and remind the other member that God has created us with these parts of the body. Although it is confidential, I was privileged to interview some members of the Mutima Church during my Masters’ research. The response I got was that Chishimba has actually allowed them to say it as it is, and tell people what it means, for it started from the Garden of Eden. Some female priests explained to me that “no single person would take a bath or shower with his or her clothes on”. We all remove our clothes when taking our bath or shower (Also see Hinfelaar, 1994: 104)”. He is of the view that Chishimba actually taught his members to bathe together naked. This caused tension between the UNIP Government and Chishimba, to the extent that the Mutima Church was banned (Masaiti, 2008).

For Chishimba, God is the same yesterday, today and forever. God will never change. Chishimba (1971:1) uses a Bemba proverb: *uwayimwena wena asumina*, meaning seeing for oneself is believing and accepting. Chishimba uses Jesus' parable of a good sower and indicates that the important part of this parable is that those who have faith and are able to abide by the word of God are like the fertile soil. The fertile soil allows any kind of seed to germinate, even if the seed is of a different crop. *Nomba icifwaikwa ni mbuto iyakutila nga fyakula ukushintapo fikabombe umulimo usuma kuli abo bafikwata*, meaning what is mostly needed of the seed is that when it grows, it should produce healthy fruits or crops to sustain those who did the work. If the seed does not produce good crops, the owner may end up weeding all of them because it is wasting fertile soil (Chishimba, 1971:1). This includes people who are not redeemed.

A person who is not fully redeemed (*lubulwa*), is likely to backslide at any point in time. That is why when good plants are associated with bad ones (weeds), there is a need to remove the weeds from the good plants. People who cook *nshima*<sup>64</sup> would ensure that the flour is pure white and not contaminated. If this is not the case, then people will not eat and they would end up throwing out the food. The word that is perfect is an everlasting one, whether in stories, or myths, proverbs, parables, songs, praises, exaltations or in preaching (Chishimba, 1971:1). The word that may be used in these parts of speech should be straightforward so that they are educative to human beings. This helps human beings be aware of their deeds (Chishimba, 1971: 2).

Chishimba continues to state that hearing of people who have been thrown into hell seems that they were not mindful of what they were doing. But of course, because God is omniscient, those who go to heaven and those who will go and those who went are people with faith and belief in God (Chishimba, 1971:2). In the beginning, the angels were more selfish and tried to be cleverer than God, but those angels who were greedy have now become ghosts. There were also people who loved worldly things more than their souls. Even the names that were working within them were associated with madness or dogs, because those people loved worldly things more than the real thing, and the Truth is that is God Almighty (Chishimba, 1971:2). That is why it is better for one to claim that "I will inherit all that I have been given from the Beginning" (Chishimba, 1971:2). For Chishimba has inherited that which God showed him from the beginning through spiritual visions and dreams.

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<sup>64</sup> *Nshima* or *ubwali* in the Bemba language, is Zambia's staple food made from porridge.

#### 4.4.2 Chishimba's Visions and Dreams

This section takes us back to when Chishimba was a member of the RCC. Chishimba (1971:50-51) narrates that “my wife Rosa, my child and myself travelled to Livingstone. In Livingstone I continued to encounter a number of visions and dreams”. The RCC movement of “Temperance” was started by the RCC priests. This is important because of the link with the RCC. This movement was only attended by the RCC priests who were not alcoholics and non-smokers, but those who were more caring about the sheep (Chishimba, 1974:50). The following sections are narrations from Chishimba's documents. These quotations highlight that Chishimba, was still engaged in catechism and at the same time he was a teacher. He narrates that

[b]ecause I was among the faithful ones, I was one of the attendees. There was one of the [RCC] priests who was so committed and wholiked me. We got along very well and most of the time, we never went for repentance. This annoyed other members of the movement. They removed us from partaking [of] Holy Communion but this did not bother us. This made me initiate another movement. By the end of 1954, the movement called ‘Ica Mutima Wakwa Jesu’ literally The Heart of Jesus was initiated (Chishimba, 1971:50-51).

To quote Chishimba,

One day I heard a knock on my door. As I opened the door I heard a song that we used to sing in Latin a long time ago. According to what I was taught, I was convinced that the name of the Redeemer, Jesus, also meant that this is the way to the Truth. This is also in line with what one of his disciples, Thomas[,] said to Jesus[:] “My King, My God”. The song I heard in Latin in Spirit was: Adoro te, Iesu, Rex Angelorum, volo te facere me denuo, ut sit humilis et misericors. In hoc modo, ut sit frui tua sancta panem' meaning, ‘I adore you Jesus, King of the Angels, I want you to create me anew, so that I may be humble and caring. In this way I may be enjoying your holy bread’. I realized that the words in this song of praise was supposed to be directed to our Saviour, Mother of Creation because she is the one I sacrificed myself to, that is where the Truth of God I sought was to emanate from (Chishimba, 1971:51).

Note that all these experiences were encountered by Chishimba when he was still a member of the RCC, a teacher and a Catechist. Most of the songs that Chishimba learnt from the RCC have

been translated into the Bemba language. They are used as hymns in the Mutima Church. According to Chishimba,

[a]gain, one night, I was asleep because I was exhausted. I heard some voices saying ‘Odi’.<sup>65</sup> As I was afraid, I asked myself who those people could be. I heard the Spirit of God within me saying “those are evil spirits, but do not worry, just answer them”. Since it was dark, I could not see anything. But when I just said ‘come in’, the light of the Lord shone upon the whole house. I saw many evil spirits coming into the house. They looked like people who were disorganized and confused. They had large protruding eyes. They were short with horns and tails. Their bodies were black in colour. I learnt something from this. I learnt that this is the same way the angels are; so these evil spirits are imitating the angels so that those who walk in the dark should know their ways. To get rid of the evil spirits, I called upon the name of our Saviour, the name we were taught long time, ‘Maria, Mother of Creator’. The evil spirits vanished into thin air (Chishimba, 1971:52).

Chishimba has imparted this teaching to his members. Members usually call upon the name of *Mayo Namfumu* meaning, Mother of King, whenever one experiences something out of the ordinance. Chishimba narrates that

[a]nother night when I was sleeping, I was visited by two evil spirits in my house. I realized that there were even older than the previous ones I saw. The other one stood on the left side and the other on the right side of my body. This time I did not panic because I already had an experience. I waited patiently for the answer from the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God gave me a prayer. I got up, knelt down into prayer and hide myself. [Unfortunately, Chishimba does not say what kind of prayer he used here]. The evil spirits left. I realized that when one is attacked by evil spirits in this manner, one has to be patient. The best solution is to pray to God, and the person praying must use wisdom, and wait upon God’s intervention. That prayer means eating the love of God. In return, God shows us things about

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<sup>65</sup> ‘Odi’ denotes announcing the arrival of a person or people in the Bemba or Nyanja languages. When someone does not feel like knocking on the door, a person would prefer [use] the term ‘Odi or Odini’. The word is used by many tribes in Zambia.

Godself and this encourages us to live with God's presence (Chishimba, 1971:53).

Chishimba teaches his members to always ask the Spirit of God for a prayer whenever they are faced with challenges. He further documents some symbols of some bushes and flowers. According to Chishimba,

[o]ne day I saw some bushes and three blossomed red rose flowers from one stem. I also saw the kraal with some cattle inside. These symbolized that the three blossomed red roses are the three in one God; God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>66</sup> The bushes symbolized the Truth that those who humble themselves have adopted (Chishimba, 1971:53).

In Chishimba's sense, people who humble themselves are also meek. The cattle kraal symbolized Africans in their land of alienation. This entails that in their quest for humbleness, Africans may be lifted so that they are blessed and receive what God has in store for them, just as the way White people are blessed (Chishimba, 1971:54; Burlington, 2008:437). In the above quotation, Chishimba has used the cattle kraal as a symbol of the land of alienation that is Africa. In Chishimba's sense, Africans should humble themselves because God has fulfilled God's promise to them. They are the chosen children of God. However, Chishimba continues that

[s]ince we already know that our elder brothers, the White people originates from Esau, that means, from the masculine side; Africans are from Jacob's origins in the New Rabbecca, that is our Saviour Mother of Creator. During the time I was still in Livingstone, I encountered a rainbow in the early hours of the morning. Inside the rainbow, there was a pigeon. As I started to wonder how the pigeon got into that rainbow, the whole vision started to diminish. I realized that it was not a pigeon per se, it symbolized our blessings in Africa (Chishimba, 1971:53).

It was from here that Chishimba realized that the history of salvation entered a new realm, where African Christianity would overshadow European Christianity (Burlington, 2008:436). Chishimba encountered the vision of the rainbow, with a pigeon inside it. For Chishimba, this was a blessing from God to the Africans. Chishimba (1971:55) however, continues with his narrative, describing how...

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<sup>66</sup> In the Bemba language, Chishimba states '*Lesá Chikolwe, Lesá Lulelya elyo na Lesá Mupashi*'.

[o]ne day I was selling some staff at the market. I experienced some strange but light wind within my body. I felt that my body was also so light. I started to have troubles in speaking. I was then showed how God works in children, for instance, how God has humbled the children, and how their minds adapt easily to the things of God, than the elderly people who are too forgetful and always in a hurry. I experienced the goodness and sweetness of God, and the wonderful smell of God. I experienced the wholeness and the light of God, and I realized that the birth of Jesus is the beginning of those who are called the children of God. After this, we had our second child by the name of Theresa. I heard a voice telling me “Ima utampe ubulendo ubutali” meaning, ‘Prepare to go on a long journey’ (Chishimba, 1971:55).

This quotation is the beginning of Chishimba’s mission work. When he claims that he experienced problems in speaking, and that he was showed how God works in children, it does not end there. Chishimba has taken the love of children further and introduced this in his church. Just as the Bemba people are fond of children (Richards, 1950), Chishimba has used the children as a metaphor by teaching that his members should behave like children. In his first marriage, Chishimba asserts that he and his wife Rosa, had their second child by the name of Theresa. Just after having their second child, Chishimba heard a voice commanding him to prepare himself and his family to go on a long journey. This can also be equated to God’s command to Abraham in Genesis 12.

#### **4.5 An Exposition**

With this voice of command in his mind, Chishimba set out to preach. It is believed that some of the first male members who accompanied him during his preachings were also members of the RCC.<sup>67</sup> Many Bemba women also joined and it is from this period that they were given recognition because they were regarded as gatekeepers of home shrines for the Christian message.<sup>68</sup> Like Lenshina, Chishimba also maintained the women’s status. As stated in Chapter Three on the role of the Bemba women, Rasing (1995) confirms that many Bemba royal women

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<sup>67</sup> In some Mutima Church documents, Chishimba mentions some of the members who are deceased and are regarded as Saints. These members left their mainline churches and joined him to spread the Word of God to the people in the Bemba land and other parts of the country (Hinfelaar, 1994).

<sup>68</sup> See Hinfelaar, 1994.

had roles in political and religious life. They were in charge of ancestral shrines. This also included common women, since they were mothers of their brothers' heirs. Women had a position which commanded respect and had influence. This increased with age (Rasing, 1995:26). In Chishimba's case, many people who could understand him were mostly the Bemba people from various groups such as the Aushi, the Lamba, the Bisa, the Mambwe-Lungu and the Bemba themselves. It is from here that Chishimba related some Biblical texts to his own tribe. Turner (1979:177) argues that "it is plain that many independent churches begin with one tribal people". Therefore, the Mutima Church started with one tribal people, the Bemba. Like many other Initiated Churches, Chishimba teaches that prayer, fasting and chastity<sup>69</sup> are the most important requisites for the acquisition of 'extraordinary' powers (Ndiokwere, 1981:82).

It is through the practice of fasting, prayer and chastity that Chishimba teaches his members to adhere to the Mutima Church Missional Policy. Members would go on a three-day dry fast, Monday to Wednesday, or five-day dry fasting, from Monday to Friday. Members would fast for this number of days "...without tasting even a single drop of water" (Ndiokwere, 1981:82). During this period they are kept isolated in different rooms where they can read the Word of God, meditate, pray and ask God for perfection. Chishimba himself is not an exception to this because he has introduced these practices. Because he is a prophet, Chishimba's divine revelations have great spiritual powers because 'he is believed to be a man of God'. It is from this that Chishimba formulates policies for the Mutima Church.

Since the *Namfumumu*, places are situated in both rural and urban areas<sup>70</sup>, members prefer going into the nearby bush for prayers whilst they are fasting. Chishimba is the only major source of these Divine revelations. The desire for spiritual visions and dreams encourages members to always be involved in "...several devotional and moral discipline[s]..." (Ndiokwere, 1981:83). For this reason, any committed member with the appropriate divine revelation, or one that seems to confuse oneself, reports to Chishimba. In turn, Chishimba will seek an interpretation and guidance from the Holy Spirit. For example, Chishimba himself, through the divine revelations, and being shown by the deceased members, has compiled the praises of *Mayo Nakabumba*

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<sup>69</sup> Although polygamy is allowed in the Mutima Church, members are taught to abstain from sexual intercourse before they are married. They are taught that sex before marriage is immoral. Therefore the practice of chastity is emphasized.

<sup>70</sup> Even if some *Namfumumu* steads are situated in urban areas, they are usually found in the outskirts of towns, where transportation is sometimes difficult.

meaning the Mother of Creator (Mary) as well as praises for Joseph.<sup>71</sup> These praises are found in a document entitled *Umutima Walowa Uwa Makumbi*.

#### 4.6 Umutima Walowa uwa Makumbi

The document, “*Umutima Walowa wa Makumbi*,” outlines part of the liturgy of the Mutima Church Sabbath Day or any other holy day when an offertory is made. It is part of the liturgy because the book outlines the sermons and the songs sung during the offertory. The sitting setup is as follows: children sit in front just next to the altar, followed by the youth. These are followed by the ordinary members of the Church, both men and women. Then there are some ranks that are followed such as deacons, deaconesses, prophets and then there are ordained female and male priests at the back. There is a demarcated line to separate those from the left-hand side and the right-hand side. In this regard, it means members are advised to mix themselves when seated, such as a male-female format. This is because the Kingdom of God has no male no female identities: they are all regarded as one and equal (Chishimba, 1971:44). All the symbols in the Mutima Church are linked in binary opposition, such as heaven/earth, body/soul, male/female, European/African, and Catholic/Mutima. In Chishimba’s worldview, God moves the relationship between symbols back and forth, through dispensations seeking resolution in parity between souls stripped of body, ethnicity, gender, rank, and church affiliation (Burlington, 2008:442).

If Chishimba is available, he sits right at the back, on an elevated stool or chair. Chishimba sits behind the ordained priests, but right in the middle of the demarcated line. While all members sit on the floor, Chishimba’s own stool or chair is covered with cushions and expensive materials. This is also a symbol of Bemba chieftaincy and authority. All members face the altar that is built in each *Namfumumu* or parish. This is usually built on the east side of the *Namfumumu* (*Kukabanga in Bemba*) part of the parish<sup>72</sup>. The altar is covered by the *chitenges*.<sup>73</sup> The altars in the Mutima

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<sup>71</sup> This information is also found in some Church documents, where they write down the names of the “Saints” and their divine revelations before they died.

<sup>72</sup> The reason the altars of the *Namfumus* are built on the East side is that the sun rises from the east to the west, and the wise men who went to visit the baby Jesus were from the East.

<sup>73</sup> *Icitenge* or *icikwembe* is a Bemba word for a wrapper. The plural of this term is *ifitenge*. Wrappers are useful in Zambia, and in some parts of Africa like Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroun, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Kenya and many other countries. Wrappers or *ifitenge* are sewn into traditional wear for both men and women. In Zambia, for example, they are used for various reasons, and both men and women use them for carrying (tying) babies to their backs to ease their workloads. They are used as decor in the home, churches, weddings and other functions, even for funerals and headscarfs and, in short, they “carry subtle power within them” because they are used as symbols. They symbolize the power of respect and taking on one’s responsibility. They symbolize

Church are made in layers, or large steps, usually three to four layers. The largest layer is at the bottom, covered by *ifitenge*, fresh flowers, and candles. This is followed by the second largest, with a similar decor, and there is the third medium layer that anchors the smallest of the layers. The smaller one is on top of all three layers. A large portrait (photograph) of Chishimba is placed right at the top. At the bottom of the altar, there are two plates that are placed at the right- and left- hand sides. The plates represent Joseph (right) and Mary (left), the parents of Jesus. The plates are meant for the offertory. What is involved here is the weekly monetary offertory from the members. During the offertory, all members remain standing. Whilst they are standing, the members sing some solemn hymns relating to Joseph and Mary. Then members take turns to go in front and humble themselves, as each kneels down and gives the offering. The following section outlines the praises of Mary, Mother of the Creator and a prayer that accompanies the praises.

#### **4.7 Praises of the Mother of Creator and Prayer (*Nakabumba*) – Holy Day 8 December**

In the Mutima Church the dates, 15 August and 8 December are unique, for they mark the “holy day” of the Mother of the Creator. Along with the praises of the Mother of Creator are the compilations of songs. One song is entitled “*You are Mother of King in Heaven and on earth*”. This song was revealed through a divine message to Chishimba (Chishimba, 1978:2). There are other songs that are mainly sung on the “holy day” of the Mother of the Creator. There is also a catechesis for each praise. For instance, when referring to Mary, there is a question that is asked: ‘*pali nyina no mwana, umucindami nani?*’ meaning, ‘*Between mother and child, who is the most honourable person?*’ Members would answer in the affirmative: “Mother is the most honourable of the two”. Even if the child is a King or Chief, the child should show some respect to the Mother (Chishimba, 1978:2).

There are some praises in the form of songs for both Mary and Joseph. One of the songs about praising Mary narrates how she was visited by the Angel Gabriel. This is sung in the Bemba language and outlines the conversation between the Angel Gabriel and Mary. For example, “The

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respect and honour, for instance: when a woman is wearing a *chitenge* outfit, it gives her an identity, respect and honour and it reflects that one has regards for one’s culture. *Ifitenge* are different in terms of texture and where they are made. In Zambia as well as other African countries, there are *fitenges* made in the form of flags, with all the colours representing that particular country. In the RCC and the Mutima Church, there are *Ifitenge* made that represent the face of Mary, Mother of Jesus. In the Mutima Church, *ifitenges* that represent the face of Mary are used to cover the altar all the time, since the altar is meant to remain covered always.

Angel said, “*ico waba na Lesa, eco ndekwebela umulandu...elyo nobe watinine pabumba ubo walaile*”, meaning “since you are with God, that is why I am telling you the message... And you became afraid because of the virginity that you vowed to maintain...’ (Chishimba, 1978:7). This song is sung whilst members are standing, and others beat the drums, whilst others may be dancing and/or hand-clapping. After a number of songs, through dancing and hand-clapping, members are advised to kneel down to honour the Mother of Creation.

During the posture of kneeling, an appointed female priest would lead the congregation in the praises of Mother Mary. During the praises of Mary, only a female priest is allowed to lead, unless there are no female priests present, then a male priest is asked to lead. The following section outlines a brief prayer to Mary. They start with a song ‘*Twali abana banono, twafyelwe fye abalanda...*’, meaning ‘we were once children who were born poor...’. This is a short introductory hymn, and after it has been sung the following praises of Mary are sung, as outlined in the prayer to Mary, Mother of Creator.

#### **4.7.1 Prayer to Mother of the Creator**

This section outlines the prayer of Mary rendered by Chishimba to the Mutima Church members. The prayer is: “We worship you, Mother of the King, Mother of Creator, our Mother, may you continue to help us, to nurture us because we are your children in the redeemed land of Africa. Mother of the Creator, you are the beginning and the end, Mother of mercy, we worship you so that we keep knowing God. You are the Mother of Africa, our country is your country, you are the leader of priests, prophets and deaconesses, guide us in our ways so that we are constantly living in the light of God and in Truth, Amen’ (Chishimba, 1978:4-7). Once they have finished the prayer of Mary, a male priest leads the praises of Joseph, and similarly, if there is no male priest present, a female priest may lead.

#### **4.7.2 Praises of Joseph and Liturgy**

Still in a kneeling posture, the members continue the praises of Joseph. As usual, one leads and the members respond by using the right hand to make the symbol of the cross from the forehead down to the chest, and left and right breasts. Then the leader leads the congregation in a hymn. When they have finished the leader, who may be one of the priests, usually the male priest, leads the praises and the whole congregation responds. The following is Joseph’s prayer:

### **4.7.3 Prayer asking for Joseph's Intercession**

The praises of Joseph go like this: “We thank you our God because you are our Wisdom of strength. You prepared Joseph to look after Jesus and his Mother. God, you have showed us your works in the being of Joseph, so that we should also continue being children of our Mother of [the] Creator. May you please pour Joseph's works [i]nto us, so that we may receive our needs, [in] both our Spiritual lives and [our] bodies.... May you continue to be our Everlasting King, so shall it be...Amen”.

After the prayer of Joseph, the priests ask the congregation to stand and he or she may lead them into a hymn. The hymn is about praising Joseph. Whilst the praises of Joseph are going on, the offertory is being placed in the plate on the right- hand side. The offertory are in form of monetary and are directed to Joseph. The offertory is meant to assist members who might be going on a long journey. After the praises have finished, the prayer is briefly said by everyone. The prayer goes like this: “We thank you God because you are omnipotent, you created Joseph who took care of Jesus and the mother. God, you have showed us your own works in this human being so that we may also be your own children since you are the Creator and help our souls and bodies, our everlasting King, so shall it be” (Chishimba, 1978:1-3). Apart from these praises of Mary and Joseph, that are sung every Saturday and on holy days, there are also holy days for Chilufya Chilondola, the mother of Chishimba. The following section outlines the importance of Chilufya Chilondola, mother of Chishimba.

### **4.8 The Holy Day for Chilufya Chilondola**

This section outlines the way in which Chilufya is honoured and remembered by being the woman who gave birth to the King (Chishimba) (Interview with MAFP2. Namfumu. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2017). Like the holy day for Mary and Joseph, Chilufya also has a special day that is dedicated to her. This is a holy day for the Mutima Church members. The members of the Church are assigned some written portions of the life of Chilufya, [who is now deceased] to study and memorise. Some of Chilufya's deeds are found in the Church's documents. As explained in Chapter Three, Chilufya Chilondola, came from the lineage of Paramount Chief Chitimukulu Chinchinta. Chilufya died in 1992.

It is written that Chilufya had big eyes. She was a tall, dark and beautiful woman. Because of the difficult situations she went through with Stuart, Chilufya ended up getting married to five men in turn, at different levels of her life. These men were Stuart, Mulolani, Anselm, Njimu, and B. Chituna<sup>74</sup>. It is believed that at one time Chilufya became ill and died. But when she went to heaven she met her own biological father, Chisala, who had died earlier. Chisala sent Chilufya back to life, stating that her time had not yet come.<sup>75</sup> People who had gathered were amazed to see that Chilufya had regained consciousness and come back to life (Chishimba, 1978:15).

#### 4.9 How Chilufya is Remembered

In this section I seek to highlight how Chilufya is remembered by the members of the Mutima Church. Chilufya is considered a Saint in the Mutima Church. This stems initially from Bemba culture and tradition, where the mothers of chiefs are given recognition and reverence. This also substantiates the way that motherhood is glorified in Bembaland (Badenberg, 2002:41-42). A number of documents in the Mutima Church are written in honour of Chishimba's mother, portraying her holy lifestyle.

It is stated that Chilufya was an active woman, both socially and workwise. For example, Chilufya enjoyed receiving visitors and showed a lot of love to people. She would wake up early in the morning, and by the time others woke up, Chilufya would have finished all the household chores. According to the Mutima Church document, when Chilufya finished all the house chores, she would then prepare *umwikulo*, meaning breakfast for all. People used to compare her strength to that of an active man. She would console those who were grieving, and she loved prayers. Most of all, she loved the Mutima Church members and called them her children (Chishimba, 1978:15).<sup>76</sup> At one time the RCC priests called her and rebuked her saying "your son has demons, don't you see that he is destroying the lives of people who are following him?" Chilufya's response was that "If my son is led by demons, I could have taken him to some people

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<sup>74</sup> Chishimba has written about the married life of his mother, Chilufya Chilondola. He narrates every experience that his mother encountered with each of her men, and the reasons that led to her being divorced and re-married. These are found in some church documents and they are used to educate members as to what kind of woman Chilufya was.

<sup>75</sup> This information is found in the Mutima Church document. The document has various kinds of information on the key people who are honoured in the Church (15).

<sup>76</sup> Also see Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 78.

who are responsible for removing them, but since Chishimba speaks from his heart, just like... you speak, then it is better for priests like you to pray for my son so that you may remove those demons” (Chishimba, 1978:15). Chilufya complained to herself that “these people are not good, they do not know that my child is being used by the Spirit of God” (Chishimba, 1978:15).

Since she is regarded as Mother of their Redeemer (Chishimba), Chilufya is honoured in the Mutima Church. Some of the *children of the spirit* bear her name, as they are given the same name “Chilufya Chilondola” upon birth. Burlington (1998:79) stresses that with her nurturing and her attitude towards the Mutima Church members, Chilufya is regarded as “Queen Mother” in the Mutima Church. This does not only originate from the Mutima Church, but should also be considered an honour for women whose sons have been chiefs and paramount chiefs in Bembaland. Further, Burlington (1998:79) asserts that Chilufya had the “physical strength and mental wisdom generally associated with men”.

Generally, Chilufya ignored the social norms which state that men are stronger than women. Like Alice Lenshina, Chilufya challenged the status quo of the RCC priests “...by showing them that her son, [Chishimba], is animated by the same spirit which empowers them” (Burlington, 1998:79). Chishimba has elevated his own mother. She is regarded as a Saint in the Mutima Church. Like her son, Chishimba, Chilufya has her own praises, but these are not outlined in this study, because this focuses only on female priests and male power, based on the missional policy.

#### **4.10 Praises for Chishimba**

This section outlines the praises that members render to Chishimba. In this section, a brief description of the praises rendered to Chishimba are given, such as “The Rock that Endures, The Rock that stumbles or the Rock of Wonder.” Inasmuch as Chishimba is the founder of the Mutima Church, he has the privileges of being recognized and honoured, among other things, as a king. If one asks any Mutima Church member why Chishimba is honoured in such a way, the response is “*Ubufumu bucindikwa kubene*” meaning, “honour must be given to whom it is due”. Therefore, Chishimba is given all honour because he founded the Mutima Church upon receiving divine revelations. Chishimba has given meaning to Bemba culture from a Christian perspective. If Chishimba is present in any place, the liturgy changes because there are some specific praises that some members ought to give him before, during and after the service. Chishimba has many names but the most familiar names are *Chibwe Mushipikisha*, literally “the Rock that endures”

or *Umulondoshi* meaning “Redeemer” or *Umufyashi wa mano* which means (Parent of Wisdom) or the Parent of Truth.

The Mutima Church members use this Scriptural passage from the Gospel of Matthew (16:18) when singing a hymn that refers to Chishimba. This means that Chishimba is also referred to as the “Peter of Africa” upon which God has established his Church. Similarly, Chishimba is considered as the African Rock upon which the Mother of Creator has established her living Church. It is believed that this verse was meant for Chishimba. As a result, when Chishimba is present, this chapter and verse are sung by members while standing, honouring him and showing that God has fulfilled God’s promise to the Black African people of Zambia. The name of *Chibwe*, meaning “The Rock”, is believed to be a stronghold of God to Mutima Church members.

To the Mutima Church members, Chishimba represents both the feminine and masculine characters, because the Rock upon which he has established his Church is neither male nor female (Chishimba, 1985:11). Concerning the issue of the Rock, it is stated that “God is neither male nor female” (Chishimba, 1985:11). He argues that since God is the initiator of everything, it should be noted that peace, goodness, joy, faith, power, love, light, food, and other things such as fire, sun, rain season, are associated neither with males nor females. All these things are wonderful things given to the members by God, who is an everlasting God (Chishimba, 1985:11). In Chishimba’s teachings, these things are not identified as having masculine or feminine features.

Burlington (2008:438) argues that “Chishimba is unique among all theologians, African or otherwise, in producing a Mario- and Afro-centric three-phase dispensationalism based upon his tripartite vision of God”. Whilst Chishimba acknowledges the Trinity in a Spiritual sense, he teaches that according to human nature, every human being has God the Father, Son, Holy Spirit, biological Grandfather, and Grandmother. Burlington understands that Chishimba is actually incorporating his Christian knowledge into Bemba culture. This also shows the influence the African culture or Bemba culture on Chishimba’s formulation of missional policy and theology. The members are the recipients of the missional policy and, since these are passed on to Chishimba by the Spirit of Mother of Creator to Chishimba’s “own” knowledge: he has power, and he is the source of wisdom.

Because of the role of women in Bemba culture, Chishimba has allowed them to be ordained, so that they may conceive with the power of the Holy Spirit. Actually, it is believed by members that Chishimba is not the one who has allowed ordination – it is the Holy Spirit. Once they are ordained, they can also impart knowledge received from Chishimba to others. Mutima Church members believe that the works done by Chishimba are from the Holy Spirit, because being just a human being, Chishimba would not otherwise have been able to perform all the duties assigned to him by God (Interview with MAMP4. Namfumu. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017). Chishimba's approach emphasizes the necessity of the process of African re-interpretation of Christianity into the Bemba culture.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the process of inculturation is a serious and important way of understanding the dialogue between gospel and culture.

#### 4.11 Conclusion

This chapter was divided into four sections. The first section interpreted the document written by Chishimba to the (then) *Zambian* authorities. The document is known as the *Full Image of God Revealed in Africa: The Keys to the Full Bible* (Chishimba, 1974). The document exposes two secrets, namely the White secret and the Black secret. Regarding the White secret, Chishimba is of the view that God revealed Godself in White people. To this end, the God that has been preached by some White missionaries represents the masculine God.

However, with regard to the Black secret, Chishimba argues that God has revealed Godself in Mary Mother of Jesus, who in turn reveals the Spirit of God to Chishimba. This means that with the involvement of Mary Mother of Jesus, and Chishimba himself, God has revealed Godself in a feminine nature. This shows that God is a fair and just God who has revealed Godself in a Black person.

The second section interprets Chishimba's faith journey, and shows how he started receiving Divine revelations in dreams and visions. The section consists mainly of the interpretations of Chishimba's visions and dreams from his unpublished document. The document is known as *Kambelenge Nga Ni Mpelwa* literally, *Let me Read What Happened Here in Zambia to a Fellow African...* (Chishimba, 1971). It is in this document that Chishimba expounded on the existence of the *children of the spirit*. Basing his argument on the works and revelations of the former RCC

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<sup>77</sup> Shorter (1998), Ukpong (1984), Martey (1993) Oduyoye (1993) and Magesa (2004) have made some efforts to re-interpret and re-contextualize the Christian faith into the African faith, thereby encouraging inculturation.

priest known as St. Louis Montfort, Chishimba was convinced that the latter's revelations were meant for the Mutima Church. Chishimba believed that when St. Louis Montfort revealed that "in the end, there will be a movement where women would be conceiving in the name of the Holy Spirit" just as it happened to Mary Mother of Jesus, and giving birth to children", the revelation was meant for Chishimba and the Mutima Church.

The third section consists of extracts from the document *Umutima Walowa uwa Makumbi Booklet* (1978). They interpret the order of liturgy and worship of the Church, introducing the praises of Mary, Mother of Jesus, and Joseph, father of Jesus. The fourth section outlines the praises of Chilufya Chilondola, the mother of Chishimba, and the praises of Chishimba.

