THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE 2011 ELECTIONS IN ZAMBIA

By

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Religious Studies

The University of Zambia

October, 2016
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DECLARATION

I, Fighton Simutowe, do solemnly declare that this dissertation represents my own work, and all
the work of other persons have been duly acknowledged, and that it has never been submitted by
anyone for a degree at this or any other University.

Signature of Author:.................................................................

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of Fighton Simutowe is approved in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Religious Studies at the University of Zambia.

Examiners’ Signatures

Signed…………………………………………………Date……………………………………..

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Pacyvia Machimu Simutowe for praying for me and enduring my absence during my studies. It is also dedicated to my mother, Jenala Nalomba and children, Temwanji, Suwilanji and Wankumbu for their endless love despite my busy schedule during the course of my studies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to give great honour and glory to God for giving me the opportunity and strength to complete my studies at the highest learning institution in Zambia. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to a number of people to whom I am deeply indebted for their support and guidance during the time of writing this dissertation.

I wish to put on record my profound gratitude to Prof. Austin Cheyeka, my supervisor, for his love, patience, constant scholarly guidance and indeed critical evaluation which helped shape this work. I am extremely grateful for everything I learned from him at the time of writing this dissertation. I am also thankful to all other lecturers at the University of Zambia, particularly those who directly taught me in the Department of Religious Studies. To all of them, I say; only God in His time, can appropriately reward you.

I am also indebted to the Provincial Education Officer in Luapula Province and the District Education Board Secretary of Milenge for granting me study leave to pursue a higher degree at the University of Zambia.

My sincere thanks also go to the Catholic Church in Lusaka and Mansa, particularly, Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) and Caritas Zambia under ZEC for having welcomed me for my research.

My heartfelt-debt goes to my wife, Pacyvvia, for her love, encouragement and patience with me when I was preoccupied with my studies. I would be failing in my acknowledgement if I do not mention Mr. Jason Mwanza of the University of Zambia for his professional and technical support during the writing of this dissertation. I would also like to greatly acknowledge Mrs Brenda Evah Michel-Mukata’s effort in typesetting this whole document. Lastly, my thanks go to my colleagues and friends who assisted me in many ways during the period of writing this dissertation.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 tripartite or general elections. The study was conducted in Lusaka and Mansa Districts of Zambia. The sample consisted of thirty (30) respondents. Twenty (20) of these were male and ten (10) were female. Three (3) of the thirty respondents were key informants. The remaining twenty-seven (27) respondents consisted of 5 non-Catholic, 7 Caritas Zambia workers, 10 clergy men and 5 politicians. The study used qualitative research design. The study was a narrative case study. Purposive sampling technique was used. Interview guides were employed in the collection of primary data from the respondents. In-depth interviews were conducted to help the researcher in getting the much needed data. Theme and content analysis structured around the research questions were used to analyse qualitative data. Employing this type of analysis technique, the researcher adhered to the following steps: Firstly, the researcher perused the collected data through interviews and identified information that was relevant to the research questions. Irrelevant information not related to the specific objectives and research questions was separated from relevant information. Secondly, the researcher identified themes from the respondents' description of their experiences. All material relevant to a certain theme was placed together. Thirdly, verbatims were used to present the findings. Verbatims reflect the deep thoughts and feelings of the respondents on what their convictions were concerning the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections. Results suggest that the Catholic Church played a number of roles in the 2011 elections. These roles included: the monitoring of elections, the provision of checks and balances on governance issues through collaboration with the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), among others. The findings also indicate that through Caritas Zambia, the Catholic Church recruited and trained 10 850 election monitors; provided civic education to the general public on their rights and duties as citizens and collaborated with seven other Civil Society Election Coalition (CSEC) members. Results also suggest that the Catholic Church presented to the nation a true reflection of the will of the people in the election as attested to by the Electoral Commission of Zambia’s announcement of the final results in September, 2011. The following were the recommendations: The Church should continue to play the critical role of advocacy on matters of social, economic and political developments in Zambia, the top leadership of the three Church Mother Bodies comprising priests, bishops, pastors, among others, should continue playing a non-partisan role in the political field. Finally, the Church in general should continue to play the critical role of providing checks and balances on matters of governance to any sitting Government with impartiality.
| ACRONYMS |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| AVAP            | Anti Voter Apathy Project        |
| BFZ             | Baptist Fellowship of Zambia     |
| CCC             | Committee for a Clean Campaign   |
| CCZ             | Christian Council of Zambia      |
| CDF             | Constituency Development Fund    |
| CSEC            | Civil Society Election Coalition |
| EFZ             | Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia |
| FODEP           | Foundation for Democratic Process|
| GHRP            | Governance and Human Rights Programme|
| JCTR            | Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection|
| MMD             | Movement for Multi-Party Democracy|
| MoU             | Memorandum of Understanding      |
| MPs             | Members of Parliament            |
| OIC             | Organisation of Islamic Conference|
| OYV             | Operation Young Vote             |
| POA             | Public Order Act                 |
| RRP             | Rapid Response Project.          |
| SACCORD         | Southern Africa Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes |
| TIZ             | Transparency International Zambia|
| UNIP            | United National Independence Party|
| YWA             | Young Women in Action            |
| ZEC             | Zambia Episcopal Conference      |
| ZICTA           | Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority |
| ZNWL            | Zambia National Women’s Lobby    |
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter is divided into contextual background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and operational definitions.

1.1 Background

The Catholic Church has for a long time been involved in political engagements with the Government of the Republic of Zambia on different fronts of human life. This Church has engaged the government on matters of politics in terms of governance, elections, peace and justice, among others. The Church has also been in partnership with the government in matters of education, health, agriculture, environment and mining (ZEC, 2012). These and many other issues may be classified as social, economic or political. These matters may positively or negatively affect human life depending on how they are handled in the nation. It is for this reason that the Catholic Church has attached great importance to collaboration concerning these matters with the Zambian government and other stakeholders based on mutual independence and self-governance. Collaboration is cardinal in understanding relationships (Komakoma, 2003).

Komakoma (2003) asserts that the beginning point in understanding the relationship between the Church and State is that of collaboration based on mutual independence and self-governance. The position encouraged by the teaching of the Second Vatican Council documents is that the Church should concern itself with general principles such as human rights and justice. At this level, the Church remains free to pass moral judgements, even on matters touching the political order. However, the Church cannot be expected to come out in support of the political system or party. Direct involvement is left to individual Christians who can belong to different political persuasions (Komakoma, 2003). This implies that those individual Christians that will have direct involvement in the political field will always strive to bring to the fore the desired justice
in the communities they serve. Chanda (2013) points out that any Christian mission that serves human life should be justice minded in areas that are flooded with injustice. So, as the Church grows more into mission mindedness, justice should be a non-negotiable part of her mission.

Although the Catholic Church has such interest in all these matters, the focus of this study is on elections, specifically the 2011 tripartite elections in which the Catholic Church in Zambia was fully involved in the monitoring exercise. That full involvement in the monitoring exercise of the elections to secure a free and fair election result by the Catholic Church in 2011, coupled with its observation of elections in the preceding years, shows how the Church values the major role elections can play in a democratic system of governance. The involvement in the democratic system of governance like elections is clear evidence of political engagement of government by the Church. This is one way in which the Church has been able to provide checks and balances in the Zambian electoral process and thereby enhancing authentic democracy in the nation.

According to Caritas Zambia (2011), the Catholic Church teaches that an authentic democracy is not merely the result of formal observation of a set of rules but is the fruit of a convinced acceptance of values that inspire democratic procedures. It further teaches that these democratic procedures can be of great value if they uphold the dignity of every human person, respect of human rights, and show commitment to the common good, as the purpose and guiding criterion for political life (Caritas Zambia, 2011). Elections are such great values that uphold the rights and dignity of every human person in order to inspire democratic procedures and give purpose to political life in a democratic dispensation. The Catholic Church seeks to uphold these tenets of democracy in order to give meaning to both politics and the role of the Church in society.

It is often heard that the Church should stay out of politics and concentrate on the preaching of the gospel. Komakoma (2003) contends that keeping the Church out of politics would divorce it from the state. He argues that those who hold this view fail to understand both the meaning of politics and the role of the Church in society. This is because the Church has the duty to teach and guide Christians not only in religious matters but also in social, economic and political affairs in so far as they are connected to the moral order. One such affair of political nature which is connected to the moral order is democracy which is enhanced by free and fair elections for the purpose of electing different political office bearers (Komakoma, 2003).
Kayula (2012) observes that elections enhance democracy because they allow the governed to choose their own preferred leaders to lead them. When citizens who are eligible voters vote in elections, they exercise their civil rights to determine who occupies public office. If this civic duty is well executed, the right people will occupy the right public offices. This is the reason why the Catholic Church in collaboration with other stakeholders has taken so much interest in observing or monitoring elections.

Caritas Zambia (2011) notes that elections are democracy at work. This is because during an election, people can assess the performance of their representatives and choose to re-elect them or elect new ones. Through elections, leaders are given the authority to represent the people. The Catholic teaching on elections is explicit. It teaches that in a democratic system, political authority is accountable to the people (Kayula, 2012). Therefore, representative bodies must be subject to effective social control. This control can be carried out in free and fair elections which allow the selection and change of representatives. These representatives who are answerable to the people need to act in pursuit of the greater common good that benefits everyone. Thus, elections are pivotal to the growth of democracy because they are meant to evaluate the actions of the elected leaders (Kayula, 2012; Caritas Zambia, 2011).

This kind of democracy which is largely enhanced by free elections has been upheld in Zambia since the early 1990s. It was during the wave of a democratic change in the early 1990s that Zambia became one of the countries that managed to change its political systems from one party participatory democracy to multi-party democracy. History has it that on 25 August, 1973, before the early 1990s, a new Constitution that abrogated the original 1964 independence Constitution was promulgated. The 1973 Constitution and the elections that followed in December 1973 consolidated UNIP’s political hegemony and ushered in what was called a one-party participatory democracy (Civil Society Election Coalition, 2011).

However, multi-party democracy was reintroduced in 1991. The reintroduction of multiparty democracy allowed Zambia to pass a historic milestone on 31 October 1991 when the founding father of the nation, Kenneth Kaunda and his United National Independence Party (UNIP) was voted out of office by a broad-based opposition coalition known as the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997; Wiseman, 1995). This broad-based
opposition coalition was due to popular dissent attributable mostly to a declining quality of life due to poor livelihood, constraining centralist economic policies as international Aid conditionalities of liberalism started to dominate the global political discourse. So, 1991 was a momentous time for Zambia. Tension in the country was high. The country was at major political crossroads. The One party Participatory Democracy had clearly failed and Zambians were asked to vote for change or keep the status quo by voting for UNIP the ruling party (Komakoma, 2003: 260). This scenario implied that the 18 years of one party autocratic rule by the UNIP Government was on the verge of collapse because multi-party politics had just been re-introduced by the repeal of Article 4 in the Republican Constitution (Komakoma, 2003). As such, the Catholic Church and other leaders of the Christian Churches in Zambia had a central message to all. The message was as a reminder that all authority came from God the Creator, and the will of the people expressed through periodic free and fair elections was the basis of the authority of government and the foundation for good governance (Komakoma, 2003).

In order to ensure the success of the electoral process in 1991, the Church leaders urged all citizens of Zambia to register for voting in order to exercise their God-given right to vote. They also called upon all citizens to observe all electoral regulations by avoiding intimidation, corruption, bribery, threats and violence. All these, among others, were to be condemned and discouraged at all costs during the electoral process. All political players in the nation were urged to abide by the result of the elections as that would reflect the will of the people in the nation (Komakoma, 2003). When results of the elections were declared, all political players were left with no option but to accept the verdict of the electoral process as the broad-based opposition coalition known as Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) came into political power with a landslide victory over the former ruling UNIP (Cheyeka, 1995). The vote was about absolute change. Thus, Mwanakatwe (1994: 224) observes that:

In the elections held on 31 October 1991, the MMD won an overwhelming victory in the Presidential and Parliamentary General Elections. In particular, the stunning victory of Frederick Chiluba against Kenneth Kaunda in the Presidential election was far beyond expectation. It was particularly an epoch-making event for Zambia and Africa generally. As the first election to bring about change of the head of state in Anglophone Africa, this transition for Zambia was at the forefront of a wave of political change that swept through the
rest of the continent during the next several years. This wave of political change resulted into the installation of more than a dozen new democracies and the partial liberalisation of most of the prominent remaining authoritarian regimes in Africa (Bratton & van de Walle, 1997; Wiseman, 1995).

Having witnessed a successful peaceful election and a smooth hand over of the realms of power by UNIP to MMD in 1991, the Catholic Bishops in February 1992 spoke passionately in their Pastoral Letter of the need for a new culture of responsibility, accountability and hard work as Zambia had just entered the Third Republic. For instance, Komakoma (2003) points out that in their Pastoral Letter entitled The Future is Ours, the Catholic Bishops called for a new culture of democracy to go with the democratic process the country had chosen to embark on following the 1991 general elections. The Bishops spoke of a new moral culture of responsibility and a new political and economic culture of accountability. People needed to work extra hard in order to build the new democratic nation.

Five years after the democratic elections in 1991; Zambia was again faced with another national election in 1996 which was preceded by a number of social, economic and political events. The nation experienced, among other things, the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1993, the Constitution debates in 1995 arising from the publication of the Mwanakatwe Constitution Review Report (Komakoma, 2003). A number of Pastoral Letters were written and Statements made by the Catholic Bishops to the powers that be following each event as a way of follow-up on the state of affairs in the nation. The Pastoral Letters written and Statements made during the first tenure of office for MMD signalled the consistency and interest of the Catholic Church in seeing to it that good governance was practiced for the betterment of all in the nation.

In showing continuity of interest in the electoral process and politics of the nation as a whole, the Catholic Bishops issued a Pastoral Letter entitled Building for Peace in view of the 18th November, 1996 General Elections. The Pastoral Letter was written to remind the citizens of Zambia of the importance of the elections. The Bishops recalled their desire to see that democracy and good governance succeeded in the country (Komakoma, 2003). After holding the 18 November, 1996 elections, the MMD president, Frederick Chiluba, was re-elected with 68.96
per cent of the votes (CSEC, 2011). This was due to constitutional provisions that barred Kenneth Kaunda resulting into UNIP boycotting the 1996 elections (CSEC, 2011).

Election integrity issues raised by local monitors and international observers on the 1996 elections including concerns with the undemocratic Constitutional reforms coupled with maladministration of the electoral process rendered the elections of the 1996 not free and fair as they did not meet the international accepted standards (CSEC, 2011).

CSEC (2011), further notes that by 2000, dissent within the ruling party owing to lack of effective participation and representation in the affairs of the party further led to the formation of more political parties through disintegration as the ruling party lost its form and coherence because of an attempt by the President to have a third term of office. The third term bid by President Chiluba failed due to local pressure from interest groups like the Oasis Forum, opposition political parties, among others. This pressure forced the President to look for a successor to stand as president in the next election. President Frederick Chiluba then settled for Mr Levy Patrick Mwanawasa as MMD presidential candidate.

The following year, 2001 saw Zambia hold another election on 27 December amidst unresolved electoral issues of the mid-1990s. Although the ruling MMD presidential candidate, Levy Mwanawasa won the election with a narrow margin of 29 per cent of the vote, the integrity of the elections was questioned by most local and international observers, mostly because the administration and management of the polls were relatively not in conformity with the expected and acceptable practices in the democratic society (CSEC, 2011).

In October 2006, Mwanawasa was re-elected President, with a 43 per cent simple majority vote. It was once again observed that there were breaches of the Electoral Code of Conduct by almost all political parties and their candidates (CSEC, 2011). Prominent on the breaches of the Electoral Code of Conduct observed that year, were the abuse of public resources and irregular election administration processes that could not meet the international standards of the conduct of elections.

On 29 June, 2008, the incumbent President, Levy Mwanawasa suffered a stroke while attending the African Union summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt and on 19 August, he died from
complications in a Paris hospital. Mwanawasa was succeeded by the then vice president, Rupiah Banda. Consequently, a presidential by-election was held on 30 October, 2008. Rupiah Banda won the election by a simple majority of 40.63 per cent. Most monitoring and observation missions in the 2008 presidential by-election did not express any major concerns that could have undermined the political choice of individuals, other than the continued abuse of public resources by the incumbent party (CSEC, 2011).

In 2011, another general election was held in Zambia. The Catholic Church was actively involved by taking an interest in the entire electoral process. The Church collaborated with a number of stakeholders before, during and after the elections in order to ensure that the desired free and fair election result was delivered to the nation.

Kayula (2012) points out that Zambia witnessed historic elections on 20 September, 2011 in which the Patriotic Front (PF) emerged winners ousting the former ruling party, the MMD. She also observes that prior to the actual exercise of voting in 2011 elections, the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) provided platforms for citizens to discuss among others, what makes for free and fair elections, the values that would determine one’s choice of a public office holder and what would determine a peaceful election environment. It is against this background that the study was undertaken in order to investigate the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 tripartite general elections.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In 2011 the Catholic Church stopped being observer of elections and became a monitor of elections to ensure a free and fair election result. To date, this action has not been examined and documented. The present study seeks to investigate and document the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 tripartite general elections in Zambia.
1.4 The Objectives of the study were:

1. To describe the nature of the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections.

2. To establish the influence of the Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections.

3. To analyse the views of the politicians about the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections.

4. To examine the views of non-Catholics about the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections.

1.5 Research Questions

In order to address the above objectives, the study was anchored in the following four (4) questions:

1. What was the nature of the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections?

2. What was the influence of the Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections?

3. What are the views of the politicians about the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections?

4. What were the views of non-Catholics about the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study may add new knowledge to the body of knowledge about the Catholic Church and politics in Zambia. It is also hoped that the findings of the study shall help the Catholic Church and other stakeholders to evaluate the Catholic Church’s involvement in matters of elections and governance in Zambia.
1.7 **Delimitation of the Study**

The study was limited to the city of Lusaka and Mansa town.

1.8 **Limitations of the Study**

The researcher encountered the challenge of scheduling of interviews with the Catholic clergy, politicians and other respondents who were often busy with their daily work demands. However, the researcher arranged alternative times for interviews with the people concerned. The other challenge was the lack of relevant literature on the study. This scenario limited the scope of literature review. Nonetheless, the researcher was able to do with what was available in order to gather sufficient information to suit the required investigations into the study.