The chapter outlines these documents by interpreting them using the lenses of Nuckolls' *Concept of Culture and Paradoxical-Dialectical Knowledge Systems* (1996) and Fiorenza's (2009; 1994; and 2011) Roman Catholic feminism respectively. The chapter shows that although women are ordained and given authority in the Mutima Church, the policy of the Church is embedded in male power. It portrays how Bemba women respond to the policy by engaging with culture and Biblical worldviews. The following chapter outlines the fieldwork done with the female and some male priests in the Mutima Church.

## CHAPTER 5

### Presentation of Findings from the Field Work

#### 5.1. Introduction

Chapter Four interpreted Mutima Church Policy documents by employing Nuckolls' (1996) lens. The purpose of the current chapter is to present the findings of the fieldwork. As stated earlier in Chapter One (cf. section 2.3), codes are used instead of pseudonyms and ages. The places where interviews were conducted are named *Namfumu*. Flick (2014: 393) argues that “anonymization is essential for confidentiality, but it is often not sufficient to guarantee confidentiality. It is also important that not too much information about the features and context of an anonymized person is kept together, which would allow (re)identification of the person”. In this case anonymization have been avoided due to ethical ethical issues.

As indicated above, the codes have been used to avoid identifying the real names or participants. Reinharz (1992:20) argues that when conducting interviews, the use of codes “is particularly suited to female researchers for it draws on skills in the traditional female role”. Reinharz (1992:20) further stresses that “this method is very useful when conducted by a woman; for a woman to be understood it may be necessary for her to be interviewed by a woman”. These skills assist female researchers to interact with their female participants. What Reinharz is saying is that although women's experiences are different, they may be similar in one way or another. For example, if one woman has experienced sexual violence, there may be two or more with the same experience, while others may have experienced psychological or economic abuse. As indicated in Chapter One (section 1.19), the initial plan of this study was to conduct interviews with female priests only. But during a pilot study, some male priests felt that it was important that they should also be interviewed. This benefited the study, in the sense that male priests assisted in pinpointing other participants, since it was a snowballing purposive study.

What follows in Table 1 (below) shows that the total of twenty-seven participants in my sample were divided as follows: nine (9) older female priests, three (3) older male priests, eleven (11) middle-aged female priests, two (2) middle-aged male priests and the other two (2) were females who volunteered to participate in the study because they went for training as nurses of Jesus (NJs) in the Mutima Church but decided to leave the church and get married. So the total number

of participants was twenty-seven (27). The purpose of putting the female and male priests in categories is to identify their experiences – if they are similar or not – and identify their voices to make it easy during data analysis. In addition, the priests are categorized in the following manner: OFP1 meaning Old female priest number 1, MAFP3 meaning middle-aged female priest number 3, OMP1 meaning old male priest number 1 and MAMP5 meaning middle-aged male priest number 5 and (FV1) female volunteer number 1.

**Table 1**

<b>Old Female Priests (OFPs)</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Middle-Aged Female Priests (MAFPs)</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Female Volunteers (FVs)</b>	<b>Age Range</b>
	<b>69-84</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>38-68</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>38-68</b>
<b>Old Male Priests (OMPs)</b>	<b>Age-Range</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Middle-Aged Male Priests (MAMPs)</b>	<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Number</b>		
	<b>68-80</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>35- 55</b>	<b>2</b>		

The findings from the field research conducted have been presented thematically, with differences distinctly pointed out. The themes are (a) Belonging to the Mutima Church, for instance, the Full Image of God (b) Marriage teachings in the Mutima Church (c) Nurses of Jesus (NJs); (d) the role of female and male Priests. Although the participants were interviewed on different dates, two middle-aged priests were interviewed on the same date, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017. Of the two that were interviewed on the same date, one other male priest decided to write down his answers because he felt he could be delayed since he was leaving for another town. The following section presents the priests' interpretations of belonging to the Mutima Church.

## **5.2. Belonging to the Mutima Church**

Flick (2014:160) views research as a disturbance that “disrupts routines, with no perceptible immediate or long-term payoff for the institution and its members”. Initially, the aim of this

study was to use a life history approach, in which some female/male priests were to be asked to narrate their life histories or faith journeys in the church. Because of the sensitive nature of the study, which might bring out some memories of deceased relatives on the part of female priests, the study embarked on exploring and concentrating on the missional policy of the Mutima Church. Flick (2014:160) says that “research unsettles the institution with three implications: [first] that the limitations of its own activities are to be disclosed; [second] that the ulterior motives of the [‘research’] are and remain unclear for the institution, and, [third], that there are no sound reasons for refusing research requests”. For Flick, some institutions cannot carry on with the usual activities that are performed in the hidden transcript. Many researchers do not explain in detail the purpose of their research. For this reason, some male priests felt that it was important for them to be involved in the fieldwork. Some female priests were not comfortable about disclosing their life histories, for example, narrating the role of the *children of the spirit* because this was believed to be a divine revelation to Chishimba.

### **5.2.1. The Full Image of God**

There is a way in which female priests interpret their ways as women belonging to the Mutima Church. The view of the question brought forward was “What does it mean for you as a woman or man, to be a member of the Mutima Church?” This was followed by a probing question: Why are women ordained in the Mutima Church? Almost all sixteen of the women who were interviewed separately responded in similar ways. Four of them initially responded in the following manner: “*Lesa wesu temwaume iyoo?*” literally, “our God is not male.” Three women responded, “*Lesa ni Lesa, te mwanakashi iyo*” literally “God is God, and God is not a woman.” What the women meant by responding in this way is in relation to Abbey’s (2001:148) argument that “the anthropocentric images of God are there to help our conception of the Supreme Being especially in regard to how God relates to us”. For Abbey, it is essential to understand God as being the Supreme Creator of all living things. The women’s emphasis that God is God does not state their complete revelation of God. Their major argument is that God is neither male nor female, and that the God of the Israelites is the same God who is with us today, and has both female and male attributes, hence, the full image of God.

### 5.2.2. Responses from the Male Priests

The middle-aged male priest clarified that belonging to the Mutima Church means a lot to him.

He stated that

[i]t means a lot to me because the church embraces the two redeemers which is the full image of God. I feel my prayers are complete to know this secret of God who is the Alpha and Omega. (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

From what the study has revealed in Chapter Four on the Alpha and Omega, the members have internalized these teachings. For MAMP4 and other church members, the full image of God reveals two secrets, that is the White and the Black secrets. More important is the way the members believe in two redeemers, Mary mother of Jesus and Chishimba. The Older male priests' response to the same question evoked a similar response:

To belong or be a member of this church...it is a lucky thing [lishuko] for us. It is in this church where we are taught that in God's Kingdom, there is neither male nor female. So we all work together as *abena mulu*, literally, those belonging to the Kingdom of God (Interview with OMP1. *Namfumumu*. 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

One of the old male priests cited a Bemba proverb. He said, you know, '*ilyakutolelwa lipompo*'? When asked what this meant, he explained that

[i]t means that some people may not be willing to preach the message because it is not in their interest but if we have our own, like we are blessed now in this church, we work whole heartedly because it belongs to us (Interview with OMP3. *Namfumumu*. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

In this sense, OMP3 means that Mutima Church members own the preachings that they have received from Chishimba. To this effect, they are in a better position to convey the Word of God to other people without changing the message. The male priests, as well the female priests, are of the view that they are blessed and lucky to belong to the Mutima Church. Both the female and male priests' responses show that from the teachings they have received from the Mutima Church, their understanding of who they are in relation to the ministry, or belonging to the Church, portray the full image of God. In this way, the priests are in line with Abbey's (2001:150) argument that God must be presented in a true and total picture. She asserts that "...our picture of God can only be true when it presents not only the masculine but also the feminine aspects of God" (Abbey, 2001:150). By this, the priests are saying that belonging to the Mutima Church does not require one to be male or female, but it shows that the women's

insights have been incorporated positively into the will of God for human beings. For this reason, the researcher posed a probing question: Why are women ordained in the Mutima Church?

In response to the above question, OMP1, an (old male priest) explained:

Do you know that gender begins with God the Creator? Let us make man [*sic*] in our own image and likeness. And for this God created man and woman that are full image of God. So both woman and man can perform God's work without discrimination. Paul in his letters said women are not supposed to preach in front of men, instead she must go and ask the man at home. Paul is saying this because he heard that it was Eve who caused Adam to stumble. You see, this has led many churches not to believe in women... (Interview with OMP1. *Namfumumu*. 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Similarly, MAMP5 elaborated that

[y]ou see that is one of the reasons we sit male and female during worship. We have to show people that spiritually we are one. So when women are ordained, their vows are not meant for our teacher, Chishimba. Chishimba in this case is just a witness whom everyone see in the flesh. All the vows are directed to God and that is why we sing the song 'I have vowed my God, I am nothing but I have agreed and vowed your redemptive mission, so from today I will keep my vows forever and ever...' So here in this church women can preach in front of the church as long as she knows what she is preaching about... (Interview with MAMP5. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

MAMP4 also stated that

[y]ou see here in Africa, we are lucky that Chishimba has revealed to us the feminine nature of God. So women should be ordained because a woman was the first to be redeemed as a Saviour (Mary). *E mulinganya wakwa Lesa* literally this is the fairness of God. Jesus has worked, yes, but his works were united with his mother's works Nakabumba meaning (Mother of Creation)... Chishimba believes that Paul was unfair on the part of women because we are all equal in the eyes of God and it's the physical body which separates women from men but spiritually we are the same (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Chishimba ordains women in his church because he believes that both women and men are God's creations. He admits that both can carry out God's mission and sees that the Pauline letters have misled many churches. All the male priests had no reservations about women being allowed to preach in church. This is also according to the missional policy document that Chishimba (1974) wrote. In Chishimba's teachings, and as stated by MAMP4, Mary is the greatest Saviour because she was the first one who was visited by the Angel of God. Chishimba does not dispute that women should preach in church, but empowers women by ordaining them.

Interviewing some priests also meant that they were given an opportunity to narrate some biblical stories according to their knowledge. In this way they felt that by starting from the Bible, they were able to answer the question of what it means for them to belong to the Mutima Church. For this reason, most of the priests were going back and forth in their narratives.

### 5.2.3. Responses from Female Priests

The explanation given by a middle-aged female priest (MAFP3) illustrates well the response of the entire group, because she gives a clear narrative of what it means for her to be a member of the Mutima Church:

Aaah mmmm, Umutima Walowa – this sweetheart does not belong to the members only; nor does it belong to the African people only; or to the women only. The meaning goes beyond every human being because every human being has a heart. Even the angels who were praising God in the beginning had godly hearts. It is only God who creates us with human hearts. We believe that every human being has attributes of God in his or her heart that are good. Mmmmmm I say this because, the angels, the white people, the black people, or better say every human being belong to the Sweetheart of Makumbi because they all have hearts. When God creates us, for instance, when God created human beings from the beginning, God’s breath (*umupu*) or spirit inside the human being. This is what in our church is referred to as the ‘sweetheart’ because it is that same spirit that makes us worship, praise, honour and pray to God. The spirit is right in our hearts. To me, as a woman, being a member of this church means that God lives within me, and in every human being because of the same spirit of God that we have. Even the angels who lived with God in the beginning benefitted from the same spirit. (*balishukiileko umupashi wakwa Lesa*). So you see the sweetheart does not just refer to members of our church, but to every living human being on earth. Although our church has been started in Zambia, and it is meant for Africans, we welcome every human being because we want to share this good thing that has happened to us.... (Interview with MAFP3. *Namfumu*. 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2017).

MAFP3’s reference to the heart reveals the *Bemba* concept of communal life. This also pertains to Bemba culture, which believes in living in community. Burlington (1998:80) observes that “when people chose to join the Mutima Church they enter into a new set of social relations supported by [a] unique set of cultural meanings”. This also confirms that Bemba society places great emphasis on people (Badenberg, 2002:42). For the Bemba people, a kind person is identified by his or her heart and their mutual relationship with others. For MAFP3, however, belonging to the Mutima Church means that every human being is referred to as Mutima, as long as one is living with a human heart. Therefore, belonging to the Mutima Church “...requires a great deal of conformity to achieve all one aspires for oneself clad in visible and measurable

conformity” (Badenberg, 2002:62). From MAFP3’s response, her own interpretation as a woman, belonging to the Mutima Church, is that which unites her with other human beings. MAFP3 is willing to be identified as an ordained female priest of the Mutima Church because she believes that she carries within her the spirit of God that has been given to every human being.

Although responses to the first question are similar, the female priests are of the view that, as women, belonging to the Mutima Church is not only a matter of being called by the name *BaMutima*, but being united with other human beings. Any human being with a heart is called Sweetheart of Makumbi, meaning (*Umutima Walowa wa Makumbi*). This is so because since the spirit and heart are from God, the two are inseparable and are sweet. For example, MAFP2’s response confirms this when she states that

[o]ne example I can give to prove that every person has a sweetheart is if a person shows love towards others. Love is the center of humanity. Love unites us. When referring to a good person, we always say, (*umutima wakwe usuma*), that person has a good heart. So every human being has a good heart except birds, dogs, animals and plants. As human beings, we worship and pray to God because this shows that we have good hearts towards our Creator. We have attributes of God that are good...God is sweet, literally, (*Lesu uwalowa*). Hence, the Sweetheart of Makumbi...means the Sweet clouds of God. Makumbi is Bemba word for clouds, (just in case you are not aware). The clouds we refer ourselves to are not just any other clouds, we belong to the nimbus clouds because they bring rain to earth and this benefits every human being, or every living thing. (Interview with MAFP2. *Namfumu*. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2017).

MAFP2’s response is similar to that of the other female priests. She demonstrates that referring to a person with a kind heart is one way of showing that the person in question belongs to the Mutima Church. Although MAFP2 did not answer directly as to what it means for her, as a woman, to be a member of the Mutima Church, she placed the emphasis on “having a good heart”. This emphasised the meaning of being a member of the Mutima Church from a woman’s perspective. The MAFP2 included the concept of “love” and “of having a good heart” because this is what members are taught; practicing love that should come from one’s heart (Chishimba, 1971:14).

The Mutima Church members appreciate God’s love for humanity during the rainy season because they believe that every living thing including animals and plants, benefits from the rains (Chishimba, 1976:16). To a Mutima Church member, every human being who worships God,

from any particular Church, is referred to as a Mutima Church member, because that person still has a heart to breathe. Showing love or loving each other means that people are practicing what God has done to humanity. Therefore, they all responded similar to the same question asked in section 5.2.1, what it means for you as a woman or man, to be a member of the Mutima Church. And the same with the question as to why women are ordained in the Mutima Church. MAFP4 was of the view that

[w]hat it means for me, as a woman... (who joined this church many years ago) ... to be a member of the Mutima Church is that as long as a person is still breathing, that person is a member of our church. A person does not need to be an official member of the church. Every person who worships in truth and in spirit is seeking the 'bread of life'... it does not matter which church that person belongs to. If we start mentioning the names of other churches, for example, Bread of Life and Seventh Day Adventist, these names include all human beings who worship God in truth and in spirit... because many people go to church on the seventh day, there is no eighth day, (raising her voice and shaking her head) ... sure, there is no eighth day (*Ifunde lyakana*). The law does not allow it. There are only seven days in a week. So these people also worship God because they believe in receiving the bread of life. If a person becomes born again, it means one has stopped all the wrong things he or she was doing. That person has a re-birth... so no one can just decide to be born again and continue doing all the bad things. Even the Mutima Church members are also born again. So for me, as a woman, belonging to the Mutima Church is not being different from others because of the name, otherwise I can say all of us are Mutima Church members, all of us belong to the Bread of Life Church or all of us are members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. (Interview with MAFP4. *Namfumu*. 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Not all the priests who were interviewed have primary/elementary 1 to 7 educational backgrounds, and some male priests, for instance, have high school certificates and it was easy for them to respond in both Bemba and English. Two of them were trained as high school teachers. MAFP4 confirmed that she joined the church many years ago, though she did not give the exact year. Similarly, MAFP4's interpretation and knowledge of God and knowledge of other churches have been through her life experience, which is also unique. All the priests who were interviewed mentioned that the name by which they are known in Zambia, '*BaMutima*', does not exclude other people. Instead, the name *BaMutima* is an inclusive name and anyone is welcome to worship with them in truth and in spirit. The priests' argument is that many denominations are given names that are inclusive, for instance, the "Bread of Life", and "Seventh-Day Adventist" Churches.

To some extent, the Mutima Church members experience a sense of ill-treatment by the public because of being members of the church. They claim that some of their children are laughed at and excluded when it comes to participating in many activities, at school and other community centres. This explains why the priests placed an emphasis on the “heart” because they want to convey the message that they deserve to be treated like other human beings. This is illustrated by MAFP8:

*Lesawandi!* My God! For me as a woman, to belong to this church means a lot. One) (Here, she raised her fourth right finger) as members of this church, people want to embarrass us when they see us in public but we are not ashamed at all; Two) our children are called names in schools; such as ‘*abana ba Mutima*’, as if it is a wrong thing. Is there anything wrong with being a member of this church? I don’t see anything wrong with it. Three) but our teacher, (referring to Chishimba) teaches us that even in the Bible, Jesus was not accepted in his own land. Even in the Bible, we read that some prophets were rejected in their own land; or do you know that the early Christians were persecuted in various ways? That is how we are treated in this country, just because we conduct ourselves differently from others. So your question is not only about us women, but the entire members of BaMutima. Four) It is just that people do not know what it means to us, it means blessings, many, many blessings to be in this church, I tell you. (Interview with MAFP8. *Namfumu*. 16<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

MAFP8’s narrative is flexible, variable and shaped partly by interaction with the researcher. By being flexible, her story invites the researcher to interact with it. She brings out four things in her response. The first is the embarrassment that leads to ill-treatment by the public. This brings out the question: What makes Mutima Church members experience ill-treatment from the public? An observation here may help us to use Oduyoye’s and Kanyoro’s words. They state that many African people “...always face the dilemma of floating between the requirements of...” two cultures (Oduyoye and Kanyoro, 2001b:3). These cultures are the Christian and the African cultures. This is similar with the members of the Mutima Church who prefer to be called the Last Israelites, and imitate the Old Testament lifestyle in their *Namfumu* villages, but who at the same time live modern lifestyles in urban areas.

What MAFP8 means by embarrassment is that the Mutima Church members refer to themselves as *AbaIsraeli bakulekelesha*, meaning the last Israel<sup>78</sup>. Because they call themselves the last Israel, Mutima Church members imitate what the children of Israel were doing, by imitating

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<sup>78</sup> See Chapter Four where an analysis and interpretation are given of the *Full Image of God Revealed in Africa: The Keys to the Full Bible* by Chishimba. And see also Gary Burlington, 1998:78.

some of the biblical practices. For instance, and as stated earlier in Chapter One (cf. *section 1.4*), most of the male members plait their hair or cover their heads with head scarfs; when greeting, the Mutima Church members embrace each other, imitating a sense of welcome and love that Joseph felt towards his brothers. Hence, Mutima Church members are caught between the Bemba and the Old Testament biblical cultures.<sup>79</sup> Because of this, many old members of the church are conservative in their views, customs, dress, and tradition. For instance, they move with walking sticks, dressed in long robes, and they are mostly vegetarians.

The second is the issue that MAFP8 raised concerning “*our children*”. Although she is an ordained female priest, MAFP8 raises one of the concerns of this dissertation: ‘*our children are called names in schools*’. Although this issue is discussed further in Chapter Six, a critical analysis should be given. In this study it will be important to scrutinize the children that she refers to by using the hidden transcript (Scott, 1990:2). For Scott, the hidden transcript may unveil more information than we actually perceive in the public transcript.

One of the characteristics Scott (1990:14) gives about the hidden transcript is that it is only specifically given a social site, as well as some particular actors. For this reason, the Mutima Church is a social site that has a set of actors. With this understanding of a social site, both men and women have been cultured to refer to each other as *bamunyanane*, literally, my brother or my sister, respectively. Furthermore, MAFP8 refers to the *children of the spirit* as well as other children whose parents are members of the Mutima Church. Hence, the *children of the spirit*, whose mothers are female priests, are the focal point of this study. However, using the hidden transcript, this issue of the children is discussed at length in Chapter Seven.

The third point raised by MAFP8 is biblical. Burlington<sup>80</sup> asserts that “...before we can tell the gospel in any particular culture, it is helpful to examine indigenous narrative in its own context”. In the narrative of the Mutima Church, Chishimba is referred to as “teacher” by his own followers. In the Bible Jesus is referred to as “teacher” or “Rabbi”. In similar terms, Chishimba is referred to as “teacher” because he is the one who is the source of information for his members.

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<sup>79</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 78.

<sup>80</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 75.

MAFP8 equates the Mutima Church members' experiences with the persecutions of the early Christian church. Yet, no information pertaining to the persecution of Mutima Church members has been heard of within the country, except when they were advised not to pay tax and to comply with the regulations of the UNIP government. The government then issued a ban on the church (Hinfelaar, 1994:102).

Furthermore, MAFP8 is of the view that other biblical prophets in the Bible were rejected in their own land, and this is similar to Chishimba. Burlington argues that “the most important role the Bible plays in ... Mutima thought is not explicitly mentioned in the Chilufya narrative, but it is always in the mind of Mutima hearers”.<sup>81</sup> Hence, in the minds of the members, such as the priests, the Bible has played an important role, because they refer to Chishimba as ‘teacher’, or ‘prophet’ or ‘parent of truth’, and they compare the members of the Mutima Church to the last Israelites.

The fourth point is about blessings. MAFP8 sees that being a member of the Mutima Church is a blessing. In common sense, one might ask, what kind of blessing is MAFP8 referring to? Is this the blessing of being given “hearts and uniting them”, or blessing them materially, or blessing them because women are ordained, or because some female priests have children with Chishimba, or blessing them because they understand the Bible according to Bemba culture? MAFP8 is not explicit in her response when she talks about blessings because the term may mean a lot of things. Blessing them materially may not be an issue, because in the Mutima Church, the members are taught not to conform to worldly materialism. They are taught to leave everything and live the kind of life the disciples of Jesus lived. The kind of blessing MAFP8 is referring to is being a member of the Mutima Church, because many members admit that “belonging to the church is a blessing” from God. The following section provides the priests' responses to the second question, “What are the teachings of the church in relation to marriage?”

### **5.3. Marriage Teachings in the Mutima Church**

All priests acknowledged that in the Mutima Church, marriage is a sacrament. They were of the view that the church has its own teachings concerning each type of marriage ceremony being practiced. According to Mutima Church members, Chishimba teaches that a man is allowed to

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<sup>81</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 77.

marry one, two, four or six women. The priests state that in all these types of marriages there are specific teachings designed for the man and for the women. The responses of the third male priest (OMP3) are outlined below. Responses from the Male Priest (OMP3), who illustrated that

[i]n our church, we are taught and we teach that marriage is designed by God. From the beginning, we see God creating Adam and later on God created Eve, and brought Eve to Adam. God united them. God announced from the beginning that ‘I am the LORD, the God of Abraham and Isaac’. We follow all the biblical laws, starting from the Old Testament through the New Testament. In the beginning, in the Bible, Abraham, Jacob, Lot, David, and Solomon, did have one wife. Then as time went on, they all started marrying a second, third, fourth until a sixth wife. So in our church we have teachings for the couples who are marrying for the first time. We have teachings for a man who is marrying a second wife, and teachings for a man marrying a third and so on. We have even teachings for a man who is marrying a sixth wife. The teachings are not designed for men only. Both women and men who are getting married undergo some marriage teachings. Then after some time, if a man intends to marry a second wife, there are teachings designed for the first wife, the second wife and the husband. So these teachings... (*amafunde*) are different depending on what type of marriage one intends living in. (Interview with OMP3. *Namfumu*. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Mutima Church members view marriage as God’s union between man and woman. In the Mutima Church, as stated above, a man can marry one wife, or two or more, also depending on the response. According to OMP3’s response, if one man marries many wives, it is considered sacred, just as one man marries one wife. Hence, even if their marriages are polygamous, they are considered sacred because they are drawn from Old Testament Biblical times.

For the case of polygamous marriages in this study refer to the public transcript, because for Scott, (1990:2), the actors in the public transcript act in an open manner. There is nothing to hide. Polygamous marriages are visible to the public, but they do not tell the whole story about power relations because, in many cases, women conduct themselves so as not to offend their husbands, for fear of losing their marriages or “...bearing the punishment[s]that are attached to the rules”.<sup>82</sup> Similarly, and though not pointing to the polygamous marriages in the Mutima Church, some African women theologians perceive polygamy as one of the acts that reduce women to mere instruments of men. [But] they argue that while we perceive such practices of one man marrying two or more wives as acts of injustice to women, other women perceive these practices as giving them “...a stable and uniform community” (See Kanyoro, 2001:161-162).

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<sup>82</sup> See Scott (1990:2) who explains that subordinates conduct themselves in a manner that should not offend the power-holders.

OMP3's response defines a stable and uniform community of the Mutima Church. Polygamy is accepted and practiced because this is seen as sanctioned by God in the Old Testament. This is a common thread that runs through Mutima Church members. Although these questions were specifically designed for the study, another request which randomly came up was to clarify OMP3's response: "[Will]... you please mention the types of marriages you just referred to in your first response. You just said 'the teachings are different depending on what type of marriage one intends living in?'" According to OMP3,

[y]ou see in our church we have what we refer to as *mwa* Isaako; Isaac's type; a man with one wife; then we have what we call, *mwa* Esao, (Esau's type; a man with two or three wives; *mwa* Daudi, (David's type; a man with six wives); *mwa* Yacobo, (Jacob's type; a man with four wives. So a man is allowed to choose the type of marriage that suits him. And you see, all these things are written in the Bible... (Interview with OMP3. *Namfumu*. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

In relation to this, Bemba culture allows polygamy for certain reasons, for example when a woman is barren. So this teaching on polygamy is also reinforced by Bemba culture. OMP3 defines four types of marriages that are practiced in the Mutima Church. He states that the first is *mwa* Isaako, (Isaac's type). In this type of marriage, a man marries one wife. This is a re-union that God placed in the Garden of Eden, when God united Adam and Eve. The second type of marriage is *mwa* Esao (Esau's type). This type of marriage allows a man to marry two or three wives. The third type is *mwa* Yacobo (Jacob's type), where a man marries four wives. The fourth type of marriage is *mwa* Daudi (David's type), where a man marries six wives.

OMP3 further notes that "a man is allowed to choose the type of marriage..." In all these types of marriages, monogamous and polygamous marriages, this study argues that the term "public transcript" may be applied, because this suggests that there is an open interaction between subordinates (women) and those who dominate (men) (Scott, 1990:2). But there is an imbalance of power tradition and Biblical teachings. Although Bemba is a matriarchal society, malestream teaching of Mariology in the Mutima Church inculcates the subordination of women. As a result, some African women theologians argue "...that there is no explicit commandment on polygamy or monogamy in the scriptures" (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 2001b:109). She observes that even if this may be the case, for God to call humanity into existence, that is, male and female, both were crowned equal partners in monogamy (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 2001b:108).

Nasimiyu-Wasike (2001b:109) further investigates the cases of monogamy and polygamy in the Bible. She perceives that the authors of some Scriptures have expressed some sense of regret and shamefulness when narrating the events of Old Testament polygamous marriages. Nasimiyu-Wasike (2001b:109) continues to suggest that wherever polygamy occurs in the Bible, it portrays some form of apology or criticism, rather than exaltation. For example, Nasimiyu-Wasike (2001b:109) asserts that in Jacob's home, polygamy creates rivalry and generates bitter lives and unhappiness (Gen. 29:30-31). According to Nasimiyu-Wasike (2001:110) "[t]he Jewish kingdom is ruined because of David's and Solomon's polygamous involvements". To this effect, some African women theologians view polygamy as that which points to some gruesome, gloomy images of marriage that bring out rivalries, jealousies, some envies, favoritism, some quarrels wherever inheritance is portrayed, some succession feuds, some injustices, and hatred, as well as murder (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 2001b:110).

It is significant to note that OMP3's response on the issue of marriage is not explicit. He is in favour of the practice of both monogamy and polygamy in the Mutima Church. This, in itself, suggests that in the Mutima Church, women's actions are shaped according to the patriarchal approach. "Whatever men think and say to be good and right, women are supposed to affirm and support" (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 2001b:111). The question African women theologians keep asking is who are the benefactors of these particular interpretations and how are systems kept in place? (Kanyoro. 2001b:163). Whatever, it is that OMP3 is saying, his response shows that in the Mutima Church men are the beneficiaries, and are thus given power to rule over women in their homes. The main challenge here is not the rule of the father; the challenge is to observe how women are socialized through "attachment, social interaction and personal relationships in contrast to men's individuation and separateness" (See Gilligan, 1982:25). This is the challenge this study is facing: it is mainly concerned with the formulation of policy and authority that is initiated by one man.

The researcher asked the middle-aged male priest number four a question in relation to polygamy in the Mutima Church. This was done in writing and the male priest responded in writing. The question was: When it comes to *kumapalo* (literally blessings), which is (polygamy or polygyny), does it mean that the man is supposed to choose the type of marriage that suits him? Or does the Spirit of God choose for him, too? The middle-aged male priest confirmed that

[w]hen it comes to *kumapalo* (polygamy or polygyny), it is your first wife who should choose the one to be with in marriage just like what Sara the wife to

Abraham did when she had no child. It was Sara who advised Abraham to pick Hagar the servant to be the second wife. This has to be done from the heart and not persuasive. This is why such women are rewarded in Heaven because in such actions theirs is deep humility in the eyes of God (quoted from MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Accordingly, a middle-aged female priest number five (MAFP5) responded thus:

From the beginning, both men and women in our church are taught that when it comes to the physical part of the body, men are stronger than women. A man should be stronger than a woman in order for him to take care of her. This is because, (she paused...and cleared her throat...) mmm... Adam was the first one to be created by God. So in our church, we are taught that men should (at least), be stronger than women. But please note that, we are also taught that spiritual wise, (*kumweo kweka-kweka*), there has to be gender equality...(umulinganya). And this is because when God created Adam, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...and when God created Eve, God breathed the same...I emphasise...the same breathe; God breathed into Adam's body, God also breathed into Eve's body. So you see, for us in this church, when it comes to performing God's mission, there is nothing like this is for the man and this is for the woman. So answering your question, first, a man is referred to as a stem of a tree, (*ishinte*) and us... (pointing to her chest) women, are referred to as branches (*amasambo*). So you know, the stem feeds the branches of the tree, and that is how a man is supposed to be in marriage (Interview with MAFP5. *Namfumu*. 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017).

According to MAFP5, the teaching of the church on the issue of marriage is that, physically, a man should be stronger than a woman. She relates this to the creation story. MAFP5 has been taught by the "teacher" (Chishimba) that Adam was the first one to be created, therefore, even the physical parts of his body should be stronger than those of a woman. Because of the way MAFP5 has been socialized or taught, her view is that a man should be physically stronger than a woman. This study argues, however, that in some societies there are women who are physically stronger than men and are able to perform men's duties.

In her response, MAFP5 points out what it means for women to be members of the Mutima Church. MAFP5 acknowledges the spiritual aspect of performing God's mission as the same in both men and women. She is aware that when it comes to carrying out God's mission, there is neither male nor female in the gifts of God. Yet, MAFP5 is not aware that the *umulinganya*, that is, the principle of fairness,<sup>83</sup> is beyond the physical aspect of men and women. MAFP5's

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<sup>83</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 77.

response should be appreciated because her actions "...may be deeply rooted in patriarchal socialization" (Kanyoro, 2001b:163). MAFP5 accepts being called a branch of a tree, without realizing that as a woman, she can also perform other duties that will support a man. This is ironic, because referring to human beings as trees means reducing them to mere objects.