1.9 **Conceptual Framework**

Despite the long standing excellent Church-State relationship that has existed for many years in Zambia, the Catholic Church keeps an eye on social issues affecting the poor, aged, orphans, and the vulnerable groups in general. Consequently, the Church takes necessary steps to participate with other stakeholders in providing some to the social, economic and political ills that affect the citizenry in the country. In 2011 the Catholic Church took keen interest in the issue of elections. Chakwe (2010) reports that the Catholic Church would for the first time in 2011 strategise to take part in the monitoring of the elections as opposed to observing the elections. Apart from monitoring elections, the Church would also play other roles related to the elections. Henriot (2008) states, “The Church has the right to pass moral judgements, even on matters touching the political order, whenever basic personal rights….make such judgements necessary.” The researcher conceptualised in the study that the strategies used by the Church in monitoring the elections could only succeed if they were geared towards attempts to advocate for peace and justice, promote human rights and provide checks and balances on governance issues like corruption, violence, vote rigging, etc. to bring about a free, fair and peaceful election to enhance democracy in Zambia (or bring about a better understanding of the Church’s role in its involvement in the 2011 elections in Zambia). The conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1.
The role of the Catholic Church

Nature of the Church’s role
- Advocacy for peace
- Preventive agent
- Monitor of elections

ZEC’s Role
- Mediator
- Promoter
- Initiator
- Educator
- Trainer
- Collaborate

Political views
- Church be non-partisan
- Church provide checks & balances

Non-Catholic views
- Promote peace & justice

Free, fair & peaceful elections to enhance democracy in Zambia
1.10 Theoretical Framework

There are many religious theories that could be used in this study. However, the theoretical framework in which this study has been inserted is the theory of separation of Church and State. It is often argued by many people and scholars that the Church and State should be separate from each other and work independently of the other. Audi (1989) refers to it as the doctrine of separation of Church and State as applied to government institutions in relation to religious ones and taken to imply that the state should not interfere with the Church, and (though this is usually given lesser emphasis) the Church should not interfere with the State. He further talks about the separation of Church and state in the political arena by saying that “the separation of Church and state does not require, nor do any sound principles demand, that churches should not take moral positions, even if there is political controversy about them,” (Audi, 1989). The principle of political neutrality would not, however, prevent churches’ encouraging their members’ participation in politics; and it certainly does not restrict political participation by religious citizens, or imply that they should not consider such participation an aspect of their religious commitments.

This theoretical framework is used in this study in order to understand and even perhaps justify the role the Catholic Church played in 2011 elections. It is argued by some scholars and theologians that it would be fatal from the moral point of view if the Church (or religion) would completely separate itself from the state and just begin to watch things deteriorating morally. For instance, the Church, from moral point of view, cannot allow the State to perpetuate injustice and other behaviours considered morally bad such as abortion and others that do not respect human dignity and the sanctity of life. Instead, the Church should provide direction on such matters so as not to erode the norms of society, even the way elections are conducted, the Church can have a say.

Debates may go on, but according to this theory, the Church should not be completely separate from the State but may simply be distinct from the State and have reasonable influence to provide checks and balances.
1.11 Operational Definitions

**Apolitical**: uninterested in politics or having no interest in politics or not concerned with politics.

**Catholicism**: the Catholic beliefs, doctrines, and rituals of a catholic church, especially those of the Roman Catholic Church.

**The Common Good**: the requirement that social conditions allow all people to reach their full human potential and realise their human dignity.

**Respondent**: a person who answers questions especially in a survey or a person who is accused of something.

**Second Vatican Council**: an ecumenical gathering of Catholic Church leaders called by Pope John XXIII from 1962-1965 to revisit and build up some of the Church’s doctrines.

1.11 Summary

This chapter discussed the contextual background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, operational definitions and abbreviations used in the study. The next chapter presents the literature review.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter reviews the literature on the Catholic Church and politics outside Africa, within Africa and in Zambia. Literature review refers to an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers (Kombo & Tromp (2006). It is a critical look at the existing research that is significant to the work that the researcher will soon be engaged in. To Schulz (2002) literature review is a systematic, critical, and summary of existing literature that is relevant to the research topic. This entails reading appropriate selection of available literature such as books, magazines, articles, journals, dissertations and newspaper reports.

This chapter therefore, reviews the literature on the role of the Catholic Church in politics and its advocacy on elections globally but with a clear focus on the Zambia’s tripartite elections held on 20th September, 2011.

The Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection Reader reports that from 1891 to 2006, the Catholic Church had attempted to spread the Christian faith among the peoples of Zambia. It also notes that despite its long held perception of being ‘apolitical,’ the Catholic Church has progressively become more aware of its political role in securing and preserving people’s rights (JCTR, 2008). Carmody (2002: 38) adds:

In some respects, the political involvement of the Catholic Church in Zambian politics is not entirely new, but in the eyes of many Zambians, the Catholic Church’s role has become clearer, moving from a position of apparent neutrality to a point where it is now regarded as the most outspoken of the Zambian churches. This perceived change in political outlook can be attributed, in the long term, to the Second Vatican Council and to the waves of liberation theology that followed the council. More immediately, however, it may be derived from the fact that as the political leadership lost credibility in the 1970s and early 80s, the Church gained the people’s confidence.

The JCTR Reader (2008) also points out that in collaboration with other Churches in Zambia, the Catholic Church has helped people to recognise and claim their rights to be heard in the corridors of state power. Civil Society Election Coalition (CSEC), (2011) adds that, the Catholic Church has helped citizens to recognise and claim their rights, such as the right to
vote, the right to political choice that has been provided through periodic elections, among others.

The Government of the Republic of Zambia is fully aware of the political role the Catholic Church has played for many years in the country based on a mutual Church-State relationship (Komakoma, 2003). Komakoma (2003) further observes that from the Colonial period in Africa, the Catholic Church has set the tone in Church-State relationship which is characterised by collaboration based on mutual independence and self-governance. The Church has been able to speak out on various social, economic and political issues affecting citizens in Zambia and the world at large. One of the major issues that has been of great concern to the Catholic Church has been the process of conducting elections in the past two decades in Zambia. This scenario prompted the Catholic Church in 2011 to become more involved than being an observer but being a monitor of elections in Zambia. This concern of the Church on the conduct of elections has not only been peculiar to Zambia but also to the entire world. This is because elections have not usually been free and fair in many countries of the world. Studies conducted by a number of scholars with regard to the process of elections in the world attest to this fact (e.g., Stearns, 2012). The next pages of this study, outlines different studies on elections conducted outside Africa, within Africa and those done in Zambia.

2.1 Studies done outside Africa

There is a lot of literature on the Catholic Church and its involvement in issues of advocacy and politics in general in the world today. However, there is limited available relevant literature on the Catholic Church and its involvement particularly in elections globally. For instance, much of the available information on elections is derived from the Pastoral lettersand/or Statements of the Catholic Bishops’ Conferences in different countries of the world such as, the Polish Catholic Bishops’ Conference (PCBC), (1990); Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ACBC), (2012); Zambia Episcope Conference (ZEC), (2013), among others.

2.1.1 The Catholic Church and Federal Elections in Australia

Hamilton (2013) points out that in Australia, the Australian Catholic Bishops’ Conference (ACBC) issued a Statement in 2012 on the elections that were to be held in July, 2013. The
Catholic Bishops urged the Catholic Church to take a united stand in sensitising the Australians in general and Christians in particular, on how they were to understand politics and approach the election.

The ACBC was instrumental in encouraging all Australians to vote in the Federal Election of July, 2013 because it was their duty to vote for their representatives who would develop and administer policies in the councils and government (Hamilton, 2013). The ACBC also implored all the politicians who would be elected to value ethical imperatives of leadership. As such, all politicians were expected to weigh up what was in the best interests of the people they were to represent. The ACBC further counselled all politicians not to spend money to secure their own re-election, but for the good of all the people since political policies and decisions ultimately shape people’s lives and their happiness (Hamilton, 2013). The Catholic Church in Australia was motivated by the Catholic Social Teaching principle of the Common Good, which requires that social conditions allow all people to reach their full human potential and realise their human dignity (Davies, 2013).

2.1.2 The Polish Elections

The Polish elections were another example where the Catholic Church was involved. According to Slay (1994) and Tworzecki (1996), the role of the Catholic Church in the Polish elections could not be over emphasised. This is because the Catholic Church was in the forefront of encouraging Polish people to vote for leaders of their choice in the parliamentary elections that were held in 1991, 1993 and 1997. The years in question were a transition period for political life in Poland (Tworzecki, 1996).

Chan (1995) points out that the Catholic Church in Poland took centre stage in the discussions of issues concerning the role of the Church in Polish civil and political life including the role of the former Communist leaders. For instance, some parties, most notably the post-Communist SLD, was able to campaign against the effects of the stringent macroeconomic policies adopted by the then incumbent reform coalition led by the UD (Slay, 1994). These issues became contentious in the run-up to the Polish elections in the years of transition (Powers & Cox, 1997). At least twenty-nine parties won seats in parliamentary elections in 1991, which led to a succession of short-lived governments between 1991 and 1997 (Chan, 1995), Powers and Cox (1997), Slay (1994) and Tworzecki (1996).
The Polish elections were conducted during the transition period (1991-1997) when there was a stir of pro-democratic events in Eastern Europe (Mwanakatwe, 1994; Powers & Cox, 1997). At that time, the Communist ideologies were still fresh and strong in the minds of politicians. It was during those years that the Catholic Church took the role of a mediator between the traditional Communist leaders and the pro-democratic leaders who in their campaigns wanted change of government systems (Tworzecki, 1996).