Although the Mutima Church view trees as life-giving, it is unfair to relate women to branches. Ramphela (1989: 188-189) argues that because the church in Africa was founded on principles derived from its historical roots, the superiority of men will continue until women and men stand together to analyse their Judeo-Christian tradition. According to Ramphela (1989:189), "our Judeo-Christian heritage has thus created a bias towards hierarchical, authoritarian, male-dominated structures".

While African women theologians avoid jumping to condemn women whose mindsets are deeply rooted in patriarchal societies, they "...seek to understand how societies are organized, and how power is used by different groups of people, by men and women, by young and old and by people of varying economic means" (Kanyoro, 2001b:163). Furthermore, Kanyoro argues that "...the analysis of women's oppression has to be taken in the context of gender analysis" (Kanyoro, 2001b:163). The question that arises then is: realizing that there is an aspect of gender equality in the gifts from God, why do many women still opt to get married to one man? Is there any gender equality and is the concept of fairness considered when it comes to marriage in the Mutima Church? To understand the teachings of the church with regard to marriage, MAFP10 pointed out that:

[i]n our church, marriage is sacred. It is a gift from God. We look at it from the Garden of Eden. After creating Adam and Eve, God blessed them. We hear Adam exclaiming that this is (*Umunofu wa munofu wandi*) meaning, flesh of my flesh. God joined Adam and Eve and gave them rules. So in our church, we believe that even if three women are married to one man, they are one; they are joined to one man too. And this is in the Bible, too (pause)... you people don't understand the Bible. The Bible says, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife... and the two shall become one. Is this not written in the Bible? So that is what it is, marriage is a sacrament. It is an institution created by God. (Interview with MAFP10. *Namfumu*. 8<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

In the Mutima sense, marriage is a sacrament. MAFP10 is of the view that polygamy is practiced in the Mutima Church, inter alia, as it is believed that where two or more people are united in marriage, it is an institution created by God. In such cases, it is believed that polygamy reduces

the levels of immorality. Mbiti (1999:143) points out that “polygamy helps to prevent or reduce unfaithfulness and prostitution, especially on the part of the husband”. But Mbiti (1999:143) discusses both the negative and positive sides of polygamous marriages in African societies. He further argues that “I am not discussing whether polygamy is right or wrong, good or bad: I am simply presenting the facts and attempting to appreciate the thinking and experience of those involved in polygamous situations” (Mbiti, 1999:143). For Mbiti, the suggestions to support polygamy remain with those who advocate for these types of marriages. He does not give a clear-cut statement supporting polygamous marriages.

Both male and female priests admit that women are regarded as branches. MAFP10 is of the view that the Mutima Church teaches that marriage is a sacrament. Since MAFP10 mentions the Garden of Eden, it shows that marriage in the Mutima Church is Biblically based and it is believed to be a gift from God. It is important to note that MAFP10 is of the view that God blessed Adam and Eve. MAFP10 speaks of Adam’s words in the affirmative: *munofu wamunofu wandi; lifupa lye fupa lyandi* meaning, flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones.

MAFP10 continues to observe that because of this, when one man marries two or more women, they are all joined together as one. The female priest, however, does not see anything wrong with this. This explanation highlights the teachings of the church on marriage as Biblical, just as the other priests did. Using Kanyoro’s (2001:93-95) words, this type of teaching on the relationship that existed between men and women in the Old Testament “...polygamous society is tainted with patriarchal bias”. The teaching has been ingrained in the minds of Mutima Church members. Scott (1990:3) insists that the more this power imbalance is exercised, the more the public transcript of subordinates (women) will take on a stereotyped, ritualistic cast. For example, it is the duty of the first wife to look for a second or third wife for the husband. Although this may be a painful journey, the wife or wives endure the pain of bringing in another woman to be their husband’s third or fourth wife, even if the husband does not have a proper income. The wives should work together to support their husband.

MAFP10 seems to have so much faith in the power of the creation story, but contradicts herself by stating that the Bible says a man shall leave his mother and father and be joined to his wife. It is not written that a man shall be joined to many wives, but one wife. Wife is in the singular form. African Women theologians are in support of one man marrying one woman as a gift from God. According to Nasimiyu-Wasike (2001a:108), “monogamy emerges in the Old Testament

as God's initial and final will for humanity. This message is powerful and clear in the creation story (Gen. 2:18)".

Furthermore, MAFP10 views monogamy as an ideal form of marriage that has a foundational relational aspect which was meant to promote mutual dependence, complementary relationships, and mutual cooperation between one woman and one man. Monogamy is not a cultural product (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 2001:109). Similarly, Kanyoro (2001a:87) observes that in the Old Testament, there was a formula for taking a wife or wives. Such initiatives were from the parents or appointees. She argues that even if this was the case, "it was mainly the male members of the family or male agents who undertook that responsibility (Gen. 24)" (Kanyoro, 2001a:87). Therefore, the teachings of the church in relation to marriage are based on biblical texts, some of which are cited in the responses of the priests. The major ones have been cited from the Old Testament, and there is no marriage teaching cited from the New Testament.

The Mutima Church is therefore one of the few AICs that espouse celibacy, a practice Chishimba adopted from the RCC that encourages its priests, nuns and brothers to remain celibate for the rest of their natural lives (Hinfelaar, 1994:122). In spite of the fact that the RCC and Mutima churches are similar in this regard, there is dissimilarity. While the RCC preaches the practice of celibacy, the Mutima Church preaches celibacy but allows some ordained male priests to go and get married for a period of time. Whereas the RCC practice sexual abstinence, the Mutima Church allows its members to engage in sexual relations. Even though polygamy is allowed and is practiced among Mary,hurch members, women are still attracted to the Mutima Church.

The question that may arise is why does a space that would appear to "sideline" women also attract them? The female priests are aware that they are not like Mary mother of Jesus: they only imitate those attributes that give them recognition. This is in line with Grant's (1982:141) criticism that "women are the 'backbone' of the church". She therefore sees that what seems to embrace women in fact means that "women are in the 'background' and should be kept there as mere support workers" (Grant, 1982: 141). In the following section the focus is on the priests understanding of the Mariological teachings in the church.

#### **5.4. The Mariological Teachings**

As mentioned earlier, in their own understanding, the Mutima believes that Mary is the mother of Jesus, the Saviour of humanity. She is also their Saviour. This is illustrated in the female and

male priests' responses as they state that Mary is as important in Jesus' life as she is important in their own lives. One middle-aged female priest number nine (9) (MAFP9) expounded concerning her understanding of Mary:

Mary is our mother. She is the mother of all nations. In our church, we are aware that we ask for forgiveness or anything through our Mother (*Nyinefwe*) Mary. So we even exalt her in many ways... Even though many people acknowledge Jesus as their Saviour, we see that Jesus himself passed through a very hard time. His birth, his growing up and his death were all hard that one cannot exalt him. Yes, for us, Mary...even if Mary went through a hard time as well, but (*amachushi*)...the sufferings of Mary were minimal compared to that of Jesus. Yes, we do acknowledge Jesus as our Saviour as well, but just as there are two sides of a coin, we believe that there are also two Saviours that God our Almighty sent on earth, these are Mary and Jesus, (Interview with MAFP9. *Namfumumu*. 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2017).

MAFP9 places emphasises that Mary provides life to the members of the church because she is believed to be the mother of all humanity. She calls Mary "our Mother". In many cases, mothers play an important role in nurturing their children. In this respect, MAFP9 narrates how Mary's role was more unique than her son's, Jesus as taught by Chishimba. MAFP9 views Mary as a woman whose life was tough, but not as tough as that of Jesus. Jesus went through a difficult time, from his birth to the time he was dying. But MAFP9 acknowledges that, to some extent, Mary encountered hardships by giving birth to a child whose life was at risk. This is further reflected by other female priests, who point out the sufferings that Mary went through. Jesus faced his own trials. These are the teachings of the church on Mary (Interview with MAFP5. *Namfumumu*. 21st July, 2017). In the case of the Mutima Church, referring to Mary as mother is a common way of exalting her. Members of the church go to the extent of invoking Mary as an intercessor, since they have inherited the tradition from the RCC. Therefore, MAFP9 continued to state that "so we even exalt her in many ways". Yet, the ways in which members identify with Mary are different. Some women in the Mutima Church identify themselves with Mary in the manner of humility, for example, conceiving in the name of the Holy Spirit. Other members imitate Mary's humility, thereby making a public statement.

Furthermore, MAFP9 acknowledges that the members of the Mutima Church refer to Mary as Saviour, and Jesus as their Saviour as well. Yet, the burden undertaken by Jesus was heavier than that of Mary. The "exaltations" in the Mutima Church pointed out by the female priest do not exactly state the actions behind them. This will be analysed using Scott's (1990:2) hidden transcripts in Chapter Seven. There is more information relating to Mary from the priests that

she spoke about. This will be discussed in the following section. As Rakoczy (2004:340) observes, “contemporary Mariology places Mary within the Christian community, not above it”. Similarly, one old female priest (OFP6) pointed out that

*Ubwangushi nimuli Nyinefwe...* the easiest way to ask for forgiveness and to pray is through our Mother Mary, because Jesus, even in his death, he went through a lot of pain, even Mary went through a lot of challenges, but she was able to handle them. Mary’s challenges were not war-like (*nkondo-nkondo*), they were not warfare challenges like those of Jesus. That is why we ask through Mary, our Mother, our Saviour. We believe that we have two saviours, Mother and the child, that is, Mary and Jesus. God spoke to these saviours. One thing is that there is some information concerning what Mary did, her duties and ways. Mary did a great job. The information about the duties or roles played by Mary are not written in the Bible. Yet, she was an important and elderly woman in the things of God—she endured the shame of pregnancy without any encounter with a man; she was a matured woman...she was humble; she did not despise the unexpected pregnancy; Mary accepted the pregnancy; she was the woman who carried the pregnancy of Jesus. So you see, carrying the baby Jesus in her womb is in itself a great job. Mary was the one who had an encounter with Gabriel...Mary carried Jesus in her womb, without even trying to kill the unborn child or abort the pregnancy. She did not even think of killing the child during birth. Mary gave birth to Jesus, she even nurtured him in a good way, she showed him how to perform duties in society and from God. And yet, people still say that Mary did nothing, she did nothing...eh...eh... (pausing a question at me). What about bringing Jesus up, seeing him grow, her own child? If Jesus was neglected, he could have become something else, but Mary protected him. It is a very important thing for a woman to be pregnant in our church because this is also a symbol of Mary... (Interview with OFP6. *Namfumu*. 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2017).

In the above response, the OFP6 seems to critique the traditional narrative that Jesus is greater than Mary. Like many other members of the Mutima Church, Mary is given more honour than Jesus, even in their songs. The OFP6 seems to affirm the “power of a woman” just as it is written in the *Mutima Uwalowa uwa Makumbi* document (Chishimba, 1974: 10). One of the songs sung in the Church to honour Mary is that ‘*namfumu wacindamisha, we mufyashi wa maka*’ literally, “Moderate Mother of King, our Powerful Parent” (Chishimba, 1974:10). This response shows the female priests’ stress on exalting Mary. It also shows the influence of the Mutima Church on Mary. Similarly, the OFP6 states that the challenges that Mary went through are different from those of Jesus.

Mutima Church members have been taught and believe that Mary encountered her own hardships, such as accepting the unplanned pregnancy without knowing any man, the shame of facing Joseph with the unplanned pregnancy that was not his, but was only betrothed to, fleeing

from Herod, and the accusations of her son that led to his crucifixion. Yet, both Mary and Jesus are considered as saviours in the Mutima Church. Mary even faced the challenge of accepting the pregnancy, even when she did not have sexual intercourse with Joseph or any other man. Exalting Mary in the Mutima Church reveals women's acceptance of lifting of other women. But, some feminist theologians view Mary's characteristics as those that "deter women from becoming whole persons" (Fiorenza, 1975:621).

Concerning the teachings and views about Mary, male priest number five (MAMP5) asserted:

You know what, God was reserving Mary for this big job of being pregnant with the Saviour. God had already chosen Mary, but as usual, Mary was not aware. You know what God does, first God shapes the chosen one, just look at what she went through, and who else... yes Joseph. Joseph went through a lot...so was Mary. God kept Mary so that no man would touch her or marry her. Mary heard that in that particular town, a king would be born. Without knowing what would befall her, Mary was willing to be the one babysitting that particular king. She wanted to be the nurse of Jesus, (NJ) even though she was not even sure as to who was to give birth to the king. She was dreaming about it...anticipating taking care of the king without getting paid...so all those anticipations were anticipations of being a saviour herself, anticipations of being the mother to a saviour, all those internal feelings of admirations meant that Mary was the saviour herself. But she did not know about it. All that she went through are what we call duties of saviourhood...it is a huge task. So for the Mutima Church, instead of exalting Jesus, we respect and exalt Mary believing that she is the biggest saviour because she did the job of taking care of Jesus. (Interview with MAMP5. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

The use of the hidden transcript is ideal in this regard, as an analysis that reveals the contradiction and possibilities that look well beneath the placid surface (Scott, 1990: 15). MAMP5 uses the "language of complementarity", indicating what is believed in the Mutima Church: that God had plans for Mary. God reserved Mary for what the male priest calls a "big job of carrying the pregnancy of the Saviour". So Chishimba teaches that Mary did not refuse the offer from God. Mary accepted the offer, stating in the affirmative, "I am the servant of the Lord" (Lk 1:38).

Similarly, Mutima Church members use this scriptural verse more often, reciting Mary's response to Gabriel as a way of holiness and humbling themselves. Members are taught that Mother Mary should be one of their examples in the Bible. Mutima Church members are taught not to allow a doubting mind, for one might not realize what gift God has stored up for her or him (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

For instance, the middle-aged male priest number four (MAMP4) continues to list the roles Mary played as a woman chosen by God:

Mary and others could not have gone to the tomb in the morning. The disciples could have gone to the tomb themselves in the morning. But the women took the risk of going to the tomb early in the morning to go and anoint the body of the king. So to us Mary is *Namfumu*, meaning mother of king. Mary is the mother of King, (*Yesu ni mfumu, Maria ni namfumu*), Meaning Jesus is king, Mary is the mother of king. She is also the mother of Creator. That is where the name *Nakabumba* comes from. People say we worship Mary, no, no, no, we don't do that, we exalt and respect Mary so much. Mary is just a human being, but she has attributes of a saviour. Mary is our saviour. We worship God, we praise God, we honour God, we pray to God, one and only God...but through exaltation we are supposed to pray to God through Mary because she is the one who gave birth to Jesus Son of God. And through Jesus we get all the information we have about our God Almighty. Without Mary we could not have known that there is God, so this is how we even have Chishimba, our saviour. Through Chishimba we hear a lot of information concerning prayer, worship, and praising God. We have come to exalt Chishimba, because through Chishimba, we get to know a lot of information about God. All the right information concerning God, we hear from Chishimba. (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

The explanation by the MAMP4 shows that the church's interest in Mary helps members to understand the roles played by women, not only in society, but also what Mary and others did from the beginning to the end of Jesus' life. His explanation shows that Mary and the other women took some risks in waking up in the morning to go to the tomb. Similarly, the members of the Mutima Church are of the view that Mary and the other women could have been beaten up or killed that morning. Hence, it is important for the Mutima Church members to identify themselves with Mary, the Mother of a king. MAMP4 explains the meaning of *namfumu* according to the Bemba society and the Mutima Church. He explains that because Jesus is referred to as king, which in Bemba language means *imfumu*, *Namfumu* is the name given to any mother of a king. In addition, speaking about the roles of Mary, OMP2 concisely responded that

[s]ome of the praises we give to our female Redeemer (Mary) are: she is the Ark of Covenant; she is the strong ivory of an elephant. This is because of the spiritual powers and strength she commands. My dear if you read in the book of Revelations 12:6, you can also learn something from there. Thanks for asking. (Interview with OMP2. *Namfumu*. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

OMP2 did not seem interested in answering some of the questions. He emphasized the role of Mary and responded by using Bemba proverbs that referred to Mary. He was of the view that many of these praises can be found in the Bible.

Some feminists on the contrary, regard Mary's response to God as something that allows women to associate themselves with the passive Mary. For instance, Daly argues that for many women, associating themselves with the Mariological figure "has devastating effects on them" (See Daly, 1975:61;and Rakoczy, 2004: 341). Although this might not be the case in the Mutima Church, one should analyze the religio-cultural context from which members of the Mutima Church are coming. MAMP5's response comes from the way he and other members of the church have been socialized to believe that training as a nurse of Jesus gives them an identity that makes them accepted in the Kingdom of God and makes them mothers to many. This resulted in the church's calling of its members to be trained as Nurses of Jesus (NJ). Accepting training as an NJ is one important thing that shows the members' meekness and humbleness before God. The following section outlines some of the conditions that lead one to serve as a Nurse of Jesus in the Mutima Church.

### **5.5. Nurses of Jesus (NJs)**

In the Mutima Church, the call to serve as an ordained female priest comes in various ways. In the 1960s and 1970s respectively, "a childless marriage was considered meaningless, and the man was pressured into polygamy" (Nasimiyu-Wasike, 2001:103). Similarly, in the Mutima Church, when a man refuses to marry a second wife, the couple would be given conditions by Chishimba. For instance, they would be told to pray earnestly to God and fast more often so that God opens the womb of the wife. In many cases, conditions for such a couple involved dry fasting for three days or for five days, depending on the health of the couple. Praying would mean waking up at 03:00 am and praying continuously until 06:00 am. These are the signs of a true member of the Mutima Church and they are the conditions to be identified as a child of God (Chishimba, 1976:7). With this kind of approach, some members become meek and humble.

The question of childlessness is vital to the church but once the woman realizes she is pregnant, they are advised to go and give thanks to God through Chishimba. It is argued by Badenberg (2002:51) that "one of the most trying and exciting moments in the human life cycle is when husband and wife, and the family as a whole, hold a first-born child in their arms. The Bemba society is no exception in this". Relating to Bemba society means that this is also a cultural issue that entails marriages being for procreation. Between the 1960s and 1970s, when a couple had been blessed with a baby, Chishimba would ask the couple to offer the baby as a sacrifice at the altar, stating that once she or he grows up, the child will serve God as an NJ.

For some members, this was very hard, while other members accepted it, believing that the same child would bring happiness to their marriage. Oduyoye (2001b: 22) asserts that in many African societies “giving birth indicates the wholeness of the woman in the same way that a woman’s pregnancy stands for the wholeness of both the woman and man”. Therefore, even though female priests have praised Mary as their biggest “saviour”, they are taught to be like Mary. In many circumstances, they are referred to as “*banamfumu*”, literally “mothers of the king” by the congregants. It is not only that they are in charge of the congregations, but there is something else beyond this point. One of the ways that female priests are taught to answer God’s calling is by accepting pregnancies, like Mary. To this end, becoming an NJ means that one is a servant of God, just as in Mary’s Magnificat.

Another way of appointment to be an NJ comes by ones’ calling. If a member feels that he or she is being called to serve as an NJ, the person is allowed to undergo a three-year training period, until the person takes an oath in front of the whole congregation. There are also others who are appointed by Chishimba, as we have seen, from the participants. For instance, if a person is constantly sick, that person is told that he or she has a calling to serve as an NJ. Many widows and widowers are lured into serving as NJs. However, concerning divorced women and widows, they do not have a calling of having *children of the spirit*.

By exalting Mary, the female priests in the Mutima Church undergo a three-year training period where they are taught how to perform the priestly duties of “saviourhood”. These are duties such as, performing mission work, looking after other people in the congregations, taking care of their children and performing some rituals when Chishimba visits the particular place.

Similarly, and during the training period, both women and men are called *ba* NJ, meaning Nurse(s) of Jesus. They perform many kinds of household duties. At the end of the third year, the NJs “swear an oath to the entire congregation” and they are ordained as male or female priests. Unlike their male counterparts who continue to practice celibacy, female priests are taught various ways that surround Mary and are thus advised to be eager to take care of the unborn king. The following sections discuss some responses concerning the experiences of female priests as Nurses of Jesus.

### 5.5.1 Experiences of Serving as Nurses of Jesus

This group comprised eight female priests, three male priests, two old female priests and four younger female priests who discussed the view that becoming a priest is one's cross to carry. Within this group, there were two women who were called for training and later absconded during their third year. The question being answered is: What are the most positive experiences that you have had in your training as a Nurse of Jesus (NJ)? The experiences of the older female priests were not the same as those of the middle-aged female priests. For example, the older female priest stated that

[y]ou see, to be called to serve as a Nurse of Jesus, it is a Cross that one has to carry. I was told to go and serve as NJ after the death of my husband. By that time, I had five children, four girls and one boy. All the children were grown up by then (Interview with OFP1. *Namfumu*. 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

As a follow-up question, (OFP1) older female priest was asked to inform the researcher who appoints members to serve as Nurses of Jesus and she replied,

It is only Chishimba, our parent of truth, our teacher who appoints members to serve as Nurses of Jesus. You see, Chishimba can see through his members... So God communicates to Chishimba and shows him the members who should train as Nurses of Jesus... My experience has been quite challenging, because I left my house and my children. But I thank God that all my four children have grown and are now married... And because I have been married before, like any other older female priest, it has not been very difficult to run the affairs of the *Namfumu*. I went through a three-year training and after that, I was ordained. I have served in charge of many *Namfumus*; *Namfumu we Tuna*, *Namfumu we Yanda*, *Namfumu wa Mpanda* to mention a few. There are no salaries in our jobs, because it is purely mission work. Church members take care of us. Part of my job has been to take care and train the young female and male NJs who have never been married before. As older priests, we teach them house chores and to look after different people who come to stay with us in *Namfumu*. The most positive part is that during my training, I travelled extensively in some parts of Zambia and knew places that I never knew before. I am now an expert in running the affairs of *Namfumus* (Interview with OFP1 at *Namfumu*. 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

OFP1 states that being called to train as a Nurse of Jesus (NJ) is a cross that one has to carry. In the Mutima sense, for one to carry a cross entails the pain and suffering experienced by Jesus, such as being rejected by his own people, facing betrayal, carrying his own heavy cross and falling with it fourteen times, being nailed to the cross while he was still alive and so on. Carrying one's cross is not an easy task because the cross of Jesus Christ means that members should endure the pain and suffering that Jesus went through. After all, it was not easy for Jesus to carry his own cross. Similarly, OMP1, a male priest said:

My experiences have enriched me a lot because we do not get paid for being priests... I see the hand of God in my life as a priest. You see, our teacher is gifted, I tell you. I didn't know the things I know today, such as, leading the worship, and educating the NJs until they are able to run the affairs of the church. He was not ordained in the RCC, but *Umufyashi wa Chishinka* literally Parent of Truth was ordained by the most High God when he was inspired by the Holy Spirit and that was in 1951. From him, I have learnt many things. I even know how to speak *ichaAushi*, a language spoken in the Luapula Province of Zambia... You know, wherever we go, we even learn how to cook the way people in that area cook their food... *Ala musalaba ukalamba sana* literally, 'it is a big Cross'. You see, sometimes as old priests, myself and other female and male priests, are sent to go and assist in establishing new Namfumus in rural areas such as the New *Namfumu wa Bulubwa* in Luwingu, the nearby area where our teacher was born. We are even told to spread the Word of God while we are establishing our new Namfumu. We were there for five years, and we planted our own food, and ate fish from the river, and there are also some wild animals...as male priests, we had to go hunting. We call this '*ukusokola umushi wa Namfumu*' literally, establishing a New *Namfumu* Village... You see why I say I see the hand of God and this is my cross eh...? My friends and I have been part of establishing a number of Namfumu villages... (Interview with OMP1 at *Namfumu*. 10<sup>th</sup> July June 2017).

Being an old man, OMP1 does not think that there is anything wrong with being a male or female priest. Being a male priest or female priest does not mean that members get a salary or a stipend. There are no salaries or stipends in the Mutima Church. It is mission work and members are used to performing unpaid tasks. Members have to be active in performing field work because the more they engage in farming, the more food they have to sustain themselves.

In his own view, OMP1 narrates that he has experienced the hand of God on his faith journey as a male priest being sent to go and establish new *Namfumu* villages in remote areas. This means he has more experience in performing mission work and involving himself in farm work, as well as storing foodstuffs to sustain members during the hot seasons. This is part of evangelizing. Both OFM1 and OMP1 are of the view that the calling to serve as priests is a gift from God because that is what they have been taught by Chishimba. OMP1, like other members, also believe that Chishimba has been ordained by the most High God. The following section narrates positive experiences by middle-aged female priests (MAFPs) and middle-aged male priests (MAMPs).

During her interview, MAFP5 narrates her own experience as NJ:

My positive experience in my training as a Nurse of Jesus is that I see myself as a blessing...a blessing that is not only to me alone, but a blessing to my family, and my relatives and the people I impart the Word of God to. Although this is a

cross to carry, for example, leaving your family, and home and travelling in the remote areas of Zambia and sometimes fasting for many days which I cannot do when I am with my mother, I have learnt a lot of things in my training. I can say that I have learnt how to cope and live with people from different tribes (Interview with MAFP5 at *Namfumumu*. 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017).

Some other female priests acknowledged that accepting being an NJ is one's cross that no other person can carry for anyone. All the eight female priests stated that during their NJs training, they have travelled and stayed in different *Namfumumus*. They stated that the training of NJ is the most difficult part because they are taught to be disciplined, to be obedient, to be meek and humble, and to mind the way they walk, talk and handle certain issues, such as settling quarrels among members and other people. They stated that this is also the period when they travel a lot, and try to adapt to different kinds of food and places. They are also taught to learn the language if that were possible. Female volunteer number one (FVN1) and female volunteer number two (FVN2), were interviewed on separate occasions and stated the reasons why they had to leave the training in their third year. According to FVN1,

*Eish...* I do not want to think about that any more. You see if I had not moved out, I was not going to be able to get married and have my own children. The training is hard because when you are there, you are taught how to look after a husband...and then you ask yourself, which husband am I supposed to look after since I have given myself to serve God as a single woman or as *umushimbe* (a virgin who has vowed not to get married)? ...But there are positive things that I learnt, such as singing, cleaning the environment, and receiving visitors in my house. (Interview with FVN1 at *Namfumumu*. 28<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Seemingly, FVN1 does not regret leaving the training and getting married. She seems to be excited about her marital life and bearing children since getting married, and bearing children are cultural norms. Similarly, FVN2 explained that in spite of her positive experiences which includes learning and teaching other NJs how to read and write, she still embraces the teachings of the church about God. FVN2 said that

[y]ou know what, the training is so educative... I mean, cultural wise, they teach you how to treat people like your fellow human beings; how to go about performing chores and looking after visitors and so on. It was in my third year that my friend and I decided to run away from becoming female priests. We ran away in the early hours of the morning, packed our suitcases and left *Namfumumu*, passing through the thick forest... You know the *Namfumumu* is always situated in the remote areas, right?...I just could not stand the thought of carrying a cross, such as having children. I was so young by then. Yes, they say it is a blessing from God, but my friend and I did not just want to be part of that... we decided to run away... and got married to outsiders instead. (Interview with FVN2 at *Namfumumu*. 29<sup>th</sup> July 2017)

Although the two statements have positive aspects in them, both FVN1 and FVN2's statements contain some form of individual resistance to being ordained as female priests. Both FVN1 and FVN2 had declined their calling as NJs and decided to go and get married to men who are not members of the Mutima Church. FVN1 and FVN2 represent those women who have declined their calling and decided to get married. As Mbiti argues, "for many African peoples, marriage is the focus of existence" (1999:133). For FVN1 and FVN2 not to have played their part in the marriage system meant that they were going to be rejected by their families and societies. According to Mbiti (1999: 133), "...marriage is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate." Mbiti (1999: 133) argues that "otherwise, he [*sic*] who does not participate in [marriage] is a curse to the community, he [*sic*] is a rebel and a law-breaker, he [*sic*] is not only abnormal but 'under-human'." Members of the Mutima Church believe that being called to serve as an NJ is a blessing from God, because the appointment of NJs is done by Chishimba. It is in this way that the appointment of female priests is based on the patriarchal system, though the calling to serve is believed to be from God through Chishimba. During their interview regarding the question "Please narrate your story about what you think is your role as a priest", the priests had the same explanation.

## 5.6. Priests' Roles

It is Chishimba who appoints the NJs and the female priests to bear the pregnancy and give birth to the unborn king. It is Chishimba who conveys messages to the Mutima Church members concerning the concept of Mary and the unborn king. Some female priests include Mary, Jesus and Chishimba as their Saviours.

As for female priests in the Mutima Church, their exaltation and imitation of Mary is vital because this gives them a sense of identity as holy and humble women. Rakoczy views Mary as a "devout Jewish woman" whose parents and family are not well known, except that "tradition" names her father as Joachim and her mother as Anne (2004: 346). Similarly, the priests, as well as members of the Mutima Church, are taught to live together as one, and embrace ordinary lives. This is reflected in Chapter Six on the role of Chishimba in the church. They practice, or rather live, according to what they term *abaIsraeli*, literally Israeli lifestyles or communal lives. Their *Namfumus* (congregations) are usually found in the outskirts of towns, located in rural areas. According to Rakoczy (2004: 346),

...it is crucial to locate Mary within her social context as a real woman of her time. A Jewish woman, she lived in a rural village in Palestine, which was a remote colony of the Roman Empire...She may or may not have been able to read.

The above quotation is not a way of forcing Rakoczy's views on the female priests, but it is to appreciate the establishment of the *Namfumus* in the Mutima Church, because within these many destitutes are taken care of. The difference is that Mary was married and female priests vow not to get married. Like other male priests, MAMP4 explains that Mutima Church members do not worship Mary, but they exalt and respect Mary because she gave birth to Jesus, the king. Mary has attributes of a saviour, so if Jesus is the saviour, then his mother Mary is the biggest saviour.

Furthermore, MAMP4 explains that "... through Jesus we get all the information we have about our God Almighty. Without Mary we could not have known that there is God, so this is how we even have Chishimba, our saviour". It is through Jesus, son of Mary, that Mutima Church members are taught about God. MAMP4 is not explicit in stating the way in which Chishimba came into being here. However, this is further illustrated in Chapter Six on the role of Chishimba in the Mutima Church. Hence, there is a need to uncover the hidden transcript in order to view the relation they bear on public transcript (Scott, 1990:14). For example, the role of Jesus and Mary is discussed in the public arena, while the role of Chishimba has been included by relating it to Mary, as if Mary is also the biological mother of Chishimba. Yet the meaning here is that God sent the angel Gabriel, and Mary responded, so all the information from God is passed on to the members through Jesus.

MAMP4 claims that just as Mary gave birth to Jesus, and both are exalted in the Mutima Church, so is Chishimba equated to Jesus. MAMP4 refers to Chishimba as another "saviour" because all the information they know about God in the church passes through him. In this respect, Chishimba is exalted because Mutima Church members believe that Chishimba has been chosen by God. Burlington argues that Chishimba discovered his true calling when the meaning and significance of his own mother, Chilufya, was revealed.<sup>84</sup> To this end, Chishimba's role and his mother's position are analyzed at length in Chapter Six.

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<sup>84</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 80.

It is important to note that from the responses of some of the priests, relationships between men and women in the Mutima Church are based on unequal sexual relations. This is in terms of the policy that men are physically fitter than women, and that they are created to take care of women. Members are of the view that this is biblically based and their church adapts what is written in both the Old and New Testament scriptures. Both men and women are socialized in a context which deems them fit to live in and praise God. This is also enshrined in Chapter Four of the Mutima Church Missional Policy.

## **5.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the responses of both female and male priests to the questions. The first question was to interpret what it means for the participant to be a member of the Mutima Church. This was followed by a probing question inquiring why the Mutima Church ordains women. In their attempt to answer these questions, the members affirmed that all human beings belong to the Mutima Church because God has blessed them with human hearts. They also asserted that all human beings are created in God's own image. For this reason, both women and men are called to perform God's duties. The second question was about the teachings of the church in relation to marriage. In their responses, both the female and male priests are of the view that marriage is biblical and sacred, since it is sanctioned by God. The third question was to understand members' theological concept of Mary. In their line of thought and according to their views, members do not worship Mary, but she is exalted because of the role she took in giving birth to Jesus. Both Mary and Jesus are regarded as Saviours. But the biggest Saviour is Mary. The final question in this chapter was to inquire about the role of the participants' serving as nurses of Jesus (NJ), narrating their story about what they think is one's role as a female/male priest in the Mutima Church. These members are chosen by Chishimba to be NJs. Some of their views are that serving as a nurse of Jesus is one's cross to carry, and no one can help one to carry the cross. All these questions and answers are based on socio-religio and cultural factors that are enshrined in the Missional policy of the church.

The following chapter continues with the presentation of findings from the priests. The chapter examines the role of priests, and the role of Chilufya, the mother of Chishimba. Furthermore, the

chapter examines the role of Chishimba and investigates the role of the *children of the spirit* which is vital for this study.

## CHAPTER 6

# Socio-Religious and Cultural Factors and the Role of Chishimba in the Mutima Church

### 6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five outlined the priests' responses to some fieldwork questions. It was highlighted that in the Mutima Church all the priests, as well as the other members of the church who have leadership positions, undergo a three-year training course that is done within the *Namfumus* or Parishes. During this training, both men and women are called Nurses of Jesus (NJs). It was also noted in Chapter Five that marital teachings are biblical in the Mutima Church, and that being a member of the Mutima Church gives them their identity. Members feel that they have acquired more knowledge about the Full Image of God that has been revealed in Africa. The chapter presented the responses of the priests on what it means for them to belong to the Mutima Church. It was observed from some of the responses that being a member of the Mutima Church is a blessing to all members.

This chapter continues to present the responses of priests from their fieldwork. The responses highlight, among other issues, the role of Chishimba in the church and the nature of the *children of the spirit*. But before these are presented, the chapter is guided by the following questions: (a) who is Chishimba? What is his role in the Church? (b) What are the teachings of the church on Jesus, Chilufya Chilondola and Chishimba? (c) What is the interpretation of *abana ba mupashi*, meaning “*children of the spirit*”? (d) What do you think should be done to acknowledge and reward a female priest who has children of the spirit for the work they are doing in the church? (e) What is your vision of female priests and/or “on being Church for the Mutima Church women?” (f) Has the church given you any conditions of service at any time? (g) What challenges have you experienced as a female priest, a leader of *Namfumu* and a mother? Do you think the Biblical teachings of the Mutima Church are related to Bemba culture? Explain.

In this chapter the responses are divided into four sections. The first section outlines the responses of the priests to questions (a) and (b): Who is Chishimba and what is his role in the teachings of the church on Mary, Jesus, Chilufya Chilondola and Chishimba? The second

section outlines the responses of the priests to questions (c) and (d): Their interpretations of the *children of the spirit* and what should be done to acknowledge and reward female priests who have *children of the spirit*. The third section outlines the responses to questions (e) and (f), with regard to the priests' vision "on being church for the Mutima Church women," and investigates whether the church has given the women any conditions of service at any time. The final section (g) outlines the priests' responses to the question of whether they "think the Biblical teachings of the Mutima Church are related to Bemba culture.

With reference to the previous chapter, Table 2 (below) shows how the total of twenty-five participants in the sample were divided as follows: nine (9) older female priests, eleven (11) middle-aged female priests and five (5) male priests. The total number of participants in this section was twenty-five (25). However, in the process of the interviews, the three older female priests withheld their responses to some of the questions because they felt that the questions were too sensitive. Although the three older priests did not state their reasons for withdrawal, it was evident that the public transcript was not the whole story (Scott, 1990:3). The older female priests felt that they might reveal information that might be sensitive to the researcher. Instead of answering the questions, the older female priests decided to remain silent. This showed that there was actually more to the public transcript than the Mutima Church members portrayed.

Flick (2014:161) says that some interviewees may distance themselves because of where researchers are coming from and also because of the age ranges. In this regard, the study argues that having learned that the researcher was conducting research on the issue of the *children of the spirit*, the two interviewees felt a sense of distrust. However, the Mutima Church itself teaches that members should preach the Word of God to outsiders, because the church has been established by God for Africans. For this reason, it was decided that the interviews should be conducted with the rest of the interviewees. Table 2 below illustrates the number of participants.

**Table 2**

<b>Old Female Priests (OFPs)</b>	<b>Age-Range</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Middle-Aged Female Priests (MAFPs)</b>	<b>Age-Range</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Female Volunteers numbers (FVs)</b>
	-	9		-	11	0
<b>Old Male Priests (OMPs)</b>	<b>Age-Range</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Middle-Aged Male Priests (MAMPs)</b>	<b>Age-Range</b>	<b>Number</b>	
	-	3		-	2	

In responding to the question on the role of Chishimba in the Mutima Church, the responses are categorized into themes. The first theme highlights the role of Chishimba. The second theme is about category comprises responses from the middle-aged female priests (MAFP 1-10). The third category comprises responses from the older male priests (OMPs). The fourth comprises middle-aged male priests (MAMPs). This was done in order to note their understanding of Chishimba's role and the *children of the spirit* pertaining to their ages. However, in their responses to the remaining questions, their ages are not categorized.

## **6.2. Chishimba's Role: The Secret**

Almost all the women who were interviewed, even the three who declined to answer all the questions, gave the same response to the role of Chishimba in their church. OFP1, an old female priest, stated that

[y]ou mean you are asking about the duty of our parent (Chishimba) in the church? There is a secret that many people do not understand about the role of Chishimba. *Umufyashi Chibombelo Chikalamba cha Mulubushi wesu Nakabumba, Lesa alimusala ukuba umulondoshi wesu ifwe fwe balubwa* meaning Chishimba is our parent, overseer, a teacher to all of us. He is the High Priest who mediates to God on our behalf. He is the High Priest, because Chishimba conveys messages from our Creator. Because we are the chosen people of God, God has since appointed him to be our Redeemer... You see Chishimba has given us very clear guidelines in almost everything we do...for instance; 'To show kindness and love to other people; be moderate, humble, meek; do not be selfish because our God is not a

selfish God...Love each other because it is in all human beings that God has instilled God's qualities; share whatever things you have and so forth and so on.' We are so blessed with Chishimba's teachings, my dear. (Interview with OFP1. *Namfumu*. 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

*Ni nkama*, literally a secret, is a phrase that is mostly used by members of the Mutima Church. It is used in cases that refer to Chishimba's roles and to answer whatever questions people who are not members of the church may ask. It is not only OFP1 who has the view that Chishimba is the High Priest, but all the members of the church concur. Mutima Church members believe that Chishimba is their Redeemer and a Parent of Truth (Interview with OFP3. *Namfumu*. 2 July 2017). Chishimba has given them guidelines to follow during the liturgy. Chishimba has many titles, and he is also referred to as King. This is further elaborated on by OFP3, an old female priest:

Chishimba is our King, because he plays the role of kingship...He is the King for the Africans in Zambia and Africa too. We had Jesus, who is also referred to as King, but Jesus was not an African...you see? The same God who gave the white people Jesus, and they betrayed him; is the same God who has given us a King in a black skin; Why...why? It is because God is a fair God... What was given to the white people can also be given to the black people... Though we praise and honour Jesus because he was the Liberator of humanity, we also do the same to Chishimba... our King...eh...eh and being a King...Chishimba also receives praises such as:

'Your followers regard you as a Rock...; you are the strong pillar to many; you are the parent to us Africans; No doubt, you are the King to those who obey your teachings'. And the other one is

'You deserve some respect and honour from us, since we are the chosen ones; you, the living Rock; the one who has kept the Word of God; That is why God has elevated you...and given Godself in you'.

You see my daughter, all these praises tell you a lot about Chishimba's roles...and they reveal a lot to us too. It has not been easy for Chishimba to impart knowledge in us...though some people have found it difficult, and have since left the church. But those who do that, are reflections of not being the chosen ones. Because Chishimba is also our King, it is important that we show him respect and honour him... (Interview with OFP3. *Namfumu*. 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017).

Like many others, OFP3 confirms that Chishimba also plays the role of a King, which is the reason they give praise to him, just as some subjects do to their Kings or Chiefs. *Imfumu Makumbi*, meaning King Makumbi, is another title that is attached to Chishimba. Similarly, OFP5 suggests that Chishimba is an African King, and for this reason he deserves the honour and respect of many praises offered to Kings and Chiefs. OFP5 stated the teachings of the Church on Jesus, Mary, Chilufya Chilondola as follows:

Well...In our church, we all know that Jesus is King, who was born in the land of our elders, the White people. We call White people our elder brothers and sisters because the secret of Jesus was revealed to them in the beginning and according to the Bible, but we also know that God was speaking and is still speaking to the Black people. Yes, Jesus is our Saviour, but the greatest Saviour is Mary, the Mother...I believe I have explained this that since Mary and Jesus were born in the White people's land,... here in Africa, God is still speaking. Chilufya Chilondola is the mother of Chishimba. You see, the secret here is what we hear about Chilufya Chilondola; what she went through and she also comes from the lineage of our Bemba Chiefs, the Chitimukulus. (Interview with OFP5. *Namfumu*. 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017).

OFP5 explained that, in the Mutima Church, White people are referred to as their elder brothers and sisters<sup>85</sup>. This resonates with Chishimba's argument in the document, "*The Full Image of God Revealed in Africa*" (1974: 3-4). It is also part of the teaching of the church. For OFP5, God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus, which is a secret that only God alone knew. But since God is full of fairness and good judgement<sup>86</sup> [and according to the Mutima Church policy document (1974)] towards Africa, God chose Chilufya and appointed one of her sons, Chishimba, to represent Mary, mother of Jesus. OFP7's response is similar to the others. According to OFP7,

Chishimba is our guide, our leader, our overseer and our Parent of Truth. You see, 'ninkama', (secret), there is a 'secret' on the role of Chishimba that people do not understand...the secret that has only been revealed by the Holy Spirit of God. It could not have been easy for him as a human being to run this church. Only God knows how this has been like this. You see, if Chishimba was a mere human being like us, our church could have been destroyed a long time ago. Being our overseer and mediator, we, the Mutima members, are very lucky in Zambia. This is because not many churches live the way we do, can you see how we live? We live as a group and love each other; The Roman Catholic have some of these qualities because they understand the Word of God just like we do. You see, whenever we face some challenges, we present them to Chishimba, and he tells us what to do or how to sort them out... because Chishimba teaches us that 'to every problem, there is a solution, as long as wisdom and knowledge are applied in handling these problems'... Chishimba consults our Almighty God on our behalf. You see long time, people used to consult ancestors, but in our church, things have been made easier for us, we consult Chishimba who in turn presents our requests to God. Chishimba is the mediator between us members and God. That is why even the name 'Rock' is one of the praises that God has revealed to

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<sup>85</sup>Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 78. Burlington gives a detailed explanation of why Mutima Church members refer to the White people as elder brothers and sisters.

<sup>86</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 78.

us to be referring to Chishimba...About Chilufya, you see, Chilufya is the mother of our overseer. Chilufya comes from the genealogy of the great Paramount Chief, Chitimukulu Chinchinta, of the Bemba people...so you see, if Jesus is the descendant of the house of David; in similar terms Chilufya is the descendant of Bemba Paramount Chief. God is a fair God. We cannot be praising the son, Chishimba only...without referring to the mother who gave birth to him. (Interview with OFP7. *Namfumumu*. 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2017).

OFP7 is convinced that Chishimba is not like any other human being, and begins by stating that ‘If Chishimba was an ordinary human being like us...’ This shows that Mutima Church members believe that God has revealed Godself in Chishimba. With reference to Chishimba’s teachings, members consider Chishimba as the one chosen by God to lead them. This conviction does not apply to OFP7 alone, but to all members of the Mutima Church, since they are of the view that they are the chosen ones. Like many other members, OFP8, also an old female priest, gave the same response. She stated that

[y]ou see, imilimo yamu fyashi wa chishinka wesu, meaning the work of our Parent of Truth, Chishimba’s works cannot be compared to the works of any other human being. Chishimba’s role is to redeem and embrace his sheep, communicate the Word of God to us. This is a secret to only those who are chosen, like us. Chishimba is the overseer, our Redeemer, mediator and our parent. He is the Rock in Africa, *libwe lye shiku*... Rock of Wonder. This is a secret to only those who are chosen here in Zambia to cover up the whole of Africa. This is a secret that only those who believe, are able to understand...and...and about Mary, I would say that you see... since to us Mary is our Liberator, look at it this way, Chishimba has been chosen to be Mary’s representative to us...before Chishimba we had Jesus...in the male nature... now we have Chishimba, even though he is a male, he is performing the works of a woman, that is Mary (*Nakabumba*). So the same way we respect Mary, because she is the mother of Jesus, is the same way we respect Chilufya, because she is the mother of our Redeemer. This is why our calendar has her Holy Day in December. This is the revelation of God, my dear. (Interview with OFP8. *Namfumumu*. 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Like other members of the Mutima Church, OFP8 is of the view that Chishimba’s role is to redeem and embrace his members. His role is to be the link between God and Mutima Church members. She mentions that Chishimba being called a Rock of Wonder, meaning *Libwe lye shiku*, implies that Chishimba’s existence and performance are a wonder to many people, because they fail to understand the work that God has sent him to perform. Mutima Church members believe that Mary is their Liberator. But they state that since Jesus was a man, God has appointed Chishimba to perform and redeem the members by performing the characteristics of a woman...that are within Chishimba. In this regard, Chilufya is the bearer of Chishimba, their Redeemer. Burlington argues that “Chilufya is God’s instrument for bringing [Chishimba] into

the world to reveal the hidden female aspect of his hidden nature and Mary's role as Africa's Savior".<sup>87</sup> The following section outlines responses from the female priests (MAFPs).

### 6.2.2. Chishimba: The *Parent of Truth*

On the teachings of the church about Mary, Jesus, Chilufya, and Chishimba, MAFP5 stated that

I think I have explained why we exalt Mary in this church... She is the mother of Jesus who endured more pain. Chishimba is our *Parent of Truth*, our teacher, '*entungulushi ya babile ne nkonkani*' meaning Chishimba is the chief guide and High Priest of the Mutima Church members... the mother of Chishimba is Chilufya... In this church, we honour Chilufya for being the mother of our High Priest, because she gave birth to our Redeemer... Jesus performed the ministry from a masculine nature... Chishimba performs the ministry from a feminine nature because he represents Mary. That is why we exalt Mary... because... you know... Mary's ministry is too feminine, (*Nyinefwe*) because Chishimba represents our Mother Mary on this earth. (Interview with MAFP5. *Namfumu*. 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017).

OFPI, MAFP5 and all the members of the church refer to Chishimba as "our teacher" or "Parent of Truth". Members of the Mutima Church refer to Chishimba as "our Guide or the one who leads". This title in the Bemba language means *Intungulushi*, hence, MAFP5's statement announces that Chishimba is their leader, and guides all the ordained priests and his members. MAFP5, including the older female priests, are of the view that Chishimba performs the work of Mary, mother of Jesus, hence, the title in Bemba *Nyinefwe*, meaning "our Mother". Chishimba is also the High Priest because he is the origin or founder of the Mutima Church. MAFP5 and MAFP7 were interviewed on the same date, but at different times. Some points by MAFP7, a female priest and parish priest of one *Namfumu*, are that

*Umufyashi wa Chishinka, Chibwe mushipikisha e Chishimba Mulolani*. Our Parent of Truth, the Rock who endures all pain is also known as Chishimba Mulolani. Chishimba is also our Redeemer... when you hear us say *Umulondoshi*... it means we are referring to Chishimba because he has redeemed us... About Chilufya Chilondola, mmmh... she is the mother of Chishimba, you know that... we respect her because of many things she did... giving birth to Chishimba... just like Mary gave birth to Jesus. Chilufya was a mother to all the Mutima Church members... she used to work up very early in the morning to perform house chores... she was a very active woman and she was a God-fearing

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<sup>87</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 77.

woman too. She was a counsellor to those who needed counselling...she loved prayers... you see, you will find all her works outlined in one of our church's documents... we use these during her Holy Days... so you see why we honour Chilufya? In Bemba we say, (*ubufumu bucindikwa kubene*) ...meaning 'the Kingship is honoured by its own people'. (Interview with MAFP7. *Namfumu*. 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Why do you refer to Chishimba as Chibwe or the Rock? Why does he endure all the pain?

These were follow up questions from the researcher, which MAFP7 continued to answer:

I call him the rock because he is the Rock of Wonder and also the following biblical reasons: First remember the shepherds that were watching the flock of sheep at night...? God sent an angel to those shepherds about a child who was born in Bethlehem, Jesus...Ah ...ah...here, I can say both Mary and Joseph endured the pain of taking care of their child...Now, we believe that if God is the everlasting God, who spoke at that time to the shepherds, and to Adam, and to Abraham and to all those that we read in the Bible, has God then stopped talking?... No, no, no (shaking her head). In Africa, God is still speaking, speaking to us Africans and this is how we have our Chishimba, our Redeemer... and because he has redeemed us, God speaks to Chishimba and he obeys... So the role of Chishimba is to listen to what God wants him to say to his members. And because Chishimba obeys, and informs us what God wants us to do and to be, we call Chishimba, '*umufyashi wesu*' or *kafundisha* (our parent or teacher). Second, the name 'Peter the Rock', is biblical. When Jesus told Peter that I have given you the name 'Rock' and on you I shall build a church... this did not just end there...uhm...uhm... the same words have been used to our parent, Chishimba. The same words have been applied to us here in Zambia. God is still speaking. Why? Because God is the same God and God is still speaking to us through Chishimba. So you see, Chishimba's other name is Peter, Peter the Rock because he has been given the keys to heaven. God has spoken that on Chishimba, God will build a church, and this is the church, our church. (Interview with MAFP7. *Namfumu*. 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Like all other Mutima Church members, MAFP7 believes that Chishimba is chosen by God. She emphasizes that Chishimba has been given the keys to heaven, and members of the Mutima Church believe this, too. The other thing they keep saying is that God is an everlasting God. Their argument, just like MAFP7's argument above, is that, if we all agree that God is an everlasting God, then it means God is still speaking. If God spoke to the white people, then God is still speaking to the black people, but using Chishimba. The teaching that has been received by the Mutima Church members is that when God speaks, God uses Chishimba or speaks through Chishimba, who in turn communicates with his members. MAFP7 outlines the role played by Chilufya before she died, indicating that, like Burlington (1998), Chilufya loved the Mutima Church members and would regard them with empathy.

OMP1 had this to say concerning the role of Chishimba:

Chishimba ... (*libwe lye shiku*) meaning (Rock of wonder)...um...um Chishimba is our Redeemer...the leader... our mediator, someone who guides us in the church. So...uhmm...if you know who Chishimba is in our midst, then you will know the role that he plays in this church. Every organization has a leader or leaders, and so we have Chishimba, whom we refer to as Peter *Wakuno Africa*, meaning Peter of this Africa. He leads us and we follow. The secret that God has imparted on Chishimba and the role that he plays, can only be understood by those who believe in what he says. That is why you see us giving him gifts and praises such as ‘You are the Rock and on you I will build a church’ because God spoke these words in the book of Isaiah, and this happened during the time of Jesus and Peter. And since God is still speaking, God speaks through Chishimba to impart knowledge into us, the members of the Mutima Church. (Interview with OMP1. *Namfumu*.10<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

*Libwe lye shiku* is also one of the phrases that is used to refer to Chishimba. The phrase simply means that Chishimba is the “Rock of Wonder” to many people. The things Chishimba teaches and does are unique, in a sense that many people do not understand, because they treat him as their fellow human being. And in the above statement, OMP1 uses the phrase which many members use over and over if people ask a lot of questions concerning Chishimba. The phrase *libwe lye shiku*, literally the Rock of Wonder, is used more often in the Mutima Church. Almost all the priests mentioned the phrase “the secret” that is in Chishimba that cannot be understood by other people. The term “secret” also appears in many of the Mutima Church’s documents. Apart from revealing that this secret exposes God’s fairness and good judgement towards Black people, there are some other issues which have not been revealed. For instance, and as indicated in Chapter Four, in the Mutima Church document titled ‘*Full Image of God Revealed in Africa*’, Chishimba argues that in the beginning, there was “...the white Secret revealed to our Elders by God using some people amongst the Elect, phrased as “I am the Alpha and the Omega” (1974: 2). In the same sense, Chishimba is of the view that if God revealed the white Secret to some Elders, the same God, because of God’s fairness (*Umulinganya*), has revealed the black Secret to the Elders of Africa by using those people amongst those elected by God. As such, Chishimba is one of the elected ones.

A similar response was given by another male priest, OMP3, who stated that the same God who was there in the beginning, is the same God that is speaking to the Mutima Church members and has appointed Chishimba. Their argument and belief is that God as an everlasting God will

continue speaking forever. By referring to Chishimba's childhood and to him as "Peter the Rock", members are of the view that Chishimba endured a lot of suffering and pain during his childhood from his stepfather. This is illustrated by OMP3, who states that

Chishimba is our Parent of Truth, our Liberator and Saviour. Let me tell you this, I believe you know his background... Well, when he was born, apart from being threatened to be killed by his step father, some people thought Chishimba would never grow up. But the Holy Spirit of God was speaking through Chishimba's biological father, who was called Mulolani. His father pointed out that 'this child of mine will grow, he is like *'Chatuta cili mu Luombe cimuka kaela'* literally, 'there is something vibrating in the Luombe River, the spouse's name is Kaela'. My child would grow up until he is old, he will not die in his prime age'. And indeed, when Chishimba started listening to the voice of God speaking to him, one of the names God has given him is *Petro Wakuno Africa, Chibwe mushipikisha* meaning Peter of this Africa, Peter the Rock, (Interview with OMP3. *Namfumu*. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Although OMP3 responds like other female priests by stating that Chishimba is "our *Parent of Truth*", he has included the roles of "Liberator" and "Saviour" which the other female priests overlooked. OMP3 is of the view that Chishimba is the Liberator because the Mutima Church members believe, Chishimba has liberated and saved them from living in sin. With Chishimba as their Liberator and Saviour, Mutima Church members believe that they are able to differentiate what is right from what is wrong. OMP3 further uses the proverb that Chishimba's father, Mulolani, used on his son a long time ago, when Mulolani praised his son Chishimba by stating that there is something vibrating in the Luombe River which has the spouse's name known as Kaela. This means that Chishimba is the one vibrating in the Mutima Church, with many people unable to capture his message.

In this section, the two responses from the middle-aged male priests were similar. MAMP4 made this statement on the role of Chishimba and his work:

Chishimba is not only the founder of the Mutima Church... Chishimba has been chosen by God to lead us and guide us, and teach us what we are supposed to know about God, in such a way that as Mutima Church members, we are fed the Word of God through Chishimba. God is everlasting God... Another thing is, 'we are created in the image of God'... so the name 'Rock' is the stronghold of God for us here in the Mutima Church starting in Zambia. The name informs us to be strong. That is why you have seen our way of worship, we fast, we have prayers from around 03:00 hours in the morning till 06:00 hours in the morning. Then we embark on our daily chores. Among other things, Chishimba has taught us that there are many evil things that happen during that time of the night. The important thing about these morning vigils is that we imitate the shepherds who were still awake when the angel Gabriel appeared to them informing them about the newly

born child, Jesus. So we are taught that it is important to stay awake at night (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

MAMP4, as well as many other members of the Mutima Church, acknowledge that these morning prayers assist people a lot. Of much importance in the morning prayers is that there are songs that relate to shepherds. MAMP4 further states that “Chishimba has taught us”, which stresses that Chishimba is the initiator of all knowledge in the church. Similarly, MAMP5 stated that

You know that we, the last Israelites are now the first in terms of spiritual wisdom. Our Redeemer has completed the secret of God that is his role. Chishimba has revealed the full image of God, the male side and the female side. Mary, our female Redeemer, is the one who used to work in spirit in our Parent of Truth. So even the guidelines of the church, Chishimba is the one who taught us (Interview with MAMP5. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

MAMP5 argues that the Redeemer of the Church, who is Chishimba, has completed the secret of God. That is the role of Chishimba. In addition, MAMP5 explains that Mary’s role is to work in spirit and reveal some issues to Chishimba. The following section illustrates the responses of the female priests to the priests’ roles and journeys in the church. The question was: Will you please narrate your faith journey and the role of the priest in the Mutima Church?

### 6.3 Priests’ Faith Journeys

Because the roles of both male and female priests are determined by Chishimba, the female priests had similar responses to this question. During the interview with the older female priests, there was a lot of pausing and re-thinking. OFP1 said:

... My story is long...I cannot say it all... I joined this church when I was young. I was married... but my husband used to drink a lot of alcohol... I can’t tell you everything now... my friends used to go and worship with Chishimba in Matero. Then they invited me...I got interested in the way Chishimba was preaching to us. I decided to join the church...by that time it was called *BaMutima Mutakatifu*...After a few years, my husband died from alcohol poisoning. Uhhh...Two years later, Chishimba approached me and asked me to go for training as NJ. I did not refuse because I knew the calling was from God... I was told to do my first-year training at home, just like any other older priest. After my initial training at home, I left my children with my sister and answered God’s calling...uhmm... this journey has not been easy, but because of my faith in God, I have managed to be where I am today. I am in-charge of *Namfumumu*, as you can see, and I train young priests both male and female and see to it that the daily chores of *Namfumumu* are followed... (Interview with OFP1. *Namfumumu*. 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

OFP1 did not seem very keen to narrate her personal life. She was pausing and leaving gaps in her sentences. This suggested that OFP1 was also recalling some painful journeys in her life. OFP1 seemed to have gone through an unbearable marital life, because she did not want to discuss more concerning her late husband.

OMP3 narrated his story regarding his role as a male priest:

You know my names eh? (smiling)... Well...As a male priest, it is my responsibility to see to it that all the members who are staying here at *Namfumumu* are in good health. As you have seen already... the programme of worship is strictly followed, the young ones are aware of their duties...the old members know what to do. Everyday after prayers in the morning, you have noticed that the programme for the day is announced, if there are members who are supposed to go to the clinic, they do so. As a leader here, I must ensure that we do not miss any Holy Day... of the church. Then there are particular days that I have sessions with the younger female priests...uh... to teach them how to handle church matters. There are also particular days that I have with male priests and NJs... It is quite a huge task, but we all understand each other... Besides me being a leader, I place other members in charge of certain groups...just like you people do in your office duties, isn't it?...if anything is not right, and when Chishimba visits this place, I am the one who is responsible to answer all the questions (Interview with OMP3. *Namfumumu*.12<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

In his response, OMP3 avoided narrating his life story. He did not state how he joined the Church or anything relating to his personal life. OMP3 focused on his daily duties within the *Namfumumu*. He said nothing concerning his children. There were also some moments of silence, and it seemed that OMP3 was being careful not to say anything that was against Church regulations. In another interview, OMP2 stated,

You know, we do not take for granted what Chishimba requires of us to do...as I have told you, Chishimba is guided by the spirit of God...so with me, personally, when I was told that I should go and perform God's duties, literally '*mukubombela Lesa*' I was very excited because I knew my God would not fail me...it was actually hard at first, to leave my children... but I had to lean on my faith that God will restore what I had left...it was not easy to go and live in remote areas...but the thought that Jesus was born in a manger made me question myself as to who I thought I was... you know...eh...eh... my duties as a male priest have made me strong. I am in charge of this *Namfumumu*...as you already know. It means that I see to it that all that we do here, both men and women, are in line with our church regulations. Anyone is free to visit us here, and we are meant to receive them whole heartedly... we do not chase people away, because our task is to bring more members in the presence of God... eh eh people should learn from our way of life... we do not live the life of people in the world... we are meant to imitate the disciples of Jesus... who were taught to become fishers of men... that is the

aim of leaving our children and performing God's work in rural setups...As priests, our role is to lead by example, we do not choose what to eat or where to stay or sleep. That is the knowledge Chishimba has imparted in us and we in-turn impart the same to our young priests and members too. (Interview with OMP2. *Namfumu*. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

In the above statement, OMP2 is reminding us that Chishimba does not just make decisions on his own, but that when Chishimba asks a member to be an NJ, it is God that is calling the member to go into the ministry. In this respect, it is believed that many of these callings are initiated by God through Chishimba, who feels that a certain individual is called to perform mission work. In the following section, the middle-aged male priests are interviewed concerning their roles as priests.

According to MAMP4,

[f]irst, I have to tell you this; uhm...uhm... I am not going to tell you how I got involved with the church...this will take long because I have to lead the worship this evening...okey... My role is to see to it that the members know all the songs that we have in the church... there are songs which we sing specifically for Chishimba, such as '*Iwe uli Chibwe, napali iwe nkakula icilonganino candi*'...meaning, 'you are the Rock and on you I will build my church'... this song is important for members to know and learn when, and how to sing it because it has three stanzas...the past...the present...and the future... (I have built... I am building...and I shall build...) It tells us who and what Chishimba means to us. So one of my roles is to teach members songs that we sing during our Holy Days...then I am also involved in teaching members how to lead worship because sometimes as priests, we travel a lot and one may find that there is no male or female priest in-charge of *Namfumu*...we travel in other towns and *Namfumus* to consecrate marriages and conduct funerals... I am also in charge of teaching members praises to Chishimba, you know, just the same way we do it culturally when we visit the paramount Chief, there is usually someone singing praises to the Chief, we also appoint someone to sing praises to Chishimba when he is in our midst, you know, because he is also our King... (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Even though MAMP4 did not say much about his background, he stated a lot of things concerning Chishimba in a way that ended by him singing some of the songs and exaltations. There are songs that are biblical but dedicated to Chishimba, such as the one in his response "You are the Rock". Chishimba is also referred to as King and the respect he receives from members is in line with kingship. MAMP5 had a similar response. The response by MAMP5 is also similar to that of the other middle-aged priests in other *Namfumus*. According to MAMP5,

My name is MAMP5. My role as a male priest...uhm... is to see to it that this area is kept clean and we have the basic resources such as water and food. I have to

know how many children we have in this *Namfumu*, and to ensure that they have their breakfast, their school uniforms are clean, including their books and they have all the things needed for school...eh...and...and if it is during holidays, I should know where some children are being taken and who is taking them. I also account for food parcels and belongings that are given to this *Namfumu*...ahmm... I have to know what kind of food we are going to eat and who will be in charge of the kitchen because the members exchange kitchen routines every after three days. Both men and women play a role in being in the kitchen and cooking for all of us, that is why they take turns. I should also be updated that so and so will be fasting, ehh... and what type of fasting they are involved in. I join them so that they do not feel neglected. I am also in charge of disciplining and teaching the children the worship songs; uhm...uhm... how to lead the service, as you saw that young boy leading the Saturday service yesterday...? (pointing at the altar). Leading the service means one is the announcer...making announcements clean, though there are other priests who are in charge. We work hand-in-hand you know, our Bemba proverb says *umunwe umo tausala inda*... meaning ‘one finger cannot pick lice’. So I can say that even if I have various tasks assigned to me, we work together as a family... members know what they are supposed to do. That is why people who do not belong to this church call us ‘*bamunyinane*’ meaning brothers and sisters... (Interview with MAMP5. *Namfumu*.27th June 2017).