2.1.3 Elections in England and Wales

It was not only in Poland and Australia where the Catholic Church became involved in elections and politics in general, but in England and Wales too. Davies (1996) reports that the Catholic Social Teaching was applied by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales in 1996 when they produced a document on the *Common Good* in preparation for the General Elections. The document was critical of dominant market values that affected the *Common Good* of the people in England and Wales. The document also served as a readable introduction to the Catholic Social Teaching and its application to issues like elections which England and Wales would face later in the year. Thus, the application of the *Common Good* by the Catholic Bishops in the elections gave voters a reflection on who among the candidates would be voted into office to take care of their welfare in the nation (Davies, 1996). Before the elections in 1996, the Catholic Church in England and Wales through its civic education programme encouraged voters to vote for the leaders of their own choice according to the democratic principles (Davies, 1996).

Hume (1996) points out that the Catholic Church in each country, under the pastoral guidance of the local bishops, has a continuing duty to apply the values of the Gospel to the problem of society. The *Common Good* under the Catholic Social Teaching encourages all members of the Church, lay, religious and ordained, to play an active part in striving to build a just and compassionate social order (Hume, 1996). This implies that when the Catholic Church’s Social Teaching is applied to issues such as elections, governance, advocacy, among others, it aims to fulfil the *Common Good* among the people. This is so because the *Common Good* requires that social conditions allow all people to reach their full human potential and realise their human dignity (Davies, 1996). Thus, Hume (1996) argues that the Church has the right and the duty to advocate a social order in which the human dignity of all is fostered, and to protest when it is in any way threatened.
It is evident from the foregoing that free and fair elections are one of the criteria of meeting the social conditions that allow all people in a given country to reach their full potential and realise their human dignity. This is so because elections allow people to vote for politicians who in turn enable people to aspire to realise their full potentials. This is the reason why the Catholic tradition holds that the common good is underpinned by the promotion and protection of human dignity (Davies, 1996). Implicit in seeking the common good is the desire to serve the poor, the marginalised, the sick and the forgotten in our community. Consequently, the Catholic Church will always seek to implement this important principle of its Social Teaching by applying it to democratic processes like elections in order to promote and protect human dignity. It is equally evident here that the literature used has set the tone of the Catholic Church’s convictions on meeting the common good and consistency in its interventions in the various global political issues affecting humanity, including elections.

2.1.4 The Catholic Church and Elections in the Philippines

Another international example of the Catholic Church getting involved in elections was in the Philippines. A study by Carmelo (1990) indicates that in the Philippines in 1990, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) issued a pre-election Statement concerning the conduct of the national and local government elections. Carmelo (1990) points out that one of the issues that was raised by the Catholic Bishops in the Statement was to urge the citizens to take note that, the May 11, 1990 election was to bring the country to a crucial crossroads in the national history. As such, citizens were to take note of the fact that it was a golden historic opportunity to elect their national and local government leaders in the upcoming election with care and seriousness. The Bishops encouraged all the Filipinos to make the election a real manifestation of maturity and unity for all the people in the country by making it peaceful and honest and by avoiding all forms of corruption (Carmelo, 1990).

Carmelo (1990) further reports that the CBCP urged the Filipinos to vote for their national leaders without fear, with dignity and freedom. Having waited for several years without elections, the nation was encouraged to vote for credible leaders and not those that were perceived to be corrupt. Carmelo (1990) further reports that the CBCP encouraged all politicians to be magnanimous in victory and gracious in defeat. Both winners and losers were urged to work together for the unity and progress of the country by accepting the election results as the will of the people of the Philippines as this would bring about peace in
the Philippines. The literature used here shows how the Catholic Church has been committed to the principle of the promotion of peace and disarmament among nations. This is so because the Catholic Church’s Social Teaching promotes peace as a positive action-oriented concept (Catholic Social Teaching, 2012).

2.2 Studies done within Africa

Having looked at the Catholic Church and its political roles at world level, we can now turn to the African continent and see how the Church has engaged the African governments on the conduct of elections in different countries. It is important to point out that many scholars have written about the work of the Catholic Church on the subject of Church and State (Audi, 1989), on matters of provision of checks and balances, advocacy, elections, social and economic issues in Africa. In most of these political engagements, the Catholic Church is usually motivated by its Social Teaching.

Davies (1996: 4), who is a Catholic Bishop in Australia states:

We encourage Catholics to look beyond their own individual needs to apply a different test at the ballot box – the test of what we call the common good. The good of the individual and the good of society as a whole must be brought together in harmony. When they are, we have the common good. As Catholics, we need to take our democratic freedoms seriously and become involved in the political processes like elections. This might mean joining a political party or even standing for election. We should all take the opportunity to meet with local aspiring candidates and make our concerns known. We offer strong encouragement to the many Catholic people who are already engaged in political life at various levels of government in different countries. Sometimes the Catholic Church seeks to promote dialogue, reconciliation and healing among warring parties or disputes among people by applying its political theology into such circumstances.

It is evident from the above that the Catholic Church is committed to encouraging all Catholics to take their democratic freedoms seriously and become involved in the political processes such as elections. This means that getting involved in processes like elections often enable Catholics to look beyond their individual needs and promote the need for the common good of the community. Konstant (1996) defines the common good as, “the guarantor of individual rights,…and in which conflicts of individual rights and interests can be adjudicated or reconciled.” He further states, common “implies, all-inclusive.” This is an indication that the common aspect in this context, does not exclude or exempt any section of the community,
but all become beneficiaries. This in a way transforms societies or communities. Metz Johann Baptist in Komonchak (1990: 773) states:

Sometimes the Catholic Church employs political theology to resolve disorders in society by seeking to develop mediations of the Christian faith which will transform societies and cultures by healing the ravages of the wide spread social injustice and creating genuine good social order.

In the next pages of the study, we look at six unique countries, among others, in Africa where the Catholic Church has been involved in the political processes, especially on the conduct of elections. The countries are: Malawi, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Mali, Kenya and Zambia. These countries were chosen because in each of these countries, each of the Catholic Church Episcope Conference was either an election monitor or observer group during the conduct of elections in the country. As such, in this study, they have become as reference points to the Zambian electoral process.

2.2.1 The Catholic Church and the Malawian political situation in the 1990s to date

2.2.1.1 Background to the political environment in Malawi in the early 1990s

When Zambia passed a historic milestone in October 1991 when the founding father Kenneth Kaunda and his United National Independence Party (UNIP) were voted out of office by a broad-based opposition coalition, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD), there was also a wave of political change that swept the rest of the continent during the next years. Malawi was at that time not an exception as citizens were equally affected by the wave of political change on the continent initiated by the Catholic Church Bishops.

Carmody (2008) observes that by the 1990s, the Catholic Church had in many parts of Africa began to play a pivotal role in transforming single-party dictatorships into multiparty democratic states. While this political tide was strongest in Zambia in 1991, a similar political tide in 1992 was slowly taking root in Malawi. In Malawi, it was the Catholic Bishops that initiated the change from one party state to multiparty democracy (Carmody, 2008). The pastoral letter that was written by the Catholic Bishops in 1992 was the main catalyst. Ross (1990) in Gifford (1995) points out that the pastoral letter of 1992 was written from the perspective of a preferential option for the poor. He further points out that the pastoral letter of 1992 on its political and social critique pointed out that the Bishops and citizens were
aware of the growing gap between the rich and the poor in the society with regard to the expectations, living standards and development.

The Bishops stressed that many people were still living in circumstances which were hardly compatible with their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Their life was a struggle for survival while at the same time a minority enjoyed the fruit of development and could afford to live in luxury and wealth. As such, the Bishops appealed for a more just distribution of the nation’s wealth (Gifford, 1995). It was as a result of the unequal distribution of the nation’s wealth in Malawi that the Bishops criticised and challenged Hastings Kamuzu Banda on such issues as wage structure, education, health services, human rights and democratic accountability of government. That was the beginning of the liberation for most of the politically oppressed Malawians.

Hans Kung in Gifford (1995) points out that contrary to the expectations of generations of Marxist philosophers from Eastern Europe and East Germany, through to South Africa, South America and to the Philippines; it has proved that religion cannot only be a means of social appeasement and consolidation, but also a catalyst of social liberation which will not be without revolutionary use of force which usually results in a vicious circle of ever-new political violence.

2.2.1.2 The Catholic Church and political change in Malawi

According to Gifford (1995) the voting for multi-party government in Malawi in the national referendum on political pluralism held on 14th June 1993 was as a result of the work of religion in the name of the gallant Catholic Church bishops’ pastoral letter of 1992. This victory of the Catholic Church saw jubilant crowds after voting in a referendum in urban centres of Malawi, marching to the bishop’s house as an acknowledgement of their new found freedom. This was the first time the Bishops in the Catholic Church had openly criticised and challenged the one-party regime in Malawi (Gifford, 1995). Since then, the Catholic Church has never seized to advocate for good governance in Malawi.

2.2.1.3 The Catholic Church and the 2014 elections in Malawi

Having gained more experience and influence in the Malawian politics over the years, the Catholic Church has continued to play its role in trying to strengthen the democratic tenets in the Malawian politics. For example, the electoral process of the 2014 tripartite elections in
Malawi were given direction by the Catholic Church under the auspices of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM). The ECM issued a Statement that gave direction on how the elections would be conducted and how the Malawians would conduct themselves before, during and after the elections. According to Mukasa (2014), elections had come at the time when the country was about to celebrate 50 years of independence. As such, Malawians needed to realise that it was an opportune time to elect or re-elect leaders who would transform Malawi socially, economically and politically.