In the Mutima Church, discipline is part of the regulations. While they are taught how to exercise discipline, members are very particular in the way they conduct themselves in public or during an argument amongst themselves. MAMP5’s response outlined similar tasks assigned to various priests in the Church. Both men and women are assigned kitchen tasks, and whether they are priests or not, they are taught how to cook. This is in line with the document *The Full Image of God Revealed in Africa* which states that “male and female is a complete or full image of God” (Chishimba, 1974: 16). The following section outlines priests’ responses regarding the question “What is your interpretation of the *children of the spirit*?”

#### **6.4 *Children of the Spirit: Female Priests***

Almost all the female priests who were interviewed had reservations about giving detailed explanations concerning their interpretation of the *children of the spirit*. The *children of the spirit*, in this regard, are those children born of ordained female priests. This shows that the issue is subtle and not openly discussed. However, all the older female priests acknowledged that their interpretation regarding the *children of the spirit* is based on the secret that is only understood by those who are chosen. In trying to interpret her own understanding of the *children of the spirit*, OFP1 stated that

[y]ou know in our ordination, for us female priests, especially the young ones, uhhh, they choose between two things...there is what is called (*ukulaya ububile*

*bwa kuba nabana, nangu ukushala umushimbe mpaka napo ubufumu bwaishibila*) meaning a female priest must vow to remain a virgin throughout her life or to have children, (like Mary) but without getting married or having a man till her death. So when it comes to having *children of the spirit*, this is a secret that no one can understand, because it is not our Parent's desire, but this is straight from the Almighty God. That is why the female priests who have *children of the spirit* are also considered a blessing to this church. I think I am not capable of saying whatever should be done to acknowledge and reward female priests who have *children of the spirit*. I say this because it has never occurred to me to think that the female priests should be paid or rewarded something, because they have vowed to God to be mothers of many in the church. (Interview with OFP1. *Namfumu*. 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Having *children of the spirit* is considered a blessing from God. That is because this practice is believed to come from Almighty God. OFP1 points out that there is “*inkama*” (a secret) with regard to the *children of the spirit*. What OFP1 means is that the younger female priests vow either to remain virgins or to renounce their virginity and accept having children, that is, if the Holy Spirit has chosen them. This calling is done through Chishimba. But, in this case, they do not have children just with any man, but with the Spirit of God.

OFP8's interpretation of the *children of the spirit* is that it is a way of imitating Mary, mother of Jesus, who did not complain about the pregnancy, even when she had known no man at that time.

OFP8 asks,

Did Mary, mother of Jesus ever complain when the angel Gabriel visited her? ... She didn't. Which makes me inform you...well...well, that...that we are so blessed to have these children. Mary, the mother of Jesus humbled herself and deprived herself of fleshly desires or worldly desires. She did not consider herself to be the mother of Jesus when the birth of Christ was prophesied... You see, look at it this way...there are many problems faced by women...sometimes you find that...eh...ah...an NJ is constantly having terrible period pains. And well...at the hospital...some doctors state that she will never have children. She is barren. But you and I do not know how God works...after ordination, you find that the same woman is pregnant...why and how? Because that woman has humbled herself before the Lord. So you see, these children of the spirit pave way for child bearing for barren women...the other thing is you will not understand...there is a secret surrounding these children and anyone who speaks evil of them should realise that he or she is bumping oneself to the Rock of Wonder. It is not our teacher who have decided to have these children, it is only the command of God that our teacher receives...In short, the *children of the spirit* are a blessing to many female priests and to the whole church...and answering your next question... God is the one who can reward us for the work we are doing, not anyone else. If we say people should reward us, then there would be unequal

measures of gifts because others will be favouring those they like... (Interview with OFP8. *Namfumumu*. 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

OFP8 explains that for some women, having the *children of the spirit* is a blessing, because a woman may have been told that she might not be able to have children. This happens especially with barren women. But it is believed that once the woman agrees to be ordained, God opens the womb and she becomes a mother of the *children of the spirit*. OFP8 illustrates that no one knows how God works.

MAFP1, a female priest, explains that

You see... you can tell from the name *children of the spirit* that they are not ordinary children. This is also '*Ilibwe lye shiku*' literally Rock of Wonder. You will never understand because even some of the members of our own church do not understand. This is not initiated by our teacher, but Chishimba receives instructions from the Holy Spirit. I...I...I can only tell you that I am among those female priests who are called '*Abasano*'. This means I belong to the Royal Clan as well...I have four children of the spirit. But...but let me put this straight...eh...eh...it is not just advisable to say they are my children...no...no...no. They are not even our teacher's children. They belong to God. You see, since it is God who gives these children. From the human nature point of view, our teacher cannot manage to have all these children. That is why we are taught not to claim ownership of the children...the thing is as ordained female priests, we are not allowed to raise these children...For instance, if one gives birth to a *child of the spirit*... the only thing one is allowed to do is to breastfeed that child until one weans the child...after that, the child is taken to another Namfumumu Village to be looked after by other ordained priests, because there are also mothers and fathers there. So the only thing I can say is that one is not allowed to claim ownership of these children, because they are directly linked with the Spirit of God. And talking about acknowledging or rewarding some female priests for having *children of the spirit*...I think you do not understand when I said Chishimba is the Rock of Wonder...do you understand the ways of God yourself? (asking me?) (I shook my head). You see, it is only God who can acknowledge and reward us, not any human being...we are doing God's work...not human beings' work. (Interview with MAFP1. *Namfumumu*. 15<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

MAFP1 is an ordained female priest who has four *children of the spirit*. She belongs to the Royal Clan. This is the same as being one of the Bemba Paramount chief's wives, where they are recognised as belonging to the Royal Clan. More important is the issue of the female priests not raising their biological children themselves. After weaning the child, the mother does not have the right to raise the child. The child is taken to another Namfumumu, where he or she belongs to every ordained priest, where the other priests take care of the child. It is ironic that while

motherhood is glorified in Africa, through one's biological children, female priests are not allowed to claim ownership or nurture their own biological children. To use Nuckolls' (1996:128) words, even in the Jalari culture<sup>88</sup>, the relationship between mother and child is close, and no amount of data on the number of people who handle the child can alter the fact that this is how mother and child feel about each other. Therefore, separating mother and child is inhumane. This does not sound good and it is not easy for female priests. This is also one's cross to bear and carry, because of the church's rules and regulations, which may be seen as patriarchal.

The word *inkama* which means "secret" in the Mutima Church is used by members, especially when they are referring to Chishimba's roles. The following section illustrates MAFP8's viewpoint on *children of the spirit*:

My interpretation of the *children of the spirit* is that they are not just mere children, or ordinary children like any other children...Uhhh you see, with these children, no human being can understand anything about these children...one needs to ask only the Holy Spirit of God to reveal the nature of these children...Even the name did not come from our teacher, but from the Almighty God...you see the children of the spirit have been assigned various tasks by God, that is why it is a secret God reveals only to those who are gifted... or who are chosen... You won't understand...As female priests, we are aware that Mary, the mother of Jesus was a single woman, a virgin who was only... and only betrothed to Joseph. Mary was filled with the Spirit of God...she knew no sin, she knew no man at all... Uhm, Uhm, she was an obedient woman, who humbled herself before God. She accepted that God had chosen her to be the Mother of Creator, Mother of Jesus. God chose Mary to be mother of those who will be liberated by her, and those people are 'us' (touching her chest)... so one of the ways we imitate her is to accept and take care of *children of the spirit*...who are we to say 'no' to the Spirit of God? Who are we to judge the *children of the spirit*...? So the same God who spoke to Mary, is the same God who speaks to us through Chishimba. I have never thought that other female priests should be rewarded because in our church we are taught about fairness, and every member of the church is a parent to these children... so I think I can't answer that question... (Interview with MAFP8. *Namfumu*. 16<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

MAFP8's interpretation of *children of the spirit* seems to highlight the needs to ask for God's revelation in order to understand the nature of these children. She is clear in stating that we do not understand these children. The issue here is about male power, because even the older female priests do not explain the male biological nature of the children, but insist that this is God's own plan. It is a "secret" that only those who are closer to the "chieftaincy" may be able to narrate.

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<sup>88</sup> The Jalaris are a Telugu-speaking fishing caste who are found on the southern coast of India, (Nuckolls, 1996).

MAFP8 clearly points out that no one can refuse the revelation of the Spirit of God. Bringing in the characteristics of Mary seems to be one way of explaining their involvement with the *children of the spirit*. Furthermore, MAFP2, explained that

*Children of the spirit* are a gift to us from God. No human being can manage to have as many children as these. That is why you must also believe the work that God is doing in this church. You see, only those who are chosen, chosen by God can understand the nature of these children...even our own relatives do not understand...but we do understand because God has revealed Godself in our Redeemer, or Teacher of Truth, Chishimba...Such children do not grow up with their mothers but with different mothers. They are brought up in difficult lifestyle (to teach them suffering). They are taught to endure suffering as a way of knowing God [Here MAFP2 spoke in English]... One can choose either to be ordained and remain a virgin throughout her ministerial work, or to empathize with Mary, Mother of Jesus. To empathize with Mary means an ordained female priest who is a virgin or has been divorced because of barrenness or other reasons can receive the gift of motherhood...with the *children of the spirit*. But also as many times as possible, it is through the revelation of the Holy Spirit. So these children are meant to do what other people do in the society, the only difference is that they are *children of the spirit*...uhm...uhmm...my dear, as priests, we have vowed to God...it is only God who sees what should be done for us, not human beings. Remember, we are taught to live different from others, worldly things are just a reflection of what the Kingdom of God looks like...so we don't do our jobs to be rewarded by human beings. Just continue praying with us... (Interview with MAFP2. *Namfumu*. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2017).

Like OFP8, MAFP2 describes *children of the spirit* as a gift to the Mutima Church. This also suggests that only those who are chosen...by God understand the nature of the *children of the spirit*. Using some of her statements in English, MAMP2 is of the view that the *children of the spirit* know who they are and are taught that suffering is meant for them to endure, so that they experience the fullness of God. As MAFP2 states, the conditions in which the *children of the spirit* are brought up are harsh, but MAFP2 is specific that “God has revealed Godself to our Redeemer...”. She elaborates on the types of ordination that take place in the Mutima Church. She states that the two types of ordination are specifically designed for virgins and single females, as both are allowed to vow whether they will perform mission work while they remain childless or empathize with Mary by having the *children of the spirit*.

The question regarding what should be done to acknowledge and reward female priests with *children of the spirit* was answered almost in the same way by all female priests. Because of the teachings they have received in the church, priests have been taught to trust and have faith in God and not in human beings. Almost all the priests interviewed on the issue of “acknowledging and

rewarding” them gave the same responses. The following are responses from the middle-aged male priests (MAMPs) on their interpretation of *the children of the spirit* and what rewards female priests should receive for being mothers to these children.

#### 6.4.1 *Children of the Spirit* : Male Priests

Since he could speak, read and write English, MAMP4’s responses were all in writing. MAMP4 started with the rewards that should be given to female priests. He stated that

You know, in all these works there’s only one reward (eternal life). The female priests regardless of *abana bamupashi* literally *children of the spirit*, the goal is only one and that is eternity. How do we achieve this? Love God with all your heart, mind and soul. Secondly love your neighbors as you love yourself. To achieve these you need to live a selfless life (Quoted from MAMP4 response. *Namfumu*. 27 June 2017).

As Hennink, Huttler and Bailey (2011:129) assert “as an interviewer, you also need to respect the views and stories of the interviewees, even if they are clearly wrong or differ from your own views”. Considering MAMP4’s views, who seemed to be one of the representatives of the church, his responses were so strongly answered that he even asked for more questions. The researcher then asked him whether Chishimba referred to these children as *abana ba mupashi* or did this come from the church members? In his response, he seemed to be very knowledgeable of the teachings of the church and discussed them freely. MAMP4 states that female priests have agreed to live a selfless life. Regarding his interpretation of the *children of the spirit*, MAMP4 wrote the following response:

You see, such names as *abana ba mupashi* was not coming from the humanity of our *Umulondoshi* literally our Redeemer, but from Thee (Almighty). It is God the Creator who spiritually initiated this kind of procreation and thus the resultant Name (*Bana ba mupashi*) (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Like other members of the Mutima Church, MAMP4 has the conviction that the idea of having *children of the spirit* in the Mutima Church is not Chishimba’s own initiative. He states that it is from the Almighty and God is the initiator of these children. However, MAMP4 is in line with other priests who state that the *children of the spirit* are not just ordinary children. According to MAMP4,

*children of the spirit* are not just like any other ordinary children. This is a spiritual terminology we use in our church because these children came after God told our *Parent of Truth* to bear children just like Jacob who had 12 children. It was from that lineage that even the Messiah Jesus has descended from. So God is omnipotent, he does everything according to his [*sic*] will and no one can

question God. He [*sic*] is God who can use anyone at any time regardless of colour, race or creed (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

The most important issue that MAMP4 raised was that “...no one can question God...” This is the ideology that has been imparted to all the members, because what God does cannot be contested (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991:23). Chishimba claims that God has appointed him and ordained him. MAMP4 was asked a follow-up question: Do the female priests make an application to be part of the *abasano* (literally Royal) Clan? MAMP4 clarified the following in written Bemba and English:

Our *Parent of Truth*, even if we see him in human form, had no power to decide who should and who shouldn't be *musano* (royal). Everything comes from the Most High God. Even his children, to have many it was God's given plan to come and help him preach the gospel to the world *pantu ilyakutolelwa lipompo* literally 'your own people can preach the Word better and tell the truth than other people. In this line of children some will be prophets, preachers, and spiritual doctors and *ipalo* (blessings). The main reason God told our Parent of Truth to do this was to grow the church of the Mother of God (*Nakabumba*) meaning Mother of Creator, rapidly till the message is delivered throughout the world. Even the so called *abasano* (of the royal clan) knew things because they were told by our Redeemer. Our Redeemer was a slave of the Word of God, doing whatever God told him to do no matter how difficult. This is God's deeds and it has worked significantly well. The church has grown rapidly in the last 65 years (Quoted from MAMP4 response. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2017).

What MAMP4 means is that based on Chishimba's human nature, he could not have managed to have such a numerous number of the *children of the spirit* without help. Like many other priests and members of the church, his argument is that Chishimba is ordained by God. Therefore, it is God who chooses the royal female priests for Chishimba. Everything Chishimba does is strictly from God. In addition, God wanted to have God's Word spread throughout the world, through the *children of the spirit*. That is one major reason there are these *children of the spirit*. However, concerning the father of the *children of the spirit*, both MAMP4 and MAMP5 stated that the children know who their father is. For example, MAMP5 explained that

[the] same children, they know about their father but even them they are taught the reason of their existence...you know *umufyashi wa chishinka* literally Our Parent of Truth starting from the children and all the wealth, he gave them to *Nakabumba* literally Mother of Creation, eg. in the song *fyonse ifyo ndi ne fintu nkwete, fyonse nalikupa Nakabumba PAMO* (emphasizing) meaning everything that I have, I have given unto You Mother of Creation; I have offered all children and all wealth. So you see our Parent of Truth has no authority over the *children of the spirit*. They are not his, neither do they belong to the female priests. So if our teacher has no authority over the children how can the female priests have authority over the

*children of the spirit?* It is the power of God that works direct in our teacher, if he was a mere human being, one could fail... (Interview with MAMP5. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

These are MAMP5's direct words in English. He was using both English and Bemba to emphasize the fact that *the children of the spirit* are actually aware that Chishimba is their biological father. But they are taught not to address him as "father" since they belong especially to God. They are taught about the reason for their existence from an early age. However, members believe that even Chishimba himself has no authority over the children. Therefore, if Chishimba has no such authority, female priests alone cannot negotiate this matter. The following section outlines responses from the older male priests on their interpretation of the *children of the spirit*.

OMP3, an older male priest confirmed that

[t]hey are children specifically given by the Spirit of God to us... You see there is a secret that is there that you cannot understand... even myself, I cannot understand this very well because this is God's choice and ways. Even many members of our church are not aware of the secret that is there that surrounds these children. But these children are taught who they are. They are taught how they are supposed to behave, and the way they are brought up no other human being can adapt to the conditions they grow up in. What I can tell you is that our teacher, Chishimba, explains that these children will perform all other activities just like any other child in the society, they will go to school, they will be official workers... some will be teachers, nurses... and of course some will be stubborn and lead miserable lives... they will even end up losing their lives, just like any other child in the society. I think that it is only God who can reward the female priests who have *children of the spirit* because the work they are doing is purely God's work. Who am I to dictate what can be done? (Interview with OMP3. *Namfumumu*. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

OMP3 also mentioned that the *children of the spirit* are taught who they are. They know how they are supposed to behave. Mention of the word "secret" which in the Bemba language means "*inkama*" suggests that it is only Chishimba who knows the secret surrounding the *children of the spirit*. OMP3 believes that this is God's way because the ways of God are not the ways of human beings. He openly states that "even myself, I cannot understand this very well". OMP3 did not want to reveal the exact nature of the *children of the spirit*. The following sections discuss the members' views on being Mutima Church members.

## 6.5 On Being Mutima Church Members

The following section outlines the responses of the priests to questions such as “What is your vision of female priests and/or ‘on being Church for the Mutima Church? Has the church given you any conditions of service at any time? What challenges have you experienced as (i) female priest; (ii) male priest; (iii) leader of *Namfumumu*? These questions were all answered by some priests. Since many of the responses were similar, the researcher chose some responses and recorded the following:

You see, if you say my vision... and on being church for Mutima Church ...in our church, we are taught that we are one, men and women. So I cannot say women must do this or be like this...no, no, no, no. Both men and women work together because in the Kingdom of God there is neither male nor female, all are one...according to *Umulondoshi*, (Redeemer) we are one in the eyes of God...and then for conditions of service, us..., we believe in keeping and obeying the Word of God...and doing what the voice of Chishimba requires us to do...obeying the Word of God and doing what we have been taught to do... and for challenges... well...well... you see as human beings, we all face challenges in our lives...but the best way to overcome is to include prayer and fasting...just like the way I will ask you to be doing when writing this information for many people to know about us. You should pray and fast so that everything goes on smoothly. (Interview with OMP2. *Namfumumu*. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

OMP2’s response may be derived from the way he understands the teachings of the church. From his statement, the church teaches that they are all equal and each should regard the other as brother and sister. Giving respect to those who are ordained is emphasized. However, respecting each other is important, even if the other is younger. OMP2 stresses that the voice of Chishimba within the church is vital, because members are not allowed to misinterpret it. It is believed that Chishimba receives revelations from God. However, MAMP4 wrote the following response on challenges faced by male priests in the church:

You see male priests since they are human beings, they do experience hardships when it comes to being single but that does not guarantee them to do the opposite of what they have been taught. There was one time our Parent of Truth told them to go back home and have children. The reason was to reduce temptations (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Follow up questions: So did *ababile abaume*, meaning male priests, obey the call to go back home to have families? Were they given a period of time to be away? MAMP4 stated that

Our Parent of Truth, I think he saw some weaknesses in them hence some kind of break. Yes our Parent of Truth had to tell them when you have this number of

children you come back for your calling. There is no rule without exception our Parent of Truth had to relieve them of their duties so that once they were back no looking back but strictly God's work. That is why we have those we call *abalolela* meaning those on the waiting list when their time is due they are supposed to go back for ordination to become priests (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

MAMP4 explained that as human beings, male priests do face some challenges, especially in leading a celibate life. For this reason, it is believed, Chishimba realized that there would be the desire for them to have wives. In this case, they are allowed to go and marry. They are given a specific time and number of children to have before they are recalled to perform their ministerial duties.

## 6.6 Conditions of Service

Since the following questions were all answered by the participants, the researcher recorded the responses from OFP8. Has the church given you any conditions of service at any time? What challenges have you experienced as (a) priest (b) leader of *Namfumu* and (c) mother? OFP8 acknowledges that human beings face a lot of different challenges, but her response is to concentrate more on prayer and fasting. Similarly, OFP8 responded that

[f]irst I will tell you about the challenges I have faced as a mother, female priest and a leader of this *Namfumu*. Of course, it has not been easy to be a mother because as a female priest, to be in-charge of this place, one faces a lot of challenges. I am a mother to all, and if you look at the youth, you will see that we have a number of them here...it is a challenge because for some of them, it is very difficult to follow the rules and regulations of the church. Well, there are times when we are faced with unplanned pregnancies, and...and this is a very difficult issue to handle because...you see...other people would think that it is because they are not my biological children, that is why I did not put strict measures to stop this...but this is not the case. Children are just children and in the modern days...ah...ah...you know they think that if you tell them to fear the Word of God, they think you are old-fashioned and primitive...The church does not give us conditions of service, because our job is not a paid up job... you know, as one joins the church, one is cultured and conditioned to obey the Word of God... one has to adapt to the type of lifestyle we live, so for us obedience is what I can say is the condition of service. (Interview with OFP8. *Namfumu*. 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2017).

Like OMP2, OFP8 also acknowledges that there are challenges they face as leaders, or mothers of the *Namfumu*. Although there are no written down rules in the Mutima Church, OFP8 points out that she faces challenges with the younger generation. Being an old female priest, OFP8

seems to have experienced many unplanned pregnancies with the youth. More heartening is the way some members might have interpreted the reasons pertaining to these unplanned pregnancies. However, OFP8 seems to understand that the lifestyle led by today's youth is different from her own. OFP8 has been a member of the Mutima Church for many years, with strong views, but she becomes silent when it comes to the Church's teachings. OFP8 acknowledges that there are no conditions of service in the church, but that a new person has to be taught what is required of her or him and that is the condition of service. Similarly, another female priest illustrated that

[y]es, I can say the church gives conditions of service. For example, people who find it difficult to follow the Word of God that is given to us through Chishimba... Here in this church, we do not receive any letters of appointment... I mean... this is not a paid job... but God rewards us and it is just for us to be faithful and honest in what we do. I think it would be rude for me to ask for conditions of service because I already know what to do as a child of God. Even our ordination, you see, they are not like the ones you know where you are given a certificate to show that you are ordained... ha ha ha. How can you ask for a certificate to perform God's mission, eh? Certificates are just human-made papers but God has written down all our deeds... And as a female priest, or mother or leader of *Namfumu*, the challenges are many that we face... because... you... know... eh... we are in human bodies. That is why we fail sometimes because we are simply human beings... look... leaving your own family to come and serve God in this rural area, is this not a challenge...? It is leaving your own children and taking care of other children who are not yours that are challenges that we face and it is only God who should intervene so that we feel whole again. (Interview with OFP5. *Namfumu*. 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2017).

It seems OFP5 has her own views on the conditions of service, her own ways of understanding and converting people to the church. Being faithful and honest are some of the conditions of service that she pointed out. She states that there are no letters of appointment in the church. Furthermore, OFP5's view is that asking for conditions of service is a rude way of performing God's mission.

Like other priests, she acknowledges that it is being in human nature that makes them fail to carry on with God's work, but she does not believe in getting a certificate for performing God's mission. Yet, she points out that "it is leaving your own children and taking care of other children who are not yours that are challenges that we face". She resorts to God's intervention so that they can become whole again. Does it mean they are not whole? In the following section, the

female priests respond to the question, “Do you think the Biblical teachings of the Mutima Church are related to the Bemba culture?”

### 6.7 Biblical Teachings Versus Bemba Culture

Regarding the above question, all the priests agreed that the Biblical teachings of the Mutima Church are related to the Bemba culture. The older female priests, such as OFP1 and OFP7, related Jewish culture to the Bemba culture, in the following manner, according to the genealogy of Chishimba and that of Jesus. According to OFP1,

[y]es, yes Bembas love living together...*Ifwe tuli baIsrael bakulekelesha*. Meaning we are the last Israel. When outsiders visit us, they find that we live together as one, the old, the middle-aged, and the young. That’s how the Israel people lived, not so...mmhhh... (Interview with OFP1. *Namfumu*. 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

And, responding to the same question, OFP7 illustrated that

Bemba people enjoy living together...In the Bible, we hear God asking Moses to go and liberate the Israelites from slavery. And God gave them rules and laid down the ten commandments...that time they were living together, moving together as one people led by Moses, Aaron and other leaders that Moses chose...and I strongly think they used to welcome visitors...the way we do...You can see for yourself...in the same way, we live like them...because Chishimba has taught us to live like Israelites, we eat together, we worship together... (Interview with OFP7. *Namfumu*. 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2017).

Seemingly, the question was easy for older female priests to answer. OFP3 narrated:

You see, Chishimba is also like Moses. He teaches us to welcome visitors. Wherever you go as long as you visit *Namfumu* village, they will welcome you and you see that our life-styles are not expensive, but unique in some way. So yes, even Bemba people, long time and even now if you go into their villages, you will find that they live together as one. They have their chiefs who unites them. (Interview with OFP3. *Namfumu*. 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2017).

OFP1, OFP3 and OFP7 remind us that the Mutima Church calls themselves “*the last Israel*”. It seems Chishimba is also equated to Moses, because Mutima Church members state that Chishimba has liberated them. As Bemba women, OFP1, OFP3 and OFP7 are aware of the cultural practices, for instance, that the clan is one of the pillars of the Bemba culture. For OFP1, and other priests, and members of the Mutima Church, living a communal life is Biblical and is also related to the Bemba culture. This is very central to the Mutima Church. OFP7 states that ‘Chishimba has taught us to live like Israelites’, and this is the core of this dissertation, “male

power” because Chishimba introduces the teachings in the Church. The following sections are responses from male priests.

OMP1, an old male priest, also explained that

...yes, yes, yes, what is written in the Bible just compliments what is found in our Bemba culture... for example, it is a custom for Bemba chiefs and some Bemba men marrying many wives for various reasons, of course not for leisure...in the Bible we hear Abraham, Jacob, David and others having many wives. As children of Israel, we have these practices in our church, because it helps us to understand the Bible, too...You know, in the Bible, menstruating women are unclean, and it is a taboo for any man to see, with his naked eyes the blood of a menstruating woman. *Fwe ba Bemba* literally, as Bembas, we teach our young ones to take care of themselves, especially the girls, when they become of age, no man should set his eyes on his wife’s menstrual blood, not even his daughters’ menstrual blood or any woman’s blood. Staying away from human blood is a symbol of purity...this is also found in the book of Leviticus... (Interview with OMP1. *Namfumumu*. 10<sup>th</sup> July June 2017).

For OMP1, many things that are done in the Bemba culture are also Biblically supported. He cites polygamy and mentions the names of people in the Bible who were involved in polygamous marriages. OMP1 recalls the way the Mutima Church members refers to themselves as ‘children of Israel’. They consider themselves “the chosen ones” and this helps them to understand what is written in the Bible. As OMP1 states, it is advised that a man should not set eyes on the menstrual blood of his wife or his own children. As OMP2 described it,

...you see, among other things, Bemba culture maintains that there should be a shrine in almost every village where members of that particular village should make sacrifices. But my grandmother told me that among the Bemba, women and not men, were be in-charge of the shrines. In this case, men were not allowed because most of them were hunters, and it was believed that because of being in contact with animal blood, men should not be in-charge of shrines...well, I don’t know if that is true...But instead, women and elderly women with good records were the ones who were in-charge of shrines...But I am not very sure of this, you know...these are stories told by old people, ha ha ha ha (laughing). But it happens in some villages where *BaNamfumumus* are located, but I have never witnessed because now we are liberated. So in the Bible, I never heard of women going hunting, but men only, but when it comes to Holy places in the Bible, only priests were allowed to be there to offer sacrifices and not women. So I can say, yes and no. The Biblical teachings are related to Bemba culture in so many ways, you just have to give me time to remember what Chishimba teaches us about the Bible. (Interview with OMP2. *Namfumumu*. 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2017).

It is stated in Chapter Three, that the Bemba people had shrines and women were in charge of shrines (Hinfelaar, 1994: xi). OMP2 is aware of the story of the roles of women in Bemba

cultures. Nuckolls (1996:119) asserts that “roles are made up of competing tendencies which must somehow be organized into a pattern of behavior. No matter how well organized, a completely stable pattern cannot develop, because competing norms remain in tension with each other”. For this reason, even if the Mutima Church aims to maintain the roles of women, there may be some challenges, such as male priests not given more privileges for being in charge of the *Namfumu[s]*. OMP2 is aware of the Biblical High Priests (men) who were in charge of the Holy altars where sacrifices were made. That is why OMP2 admits that, in many ways, Biblical teachings and the Bemba culture are related in such a way that women’s roles are to stay at home and do house-keeping, and men have to go hunting. OMP3 has his own way of interpreting the similarities:

[You] see, Joseph the father of Jesus... in our culture, we refer to him as ‘*Kalinda*’ meaning ‘the guide’ because he took care of Mary and Jesus. And Joseph is also from the genealogy of David...Chishimba, comes from the genealogy of Bemba Paramount Chief Chitimukulu. All these things inform us that God is still speaking to us. We don’t just follow the Bible blindly...no no no (shaking his head)...there are a lot of similarities that our culture takes from the Bible...That is why we also call Chishimba, our guide because he takes care of his sheep in this church... (Interview with OMP3. *Namfumu*. 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2017).

OMP3 is aware that the genealogy of Joseph is from the house of David. He is therefore relating it to the genealogy of Chishimba, that is from the Bemba Paramount Chief, Chitimukulu. In his explanations, OMP3 states that Joseph was obeying God day and night, and that is why Mutima Church members have such praise for Joseph. God is still speaking, because that is what is taught in the Mutima Church. In similar terms, MAMP5 illustrates that

[i]n terms of the Bible...I can say that (we) BaMutima members have really understood the Word of God. It speaks to us, we live it, and we imitate it. When we hear the creation story, God was speaking...to God’s angels, to Adam and Eve, to Abraham, Noah, Solomon, Isaiah, name the people in the Bible? Some of it relates to our Bemba origin. God spoke and they listened and some failed to follow God’s Word, while others were so obedient. So God never stopped talking...God is still talking, even into our cultures...to the Chiefs in Bemba culture and other cultures in Africa, the same God has been using people to talk to them...What Chishimba went through when he was a child...and what he is still going through...can’t you see that these are related to what Jesus went through? (asking me). Can God lift one type of people up and leave the others to fend for themselves? No. God is a fair God my child. Chishimba’s lineage is that of Kinship ... what about (Yesu), Jesus? He is from the lineage of David, too...That is why the Bible is so central to us, we have read it and understood it, and we see that we are children of Israel... (Yacobo)...Jacob. (Interview with MAMP5. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2017).

MAMP5 is of the view that Mutima Church members are lucky because they have the Bible. He speaks of the creation story, and other characters mentioned in the Bible, relating these to Bemba culture. MAMP5 compares what Jesus went through to the experiences of Chishimba. This is why Chishimba is given the utmost respect, hence the effect of male power in the Mutima Church. MAMP5 is of the view that God cannot lift one type of people and leave out others. Within this view, MAMP5's opinion is that if God gave Jesus to the White people, God cannot leave out the Black people. In this respect, God has elevated Black people by giving them Chishimba, but because people would not respect Jesus as much as Chishimba, they intended to kill them. So for MAMP5, the Biblical teachings of the Mutima Church are very much related to Bemba culture. MAMP4 explains this from the same point of view:

You know my dear...Bemba culture is very unique...our marriages are not expensive. They are not expensive in the sense that it does not need to take a man to be rich to get married. Maybe nowadays, but in rural areas, no, no, no. And...and if we read how Jacob married Leah and Rachel, he worked seven years for each wife, which made it fourteen good years...and you know, it is cultural for a Bemba man to move from his father's village or home and go and live in the wife's village, so that he should work in the fields of the in-laws... (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2017).