To further give success and direction in the electoral process in Malawi, the Catholic Church rolled out a robust civic education campaign strategy. The Church launched a civic and voter education campaign programme in various districts of Malawi before the May, 2014 polls. The civic education campaign strategy was meant to sensitise all Malawians on the importance of exercising the right to vote. Mwapasa (2014) reports that the Roman Catholic Church through its Karonga Diocese had rolled out a civic and voter education campaign to ensure that all eligible voters were well informed and made ready for the May, 2014 tripartite elections. The project which was called Malawi 2014 Tripartite Elections Preparation, Monitoring and Beyond was implemented with funding from the German Government (Mwapasa, 2014).

After equipping the electorate for the task, the ECM called upon the Malawi Electoral Commission for a timely, effective and efficient delivery of electoral results that would sustain public confidence in the electoral process (Mukasa, 2014). The ECM also called for continued patience, peace and calm from all electoral stakeholders and Malawi citizens in general to create an enabling environment in which the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) would release the official results for the polls. The ECM further called upon all Malawians to refrain from any confrontational, defensive and uncompromising language and allow room for genuine reason, faith and dialogue in the nation (Mukasa, 2014). Lastly, ECM discouraged all forms of violence as a means of settling differences of frustrations, but encouraged everybody to give room and space for dialogue and mediation (Mukasa, 2014). The ECM was able to sensitise all Malawians and accomplish all these tasks through an initiative of a robust civic education campaign strategy which was under the project called Malawi 2014 Tripartite Elections Preparation, Monitoring and Beyond (Mwapasa, 2014).
2.2.2 The Catholic Church and elections in Ghana

Another example of the Catholic Church’s political engagements in Africa on elections was in Ghana where there was a presidential election petition filed in the Ghanaian Supreme Court. The presidential candidate of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in the 2012 elections, Nana Addo Dankwa, Akufo-Addo, and two others, on 28 December, 2012, filed the petition challenging the result of the presidential election which declared President John Dramani Mahama the winner. The petition appeared to have put the entire country on the edge, as Ghanaians waited anxiously for the verdict that would endorse President Mahama, order a re-run of the presidential election or put a seal on Nana Akufo-Addo as the President (Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference (GCBC), Avevor, 2013).

2.2.2.1 Why the Catholic Church got involved

The political tension in Ghana prompted the GCBC to appeal to Ghanaians to refrain from provocative actions and utterances that had the potential to breed conflict in the country. As such, the bishops endorsed the call by a section of society for the victors in the election petition case not to celebrate after the court verdict, but rather continue their normal endeavours to develop the country (GCBC, Avevor, 2013).

At a press conference to crown its extraordinary plenary held from August 6 to 8, 2013, the Catholic Church’s most important decision-making body in Ghana headed by the GCBC president - the Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu of Kanongo-Mampong made a passionate appeal to all Ghanaians to remain calm before and after the Supreme Court’s verdict on the presidential election petition (GCBC, Avevor, 2013). The GCBC president pointed out that in a democratic system of government, justice was always dispensed through the judicial system.

He further said:

We are confident that our nine Justices of the Supreme Court will offer justice to the nation in their judgement. It is our prayer that in discharging this all-important duty, they will be guided by the Holy Spirit and that God will endow them with the necessary strength and courage to give the right verdict without fear or favour. As we wait the Court’s decision, we encourage all Ghanaians to prepare their minds and hearts to receive the judgement that the Supreme Court will give in good faith and to see it as a victory for Ghana’s democracy (Bokpe, 2013).

The GCBC president further urged the leadership of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) to accept the court’s verdict in good faith and
encourage their supporters to do the same (GCBC, Avevor, 2013). To further sensitize and encourage all Ghanaians to preserve the country’s peace and unity before and after the Supreme Court had delivered its verdict, the Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu of Kanongo-Mampong and president of GCBC paid glowing tribute to God for blessing Ghana with peace and stability for many years in the midst of violent conflicts in the neighbouring countries occasioned mostly by ethnic and electoral disputes.

In his continued appreciation of God’s favour on Ghana, the GCBC president said:

We thank God for the peace we enjoy and pray that He will continue to bless our nation with peace even as we, the citizens, work to promote peaceful co-existence. Since the Fourth Republic began in 1992, Ghana has gone to the polls six times and on each occasion, we have acquitted ourselves creditably, earning the respect and admiration of the international community. Today, Ghana is perceived as a functional African democracy and a model stable State. While we take individual and collective credit for this feat and seek ways of consolidating Ghana's democratic gains, the time has come for us to guard against political complacency which can derail the gains we have so far made (GCBC, Bokpe, Avevor, 2013).

In reflecting on the historical electoral process in Ghana and the contribution of the Catholic Church to the peaceful environment in the nation, the president added,

For the first time in our electoral history, the election of a sitting President has been challenged in the Supreme Court, the highest court of our land. Having heard the petition, the Supreme Court is preparing to give its verdict and the nation is waiting. As Shepherds of God's people, we believe that we have a divine duty imposed on us by our Lord and Master to be the prophetic voice and an instrument of peace in our country and to work with all stakeholders to ensure that Ghana develops in a peaceful environment. We have accomplished this duty over the years. To this end, we wish to call on all citizens to continue to pray, work and champion the cause of peace before and after the verdict of the Supreme Court. We, on our part, assure all citizens that we are praying for our country and all its citizens (GCBC, Bokpe, Avevor, 2013).

The appeal for calm and prayer among the Ghanaian citizens by the president of the GCBC, the Most Rev. Joseph Osei-Bonsu to keep the country’s democratic clock ticking, even after the verdict had been delivered by the Supreme Court made the Ghanaians to remain calm and allowed the security agencies to maintain peace and order at all times (GCBC, Avevor, 2013).

On the way forward, the GCBC president made a humble and passionate appeal to all Ghanaians that in whatever they did, they needed to think about Ghana first. This would consolidate their memories of how their forebears sacrificed to bring Ghana to the current
position. It would be for that reason that the Ghanaians would begin to work together despite the verdict so as to safeguard the unity and stability that their country was enjoying (Bokpe, 2013). As a result of the involvement in the electoral impasse in Ghana by the Catholic Church, the Supreme Court’s verdict was well received and accepted by all stakeholders. As such, peace and unity prevailed in the entire nation.

2.2.3 The Catholic Church and elections in Zimbabwe

Another special political involvement in elections by the Catholic Church took place in the Republic of Zimbabwe in July, 2013.

2.2.3.1 Why the Catholic Church got involved in the 2013 elections

According to Dachs (2013), in 2013, Zimbabwe went to the polls and there was a dispute between Tsvangirai’s party and Mugabe’s party over the declared results. Tsvangirai, as the main political opposition leader rejected the election results of 31 July, 2013, charging that there was widespread vote-rigging. The opposition leader said that he was going to challenge the outcome as well as the count that gave Mugabe's ZANU-PF party a two-thirds majority in parliament (Catholic News Service-CNS & Dachs, 2013).

This situation prompted the Catholic Church in collaboration with other stakeholders to issue a Statement on 2 August, 2013. In the Statement, Zimbabwe’s Church leaders called on the country's political parties to accept the election results of 31 July 2013. The Secretary General, Father Frederick Chiromba of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference was hopeful that the Church would help mediate a peaceful resolution. He said, ‘I hope the Churches can play a key role in finding a peaceful resolution so that Zimbabwe can make the new start it so desperately needs’ (CNS & Dachs, 2013). The Secretary General further said that according to the official results, President Robert Mugabe had taken 62 per cent of the presidential vote, while opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai had only won 34 per cent (CNS & Dachs, 2013).

In the face of these events, the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations, an organisation that includes the leaders of the Bishops’ Conference of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe made a passionate Statement of appeal to the parties concerned as follows:
We urge all political parties and stakeholders who feel aggrieved by any challenge or issue to act in a restrained manner that will allow for dialogue, due process and the preservation of peace and stability in Zimbabwe, where there are legitimate and substantiated irregularities and anomalies, we urge concerned parties to resolve these through peaceful dialogue, law abiding and in an orderly manner (CNS & Dachs, 2013).

The Church leaders further urged Zimbabweans to remain united in prayer, faith and hope and to maintain a spirit of restraint, tolerance and harmony. The Secretary General, Father Chiromba also told the Catholic News Service (CNS) that it was crucial that Zimbabweans found the way forward together. He assured the Zimbabweans that as Church leaders, they would try to meet with the stakeholders and come to some understanding of what might have transpired during the elections (CNS & Dachs, 2013).

Father Chiromba urged the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission to take the necessary steps to address the allegations because the opposition felt cheated and their grievances needed to be addressed through the proper channels. He noted that it was highly significant that the elections took place peacefully in Zimbabwe. He urged all Zimbabweans to work through the impasse together because the situation the country was in, carried the risk that Zimbabwe would continue to be isolated from the international community (CNS & Dachs, 2013).

The intervention by the Catholic Church and other stakeholders into the Zimbabwean election crisis was evident to all, in Zimbabwe itself, the Southern Region and the International Community at large (CNS, 2013). This was so because Zimbabwe remained calm even after the election results were made known to them. The nation took heed of the appeal that was made by the Catholic Church and other stakeholders to maintain peace in the face of a crisis in the country (Dachs, 2013). So, Zimbabwe experienced no violence after the elections because of the role that was played by the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church’s role in that election, like in any other country, might have been influenced by its political theology which often seeks to develop mediations of the Christian faith which transforms societies and cultures, healing the ravages of widespread social injustice and creating genuine good social orders in the countries of the world (Metz J.B. in Komonchak, et al., 1990). The literature used here shows that the application of the Catholic Church’s political theology into the issues affecting societies is able to yield positive results as was the case in Zimbabwe.
2.2.4 The Catholic Church and the presidential elections in Mali

Another political contribution towards elections by the Catholic Church was witnessed in the Republic of Mali in West Africa during the presidential elections that were held on Sunday, 28 July, 2012. Demichelis (2013), reports that the Catholic Church through Caritas Mali made an important contribution to the presidential elections that were held in that country by not only sending observers to monitor Mali’s elections but by also promoting a series of meetings and debates among the various political leaders prior to the election date. It also promoted various civic awareness initiatives to encourage the electorate to exercise their right to vote. For Malians, the Sunday 28 July, 2012 vote was special and crucial because those were the first democratic elections to be held since the end of the war against the Muslim fundamentalists in which the French army had taken part (Demichelis, 2013).

2.2.4.1. Reasons for Catholic Church’s involvement

Fr. Edmond Dembélé, Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Mali explained that the Catholic Church was prompted to make a decision to lend a hand in Mali’s political elections because in his Apostolic Exhortation Africae Munus, Pope Benedict XVI had invited the Church to engage in efforts to promote peace and justice, in the name of truth (Demichiles, 2013). “This is why we wanted to help to ensure transparency during this key moment in our country’s history, so that elections are democratic, peaceful, sincere and credible” the Secretary General added (Demichelis, 2013).

Prior to the polls, Caritas a department under the Catholic Church conducted civic education among the Malian electorate. In addition, Caritas made an important contribution to the presidential elections by confirming to the international community that the voting process had gone on smoothly. For instance, the 153 observers working for Caritas Mali, France, Sahel and for Secours Catholique, reported that they had not noticed any irregularities at the polling stations save they noted that the first official results announced by Mali’s central Government had put the former Prime Minister Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta ahead of other candidates with a wide margin (Demichelis, 2013).

Caritas observers’ report also pointed out that Caritas Mali did not only send observers to monitor the country’s elections, but promoted a series of meetings and debates among the various political leaders. In addition, Caritas conducted various awareness initiatives to encourage the electorate to exercise their right to vote (Demichelis, 2013). The report also
stressed that the turnout at the polls was very high because about 53.3 per cent of those who were eligible to vote, managed to cast their vote. ‘On comparative basis, that figure never rose above 38 per cent in the previous presidential elections,’ the report added (Demichelis, 2013).

However, Caritas Mali’s 153 observers pointed out some shortfalls which made voting more difficult in Mali. For instance, they pointed out that many voters; particularly those who were forced to flee their villages because of the war did not know where to go to cast their votes. The observers also reported that the mobile network in the country was so busy that communication was impossible and many electoral agents were not able to carry out their task on the day of the elections. “All in all, despite everything, the voting process went on smoothly,” said a satisfied Théodore Togo, Secretary General of Caritas Mali (Demichelis, 2013).

It is evident from the foregoing issues that, the Malian election was a success because the Catholic Church and other stakeholders played their part as voting went on as planned. The citizens accepted the election results as the Catholic Church in Mali urged all presidential candidates to peacefully accept the outcome of the vote. The Catholic Church earnestly appealed to the entire international community to continue to monitor and support the growth of democracy in that country (Demichelis, 2013).

2.2.5 The role of the Catholic Church in the 2013 general elections in Kenya

Before looking at the role of the Catholic Church in the 2013 general elections in Kenya, here is a brief political background to it. On 27 December, 2007, Kenya held presidential, parliamentary, and local government elections. While the parliamentary and local government elections were largely credible, the presidential election was seriously flawed, with irregularities in the vote tabulation process as well as turnout in excess of 100 per cent in some constituencies. On 30 December, 2007, the chairman of the Electoral Commission of Kenya declared the then incumbent Mwai Kibaki the winner of the presidential election (Gachie, 2009). Violence erupted in different parts of Kenya as supporters of opposition candidate Raila Odinga and supporters of Kibaki clashed with police and each other. The post-election crisis left about 1,300 Kenyans dead and about 500,000 people displaced. In order to resolve the crisis, negotiation teams representing Party of National Unity (PNU) and Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) began talks under the auspices of former UN
2.2.5.1 The Power sharing agreement

After talks by the parties concerned, President Kibaki and Raila Odinga signed a power-sharing agreement on 28 February, 2008. This power-sharing agreement provided for the establishment of a prime minister position to be filled by Odinga and two deputy prime minister positions as well as the division of an expanded list of cabinet posts according to the parties’ proportional representation in parliament (Gachie, 2009). On 18 March, 2008, the Kenyan parliament amended the constitution and adopted legislation to give legal force to the agreement. On 17 April, 2008 the new coalition cabinet and Prime Minister Odinga were sworn in. The Kofi Annan-led political settlement also set out a reform agenda to address underlying causes of the post-election violence (Obala, 2012). According to Gachie (2009), the focus of the reform agenda was on constitutional, electoral, land, and institutional reform as well as increased accountability for corruption and political violence. This reform agenda in Kenya saw the birth of a new constitution which was approved in a referendum on 4 August, 2010 (Mogae & Commonwealth Secretariat, 2013).

2.2.5.2 Key issue(s) in the 2013 General Elections in Kenya

The major issue that surrounded the 2013 Kenyan general elections was the fear of violence among the citizens. Following the disputed general elections in Kenya, held in 2007 which witnessed post-election violence, it was uncertain as to whether Kenyans would uphold peace during the 2013 general elections (Obala, 2013; Nyabate, 2013; Mogae & Commonwealth Secretariat).

According to Nyabate (2013) the fear of violence made the 2013 electioneering period in Kenya the most unpredictable one as the post-election violence witnessed during the 2007/2008 period led to loss of lives close to 1,300 citizens and about 500,000 displaced in the midst of massive destruction of property. This tense scenario among citizens was largely attributed to the years of successive dictatorial regimes, corruption, impunity and inequality, violation of fundamental human rights, marginalisation, political manipulation, ethnicity and systemic abuse of office all of which had become entrenched in Kenya’s governance system (Obala, 2013).
2.2.5.3 Why the Catholic Church got involved

It was against the background indicated above, in the Kenyan politics and elections that the Catholic Church and other stakeholders were prompted to get involved in monitoring and humanitarian aid interventions in the 2013 general elections. Before the 2013 elections, the Catholic Church and other Churches in Kenya called upon all Kenyans to maintain peace throughout the election process. The Catholic Church in particular, under the leadership of His Eminence John Cardinal Njue held a national prayer day for a peaceful election and the launch of the Lenten Campaign 2013 with Campaign theme, “United and peaceful Kenya - The Change I want to see on the 9th of February, 2013,” (Nyabate, 2013). On the 14th and the 19 February, 2013, Christian Churches organised and conducted presidential debates dubbed ‘Presidential Debate, 2013. Furthermore, on 24 February, 2013; the Churches through ‘the National Peace and Reconciliation’ prayer meetings rallied Kenyans and well-wishers to maintain peace (Caritas Kenya & Nyabate, 2013).

In continuing to perform its role, Caritas Kenya, endeavoured to inform all its partners on the 2013 election situation in Kenya. It systematically facilitated and coordinated regular flow of information from all the Catholic dioceses and updated the confederation on the 2013 election process (Caritas Kenya & Nyabate, 2013). To speed up channels of communication, Caritas Kenya established relevant contact details of key persons in all the Dioceses for efficient and effective coordination of any humanitarian intervention that could arise before, during and after the elections. It mapped out hotspots at diocesan level and identified nearby parishes which would act as focal points for safe havens (Caritas Kenya & Nyabate, 2013).

In addition, a communication platform ‘Drop box’ was established where Community Information Movement Organisations (CIMOs) could update each other on any emerging information relevant in the coordination of any efforts needed for effective delivery of services. Caritas Kenya together with the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) carried out peace building activities especially in areas vulnerable to communal conflicts due to fights for resources especially at land boundaries between two different ethnic tribes (Caritas Kenya & Nyabate, 2013).

Nyabate (2013) reports that before the 2013 general elections, the CJPC through the support of other partner organizations continuously held civic education, capacity building trainings,
established dialogue forums, advocacy and empowerment of women participation in political activities all over the country. These activities aimed at enhancing community cohesiveness and integration through civic engagement and promotion of sustainable livelihoods during and after the 2013 electioneering period. These activities also aimed at promoting peaceful coexistence amongst communities in Kenya (Caritas Kenya & Nyabate, 2013).

As a result of the combined efforts of the Catholic Church and other stakeholders, Kenya experienced a peaceful and well-coordinated 2013 electoral process. The violence which had rocked the country for about 6 years has since paved way for peaceful coexistence amongst Kenyan communities to date (Obala, 2013; Nyabate, 2013). In the 2013 electoral process, the Catholic Church became more positive than it was in 2007-2008 with a good focus on civic education as a tool for sensitisation and reconciliation through the 2013 Kenya Lenten Campaign (Healey, 2013). In order to show continuity in sensitisation and commitment to the cause of peace in Kenya, Caritas Kenya still holds its weekly Emergency Contingency Planning meetings with in-country CIMOs with an aim to share information and experiences so as to adopt best learnt practices. It is evident from the above discourse that the Catholic Church and other stakeholders in Kenya have achieved the purpose of fostering peace and tranquillity by getting involved in the monitoring of elections and the entire electoral process in Kenya.