MAMP4's view is that unlike other tribes in Zambia whose dowries are expensive, marriages in Bemba are not based on the richness of a groom. In many cases, especially in rural areas, a groom is asked to go and help his father-in-law to work on the farm. In short, MAMP4 seems to bring out the matriarchal nature of Bemba society when he narrates his own story pertaining to marriage. He sees the way Jacob worked for Laban in a form of dowry as something Biblical that is related to the Bemba culture.

## 6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has been a continuation of the priests' responses to some interview questions. The responses highlight, among other issues, the role of Chishimba in the church and the interpretation of the *children of the spirit*. It has been noted that Chishimba has many titles in the church. He is referred to as King, High Priest, teacher, Parent of Truth, Redeemer, Rock of Wonder, Peter the Rock and many other unique titles. It has been noted that the *children of the spirit* are aware of who they really are. The biological father of these children is Chishimba but since Chishimba is only used by the spirit of God, they are therefore God's children. Neither Chishimba himself, nor the female priests, have authority over the children. The priests' vision

of the church is that God is the visionary of the Mutima Church. It is also noted that Mutima Church conditions of priestly service are that members should obey the Word of God. There are no written down rules for church members. Obedience is a virtue that has to be accomplished. The priests outlined some of the challenges that they face as leaders of the *Namfumus*. It has also been acknowledged that Biblical teachings and the Bemba culture are inter-related. In the following chapter, analyses of the responses from both male and female priests are presented.

## CHAPTER 7

# Relationships Between Women and Male Power in the Mutima Church

### 7.1. Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the study highlighted the responses of the priests to the fieldwork. A major concern was the questions regarding the role of Chishimba, and the teachings of the church on Mary, Jesus, Chilufya Chilondola and Chishimba. In addition, responses to the priests' interpretations of the *children of the spirit* were highlighted. It was noted that Chishimba is believed to be guided by the Holy Spirit. It is with the help of the Holy Spirit that Chishimba chooses female priests with whom to bear children, thereby reproducing *children of the spirit*. For this reason, Chishimba has many titles, such as *Parent of Truth*, Guide, Teacher, Redeemer, to mention a few, and Chilufya Chilondola, is the mother of their guide. Chilufya Chilondola is respected in the church as having given birth to the guide or Redeemer. This chapter presents an analysis of the field, which is categorized into themes. The following sections provide analyses of the fieldwork.

### 7.2. Analysis of the Field Work: The Mutima Church Priests

Neuman (2014:480) advises that “in qualitative research you organize the raw data into conceptual categories and create themes or concepts”. After organizing my raw data, I present an analysis of the findings from my fieldwork in Chapters Five and Six. To do this, the chapter is divided into eight themes. The first is not a theme, but a section that analyses Chishimba's influence and power. This is followed by a section discussing Chishimba's theological role in the Mutima Church. The second theme is the full image of God. This comes from the Mutima Church members' responses to what it means for members to belong to the Mutima Church and women being ordained. The third theme is the concept of Mariology. This is because in the Mutima Church, the feminine face of Mary has a unique influence. The fourth theme presents an analysis of the “secret” surrounding the *Parent of Truth*. The fifth theme presents an analysis on the *children of the spirit*. The sixth theme presents an analysis of the priests' interpretation of marriage in the church. The seventh theme presents an analysis of the mother of Chishimba, Chilufya Chilondola. The final theme is an analysis of the priests' roles when serving as *nurses of Jesus*. All these terms are interrelated to the male power dynamics in the Mutima Church.

Neuman (2014:480) argues that “instead of being a clerical task of data management, qualitative coding is an integral part of data analysis. Your research question provides a guide, but the process often leads to new questions”. This study sought to answer the following question: How does the male-formulated missional policy affect ordained women’s lives and influence their functions in the Mutima Church? To this effect, the new questions I seek to answer in this chapter concern the laying down of rules and regulations in the Mutima Church, and to what extent are women willing partners, abetting male power? What broader issues can be drawn from the relationships of marriage, culture, religion and mission in the Mutima Church? The following section provides analyses of the influence that Chishimba has in his Church.

### **7.3. Chishimba’s Influence and Power**

Scott’s (1990:202) perspective is that as a person turns to some rarer open confrontations there may be some risks within the hidden transcript of subordinate groups. These risks may seem to be the basis or underlying events for social movements. Since the Mutima Church’s policy is believed to be divine revelations received by Chishimba, the female priests have found it difficult to state that the *children of the spirit* are actually Chishimba’s biological children. It is only by probing further that the male priests were able to explain how Chishimba receives revelations of the *children of the spirit*. An analysis of the hidden transcript can uncover issues embedded in religious ideologies. Religious ideologies are critical arenas in which power lurks (Scott, 1990:203).

To legitimise his authority, Chishimba draws his authority from two parallel power structures: Western Christian tradition (according to Ruether, *Holy Patriarchy*) (1983), and Bemba royal traditions and values (according to Ramphela, *African Patriarchy*) (1988). This is the case in the Mutima Church. In Chishimba, these power structures interlock with each other. The Christian tradition “sacralised” him while the royal Bemba traditions and values “reified” (kingly figure) him. Embedding himself in these two power structures, Chishimba wields a lot of power. Within the Western Christian tradition, he portrayed himself as a “patriarch”, while in the royal Bemba tradition, he projected himself as royalty. Ruether (1983:53), elaborating on Holy Patriarchy, states that women and children are connected to God in a secondary manner. Women and children do not stand in direct relation to God, but they do so in an indirect manner, through the male. This is the God-male-female format (Ruether, 1983:53).

Mutima Church members are socialized in these traditions, such as a man is a stem and women are branches. This has been used because a tree is one of the significant symbols in the Mutima Church. Mutima Church members believe that a tree is a symbol of life. When a tree produces green leaves during springtime, it shows that there is life within it. In the Mutima Church, the tree is also equated to a family. Furthermore, the belief is that the *children of the spirit* are not at his own desire, but that it is the Will of God through the divine revelation of Mary, legitimized by religion (Interview with MAMP4 and MAMP5. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017). Members have internalized the traditions as Chishimba's intended actions which are being followed. This implies that at the centre of his influence, Chishimba uses his knowledge to control his subjects. Knowledge is power, hence at the centre of Chishimba's knowledge, there is an issue of male power.

Commenting on this kind of human exaltation and worship, Moltmann (1991:2) argues that human forms of domination have always sought legitimation in religion and most of them have found it there. He states that there are various images of God that are worshipped with ultimate devotion. Designated human beings in different communities reinforce the image of God, to the extent that they persuade their subjects to worship them. In this way, affirmation in support of their power is never doubted. Anchored in religion and legitimized by religion, power proves to be firmly rooted in such leaders (Moltmann, 1991:2).

In the same way, Chishimba's influence and power seem to be forms of dominance that are uncontested by religion. He has legitimized his teachings to the extent that images of God are exalted through Chishimba. For instance, in the Mutima Church, it seems that some female priests cannot negotiate sex, since the act is initiated by the Holy Spirit. It is thus the Holy Spirit that directs Chishimba to some female priests with whom he should have sex. This has been legitimized and preached – that it is only the Holy Spirit that appoints female priests and not Chishimba himself.

To this end, Oduyoye (1995:127) remarks that while it has been observed that some AICs have encouraged the participation of women, there are keen limitations to their participation in the church. There are still some aspects of traditional male superiority in the Cherubim and Seraphim arrangements. While women are in the majority, men have more leadership roles (Oduyoye, 1995:127). In the Mutima Church, for example, some female priests have internalized the

malestream preaching that both women and men are created in the (male) image of God. Their views are that Chishimba has taught them the truth about the full image of God revealed in Africa. The following section analyses Chishimba's theological role in the Mutima Church.

### 7.3.1 Chishimba's Role

MAFP7 explained that "...the role of Chishimba is to listen to what God wants him to say to his members...Chishimba's other name is Peter, Peter the Rock because he has been given the keys to heaven..."(Interview with MAFP7. *Namfumu*. 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Chishimba's role as keeper of the keys is significant to the Mutima Church members, because of this belief that God has handed over the heavenly keys to Chishimba. This is the teaching that members have received. In Scott's view, Chishimba's ideology and teaching may be regarded as the practice of domination, that has created the notion of a hidden transcript amongst his members (Scott, 1990:27). For this reason, members refer to him as "*Umulondoshi wakuno Africa*", literally the Redeemer for Africans, the Guide, Parent of Truth, Teacher, High Priest, Overseer, King, Peter the Rock, and the many other titles that are associated with exaltations of Chishimba.

## 7.4 The Full Image of God

In Chapter Four (cf. section 4.3) of this study, the document written by Chishimba entitled *The Full Image of God Revealed in Africa* was interpreted. According to Chishimba, the document reveals two secrets of God, that is the White and the Black secrets. Within these secrets lie the male and female nature of God (1974). It is in this document that participants place such emphasis on what it means for them to be members of the Mutima Church. For instance, the female priests have emphasized that God is neither male nor female. It is also observed by MAMP4 that being a member of the church means that he has found the true revelation of God. He states that his prayers are complete because the church embraces the two redeemers. These two redeemers are Mary and Jesus.

Oduyoye (1995:124) argues that the male hierarchy in Aladura churches follows the order that has been described by Paul in his letters to the Corinthians (1 Cor.12:28) and to the Ephesians (Eph. 4:11-12). But female leadership is based on Biblical themes, such as those from the Hebrew Scriptures where the role models are Miriam, Rachel and Lydia. Similarly, while the Mutima Church teachings place an emphasis on the equality of female and male, statements on the position of man being a stem undermines the position of women, who are merely branches.

Oduyoye (1995:124) further comments that in many churches “non-canonical material contemporary to the New Testament is ...generally ignored...” She notes that “the position[s] of women are usually taken from Genesis, Leviticus and the New Testament Epistles. These texts constitute a “man’s Bible” (Oduyoye, 1995:124).

According to the male priests such as OMP1, gender starts with God (Interview with OMP1. *Namfumu*. 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017). OMP1 and other members are of the view that gender is a concept that has been designed by God. They state that God created male and female in God’s own image. It is for this reason that women are ordained in the Mutima Church. The male priests agree that the Pauline view on women plays an important role as to why other churches do not ordain women. What has been missing in Paul’s letters is that both men and women are meant to perform God’s duties, because spiritually both are the same (Interview with OMP1 and MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2017). This, in theory, resonates with the teaching of the Mutima Church that is enshrined in the policy document (Chishimba, 1974). Mutima Church policy affirms that “both male and female are created in the image of God” (Chishimba, 1974:16).

However, Mutima Church policy documents also stipulate that men are allowed to practice polygyny or polygamy. Men are referred to as stems whilst women are referred to as branches. That is why the middle-aged male priest number 4 (MAMP4) responded that “it is true man was created first and God made him to sleep in order to create Eva from the rib of Adam. If you look at the tree, the branch shoots from the trunk” (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017). For Oduyoye (1995:124), this is perceived as a result of contemporary “theologizing”. She suggests that in some churches women’s aspirations to become like men and reject their womanhood is not a form of equality. This, for her, is a “modern” women’s liberation that is not biblical and is not African (Oduyoye, 1995:125). This raises some questions, especially when it is stated that both male and female are created in God’s image. It is thus possible to see how Mutima Church members give a restrictive meaning to the interpretation that favours men over women.

In line with the above, Fiorenza (2011) maintains that the question remains as to how God is spoken about in a theological manner. This is because of the way human beings portray God as the “father”, and also how the “father God” has authority in the house, church and society. With God proclaimed as the “father”, Fiorenza (2011:221) asks whether the God that is mostly

proclaimed is the God of domination, violence, and subordination, or whether this is a God who engenders the well-being of all human beings without excluding anyone (Fiorenza, 2011:221). The argument that is raised by Fiorenza is the problem of “monotheism versus polytheism...” This problem should not be approached as an ontological one, but it ought to be analysed within a dualistic rhetoric and should be reformulated in terms of a theological critique (Fiorenza, 2011:221). Further, she is of the view that an issue that is intertwined with the problem of monotheism “...is the question of how the symbol “G\*d” strengthens or undermines ideological power relationships” (Fiorenza, 2011:221).

For female priests, belonging to the Mutima Church means that they have heard, and are practicing, the complete image of God that is revealed in Africa. It is the complete image of God in the sense that the members have been taught about the White and Black secrets. They have been taught how God manifested Godself in both the White and the Black secrets, but the White secret only revealed the masculine nature of God. Therefore, the Black secret has revealed both the masculine and feminine natures of God. The female priests emphasized that being called *Ba Mutima* (meaning those of the heart) is an inclusive name because all human beings have hearts. The female priests state that it is the human heart that determines people to conclude whether a person has a good heart or not. Although this is also perceived from the Bemba cultural point of view (Badenberg, 2002:42), the same teaching and influence have also been reinforced by Chishimba.

However, Neuman (2014:481) argues that “as you slowly read field notes, historical sources, or other data, you look for critical terms, central people, key events, or themes”. Chapter Three (Section 3.2.4) discussed the three pillars of the Bemba culture, namely, the Clan system, the Matrilineal system and Marriage. The Bembas believe that every human being has a heart from which one’s feelings originate. The human heart is central to members of the church, as it is part of the first pillar of Bemba society, the Clan. (Badenberg, 2002:62). For this reason, the symbol of the sacred heart of Jesus has contributed to bringing and converting families into the church. Thus, members have been taught the practice of gazing at the Sacred Heart of Jesus for hours, to become children of God (Hinfelaar, 1994:104).

The lived experience of Mutima Church members have demonstrated the efficacy of gazing at the heart of Jesus. For Scott (1990:203), such claims relate to the charismatic attitudes whose

roots are embedded in the hidden transcript of subordinate groups. In this way, OFP1 illustrated the use of some churches' names, such as the "Seventh-Day Adventist", or Bread of Life and so on. Her argument is that every person who is born again would like to enjoy the Bread of Life that is Jesus Christ, to worship on the Seventh Day of the week. Their narratives, as women members of the Mutima Church, show their willingness to belong and carry on spreading the Word of God to other people. Coming from the Bemba background, where motherhood is glorified, it has, however, not been difficult for female members to identify themselves with Mary, mother of Jesus.

## 7.5 Mariology

Members of the Mutima Church believe that Mary is the mediator between God and humanity. In this sense, O'Donovan (1996:258) sees that "...some Christians think that departed Christians or Jesus' Mother, Mary can act as mediators between them and God". This is true in the sense that Mutima Church members exalt and give reverence to Mary, mother of Jesus. For example, in her response, MAFP9 confirmed that Mary is their mother. The sufferings of Mary were not as much as that of Jesus. She stated that there are two Saviours that God sent on earth (Interview with MAFP9. *Namfumumu*. 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Both MAFP9 and OFP6 stated that they had been taught that both Mary and Jesus are Saviours, but Mary is the biggest Saviour, because she did not go through a lot of hardship. MAMP5 also stated that "...all those anticipations were anticipations of being a saviour herself, anticipations of being the mother to a saviour, all those internal feelings of admirations meant that Mary was the Saviour herself..." (Interview with MAMP5. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

The words of Fiorenza show how Mutima Church members "...have developed a very positive image of Mary..." (Fiorenza, 2011:200). They revere Mary to the extent of asking for her only, inasmuch as Mary was both their liberator and their mother. They admire Mary's characteristics; they imitate them and they venerate her. They believe that Mary is the mediator because she is the mother of God. Mary is referred to as *Mayo Nakabumba* literally Mother of the Creator, Seat of Wisdom or *Namfumumu* meaning Mother of King or literally *Nyinefwe*, Our Mother, which are titles of exaltation for Mary in the Mutima Church. The Mutima Church uses the symbol of Mary in many forms. Firstly, Mary is used as a symbol of purity because they have been taught that she had no sin. Mary received no temptation from the devil. Secondly, Mary is used as a symbol of fertility. She conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. She did not complain

about the pregnancy. Mary never bothered about what people in society were going to say. Mary cared for and maintained the pregnancy without thinking of an abortion. Thirdly, Mary is used as a symbol of life. She gave birth to Jesus. She nurtured Jesus and taught him God's ways (Interview with OFP6. *Namfumu*. 26<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

Fourthly, Mary is seen and portrayed as a symbol of humility. It is through Mary that the Mutima Church members believe that God has both feminine and masculine characteristics. This is revealed through Mary, since she is the *Senior Redemptrix* over Jesus. Mary is used as the mediator between humanity (Chishimba) and God. Fifthly, it is through Chishimba that Mary has established her own church with Black people, that is, the Mutima Church (Burlington, 2008:440). Sixthly, it is also through Mary that Mutima Church members believe that Chishimba himself has both feminine and masculine characteristics. This is because through Mary's saviourhood and her relationship with her favoured child, Chishimba, and her children, the Africans, there was something that was hidden from the Europeans, just as the messiahship of Jesus was also hidden from the Jews (Burlington, 2008:440). These are some of the reasons why Mary is revered. Loades (1996:128) is of the view that "Mary is taken into dialogue with God, as a woman of courageous choice, proclaiming God's vindication of those who need it, surviving poverty, flight, exile and so on". To Mutima Church members, Mary's conversation with the angel Gabriel portrays how she humbled herself. It is for this reason that Mutima Church members portray Mary's humility in songs and prayers, as they believe that Mary obeyed God's command and she was highly favored because of that.

To date, the generally common practice among members in the Mutima Church is imitating and exalting Mary, mother of Jesus. Rakoczy (2004:339) asserts that "Mary, the Mother of Jesus, named as *Theotokos* (Mother of God) by the Council of Ephesus in 431..." was given the title "Mother of God" as the members insisted that "if Mary gave birth to Jesus, and Jesus is referred to as the Son of God, and... Jesus and the Father are one, then Mary is the Mother of God"<sup>89</sup>. For this reason, Mutima Church members have been taught that Mary is the Mother of Creation. Furthermore, Rakoczy (2004:342-343) suggests that "this was the result of the Christological controversy concerning the two natures of Christ—human and divine—and Mary was named as

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<sup>89</sup> For more information on the details of the Council of Ephesus, see... The Council of Ephesus in 431 proclaimed that Mary is *Theotokos*, meaning Mother of God.

Mother of the whole person”. Thus, using the words of Rakoczy (2004:344), in the Mutima Church the common experience among members, especially female priests who have children with Chishimba, is relating to Mary by using “...images such as handmaid, virgin and mother”. Rakoczy’s theology on Mariology and its concepts of Mary shed light on this aspect of the study because it resonates with some female priests who have *children of the spirit*. Some female priests with *children of the spirit* glorify motherhood, in the sense that they were not expecting to have children in the first place. The works of Rakoczy (2004) highlight the theological approaches towards Mary, emphasizing her place in the Christian community and solidarity with the poor and with women. Furthermore, it presents contextual approaches to Mary in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Rakoczy, 2004:340).

Despite the contextual approaches to various parts of the world as perceived by Rakoczy, Ruether (1993:149-150) speaking from the perspective of patriarchal systems of domination, points out that “the Mariological tradition functions in patriarchal theology primarily to reflect and express the ideology of the patriarchal feminine. The Virgin Mary becomes the theological personification of Psyche and Mother Church as Virginal Bride and Mother of Christians”. Ruether is of the view that even though Mary’s place in the church and society is to be exalted and imitated, policies such as remaining a virgin, getting married and conceiving are problematic for women, because they function only in male-dominated places that make women become incompetent, submissive and passive.

In view of this, Fiorenza (1975:621) argues strongly that “Mary has almost never functioned as a symbol of women’s equality and capacity to lead; adherence to her can deter women from becoming whole persons”. Though these three women theologians, Rakoczy, Ruether and Fiorenza, refer to Mary in a manner that seems to teach women to be critical when identifying themselves with the Virgin Mary, this form of Mariological tradition is practiced and imitated in the Mutima Church.

Using Nuckolls’ (1996) terms, this is a paradoxical-dialectical knowledge system because the teachings moves back and forth between the transcendent and the human. Here, Chishimba is trying to find stability for his religio-cultural teachings. On the other hand, mariological tradition has resulted in some female priests becoming subservient to Chishimba’s views on humility. In this way, some female priests consider having children with Chishimba as sacred. It is this belief

of conceiving in the name of Mary that allows some female priests to consider themselves as chosen by God. Yet this whole area of the Mutima Church is considered to be a secret.

It is secretive, and many people fail to understand the “being” of Chishimba. Many people fail to understand and believe, as Mutima Church members do, that Chishimba is guided by the Holy Spirit. It is also believed that it is the Holy Spirit who directs Chishimba in what he should do and not do. It is believed that the Holy Spirit even chooses particular female priests for Chishimba (Interview with male participants. *Namfumu*. July 2017). Mutima Church members believe that Mary is more powerful than Jesus, though Mary was also humble to God. This is because of Mary’s acceptance of pregnancy as a symbol, as God elevated her to the status of mother of Jesus. As they exalt the uniqueness of Mary, they also imitate mother Mary. The female priests are perceived as mothers of the king because they nurture and care for every person who visits the *Namfumu* homesteads. They have been socialized and believe that as Rakoczy (2004:345) conclusively asserts, “Mary can do everything for everyone”. The following sections outline some analytical views on the secret surrounding the *Parent of Truth* in the Mutima Church.

## **7.6 The Secret Surrounding the *Parent of Truth* in the Mutima Church**

Oduyoye (1995:32) narrates the history of secret societies in West Africa. She perceives that it is believed that a long time ago, when women were keepers of certain secrets of divinities such as some avenging spirits and that of the Great Mother, who was believed to be the Supreme Creator, women outnumbered men in some societies. While men were entitled to carry out all tasks, women were in charge of shrines belonging to the Great Mother. This was referred to as the cult of women (Oduyoye, 1999:32). However, as the years went by, the shrine belonging to the Great Mother was eventually captured by men. Women had no option but to hand over a knowledge of the secrets of the cult to men. Men ensured they had full knowledge of the shrine though they had to behead the priestesses in order to possess the shrine. Oduyoye (1995:32) continues that, to this day, the cult’s priests have maintained the custom of plaiting their hair, and their dresses are like that of women. Because the secrets of the farms were mainly linked to the cult of the Great Mother, men taught themselves techniques of farming and women were forbidden to take part in yam-planting (Oduyoye, 1995:32).

Furthermore, Oduyoye (1995:32) explains that the festival of the yam that was performed by women to appease the earth goddess was also taken over by men. The goddess became the men's secret societies' deity. To date, whenever the goddess's statue is in procession, women are advised to remain in hiding since they have to remain silent and are forbidden to be seen. According to Oduyoye (1995:32), "the Mother Goddess, who used to be the source of power for women, has been appropriated by men and is now the reigning deity of men's secret societies that demand that women remain voiceless and out of sight". The role of women that was once in power has been sidelined. Women's voices have been silenced.

Oduyoye's story provides some guidelines. For example, OFP1 explained that "you see, there is a secret on the role of Chishimba that people do not understand...the secret that has only been revealed by the Holy Spirit of God". OFP8 argues that Chishimba is the *Parent of Truth*, because his works cannot be compared to any other human being (Interview with OFP1 and OFP8. *Namfumu*. 28<sup>th</sup> June and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Similarly, OFP7 also stated that there is a secret about the role of Chishimba. But before that, she stresses that Chishimba is our guide, overseer and *Parent of Truth*. She mentions that the name referred to as Chishimba, the Rock, is one of the praises that God has revealed to them (Interview with OFP7. *Namfumu*. 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Chishimba is regarded as a *Parent of Truth*, and his works are surrounded by a lot of secret. So, Chishimba is the Holy Father whose authority and law are revelations from above, but his members are subject to obedience, dependence and tutelage which come from below.

In the same way, secrecy in the Mutima Church is a custom that is attached to Chishimba, and it has found symbolic expression when all the members respect and honour Chishimba. In this way, Scott (1990:196) suggests that ideological and symbolic dissent are similar. In a metaphorical manner, the hidden transcript determines the acts that should be performed on stage. Thus, if there is not much pressure from the subordinates to reorder the pattern of domination, "...others will exploit that breach and a new, de facto limit governing what may be said will have been established incorporating the new territory" (Scott, 1990:196). In the same way, members exalt Chishimba for being the *Parent of Truth* and receiver of divine revelations. It is in this way that his own children will also rise and establish their territories.

The term *Parent of Truth* is located within the patriarchal tradition. It is the patriarch who imposes various laws that reinforce different forms of hierarchy. Moltmann (1991:20) contends

that this is a typical patriarchal religious order of family relationships where the father is the lord. Moltmann views this as a pyramid, where such relationships are copied in church structures, from the children of the parish, to the pastors, bishops, the patriarchs and finally to the Holy Father. In Moltmann's view, authority and law are from above, while obedience, dependence and tutelage prevail from below (Moltmann, 1991:20). He considers this a theistic order, and not a Trinitarian one because, as a theistic order, it produces a super-ego in the said individual. This is the patriarchal way of relating to the world-God, for example, the Father, Holy Father, Father of the land, and father of the family (Moltmann, 1991:20).

Similarly in the Mutima Church, a religious order of the Holy Father has been addressed to Chishimba. According to the members, what Chishimba says is therefore believed to be divine and sacred. In Chishimba's sense and teachings, the same God that was speaking in the Creation story is the same that is still speaking to Chishimba. Since God was speaking during the time of Abraham and David, and God was speaking in New Testament times, Mutima Church members believe that God is still speaking to them through Chishimba. For OFP5, the secret is what they have heard concerning the White and Black secrets, and Chilufya Chilondola being the mother of their Redeemer, who is Chishimba (Interview with OFP5. *Namfumumu*. 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017). In the same way, OFP7 was of the view that members of the church cannot praise Chishimba only, without reverence to the mother. She states that "...there is a secret [to] the role of Chishimba that people do not understand...the secret that has only been revealed by the Holy Spirit of God" (Interview with OFP7. *Namfumumu*. 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017). OFP8 also explained that "Chishimba...*libwe lye shiku* literally, is the Rock of Wonder...this is a secret to only those who are chosen here in Zambia..." (Interview with OFP8. *Namfumumu*. 7<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

The female priests, including the members of the church, strongly believe that Chishimba is chosen by God, and that God has revealed Godself to Chishimba in a way that is secretive. With regard to West African Societies, Oduyoye (1995:31-32), asserts that

several West African communities have exclusive men's secret societies associated with creation and agriculture that provide the means for keeping order in the society. This is true of the Ogboni and Oro [,] of the Yoruba and the Poro societies of Sierra Leone. The annual demonstration of power over women in these religious festivals helps to perpetuate women's inferiority in the minds of growing boys and

girls and to ensure that patriarchy reigns where once there [was] parity or, perhaps, even female leadership.

With reference to Oduyoye's statement, the majority of secret societies in West African communities reaffirm the silencing of women and make them depend largely on their male counterparts. This also indicates that men in the Ogboni and Oro of the Yoruba and the Poro societies believe that because of the nature of a woman, she should not be allowed to take part in farming, for fear that she may "pollute the land". Thus, the power of societal norms prevents the participation of women in agriculture and other leadership positions.

As for Chishimba, the terms "secret", "Rock of Wonder" and the *Parent of Truth*, as members refer to Chishimba's role, raises questions pertaining to beliefs, practices and experiences. For example, do the terms "secret", "Rock of Wonder", or the *Parent of Truth* spring from traditional Bemba concepts? Do the terms have anything in common with some of the practices and beliefs of Bemba culture or chiefs, or do these terms have to do with Chishimba's own religious experiences? Whether they are real or not, this study argues that Chishimba has used his own religious experience to subordinate the position of women in his church. Appiah-Kubi (1981:119) argues that most of the Indigenous African Christian Churches are messianic. For these churches, "salvation is brought about by a redeemer, who is the mediator between the human and the divine. The leadership tends to be charismatic and endowed with supernatural powers" (Appiah-Kubi, 1981:119).

One may question what it is about women [in Oduyoye's story] that has made them remain voiceless and forbidden to be seen or heard. Are women endowed with supernatural powers? This seems to be similar to the case of Chishimba. The priests presented their knowledge, stating that the role of Chishimba is, to some extent, a secret that only few would understand. For members of the Mutima Church, referring to Chishimba as the *Parent of Truth*, Rock of Wonder, or a Stumbling Rock are terms that portray exaltation. As for the Bemba culture, titles are meaningful. They serve to praise and legitimize the authority of paramount chiefs. Commenting on the way subordinate groups, such as Mutima Church members, refer to Chishimba, Scott (1990:24) argues that people submit to particular priests, because of their misconceptions and a general respect for them. In the same way, Chishimba is regarded as a high priest, and his members are of the view that Chishimba, has received divine revelations.

Such titles silence people and make them reserve their questions. No matter how much one would want to inquire about the power of Chishimba, one would get no clear answers, except the belief that Chishimba is ordained and appointed by the Supreme God to establish and lead his church. Because of the belief that Chishimba receives divine revelations, members of the Mutima Church submit to the *Parent of Truth* and obey the rules he has formulated.

The concepts *Parent of Truth* and *Children of the Spirit* fall within a symbolic language which suggests non-agentive power, the kind of power which, according to Comaroff and Comaroff (1999:22), operates beyond contestation or negotiation. It simply means that through Chishimba's dreams he holds the "truth", which "cannot be questioned". These teachings encourage relations of obedience, subservience and subordination. Through songs and hymns and teachings (his teachings) in the church, members have been socialised to believe in him as the *Parent of Truth*. This knowledge is imparted to and inculcated into women (and all members) at a perceptual level and a mental level, below the level of consciousness. It is on an ideological level that these cultural and religious images operate.

Cilliers (2013:4) observes that in an attempt to reveal the disguise, Foucault strove to disclose that knowledge is essentially an instrument of power, par excellence. Cilliers rightly observes that Foucault's argument is that power is always there, and it is not used or acted upon as the need arises, but is there, subtle and silent (Cilliers, 2013:4). The argument that Cilliers (2013:4) makes is that

[p]ower creates knowledge, and the conviction that a certain form of knowledge is 'truth' is an exercise in, but also a condition of [,] increasing power. Knowledge and power complement, generate, and sustain each other; they co-exist and flourish in an undeniable, reciprocal relationship – sometimes blatantly, but mostly subtly, hidden behind its mask.

Cilliers' argument is ideal in that it provides a basis for the understanding of power. It clearly indicates that "power" is not just a matter of using the physical part of human bodies. What Cilliers seems to be emphasizing is that knowledge is not only derived from power, but that the two – power and knowledge complement each other. In simpler terms, power and knowledge are intertwined, and one cannot function without the other and they silently function together in disguise.

It seems as if this is how Chishimba has used knowledge as a form of power. He has gained his power in an invisible manner, but legitimately, behind his mask of power. Chishimba's training at the RCC Seminary imbued him with knowledge. With Chishimba's Bemba cultural background and knowledge of the religious teachings of the RCC, there is no doubt that indeed power and knowledge complete, complement, generate and sustain one another. The two co-exist and reproduce behind the mask. This is in agreement with Comaroff and Comaroff's (1991:22) argument on power. They argue that power comes across to us primarily as a set of ideas that reflect the interests of those who are ruling. They assert that the power of silence, which includes the silent authority of habits and attitudes, are also effective. They are similar to the most violent coercion that has to do with shaping, with directing and dominating social thoughts and actions (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991:22).