2.3 Studies done on Zambia

2.3.1 Overview

The historical background of the political role of the Catholic Church in Zambia is cardinal for this study. This is because it forms the basis for the current and future Church political engagements with any political leadership that has assumed and seeks to assume the realms of power in Zambia. The areas of concern for engaging the government by the Church may slightly differ from those of yester years to those of today and/or tomorrow. This may be due to various developments that have since taken place over the past decades. For instance, the Church might have engaged the colonial political leadership on issues of race or colour and not on elections or other governance issues because those concerns were totally different from the concerns of the immediate past years and now. However, whatever the case, it should be noted that the present day Catholic Church engagements with government on
various issues, including elections, are shaped by the historical political role the Church has played over the years.

2.3.2 The Historical political role of the Catholic Church in Zambia

The role of the Catholic Church in the history of Zambian politics dates as far back as the missionary era when the Church had a general apolitical approach to politics in Africa. Carmody (2008) states that, in 1953, when Northern Rhodesia, with Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, started experiencing independence movements the Catholic spokesperson stated: “Provided there is no question of principle involved, it is the practice of the Catholic missionaries to take no part in advocating or opposing contentious political solutions.” This was an era when the Catholic Church perceived itself to be above politics (Carmody, 2001). This era culminated into the period of silence until 1958 when the Bishops’ Conference had an epoch-making statement in which they strongly criticised the colonial political system in its failure to respect rights of individuals regardless of race or colour (Carmody, 2001). The period that was marked with silence from the Catholic Church slid into the period of Zambia’s political independence in the early 1960’s when there was still no political voice by the Catholic Church.

2.3.3 The Catholic Church’s political role between 1964 and 1989 in Zambia

When Zambia attained its independence in 1964, the Catholic Church’s voice on its political role remained muted until the 1970s when together with other mainline churches confronted the state on the attempted imposition of Scientific Socialism in 1979 (Carmody, 2008). From 1964 to the 1980s, the voice of the Catholic Church, particularly on elections and politics in general, was almost non-existent in that elections were not as competitive as it is now due to the existence of only a one-party system of governance under Dr Kenneth Kaunda (Mwanakatwe, 1994). During that period, the Catholic Church maintained an apparently satisfactory working relationship with the government (Carmody, 2001).

2.3.4 The Catholic Church breaks period of silence

Carmody (2008) points out that by the 1990s, the Catholic Church in many parts of Africa began to play a pivotal role in transforming single-party dictatorships into multiparty democratic states. Zambia was equally affected by the Catholic Church’s end of the years of
silence on issues of politics in Africa. The major statement that was made immediately after the end of years of silence appeared in Zambia after the food riots in June 1990. According to Komakoma (2003: 225), the Catholic Bishops made the following statement:

The past several weeks have been a time of extreme national crisis involving great suffering for many of the families of our country. We wish to express our profound sympathy to the families of those who were killed or injured in the recent riots—ordinary citizens, young people…and we offer urgent prayers for reconciliation…. we also feel compelled to speak out on behalf of the poor in particular for the cause of justice…it is not the role of the Church to make decisions concerning the type of political system to be adopted by the nation. However, the Church insists that it has the right to pass moral judgements, even on matters touching political order, whenever basic personal rights…make such judgements necessary.

The Bishops spoke on behalf of the poor in order to avert a looming national crisis due to the food riots in Zambia. There was need for reconciliation among the warring parties for peace to prevail in the nation. Komakoma (2003) points out that Bishops had acknowledged the deep suffering of so many, especially the poor who faced the rising cost of the basic necessities of life, and wished to offer their compassionate assistance in whatever way they could. The Bishops also understood and shared the anxiety of the national leaders in their search for justice and peace in the land and therefore offered reflections as a contribution to the national dialogue concerning the future they would face together. Although there were no elections at the time, the Catholic Church was simply fulfilling and maintaining its political role in the nation. This is because the Church has the right to pass moral judgements, even on matters touching political order, whenever basic personal rights…make such judgements necessary (Komakoma, 2003; Vatican II, No.76).

According to Hume (1996), the Catholic Church has the right and the duty to advocate a social order in which the human dignity of all is fostered, and to protect when it is in any way threatened. The Common Good of the human person or dignity is the focal point of the Catholic Church’s social teaching. This Common Good is one of the ten principles of the Catholic Church’s social teaching (Stuperick, 2012; Hume, 1996).

2.3.5 The Catholic Church during the years of democratic dispensation in Zambia

Having broken the years of silence, the Catholic Church began to play a pivotal role in the democratic dispensation in Zambia. Its major role with other stakeholders was to transform Zambia which was a single-party dictatorship into a multiparty democratic state. The
multiparty democracy was re-introduced in Zambia in 1991 after an amendment to the Constitution of Zambia Act of 1973 leading to the enactment of the Constitution of Zambia Act of 1991. This was as a result of popular dissent attributable mostly to a declining quality of life due to livelihood constraining centralist economic policies as international Aid conditionalities of liberalism started to dominate the global political discourse (Civil Society Election Coalition (CSEC), 2011).

2.3.6 Politics and elections in Zambia between 1991 and 2000

At the height of all these events and or changes in 1991, the Catholic Church continued to promote justice as the way to true peace in Zambia (Carmody, 2008). Having enacted a new Constitution that brought back multi-party politics in 1991, Zambians eagerly looked forward to forming new political parties and holding multiparty democratic elections in accordance with the new political dispensation.

Many political parties were formed under individual’s names while others as groups or movements. One such movement that emerged stronger and popular among Zambians and transformed itself into a political party was the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) under the leadership of FTJ Chiluba.

Given the increase dissent to UNIP’s political governance hegemony, pressure was mounted on Kaunda’s government to quickly set a date for the first multiparty general elections under the new enacted Constitution (CSEC, 2011). With tensions high in the nation, and no option left by the ruling government, 31 October, 1991 was finally declared by Dr Kenneth Kaunda as polls’ day. Political parties vigorously campaigned throughout the country in readiness for the set date of elections. Komakoma (2003: 260) describes the mood of the nation at that time as follows:

The 1991 elections were momentous. The country was at a major crossroads. The vote was about change. After 18 years of one party autocratic rule by the UNIP Government, multi-party politics had just been re-introduced by the repeal of Article 4 in the Republican Constitution. The One Party Participatory Democracy had clearly failed and Zambians were being asked to vote for change or keep the status quo by voting for UNIP, the ruling Party. Tensions in the country were very high, hence….the seriousness of those elections.

It was at that time of major crossroads of the country that an appropriate message from the Catholic Church Bishops and other Christian Church leaders was needed to educate the
citizens on the seriousness of those elections and how to maintain peace and tranquillity in the nation. The central message from the Church leaders to both citizens and political leaders was in form of a reminder that, all authority comes from God the creator, and that the will of the people which is expressed through periodic free and fair elections was the basis of the authority of Government and good governance (Komakoma, 2003).

2.3.7 Specific task of the Catholic Church and other Christian leaders in the 1991 elections

In order to ensure the success of the electoral process, the Catholic Church Bishops and other Church leaders got involved with a specific task of providing civic education to all citizens of Zambia. They called upon all citizens including political leaders to observe all electoral regulations and to avoid all forms of intimidation, bribery, threats and violence during the electoral process (Komakoma, 2003). The Church leaders also called upon all political players to accept the outcome of the election results in order to have a true reflection of a free and fair election that would be characterised with peace in the entire nation (Komakoma, 2003; ZEC, 1991).

2.3.8 Results of the intervention by the Church in the General Elections

The major achievement by the Catholic Church during the 1991 elections was the effect of its call for peace that yielded great results. The country experienced a violent free election atmosphere with no intimidation from any political party (Komakoma, 2003). This state of affairs in the 1991 elections has been attested to by Mwanakatwe (1994: 229) who states:

Despite the significant shortcomings with the electing system and administration, elections were universally seen to be free and fair, and all parties accepted the results.……Above all, the Zambian people, by their peaceful conduct before the elections and their patience on the election day, demonstrated a profound commitment to democracy. The nation decided that it wanted change. By choosing change through the ballot box, Zambians sent a message that now reverberates across Africa and around the globe.

The call to peace by the Catholic Church and other stakeholders yielded a fruitful election which resulted in Zambia as a country gaining great reputation and recognition by the international community as an oasis of peace. This was due to the nature of the peaceful conduct of the elections in which Zambians demonstrated maturity in handling their own democratic affairs. The call to peace demonstrates the Catholic Social Teaching principle of
promotion of peace. This is one of the ten key principles of which encourages the promotion of peace among communities. Davies and Sudlow (1998) explain the principle of promotion of peace as follows:

This is a Catholic teaching which promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. In the words of Pope John Paul II, “Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements”. There is a close relationship in Catholic Social Teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.

This is a rich principle that has, among others, been applied by the Catholic Church world over to mediate in many countries that have had problems in the electoral process and other human conflicts (Hume, 1996).

2.4 The Catholic Church and elections held between 1996 and 2011

A number of elections have been held between 1996 and 2011 in Zambia. This part of the study is set to briefly look at each of those elections held in Zambia and ascertain the role played by the Catholic Church in each.

2.4.1 The Catholic Church and the 1996 General elections

Having experienced peaceful 1991 general elections, Zambians looked forward to the government to fulfil its campaign promises and to receive the fruit of their newly acquired democracy. They also looked forward to the next democratic elections that were going to come in the next five years. So, the next democratic elections after the 1991 were conducted in 1996. The Catholic Church had once again a great responsibility to the nation because there were a number of issues to be taken into consideration before the polls.