This is in line with Chishimba's use of power towards his members. Because Chishimba is believed to be receiving divine revelations, his members cannot question but receive the message and act upon it. In the language of Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:23), "this is why power has so often been seen to lie in what it silences, what it prevents people from thinking and saying, what it puts beyond the limits of the rational and the credible". To substantiate the Comaroff and Comaroff's argument, one would state that Chishimba uses knowledge and power to teach his members and, to some extent influence them. They in turn praise him, respect him, exalt him because they believe that Chishimba is their liberator. They even refer to Chishimba as King (Interview with OFP3. *Namfumu*. 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017).

In this respect, it is important to define the word "influence". Malina (1986:80) defines influence as "...the capacity to persuade". A person needs to be able to interact socially and effectively to apply influence. Malina (1986:80) indicates that such a kind of influence works by persuading people to follow what one wants. Such a kind of influence points out what is rational and how one should act. It is influence that aims to change the opinions and attitudes of others, so that their actions may follow that of their leader.

Chishimba is the one who has the information. He has been shaped by the Bemba culture, which is his tribe. Chishimba has also been shaped by the RCC tradition, which is the denomination from which he is coming. He formulates and designs the structure of the church. Being the stem of the Mutima Church, Chishimba acts in a given way, and points out what makes sense to him.

He is the author of tradition, and because Chishimba is the author of the Biblical narratives in the Mutima Church, members are shaped in a way that his word is unquestioned.

The priests' responses to the role of Chishimba shows that he is the author of the traditions of the church. In their view, Chishimba is the one who mediates to God on their behalf when he is referred to as the *Redeemer*, or *Teacher* or *King*, because these are titles that are used to address Jesus. Oduyoye (2001a:53), observes that “[t]here are several other names used for Jesus: Son of God and Lord occur quite frequently, but the Letter to the Hebrews adds that of High Priest”. And Mutima Church members have adopted the title ‘High Priest’ as well (Interview with OFP1. *Namfumu*. 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and MAFP5. *Namfumu*. 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017), as a praise-name for Chishimba. Both OFP1 and MAFP5 are of the view that Chishimba is the High Priest. MAFP5 also states that Jesus performed his works from a masculine perspective, while Chishimba, because he is also being used by the spirit of Mary, performs his work from a feminine perspective (Interview with MAFP5. *Namfumu*. 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017).

Seemingly, Chishimba has appropriated for himself all the titles of Jesus. To affirm this, OFP3 explained that there are praises or exaltations that are ascribed to Chishimba, such as: “Your followers regard you as a Rock... You are the strong pillar to many... You are the parent of us Africans... No doubt, you are the King to those who obey your teachings... You deserve some respect and honour from us, since we are the chosen ones... You the living Rock...” (Interview with OFP3. *Namfumu*. 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2017). The important thing is the theological aspect that Mutima Church members attribute to Chishimba, since he is also referred to as the Living Rock of the Church. The following sections draws on the insights of the *children of the spirit*.

### **7.7 *Children of the Spirit***

It would seem as if Chishimba has literally taken unto himself the words of Saint Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort to apply to himself and his Church. These words of de Montfort are quoted by D'Ascanio (2004:16), and state that the Blessed Virgin will have more children, servants and slaves of love, and these words seem to have impacted on Chishimba and his members. Seemingly, Chishimba himself, being the author of knowledge and tradition in his church, has also documented de Montfort's revelations. To the members of the Mutima Church, however, de Montfort's revelations are valid and they believe that the words and revelations are thus meant exclusively for Mutima Church members. For example, Chishimba (1971:82-83) writes that in

the near future, there will be a movement led by the Holy Spirit of Mary. In this movement, some female members will be conceiving in the name of Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. After conception, the female members will give birth to children who will be called *children of the spirit* (Chishimba, 1971:82-83). In the light of this argument, although members of the Mutima Church are aware that Chishimba is the father of the *children of the spirit*, they are convinced by his teaching that Chishimba is being used by the Holy Spirit to father these children.

For some female priests, empathizing with Mary means accepting sexual intercourse with Chishimba. They believe that it is the Holy Spirit that guides Chishimba and directs him to have sexual intercourse with some female priests, thereby conceiving and giving birth to *children of the spirit*. This is then regarded as a blessing, both to the female priests and to the church. To this end, female priests identify themselves with the Virgin Mary carrying a “holy” baby. In this way, Soelle says, Mary is a woman who has been most concerned with God’s problems. She argues that “Mary is submissive, but she is also subversive...because...she undermines the power of the ruling classes. To use a term that has been used widely in West Germany recently, we could say that Mary is a sympathizer” (Soelle, 1984:46).

OFP8 responded that “did Mary mother of Jesus ever complain when the angel Gabriel visited her...she didn’t...which makes me to inform you...that we are so blessed to have these children” (Interview with OFP8. *Namfumu*. 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Like other female priests, OFP8 states that because of many problems that are faced by women, such as barrenness and medical problems, doctors usually diagnose them as barren. But those that are blessed and chosen by the Holy Spirit overcome this barrenness by having the *children of the spirit*. However, it is difficult to rightly state that the biological father of the *children of the spirit* is Chishimba. Most of the female priests referred to the deeds of Mary. But Oduyoye (1981) and Appiah-Kubi (1981) argue that women in the church tend to be silenced because the leader of the church has supernatural powers and he or she is considered sacred.

Because Chishimba is considered sacred and believed to have supernatural powers, female priests have believed that even those diagnosed with barrenness can eventually have *children of the spirit* if they are ordained in the Mutima Church. (Interview with OFP8. *Namfumu*. 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Female priests, (for example OFP8) believes that a woman needs to humble herself before

the Lord. The Lord then opens her womb and paves the way for her to have *children of the spirit*. OFP8's further response indicates that "...you see you will never understand...there is a secret surrounding these children and anyone who speaks evil of them should realise that he or she is bumping oneself to the Rock of Wonder...the *children of the spirit* are a blessing to many female priests and to the whole church..." (Interview with OFP8. *Namfummu*. 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

MAFP1 responded that she could not give a firm interpretation of the *children of the spirit*. She stated that "this is also a Rock of Wonder. You see you will never understand because even some of the members of our own church do not understand...I belong to the Royal Clan as well... I have four *children of the spirit*...You see it is God who gives these children, we are taught not to claim ownership of the children..." (Interview with MAFP1. *Namfummu*. 15<sup>th</sup> July 2017). With regard to separating mother and child, Nuckolls (1996:128) asserts that there is a strong bond between mother and child. He continues that, "The bond is not dependent on 'objective' factors. It is the *idea* of attachment, not the quantifiable measurement of it, which must be considered. If the idea is strong, intermittent contact between mother and child might actually make feelings of dependency more intense, not less so. Do we not make the same assumption when we say that absence makes the heart grow fonder?" (Nuckolls, 1996:128). For Nuckolls, the attachment or bond between mother and child is immeasurable. Mothers have strong feelings for their children, and vice versa. This attachment is a behaviour that is universal since no one knows what children do when they are frightened (Nuckolls, 1996:129).

To minimize the ambivalence in answering questions about the status of Chishimba, members use the phrase "bumping oneself into the Rock of Wonder" which is translated into Bemba as '*ukuipununa kwi libwe lye shiku*'. The phrase has powerful connotations attached to it, indicating that the person who is asking is literally silenced, because traditionally, one is not allowed to speak openly about the sexual desires of Bemba chiefs or kings such as Chishimba. The only response one would get concerning the *children of the spirit* is that they are a blessing from God.

MAFP1 also stated that when it comes to *children of the spirit*, it is a "secret" that no one can understand because female priests with *children of the spirit* are a blessing to the church. MAFP1 confirmed that she belongs to the inner circle, meaning that she is one of the female priests who has four *children of the spirit*. As stated earlier in Chapter One, these female priests are also referred to as *Abasano*, meaning belonging to the Royal Clan. It is important to note that MAFP1

stated that “we are taught not to claim ownership of the children...” In the same line, MAMP4 stated that it is human nature that people see in Chishimba. Everything Chishimba does comes from the Most High God, including his children...having many children means helping him to preach and spread the gospel to the world. MAMP4’s argument is that God has used Chishimba to produce as many children as possible so that when it comes to preaching the Word of God, these children will preach wholeheartedly (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Like MAMP4, OMP3’s response was that *children of the spirit* are not just like any other ordinary children. He stated that “...you see there is a secret that is there that you cannot understand...even myself I cannot understand this very well because this is God’s choice and ways” (Interview with OMP3. *Namfumumu*. 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017). It could be stated that the priests’ interpretation of the *children of the spirit* is also connected to the secret. Because they are believed to be gifts from God, the priests insist that it is difficult for one to get a full explanation about the children. OMP3 emphasized that Chishimba had taught them that the *children of the spirit* would be involved in other official activities, just like any other children in the world.

Similarly, MAMP5 responded that the *children of the spirit* know who their father is. But after they have been taught the reason for their existence, the *Parent of Truth* has surrendered everything he has, including the children, to the Mother of Creation. Even Chishimba has no authority over the *children of the spirit* because they do not belong to him. And the same applies to female priests, who cannot claim authority over these children. The role of female priests is to imitate Mary by embracing her humility. The irony is that while Mary was married to Joseph, the female priests are not married, and they are entitled to remain single throughout their lives. Being human, they may experience the pain of losing or missing their children, but the belief is that they cannot contest God’s ways (Interview with MAMP5. *Namfumumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2017). In this regard, it is important to use Soelle’s (1984:46) words, as she argues that “the figure [of] Mary, then is as ambiguous as [are] all religious concepts and symbols. She serves the interests of religiously glorified submissiveness but also those of consolation, protection, and the rescue of victims”.

MAFP2 explained that the *children of the spirit* are a gift to the whole church. She also stated that “only those who are chosen ...by God can understand the nature of these children...even our own relatives do not understand...but we do understand because God has revealed Godself

in our Redeemer, or Teacher of Truth, Chishimba” (Interview with MAFP2. *Namfummu*. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2017). MAFP2 explained that it is through their training that the female priests are given choices. One has to choose to serve God as an ordained priest who may decide to remain a virgin throughout her ministerial work, or to vow that one day she may get married to one of the male priests or to empathise with Mary, mother of Jesus.

By speaking of those who are chosen by God, MAFP2 is referring to female priests who belong to the Royal Clan who state that even their relatives do not understand the position of female priests since, in some cases, relatives who have allowed their daughters to go for training ask for dowries to be paid because their daughters have, in the process of serving God, become pregnant. This is because the issue of *children of the spirit* is not openly discussed and the leadership is not transparent in addressing such issues. Even though female priests are given options to choose ordination or remain celibate, and some choose to remain virgins throughout their ministerial work, it seems this is not so, because it is the power of the Holy Spirit that chooses who should have *children of the spirit*. This whole practice shows that the Mutima Church, being one of the AICs in Zambia, has not succeeded in incorporating women’s insights into the will of God for human beings (Oduyoye, 1995:125). It is said that some female priests cannot negotiate for safer sex for fear of disobeying the presence of the Holy Spirit. Some male priests feel they cannot question these actions, as they also believe that the Holy Spirit is present in their midst. The following sections highlight an analysis of the priests’ interpretations of marriage in the Mutima Church.

### **7.8 The Priests’ Interpretations of Marriage in the Church**

In both the Bemba and Christian cultures, the teachings and belief of marriage in the church is that it is sacred since it is an institution of God. The priests confirm that the church’s teachings on marriage are that male and female are beings created in the image of God. But once they are married they become one. Female priests state that even if one man has married three or four wives, it still means that they have all become one. This is associated with the tree in which, it is stated that a man is the stem and women are branches, because the stem holds the branches. While the female priests are of the view that the practice of polygamy in the church is Biblical, O’Donovan (1996:279), in contrast, argues that “polygamy is not the will of God”, but rather the desire and selfishness of human beings.

Chishimba teaches that polygamy is the will of God and, as such, some members of the Mutima Church live and practice it. It is important to add that Chishimba's cultural background demands that Bemba chiefs practice polygamy, and it has been observed in Chapter Three of this study (cf. section 3.2.1) that Bemba Paramount Chief[s] usually have many wives. Whiteley (1950:18) also observes that, given an opportunity of resources such as wealth or land, any Bemba man would also marry many wives. In the same way, Chishimba's claims that his lineage is that of Bemba Paramount Chief *Chitimukulu* does not exclude him from engaging in sexual intercourse with some female priests. This further illustrates how Chishimba himself is shaped by Bemba culture.

It has been documented in Chapter Three of this study (cf. section 3.2.4) that marriage is the third pillar of Bemba society, where the chiefs and other male members of the society practice polygamy. Such marriage is unique to Bemba society because in it women are recognized as the strongholders of the house. Similarly, Chishimba has justified these practices by basing them on Old Testament polygamous marriages and using them in the Mutima Church. With his background of Bemba and RCC traditions, Chishimba's teachings on marriage are believed to be sacred, and members of the church accept and practice them. Polygamy is one of the practices in the church, and women, as well as other members of the church, do not see anything wrong with polygamy. Because of these kinds of marriage practices, Mutima Church members consider themselves to be the last children of Israel. The phrase the "last Israelites" is also used in Chapter Four of this study (cf. section 4.3.1).

Malina (1983:105) argues that marriage strategies in the Bible reveal that people were much concerned with honour and shame. He points out that the marriage system was typically patriarchal, where "...the female [was] embedded in the male's owner". He further concedes that typical of this period were multiple wives, such as, marriage with widows, foreigners and slaves, citing the following Biblical texts: Genesis 16:1-4 and 25:1-6 for Abraham; Genesis 24:67 for Isaac; Genesis 26:34 and 28:9 for Esau; Genesis 29:21 and 30:12 for Jacob (Malina, 1983:106).

Although Mutima Church members refer to themselves as the last Israelites or children of Israel, some women in the Mutima Church may or may not be aware of all the customs and practices of the Israelite period. For Mutima Church members, however, some of the members, especially

women, have not furthered their education. This has been a result of some women being married off at early ages, or being asked to serve as nurses of Jesus. For others, however, it could have been a lack of financial support for their education, when one or both parents have died.

Malina (1983:110) has described three types of marriage system in Old Testament times. The first type of marriage was part of the patriarchal system, where the patriarchs gave their women in exchange for political and economic advantage after marriage. The second type of marriage was during the Israelite period, which is an aggressive type of marriage system where men denied their women to higher class outsiders and attempted to take the outsiders' women. On the women's part, sexual intercourse was seen as an issue of hospitality, so women were portrayed as instruments of sexual hospitality to honour the men (Deu. 23:17-18) (Malina, 1983:108). The third type of marriage was current in what Malina terms the Jewish period, where a defensive strategy was practiced and the laws of the patriarchal and the Israelite periods were reshaped to fit this period (Malina, 1983:110).

Having outlined Malina's arguments on the three types of marriage in the Old Testament, the question that arises is which, among these marriage strategies has Chishimba adopted to teach his members? The answer to this question is that Chishimba has adopted all three marriage strategies. That is not to say that there is endemic violence and aggression in marriages within the Mutima Church, but Chishimba has adopted some aspects of patriarchal strategy. This marriage strategy reveals "...sexual hospitality toward persons of higher social rank, with a view to the economic and political benefit of the male" (Malina, 1983:117).

This is the situation faced by some female priests. Chishimba does not marry them, but they are given honour in the church for having *children of the spirit*. The concept is that of honouring some female priests as belonging to the Royal Clan. There are no monetary rewards, apart from being assured eternal life. This is "holy patriarchy" that stems from a natural affinity for "African patriarchy" initiated by traditional theologians such as Chishimba (Ramphela, 1989:188). This strategy has some affinity with the Bemba culture in which Bemba chiefs marry many wives.

Chishimba has also adopted the Israelite strategy. Mutima Church marriage strategy resonates with agnosticism, and competition is rife between women who are in polygamous marriages as

they try to satisfy their husbands' sexual desires, causing much dissension among female priests. Malina (1983:107) confirms that "this is simply an expression of the agonistic quality of social relations typical of sedentary Mediterranean communities from antiquity". Furthermore, Chishimba has also adopted defensive strategy of the Jewish Period. Some male members have only one wife, but the rule is that all members who are married are under the covenant, because they are joined together as one. Because of his knowledge, and his position as founder of the Mutima Church, members have claimed that Chishimba is their Redeemer, their Saviour, Teacher and Guide, as well as being associated with many other titles. The following section highlights an analysis of the priests' theological concept of Chilufya Chilondola.

### **7.9 Mother of the Liberator - Chilufya Chilondola**

This section discusses and analyses the responses of the priests with regard to Chilufya Chilondola. Therefore, to analyse Mutima Church members' views on Chilufya Chilondola, one needs to understand the Mutima Church's missional policy. In the church's founding document, Chilufya Chilondola is descended from Paramount Chief *Chitimukulu Chinchita* (Chishimba, 1985:14). According to the Church's document, and in the belief of the members of the Mutima Church, Chilufya Chilondola is a Saint because she embraced Mutima Church members and took care of them by showing them love. Chilufya Chilondola is honoured in the Mutima Church "...for being the mother of our High Priest" (Interview with MAFP5. *Namfumumu*. 21<sup>st</sup> July 2017). In the same way, OFP8 also stated that Chilufya is honoured because she is the mother of "...our Redeemer" (Interview with OFP8. *Namfumumu*. 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Because Chilufya is also equated with Mary, Chishimba has introduced the phrase "Nurses of Jesus" to describe those members who wish to train as priests, deaconesses, and prophets.

Almost on the pattern of Mary, Queen of Heaven, Chilufya is the queen mother of the Mutima Church and regarded as mother of the liberator. She gave birth to the *Parent of Truth*. For this reason, and based on Bemba culture, where mothers of kings are honoured, Chilufya has received much honour in the Mutima Church. She is indeed the queen mother of the Mutima Church. Burlington indicates that Chilufya is a prototype for the role of all Mutima women.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 79.

Mutima Church members believe that Chilufya Chilondola represents Mary's feminine nature in the church and the world. Since she gave birth to a black child (Chishimba) in the midst of other coloured children, Stuart (Chishimba's stepfather) had disliked Chishimba. Burlington narrates how the treatment Chishimba received from Stuart helped him discover his true calling in the world. According to Burlington, "through his discovery the meaning and significance of Chilufya's life is revealed. [Chilufya] returns to her own family (who are by now all Mutimas) and to renew fecundity".<sup>91</sup> The following section is a discussion on the role of serving as *nurses of Jesus* in the Mutima Church.

### **7.10 Serving as Nurses of Jesus (NJs) and the Challenges Faced in Ministry**

Like Moltmann (1991) and Fiorenza (1983), Oduyoye (1981:112) argues that Christianity should take into consideration the African belief which rules that God delegates authority to intermediary beings. Arguing from an African woman theologian's perspective, Oduyoye stresses that there is a widespread belief in the "*divine right of kings*". These are most often sanctioned by African religions. She concedes that in most cases the divine rulers or kings are cultic people and their personalities are considered sacred (Oduyoye, 1981:112).

Given Oduyoye's argument on the beliefs held by our African counterparts that God delegates authority to intermediary beings, members of the Mutima Church believe that Chishimba is appointed by God. Hence, "king" is one of his titles that is also associated with exaltation. The debate here is whether Chishimba is himself involved in a cult or not. Since his lineage is that of the Bemba chieftaincy, Chishimba is aware of the divine right of kings associated with many African cultures. As he is also considered a sacred person by his members, Chishimba is the one who appoints members to go for training and serve as *Nurses of Jesus (NJs)*. It should be noted that members of the Mutima Church may be referred to as a group of subordinates. For this reason, Scott (1990:27) stresses that "the hidden transcript of subordinate groups, in turn, reacts back on the public transcript by engendering a subculture and by opposing its own variant form of social domination against that of the dominant elite. Both are realms of power and interest".

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<sup>91</sup> Burlington, G. 1998. Topography of a Zambian StoryLand. [Online]. Available: [http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs\\_IJFM/15\\_2\\_PDFs/ijfm\\_15\\_2.pdf#page=18](http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/15_2_PDFs/ijfm_15_2.pdf#page=18) [2016, 23 April]. p. 80.

In his teaching, Chishimba uses some Bemba cultural values to put across his Biblical message. In the same way, members of the Mutima Church may be portrayed as equipping their beliefs with a Bemba culture associated with a culture of spiritual belief. For instance, in her response, OFP8 highlighted that after two years of mourning her husband, Chishimba approached her. He asked OFP8 to go for training as an NJ. OFP8 did not refuse because she knew the call was divine and from God (Interview with OFP8. *Namfumumu*. 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Similarly, OMP2 stated that, "...Chishimba is guided by the Spirit of God...I was excited because I knew God would not fail me...being a widower, I left my seven children..." (Interview with OMP2. *Namfumumu*. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017). Both OFP8 and OMP2 lost their spouses. They left their children to go for unpaid training as *NJs* for two years since they did their first year whilst in their own homes. Both were approached by Chishimba, who is their sacred leader. Although this may have sounded awkward to OFP8 and OMP2 respectively, and to their relatives, the two members did not refuse because they understood this to be a calling from God. Even though widows or widowers do not have *children of the spirit*, they are defensive in the way they responded to the questions. For OFP8 and OMP2, leaving their own children to go and live communal lives have been a challenge to them and to their own children. They both explained how, as many times as possible, they have been approached by their own biological children to go back, but they refuse because they have 'vowed' to serve God through Chishimba and the people they serve.

While the older female priests resisted speaking out much about the challenges, they acknowledged that they face some difficulties. They stated that these difficulties have been overcome by fasting and prayer. This was the way OMP2 avoided disclosing his own challenges, which seemed to be like a culture of resistance to the researcher. OMP2 stated that "as human beings, we all face challenges in our lives...but the best way to overcome is to include prayer and fasting...just like the way I will ask you to be doing when writing this information for many people to know about us. You should pray and fast so everything go smoothly" (Interview with OMP2. *Namfumumu*. 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017).

According to the priests, they do not live like other people because their duties involve looking after the people who have been placed under them. They live in *Namfumumu*, where they live as a community, hence they are the "children of Israel". To some, especially the young female priests, this kind of life has many challenges. The only time they move away from where they are stationed is when they are being transferred to another *Namfumumu* or going to attend Holy Days

that are held in urban *Namfumu* places. But even if they move in such a way, the *Namfumu* they would be coming from is always left in charge of any priest who may be around. As stated by OFP8, the older female priest, *Namfumu* places are in many cases faced with issues of unplanned pregnancies, but the rule is that once this happens, the priests in-charge will report the matter to Chishimba and the youths will be asked to be in marriage. As a result, one would find very young couples living as husband and wife in the Mutima Church. The section that follows offers an analysis of the priests' responses to the conditions of service and the relation of Biblical teachings to the Bemba culture.

### 7.10.1 General Analysis

Oduyoye (2001b:19) argues that in Africa, particularly in the AICs, women are the keenest participants in the religious provisions or regulations that link women with evil and make men the innocent victims of women's sexuality. She points out that the issue of sexuality takes humanity back to the "Eve and evil" syndrome" (Oduyoye, 2001b:19). Oduyoye's concern here stems from the African women theologians' point of view. They observe that the authority and interpretations of the Bible have been exercised with a focus on the oppression and subordination of women. Some African Churches, in their quest to "absolutize" the Bible, have preached the story of Eve, to emphasize the wrong things that have been caused by women. The story of Eve allows human separation from God, thereby allowing human beings to respond to God of their own free will. She argues that the narrative of the Eve story needs to be examined adequately so that it allows inclusiveness in the church and society (Oduyoye, 2001b:19).

Listening to the responses of female priests in the Mutima Church, one hears that the *children of the spirit* are gifts from God, they are a blessing to the church. This is how religious knowledge of the issue of *children of the spirit* has been interpreted by the members. The *children of the spirit* are not to be associated with any other ordinary children, because they are special children. The Holy Spirit has been portrayed, and therefore believed to be, the progenitor of the *children of the spirit*. In this respect, Chishimba's sexual responsibility is abrogated. This is a secret that even some members of the church cannot reveal and some do not even understand the nature of the *children of the spirit*. Chishimba has taught the female priests not to claim ownership of the children, because they are "gifts from God". Interestingly, female priests who give birth to these children are not allowed to nurture and raise them: they are raised and nurtured by other female priests in other *Namfumus*.

This is an issue of male power, precisely because Chishimba himself claims “ownership” of the *children of the spirit*, indirectly. Allowing the *children of the spirit* to be nurtured in the *Namfumus* by other priests illustrates the point that Chishimba claims ownership of them. Another dimension to these power relations is that the *children of the spirit* are taught not to address their parents as “mother”. Not even the female priests address their children as my “son”, or my “daughter”, for these are God’s own children. Some of the responses from the female priests were that Mary nurtured Jesus and taught him how to live in society. Respectively, this study argues that Chishimba has been ordaining females as priests, using some of them to satisfy his sexual desires. Chishimba has no wife of his own. He claims to stand in the place of Jesus in Africa, with no legal wife, but with a large number of children whom he has fathered.

There is another sense in which Chishimba perpetuates women’s inferiority in his church. This is his portrayal of how one can violate the dignity of human beings, making them vulnerable and fragile. For instance, in the discussion with MAMP4, he stated that some male priests are allowed to renounce their celibacy. They marry for a stated number of years and have a certain number of children. Once the number of years allocated to them expires, the male priests are called back for ordination (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017). Claassens and Spronk (2013:3), comment on human dignity as follows. They argue that a “...key feature of Fragile Dignity is that it contains important perspectives with regards to the way one uses biblical texts in a normative conversation on the promotion of human dignity in contemporary contexts”. With regard to Claassens and Spronk’s argument on fragile dignity, one of its features is the way some Biblical texts have been interpreted normatively to suit the contexts of the recipients. Chishimba has adopted a practice of human violation by making some members vulnerable and fragile.

Although the first two female volunteers (FVN1 and FVN2) were interviewed separately, they are no longer members of the Mutima Church. The two women had been trained and ordained as female priests but decided to leave before they were ordained. For Scott (1990), these are signs of resistance. According to Scott (1990:118), “none of the practices and discourses of resistance can exist without tacit or acknowledged coordination and communication within the subordinate group. For that to occur, the subordinate group must carve out for itself social spaces insulated from control and surveillance from above”. Scott is of the view that even if the subordinate groups express themselves publicly in certain contexts, they also require to express

some hidden transcripts in another way. For example, the fact that both FVN1 and FVN2 resigned at the same time means that they planned to leave their training long before the actual time. FVN1 responded that she did not want to think about what she was taught during her training. She further asserted that had she stayed in the church, she could not have married. According to FVN2, the training was hard because basically, and indirectly, one is trained how to take care of a husband, in spite of the fact that one is pledged to celibacy. Although these are the only two women who were interviewed, it is evident that there are both men and women who had the same experience and decided to leave the church.

Similarly, FVN2 appreciates the training and states that it is valuable. Perhaps she views it according to the way she lives with her husband in the house and how she receives visitors. FVN1 elaborates that she could not think of carrying her “own” cross, because in the Mutima Church, when one says that it is your cross to carry, one simply means that no one can help you to lessen your burdens. It would seem as if FVN1 and FVN2 showed some resistance to enduring the cross of having *children of the spirit*. They seem to be portraying voices of resistance.

The responses of the older female priests are likely different from the younger female priests who have *children of the spirit*. It is possible that the older female priests are not aware of the secrecy surrounding the *children of the spirit*. Possibly, they do not know what is taught to those who belong to the Royal Clan. Belonging to the Royal Clan is also a Bemba concept, where the wives of chiefs are referred to as *Abasano*, belonging to the inner circle or Royal Clan. There are definitely some “secrets” that Chishimba has used to draw some younger female priests into his small, intimate and closed circle.

## 7.11 Conclusion

This chapter was divided into eight themes. The first section analysed Chishimba’s power and influence towards his members. In trying to discuss Chishimba’s power and influence, a section on Chishimba’s theological role was included. With regard to the document, *the full image of God* (Chishimba, 1974), the second theme involved answering two questions: What does it mean to you to belong to the Mutima Church, and why are women ordained in the Mutima Church? These answers were influenced by the nature of the responses given by members stating that both female and male are created in God’s image.

The third theme is the concept of Mariology. The feminine face of Mary is imitated in the Mutima Church, and the members asked to give their theological interpretation of Mary. The fourth theme presents an analysis of the “secret” surrounding the *Parent of Truth*. It was observed that the “secret” surrounding Chishimba was that he was appointed and ordained by the most High God. Whatever Chishimba does or says is guided by the Holy Spirit. That is why some members emphasize the fact that it is difficult for many people to understand Chishimba’s existence, because it is surrounded by a secret. Among the many titles given to Chishimba is the *Parent of Truth*. In the Bemba language, this means *Umufyashi wa Chishinka*. This is because members believe that Chishimba receives divine revelations from God which he imparts to his members.

The fifth theme presents an analysis of the “*children of the spirit*”, which is the core of this dissertation. It was observed from the members’ understanding that the *children of the spirit* are a gift to the church by God. It is believed by Mutima Church members that it is God who decides and chooses the female priests who belong to the Royal Clan. The sixth theme discussed the priests’ interpretation of marriage in the Mutima Church. It has been observed that their interpretation of marriage is ironic because, on the one hand, they state that both men and women are created in the image of God, and therefore they are both equal and can perform God’s duties. On the other hand, the priests stated that a man can marry as many women as he wishes, because these laws are legislated in the Bible. The seventh theme presented the attitude of priests towards their understanding of Chilufya Chilondola’s actions. It has been observed that Chilufya is also seen as the Mutima Church members’ queen mother, since she gave birth to their Redeemer, Chishimba.

The final theme was a discussion of the priests’ interpretation of their service as *nurses of Jesus*. This is done before ordination. Most of the priests explained that Chishimba is the one who appoints them to train and serve as *nurses of Jesus*. According to the members, they believe that their appointment to train as the *nurses of Jesus* is sacred. Hence, the members cannot refuse. From the priests’ responses, it has been confirmed that most of Chishimba’s teachings are from his knowledge of the Bemba culture, as well as his knowledge of the RCC. Hence, Chishimba uses his male power to become the centre and author of authority in the Mutima Church.

The following is the concluding chapter of the dissertation. I will demonstrate in this chapter the extent of what I have achieved in this study. The study concludes with its final statements, and conclusions.

## CHAPTER 8

### Conclusions

#### 8.1. Introduction

This study has sought to interrogate, by means of fieldwork, the effects of the missional policy among some ordained Bemba women in the Mutima Church of Zambia. The study sought to examine and analyse relationships between women and male power. The intention was to establish the link between missional policy, women and male power. It also sought to establish the possibility that missional policy might have on female priests' lives. Given that the study itself is cultural-religio, in which ethnicity is at the centre, field research was conducted and interviews have been presented and analysed. The question that this study sought to answer is: How does the male-formulated missional policy affect ordained women's lives and influence their functions in the Mutima Church?

To answer this, there is a need to show what this concluding chapter of the study, divided into four sections, has achieved. The first section unmask the missional Church policy, focusing on issues of women and male power. There follows some malestream preachings of Mary, who is of great interest and a symbol of humility and motherhood in the Mutima Church. The second section highlights the gap in literature. There is, however, a brief discussion of some issues which have contributed to the existing literature, thereby providing new knowledge. The issue of male power and *children of the spirit* gives some women an identity in the context of the Mutima Church, as briefly discussed. The third section draws on issues in relation to Biblical marriage and the Bemba culture. The fourth section contains suggestions for future research, a summary and a conclusion.

#### 8.2. Unmasking the Mutima Church's Missional Policy: Women and Male Power

Bearing in mind that Mary is one of the symbolic figures adopted by the Mutima Church, the study has portrayed how members imitate the characteristics of Mary as a form of humility. Fiorenza (2011:198) argues that "feminist criticism has unmasked the images and symbols of hegemonic Mariology as the religious projection of a celibate, male priestly hierarchy—a projection which has ideologically legitimized male domination in church and society". In the

Mutima Church, however, this still needs to be unmasked. Chishimba leans on the Bible, thereby propagating Holy Patriarchy, which is reinforced by African culture, particularly the Bemba patriarchy (Ramphela, 1989: 188). All these are issues of power, because religion (Christianity) is an issue of power, just as Bemba cultural values are symbols of power. Chishimba sees his role as part of the Bemba royal lineage, where his Mother (Chilufya) was like *Namfummu* (proto-Mary). These two power and belief systems operate concurrently though with tensions. Chishimba is the Patriarch (Saviour) in the Mutima Church, and a *Father of Truth* (Protector of women) in the Bemba cultural set up. The Mutima Church empowers women, in the sense that they have been ordained.

However, the issue of ordaining women should be seen from more than one angle. Firstly, in traditional Bemba society women have been guardians and gatekeepers of religious shrines and home shrines. Secondly, women in the Bemba matrilineal system “assert” power over their husbands in the sense that husbands have to work for their father-in-law to “compensate” for marrying one of his daughters. Fiorenza (2011:199) is of the view that these ideologies and dogmas that were articulated during the time of the Greco-Roman imperial form of Christianity were institutionalized and have become historically operative. She argues that “indeed, it is overlooked that these ideologizing and mythologizing forms of kyriarchal Mariology often go hand in hand with a conservative politics of ecclesiastical and societal restoration that is contrary to the vision of the discipleship of equals” (Fiorenza, 2011:199).

With habitually teaching (through sermons), members of the Mutima Church have been socialized to perceive (and consequently believe) that Chishimba is their “Saviour”, with feminine characteristics, to whom God has revealed the truth. Because they are taught regularly, members have internalized these teachings, to the extent that they accept them as truth. If some women have left the church [such as the two women participants], it is a sign or symbol of resistance: one who possesses a “secret” has power over those who do not have a (religious) “secret”. This is what the Comaroffs (1991:22) term nonagentive power, since it can rarely be questioned as it is believed that it comes from God. The Comaroffs see this as “a function, in other words, of the capacity of the dominant to impose their will and their worldview on others” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991:22-23).

### 8.3. Contributions to Establishing New knowledge

In this section, I outline some significant issues that motivated me to undertake this study. These issues contribute towards new knowledge.

### 8.4 The Gap in Literature – The *children of the spirit*

In contrast to the RCC where the Mutima Church originated, the Mutima Church ordains women and gives them leadership positions. But the process of ordaining them (the study argues) also indicates that female priests are also disempowered, in that they cannot negotiate the issues of sex and sexuality, as this is said to be an issue determined by the Holy Spirit. As a visionary and founder, Chishimba claimed an authority that was independent of the RCC. He presented himself as an African prophet who was sent to free Black (Bemba) Catholics from White Rule and began to set up his own doctrines and churches (Turner, 1979:151). As stated in Chapter Four (Section 4.3.1), Chishimba was encouraged and motivated by visions of the Virgin Mary. Drawing on the way that Bemba chiefs build huts that are fenced to protect their wives and children (Whiteley, 1950:18), and drawing on the Bemba concept of women wielding political authority as chieftainess (*banamfumumu*) (Richards, 1940:22), Chishimba founded new villages for his followers and embarked on new forms of communal behaviour that were offensive to traditional opinion (Turner, 1979:152).

Chishimba seemed to be affirming Bemba culture by using Christian values to ordain women, and he has empowered some women by ordaining them and giving them leadership positions to run the *Namfumus*. Chishimba appropriated for himself and put into practice the revelation of Montfort, where he revealed that “in the near or distant future the Blessed Virgin will have more children, servants and slaves of love than ever before” (D’Ascanio, 2004:16). In Bemba culture, Richards (1940:91) observes that “... the Bemba husband never does obtain complete control over his wife and children”.<sup>92</sup> Richards, as discussed in Chapter Three (section 3.2.2), endorses the matrilineal system of the Bemba people, where women are in control of the household. But, for fear of losing the ‘so-called *children of the spirit*’, Chishimba uses a religious ideology which teaches that female priests may not claim these children as their own.

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<sup>92</sup> Also see Kaunda and Kaunda (2016). “Infunkutu—the Bemba Sexual Dance as Women’s Sexual Agency” in *The Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. Vol. 155. pp. 159-175.

Chishimba initiated the concept of *Nurses of Jesus* (NJs), who are missiologically interpreted as brides of Mary. It is during the NJs' training that some women are advised to choose to serve God in three ways. Firstly, they may choose to remain virgins for the rest of their lives. Secondly, they may choose to conceive and give birth to *children of the spirit*. Thirdly, they may choose to denounce their priesthood after serving for some years. They are allowed to go and get married to their fellow male priests, but after a specified number of years, they are re-called to serve God. This is because Chishimba (*Umufyashi*) has seen some weaknesses in the priests, hence some kind of break was granted (*Interview with OMP2, Namfumu. 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2017*). This is part of the malestream Mariology which Chishimba preached to his members.

From this perspective, Fiorenza (2011:198) observes that malestream Mariology and the cult of Mary degrade both men and women in four ways. Firstly, they emphasize that virginity is detrimental to sexuality. Secondly, they do this in a unilateral manner, for example, they associate the model of "true womanhood" with that of motherhood. Thirdly, they do this in a religious manner. For example, they valorize obedience, passivity, humility and submissiveness as being the cardinal virtues of wo/men. Fourthly, this is done by constructing an essentializing gender complementarity that sustains the structural oppression of wo/men (Fiorenza, 2011:198). While the RCC had various orders under the patronage of Mary, they did not have *nurses of Jesus*. However, Chishimba using the Bemba culture, has initiated one, the *nurses of Jesus*. In the Mutima Church, this is blended with Christian traditions and Bemba cultural perspectives. This, therefore, is embedded within Bemba culture.

In Chishimba's complex religious ideology, female priests occupy the role of Mary, as Mary did for Jesus. In this religious ideology, Chishimba is subsumed in the womb of Mary, but somehow also acts as a "husband" to the "Marys" (some ordained women). It is an allegorical interpretation of his dreams. Because Chishimba claims to have had a visitation from Mary, where he was lifted into heaven and given a new revelation, members believe that Chishimba is the Black messiah (Burlington, 2008:436). As discussed earlier, Chishimba himself is believed to be led by the Holy Spirit, and members argue that without the power of the Holy Spirit, he cannot perform all the tasks assigned to him by God. Even the issue of having *children of the spirit* is a divine issue. Members argue that no mere man can perform such duties. It is believed that the

*children of the spirit* themselves are aware that Chishimba is their paternal father, but they are taught to accept that his works are divine. They are taught not to question.

Scott (1990:49) stresses that “by controlling the public stage, the dominant can create an appearance that approximates what, ideally, they would want subordinates to see”. Members of the Mutima Church operate within the public and hidden transcripts. In the public sphere, members project themselves as imitators of the humility of Mary, though in fact cannot live out her humility. The well-known name that is used to refer to the children is *Abana bamu Mupashi*, meaning *children of the spirit*. But when one is asked to interpret or explain who their father is, the answers given are an interpretation that they exist because of the love of God through the Holy Spirit. When asked who is likely to conceive by the Holy Spirit, the members are of the view that this is not Chishimba’s desire, but it is done through Chishimba by the Will of God. This is where the hidden transcript emerges. Sendapu (2016:79) observes that members of the Mutima Church do not only hold Chishimba’s teachings as ‘sacrosanct’ but, they also honour Chishimba, and regard him as the sole founder of the church. Some members are able to explain how God has revealed Godself, and used Chishimba to bear these children. Hence, they see a relationship between the Biblical concept of marriage, and the traditional concept of marriage in Bemba culture and power in the Mutima Church. These concepts blend and are interlocked in a theology and praxis of Chishimba’s making, showing how policy, as an issue of religious power, operates within the framework of male power structures and affects women in the Mutima Church.

### **8.5 The Relationship Between the Traditional Concept of Marriage in Bemba Culture, the Mutima Church and the Biblical Concept of Marriage**

Research conducted by Whiteley (1950:18) among the Bemba reveals that polygynous marriages occur throughout Bembaland, though these are not recognized social units as in the patrilineal southern and eastern Bantu. While they may not be practiced widely among commoners, polygamous marriages do occur among the Bemba chiefs who “...may have as many as several dozen wives” (Whiteley, 1950:18). However, Richards (1940:15) observes that the Bemba people regard married life as the only possible existence for a normal man and woman, and in this way, they resemble other African peoples. Bemba men and women desire children passionately, for there is craving for off-spring. Richards argues that “to produce and possess children is one of the strongest ambitions of Bemba life” (Richards, 1940:17). The wives of

chiefs are well-secured because they live in huts fenced around a common stockade (Whiteley, 1950:18). In the midst of all this, there is an issue of power that is designed to control the wives of chiefs. Though the Bemba chiefs do not live in the fenced huts with their wives, they have their own palaces where they live. In Bemba language, the chiefs' palaces are known as *Kumusumba wa Mfumu*. However, it is from these palaces that the Bemba chiefs control their wives and children's huts by assigning guards to be in charge of their wives' huts.

Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:23) argue that power operates within three interrelated modalities. These are hegemony, ideology and culture. Religious beliefs and values in the Mutima Church fall within the sphere of hegemony, culture and ideology, as faces of power. That is because culture is an issue of power. For instance, when we examine the role of Bemba Paramount Chiefs, they hold authority in their hands. Bemba Chiefs do not marry one wife, but many women. The wives of Bemba Chiefs are referred to as *Abasano*, literally belonging to the Royal Clan. The reasons for them to have many wives are many. It may be because they hold authority in their hands or because of prestige (Mbiti, 1999). Being a Chief, one has the power to marry many wives, for instance, a chief has the liberty to choose which woman he wants to marry.

Bemba Paramount Chiefs, just like many other chiefs, look after their mothers. Mothers are very important and significant because it is believed that they are the ones who gave birth and nurtured the chiefs. Mothers of the Bemba Chiefs hold leadership roles. Since they are consulted about carrying out some tasks, they have the final say and are honoured by their subjects. That is the reason they are regarded as Queen mothers. For instance, the study has discussed how Chilufya is elevated, and in some sense equated to Mary, Mother of Jesus.<sup>93</sup> Although Chilufya gave birth to Chishimba, honour is also given to Chishimba's Grandfather and Grandmother. In African culture, the Grandfather and Grandmother represent authority.

As discussed in Chapter Three (section 3.2.3 and 3.2.4) regarding the Bemba concept of marriage, Badenberg (2002:49) asserts that Bembas are matrilineal. That is another reason for Bemba chiefs to be so attached to their mothers, just as many sons would love their mothers more than their fathers. Richards (1940:30) asserts that "polygamy [among Bemba] is relatively

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<sup>93</sup> See Burlington (1998), who narrates the story of Chilufya Chilondola. Burlington is of the view that the Mutima Church members compare Chilufya to Mary.

speaking, uncommon and the institution is not an essential part of Bemba family and economic life as it is among so many Bantu people”. Richards is of the view that polygamous marriages are not rife among the Bemba people. They are only practiced when one man feels the desire to have two or more wives.

In years past, marriages were arranged by Chishimba in the Mutima Church. Concerning his daughters, Chishimba would marry off his girl children, without asking for a dowry, and a bridegroom may be offered marriage to two sisters from different female priests. With regard to dowry, it depended on the man to give something to Chishimba, if he so wished. Chishimba could, however, contribute something towards his sons’ weddings and ask some of the church members to assist them in paying the dowry if they were not able to meet the required sum. As for other members of the church, most marriages were arranged by Chishimba. The reason given being that Chishimba is led by the Holy Spirit to appoint who should get married to whom.

In his argument, Chishimba (1974:6) states that even in the Old Testament most marriages were arranged by God and men. For instance, OMP1 stressed that when God created Adam, God also created Eve. However, God did not charge Adam with any task. God just blessed them and instructed them to multiply and fill the earth. This is the concept of the “Mutima walowa Church...” (Interview with OMP1. *Namfumu*. 10<sup>th</sup> July 2017). To this end, polygamy is allowed in the Mutima Church. A man can marry two to four wives and they can all live together, since they are all the last Israelites (Interview with MAMP4. *Namfumu*. 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Chishimba emphasizes equality between men and women in the church. It is quite difficult to understand the practice of union (man and woman) that Chishimba has been teaching in his church, such as allowing one man to marry two or more wives. The paradox is that although polygamy is practiced in the church, male ideology cuts through this, making women ambivalent about their role in the church and society. This inequality is prone to raise more questions than answers. According to Nuckolls, (1996:148) “in divination, contradictions are temporarily resolved by transforming them into individual or family interests and then adjudicating the conflict between these interests in a forum presided over by judges...[I]n this case, however, nothing is done (because nothing can be done)”. Regarding the members of the Mutima Church, nothing can be done because members are already socialized to this kind of cultural-religio belief system. The fact that the Mutima Church ordains women who are also leaders of some parishes

does not destroy the underlying characteristics of clericalism that continues to deprive some women of their dignity and sexual desires.

### **8.5.1 An Empirical Study**

This being an empirical study shows that it has also built on existing knowledge and literature that is associated with the academy. The experiences of ordained female priests in the Mutima Church have been documented as pertaining to their power to lead. The origins (but not all) and some teachings and practices of the Mutima Church have been documented by some scholars such as Hinfelaar, 1994; Garvey, 1994; Turner, 1997 and Burlington 2008; 1998, to mention a few. Furthermore, a review of the literature from the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians indicates that there is inadequate literature “inquiring] if these [AICs] have succeeded in incorporating women’s insights into the will of God for human beings” (Oduyoye, 1995:125). To this end, the claim of this study is that female priests are operating within a framework of religious ideology, hegemony and culture that is socially constructed and imbued with inequalities of sexual privilege, compared to their male counterparts. These are all held within the Mutima Church policy and enshrined in the malestream teachings of all members.

### **8.5.2 An Academic Contribution**

The present study seeks to make an academic contribution to the debate on the experiences of some female priests in the AICs. Literature on AICs have revealed that there are many women who have initiated some individual churches, but limited research have been conducted on the experiences of ordained female priests and women concerning their conception of *children of the spirit* from the Global South. This is the reason for this study, which seeks to make a significant theological contribution towards this gap in knowledge. Although this study was conducted in Zambia, and focused mainly on the experiences of some ordained women, it is also relevant and important to other women of faith and girls who may be lured into accepting the religious teachings of some malestream Mariological faiths throughout the world. This investigation is an eye-opener to many researchers who have interests in conducting research centred on a theological/ethnological/ missiological perspective, that may also be informed by sociological, anthropological and psychological perspectives. It is also an eye-opener for researchers to conduct field work in some African Initiated Churches hereafter AICs.

### 8.5.3 African Feminist Research

It is to be noted that many feminist scholars are of the view that women's experiences have been marginalized through the period of Christian tradition.<sup>94</sup> To this end, research that is conducted on one individual woman is of much importance to African feminist theological research (Longwe, 2012:225). For this reason, the experiences of some female priests in the Mutima Church are both significant and unique.

### 8.5.4 Women and Male Power

While there are a number of religio-cultural and ideological factors that contribute to the construction of the *children of the spirit* and the roles of female priests, research such as this is significant and unique in terms of the experiences of both male and female priests. Of importance is the particular use of the *children of the spirit* known as *abana ba mupashi* in the *Bemba* language. This is used to describe the children born of some female priests who have vowed not to get married. It is an important part of this study's original contribution to knowledge. More important is the fact that male power is at the core of the formulation of this religious ideology.

### 8.5.5 Feminist Empirical Research

This study is about feminist research that entails women conducting research on women. The study is about an African (Zambian) feminist theologian researching the experiences of some female priests in the Mutima Church. In this study, there is a combination of methods of data collection that included a woman interviewing both male and female priests. In feminist research, when a woman conducts and manages interviews from both male and female priests on such a sensitive topic, it means that this is a contribution to new knowledge in terms of methodology. A comparative analysis of the responses from both male and female priests concerning their perception of Chishimba and their church contributes to the uniqueness of this study.

In the Mutima Church, human sexuality intersects with how issues of religious leadership, policy and male power also intersect with those of human dignity. The importance of this study lies in the fact that it has demonstrated that issues of leadership, male power, and policy affect some ordained women. It illustrates how issues of leadership, policy and male power intersect with

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<sup>94</sup> See Mercy Oduyoye (2001) and Isabel Phiri (2003) and other feminist theologians who argue that the experiences of women are not widely recorded.

those of sexuality and human dignity. These are findings unique to the study of AICs in the area of leadership, policy, male power, sexuality and human dignity.

### **8.5.6 New Knowledge**

An analysis of the findings on the theme of *children of the spirit* is also of much importance to the study. It is worth noting that the priests who took part in this study are of the view that Chishimba receives divine revelations and is ordained by God. They acknowledge that Chishimba's supernatural powers are specifically God-given. More critical, they state that it is not to Chishimba's own liking and desire to have *children of the spirit*, but it is the will of God. They declare that the Mutima Church is one that is ordained by God. This was reflected in their responses to the rewards to be given to female priests who have *children of the spirit*. This is a unique contribution to the study of AICs, because previous studies on AICs have shown a growing experience of most founders being led by the Holy Spirit. However, we do not know the experiences of some women in many AICs.

The researcher is of the view that the mission of the church should be transparent, thereby allowing key players to dialogue effectively in order to inform and form the church policy. If the formulation of the church policy is based upon one male or female founder, then the church in question can mistakenly be presumed to be a cult or that it belongs to some secret society. As Hewitt (2016:479) points out that the mission of the church should focus on the life-giving, life-saving and life-sustaining character and mission of the Triune God pertinent to the contextual realities of the world. To this end, the task of the church is to evangelise a message that gives life and joy to humanity.<sup>95</sup>

### **8.5.7 Identifying the Gaps and Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has identified gaps in the following areas: 1) experiences of the male priests; 2) experiences of the *children of the spirit*; 3) the installation of Chishimba's successor; and 4) the concealment of Chishimba's body for some months before he was buried.

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<sup>95</sup> See Bevans (2016) ... In Ross, K. R., Keum, J., Avtzi, K., and Hewitt, R. R. *Ecumenical Missiology: Changing Landscapes and New Conceptions of Missions*.

## 8.6 Summary of the conclusions of chapters

This study has eight chapters. Chapter One of the current study lays down the foundation of the topic, *Women and Male Power: A Study of the Missional Policy of the African Independent Church of Northern Zambia*. The chapter acknowledges that this is an ethnological/missiological study. Its focus is on policy and the Bemba women who are priests in the Mutima Church of Zambia. Furthermore, the study uses an anthropological model to maintain the cultural identity of the Christian faith. It highlights that some female priests in the Mutima Church of Zambia have children with the church founder. These are called *children of the spirit*.

The chapter covers issues such as nature and goal of the study, motivation for the study, problem statement and focus, exploratory research question, sub-questions guiding the research, research hypothesis, theoretical frameworks, research design and methodology, problem statement, focus, profile of Zambia, giving the background, population estimates, ethnic groups and religions.

Chapter Two describes the conceptual frameworks undergirding the study. For instance, theories from Scott (1990), Oduyoye (1995), Nuckolls, (1996) and Fiorenza (2011, 1994) were explored. It includes the literature on *Missio Dei*, inculturation and the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. These are all cited to undergird the location of the current study.

Chapter Three presents the historical background of Zambia, the Bemba people, the coming of missionaries and the rise of the missional policies of the Lumpa and the Mutima Churches.

Chapter Four employs Nuckolls' understanding of the '*Concept of Culture and Paradoxical-Dialectical Knowledge Systems*' (1996). Additionally, Fiorenza's (2009; 1994; and 2011) understanding of malestream Mariology is also employed to interpret the Mutima Church missional policy that is embedded in male power.

Chapters Five and Six present the findings of the study. Most important in the presentation of the findings are the priests' responses to some interview questions. The responses highlight issues such as the role of Chishimba in the church and the priests' interpretation of the *children of the spirit*.

Chapter Seven has presented an analysis of the findings from both Chapters Five and Six. More important in this chapter is the way Chishimba has used some Bemba traditions to reinforce Biblical teachings. It has been confirmed by the priests that most of the teachings are from the

Bemba culture, as well as Chishimba's prior learning from the RCC. Chapter Eight is the concluding chapter. Here I demonstrate what I have achieved in this study. I conclude with final statements, conclusions and suggestions for future research.

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## APPENDIX I

### Ethical Clearance



UNIVERSITEIT  
STELLENBOSCH  
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### APPROVED WITH STIPULATIONS Response to Modifications

21 June 2017

Project number: SU-HSD-003182

Project title: Women and Male Power: A Study of the Missional Policy of the African Independent Church in Northern Zambia

Dear Bridget Masaiti

Your response to modifications received on 4 May 2017 was reviewed by the REC: Humanities and has been approved.

**Ethics approval period:** 21 June 2017 – 20 June 2018

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

**If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.**

Please use your SU project number (SU-HSD-003182) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

#### **FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD**

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at [cgraham@sun.ac.za](mailto:cgraham@sun.ac.za).

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Informed Consent Form**



UNIVERSITEIT•STELLENBOSCH•UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

### **STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**

### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

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**Topic: Women and Male Power: A Study of the Missional Policy of the African Independent Church in Northern Zambia**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Bridget Nonde Masaiti, PhD student in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University. The results of the research will be contributed to the PhD Thesis. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of you are a woman in a leadership position within and with knowledge of the teachings and practices of church.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study broadly concerns the interface between the Bemba culture of the region and a Christian church in Northern Zambia to which you belong. The study will in particular investigate understanding of women in leadership positions of the church's teachings and its missional policies and how the latter determines the relationship between women leaders and males in the Church hierarchy, especially with regard to the High Priest.

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

You will be requested to partake in an interview with me at a time and location convenient to you. The interviews will not take longer than 90 minutes. During the interview I will ask you about your views on your church's practices, doctrines and your experiences of being a women in leadership in your church. You are free not to answer any questions that you do not wish to. You are free to withdraw from participating if you so wish. I will make a tape recording of the interview. You are welcome to listen to it afterwards or to ask to see the transcription of our interview to ensure that your words and intentions are reflected correctly. You may also refuse to have the interview recorded and for me to rather take notes only – these will also be available for your scrutiny of you so wish. Furthermore, I will attend some church events for which I will obtain your and your superiors' permission.

### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

During the interview you may experience some emotional discomfort or may be reminded of an experience that you may have had that upsets you. You are free to request for us not to pursue the matter and to disclose information to the extent that you are comfortable with. If you feel any need for emotional assistance or counselling. If this is the case, free counselling will be offered by trained counsellors of Cross Impact Outreach, Zambia. I will be accompanied by a counsellor to our interview, so she will be on hand but will not be physically present during the interview. To learn more of the counselling services of Cross Impact Outreach or to contact them privately after our interview, they can be reached at Cross Impact Out Reach Zambia, PO Box 810180, Kapiri Mposhi, Zambia. Tel: +260 973 944 207 or +260 968 496832; Email: [cimmissionaries@gmail.com](mailto:cimmissionaries@gmail.com).

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

This research will help scholars like myself to better understand the relationship between the Bemba culture and the doctrines and mission policies of African Independent Churches in northern Zambia. It will also look at challenges faced by or the strengths of women leaders in African Initiated Churches to the background of their culture and church policies, especially with regard to challenges they face as part of male-dominated church hierarchies. As such, it may eventually contribute to overcoming these challenges.

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will not receive any payment for your participation in this research. However, you will receive a token of appreciation for your time and willingness to participate in the research in the form of a gift voucher to the value of 115 000 ZMK (about 300 ZAR).

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Towards this end your name will not be divulged, but a pseudonym or number will be assigned to you. You age and marital status will be asked, but this will be used only as far as it may be important for the interpretation of the data, but it will not be linked to you specifically. No one but myself and my supervisor will have access to the raw data. All interviews will be transcribed by myself and saved on my password-protected computer. Any documentation related to our interview will be stored and locked in a cabinet in my study at home or at the university. After I have finished my research and obtained my degree all of the raw data will be deleted or destroyed. The finished dissertation will be available online via the University of Stellenbosch's Library and Information system, however, the dissertation will contain only anonymized data.

## 7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't feel like answering and still remain in the study. I may wish to withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## 8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact myself at : ..... or my supervisor, Dr Henry Mbaya, telephonically at +27(0)21-808 3259 or via e-mail at [hmbaya@sun.ac.za](mailto:hmbaya@sun.ac.za).

## 9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); +27(0)21 -808-4622] at the Division for Research Development.

The information above was described to [*me/the subject/the participant*] by [*name of relevant person*] in [*Afrikaans/English/Xhosa/other/Bemba*] and [*I am/the subject is/the participant is*] in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [*me/him/her*]. [*I/the participant/the subject*] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to [*my/his/her*] satisfaction.

[*I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.*] I have been given a copy of this form.

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**Name of Subject/Participant**

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

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**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

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**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [*his/her*] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the*

*representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [Afrikaans/\*English/\*Xhosa/\*Other/Bemba] and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

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**Signature of Investigator Date**

### APPENDIX III

#### Research Questions for the Mutima Church Priests

Name of Church ..... Date.....

Position held in the church? .....

Number of years in ministry?.....

Age of interviewee? .....

Educational Qualifications? .....

1. What does it mean for you to be a member of the Mutima Church?
2. What are some of the life experiences that you have encountered as a member of the Mutima Church?
3. Please narrate your faith journey and the role of a priest in your church?
4. What are the activities in which the priests are involved?
5. What are the conditions of service for any priest in the church?
6. What is the relationship between women and male power in the Mutima Church?
7. What are the teachings (doctrine) and how do these inform the missional policy of the Mutima Church?
8. What is the relationship between teachings (policy) and practice?
9. What are the reasons for your answer to question #7 above?
10. What consequences do these have for women in the Mutima Church?
11. What do you think are the problems that a female priest faces as she serves the church alongside *children of the spirit*?
12. What would be the appropriate way to solve the problems you identified in question #10?
13. What is your vision as a female priest?
14. How does the ecclesiology of the Mutima Church foster these teachings or vice versa?
15. What is the interface between Bemba culture and ecclesiology? How do they influence each other?
16. How do you relate to the male power within the church and yet function effectively within the paradigm of their church?
17. What is the role of marriage within the church, among church members?
18. Is there a relationship between the traditional concept of marriage in the Mutima Church and the biblical concept of marriage?

19. What broader issues could be encapsulated in the relationship of marriage, culture, religion and mission in the Mutima church?
20. Apart from the members of this congregation, who else would you refer me to for questioning in other congregations?

**APPENDIX IV**

<b>Glossary of Participants</b>		<b>Code</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.	Middle-aged Male Priest number four	MAMP4	27 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
2.	Middle-aged male Priest number five	MAMP5	27 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
3.	Old Female Priest number one	OFP1	28 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
4.	Old Female Priest number three	OFP3	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2017
5.	Old Female Priest number five	OFP5	3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2017
6.	Old Female Priest number eight	OFP8	4 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
7.	Middle-aged Female Priest number four	MAFP4	5 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
8.	Middle-aged Female Priest number seven	MAFP7	6 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
9.	Old Female Priest number seven	OFP7	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
10.	Middle-aged Female Priest number ten	MAFP10	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
11.	Old Male Priest number one	OMP1	10 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
12.	Old Male Priest number three	OMP3	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
13.	Old Male Priest number two	OMP2	13 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
14.	Middle-aged Female Priest number one	MAFP1	15 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
15.	Middle-aged Female Priest number eight	MAFP8	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
16.	Middle-aged Female Priest number six	MAFP6	17 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
17.	Old Female Priest number four	OFP4	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
18.	Old Female Priest number two	OFP2	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2017
19.	Middle-aged Female Priest number five	MAFP5	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2017
20.	Middle-aged Female Priest number two	MAFP2	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2017
21.	Middle-aged Female Priest number three	MAFP3	23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2017
22.	Middle-aged Female Priest number nine	MAFP9	25 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
23.	Old Female Priest number six	OFP6	26 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
24.	Middle-aged Female Priest number eleven	MAFP11	27 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
25.	Female Volunteer number one	FVN2	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
26.	Female Volunteer number two	FVN1	29 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
27.	Old Female Priest number nine	OFP9	30 <sup>th</sup> July 2017

## APPENDIX V

### Letter from the Mutima Church



#### UMUTIMA WALOWA WAMAKUMBI

NAMFUMU WANKAMA  
P O Box 217614  
NDOLA BRANCH  
Telephone Number: 226461/226462  
Email: bamutima@gmail.com

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6 January 2016

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**BRIDGET NONDE MASAITI**

I am writing to confirm that the above named is a bonafide student at the University of Stellenbosch, in South Africa. She has been granted permission by our church to carry out research with some BaBemba women in the BaMutima Church of Northern Zambia. The title of her research is: 'Women and Male Power: A Study of the Missional Policy of the BaMutima Church in Northern Zambia.'

The research will assist the BaMutima Church in not only understanding the experiences of women, but also, based on the research findings, be able to address and eliminate some of the harmful cultural practices that adversely affect women in our church, those in ministry and also ordinary women. The research will also help to improve the livelihood of our women and their social standing in society.

The BaMutima Church appreciates the recognition made by Ms Masaiti to your institution. Our church will be grateful to assist Ms Masaiti with any assistance she may need.

May God kindly bless you.

**Pastor Chisubilo Kangwa**  
**Chairperson of Pastors' Branch**

UMUTIMA WALOWA WAMAKUMBI  
NAMFUMU WANKAMA  
P.O.BOX 217614  
NDOLA BRANCH  
ZAMBIA

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*Please address all correspondence to the General Secretary.*

## APPENDIX VI

### Letter from Cross Impact Outreach Zambia



**Cross Impact Outreach Zambia**  
IMPACTING COMMUNITY | EQUIPPING PEOPLE | REACHING NATIONS | RESTORING DESTINIES

P. O Box 810180, Kapiri Mposhi,  
Zambia  
+260 973 944207  
+260 968 496832  
E-mail: [cimissionaries@gmail.com](mailto:cimissionaries@gmail.com)

12 June 2016

#### To Whom It May Concern – Bridget Nonde Masaiti

The bearer of this letter, Bridget Nonde Masaiti is a bonafide student of Stellenbosch University in South Africa. She has requested this counselling firm to write a back-up letter to Stellenbosch University.

Bridget is in the process of conducting face-to-face interviews with twenty women of the Mutima Church in Zambia. These women are ordained priests who swear an oath and are consecrated before the congregation. They have vowed not to get married, but in the process have children with the church founder. This is a sad situation, especially in the sense that Bridget intends to investigate the life-histories of these women. This entails that the women will be telling and narrating their faith journeys, which may prove to be painful and at times, unbearable.

In light of this, Bridget has requested this firm to assist in providing counselling to her research participants. Our counselling firm has been in existence since 2012. The firm has branches in five towns in the country, namely; Lusaka, Ndola, Kitwe, Kapiri-Mposhi, Kabwe, and Mufulira. It offers self-help support, peer support, and professional support by providing mental well-being to our community. Furthermore, it also assists people with post-traumatic disorders so that they can identify, normalize, cope and manage their symptoms in their quest for regained emotional health.

Therefore, I have no objection in assisting Bridget with the support that she needs towards providing counselling to her research participants. Our firm will gladly provide counselling in the most professional manner that it has always done to the Zambian community.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Darlington Shawa**  
Executive Director  
+260-973944207

TRANSFORMATION COMMUNITY CHURCH INTERNATIONAL