2.4.2 Issues raised by the Catholic Church before the 1996 elections

There were a number of concerns that were brought to the fore by the Catholic Church just before the 1996 general elections. The concerns were published by the Catholic Church Bishops in their Pastoral letter entitled Building for Peace (Komakoma, 2003). The Bishops reminded the Zambian citizens of how five years earlier they had received God’s grace of the peaceful transition to multiparty democracy after the free elections. Komakoma (2003) describes this grace as the triumph of the Zambian people who with God’s help demonstrated
a mature and dedicated commitment to a democratic Government. However, the Bishops were deeply concerned about what they had heard from the Zambian people across the nation. Komakoma (2003: 348) states the concerns as follows:

We have heard people express fear about possible violence during the elections, apathy about the usefulness of voting and questions about the honesty of the electoral process.

Thus, in view of that, a special intervention had been put in place. The intervention by Bishops involved directing the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) to conduct non-partisan civic education programmes throughout Zambia. During those sessions, people had made known their concerns and had asked for guidance from the Church (Komakoma, 2003).

In view of the threats of violence, apathy towards voting and dishonesty in the electoral process, the Bishops wrote a Pastoral Letter to call upon all Catholics and the people of Zambia to be mindful of the importance of maintaining and strengthening democratic structures and attitudes if Zambia was going to enjoy peace and development in future (ZEC, 2003). The Bishops also recalled the strong emphasis given in the Church’s Social Teaching and the Pope’s message about the values of democracy. The Pastoral Letter - *Building for Peace* from the Catholic Bishops of Zambia in Komakoma (2003: 349) states:

As Pope John Paul II, in one of his encyclicals, has said, ‘The Church values the democratic system in as much as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate….by (just) law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person,’ (John Paul II, One Hundred Years, 1991, No.46).

In addition, as religious leaders, the Bishops raised three other cardinal points in relation to the Bible and the Social teaching of the Church. They emphasised that the citizens needed to know and understand what constituted peaceful, free and fair elections, the criteria of choosing good leaders and the role of the Church in strengthening democracy (ZEC, 2003). For instance, on the peaceful free and fair elections, citizens needed to know that there was need for a conducive atmosphere where contestants would conduct themselves in a manner that would not put others at unfair disadvantage and the practice of transparency in the organisation of elections in the nation. On the criteria for choosing good leaders, the citizens needed to know that they were all responsible for voting during the elections and those
candidates for political parties were to be committed to the manifestos of their party and their personal vision of their constituencies (Komakoma, 2003).

On the role of the Church in strengthening democracy, the Church leaders emphasised that leaders should always be conscious of their role in society of being the conscience of the nation. In fulfilling this role, leaders must strive to ensure that the gospel values of love, reconciliation, tolerance, social justice, fairness, the common good, equality and above all special concern for the poor are promoted in the political and economic life of the nation (Komakoma, 2003).

Finally, the Bishops appealed to all Zambians to realise that voting was one of their fundamental human rights, a citizen’s duty and the only means by which citizens could peacefully and freely choose their leaders. As such, all citizens were passionately called upon to enter the elections with a spirit of honesty by avoiding bribes and all forms of violence in order to maintain peace in the nation (Komakoma, 2003).

2.5 The 2001 General Elections

After five years of waiting, Zambians were faced with another general election in 2001. Before the general elections, the Catholic Church issued a Pastoral Letter in which they raised a number of pertinent issues.

2.5.1 The concerns in the 2001 elections

The Bishops raised concerns over the ruling MMD government and described the situation as a ‘crisis’ because MMD faced stiff competition from different political parties in the much awaited election (ZEC, 2001). In addition, the Catholic Bishops were not amused with the manoeuvres of Dir. Frederick Chiluba, who before the 2001 elections tried to campaign for a third term of office.

2.5.2 The interventions in the 2001 elections

The third term bid by Dir Frederick Chiluba did not please many stakeholders, including the Catholic Church in Zambia. As a result, the Catholic Church and its allies intervened in some way as a means of fulfilling its political role of being the conscience of the nation. Carmody (2002) points out that as part of the lead-up to the 2001 Zambian elections, officials of the
Catholic Church, including the Archbishop of Lusaka, Medardo Mazombwe, campaigned vigorously with other Churches and non-governmental organisations against a proposed amendment to the country’s constitution, which would enable Dr Chiluba to be a candidate for a third term as president. Thus, the campaign by the Catholic Church and other stakeholders, especially the Oasis Forum was ultimately successful as the bid by Dr Chiluba failed.

Having succeeded in stopping the third term bid, the Catholic Bishops called upon all Christians to show their true colours by being good followers of Jesus Christ and law-abiding citizens in the face of the 2001 elections. In addition, Christians were called upon to look for leaders who were God-fearing, upright and had love for the people. They further challenged all Christians to get involved in the elections by turning out in huge numbers to participate in voting for the candidates of their choice but with upright character (Komakoma, 2003).

2.5.3 The Social Teaching of the Church

The Social Teaching of the Catholic Church is of paramount importance to the life of the entire Catholic Church. As such, every member needs to pay attention to its content and practice. It was for that reason that in 2001, the Bishops highlighted the teaching and the need for Christians to adhere to it as outlined in the message of Pope John-Paul II concerning its importance and how the Catholic Church relates it to elections and true democracy. Pope John-Paul II cited in the Pastoral Letter by the Catholic Bishops of Zambia in Komakoma (2003) reminds Christians about the value of this teaching as follows:

The Church values the democratic system in as much as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate (John-Paul II, One Hundred Years, No.46).

In applying this teaching of the Church, the Bishops in the 2001 elections implored the Christians to use election time to critically evaluate the candidates who put themselves up for elections. Christian voters were also urged to evaluate candidates according to agreed criteria of values inspired by the Social Teaching of the Church. As such, the Christian voter was asked to vote for a candidate who was: God-fearing, respectful of human life and the dignity of each person, ready to work for the common good, a person of integrity, concerned about the poor and vulnerable people. Christians were also urged to vote for a candidate who was
ready to serve not to be served, of high moral behaviour and one with a proven record of good personal background. Those candidates who had already been in office were to be evaluated on their record in office (Komakoma, 2003). The Bishops also called upon all Christians to be prophetic, to question and expose malpractices like bribery and corruption during the election period. Christians were further reminded that the Church could not afford to be comfortable in an environment of corruption and violence. As such, Christians were called upon to stand up for what was right in the society (Komakoma, 2003).

Carmody (2002) notes that the people of Zambia voted on 27 December, 2001 to elect the a new president, members of Parliament and local councillors. The president got only 29 per cent of the vote and none of the 10 major political parties gained a majority, setting a stage for a new direction in Zambian politics as these matters had become highly competitive in the nation.

Carmody (2002) further stated that after the polls on 27 December, 2001, the Zambian Bishops met with the newly elected president, Levy Mwanawasa on 25 January, 2002. The Bishops urged the President elect to heal a deeply divided country. The division had come about due to the fact that Zambia’s 10 opposition parties and international observers had accused Mwanawasa’s party of rigging the election held on 27 December, 2001 (Carmody, 2002). The Bishops stressed the need for constitutional reform in the nation. The bishops also stated that there was a perceived acceptance of corruption as the norm, not only in government but in the psyche of the Zambians. Noting Zambia’s deep-rooted social and economic problems, the Bishops advised that President Mwanawasa needed great wisdom and resilience to bring the country out of its political status-quo (Carmody, 2002).

2.5.4 Results of the interventions

The interventions that were put in place by the Catholic Church and other stakeholders in 2001 yielded positive results in that the presidential third term bid by Dr Frederick Chiluba failed to materialise. In addition, there was no violence before, during and after the elections as Zambians took heed to the call by the Bishops of avoiding violence. In a nutshell, the election was a success due to the involvement of the Catholic Bishops and other stakeholders.
2.6 The 2006 General Elections

The 2006 general elections were the fourth since Zambia returned to multiparty politics in 1991. There was not much raised over the elections in 2006 except for few issues. As usual, the Catholic Church which had always monitored electoral processes with suitable interventions gave general criteria and guidance for the voters and encouraged national leaders to tackle the country’s most urgent problems (Agenzia, 2006). It was for that reason that the Catholic Church through its Bishops had issued a Pastoral Letter that highlighted few issues about the elections in 2006.

Agenzia (2006) points out that the Bishops noted in their Pastoral Letter that the 2006 elections offered Zambians with another opportunity to elect leaders with the necessary attributes and vision that could bring about a better future for the nation. Bishops were delighted that every election provided an opportunity for self-appraisal. It was a time to review the nation’s past performance in order to prepare for better political choices for the future. However, the Bishops noted that on the political level, it was sad that in a period of only fifteen years, Zambia had had two constitutional reform processes, namely, Mwanakatwe and Mung’omba Constitutional Review Commissions. Regrettably, those processes, costly as they had been, were not given the chance to produce desired and sustainable results by the governments in power.

It was further noted by the Bishops that, the nation was going into the 2006 tripartite elections without comprehensive electoral reforms that would have addressed both constitutional matters and the various election-related Acts of Parliament. According to Agenzia (2006:1) the Bishops’ remarked that: “This is another demonstration of how partisan interests override national interests.” In view of that, the Bishops appealed to all Zambians to be enthusiastically involved in the 2006 electoral process by being attentive to and fully engage in pre-election issues so that their choices were well informed. Zambians needed to remember that their individual votes were the sources of power. The Bishops said that another chance had presented itself for Zambians to make an appraisal of their elected political leaders by evaluating the new applicants. Zambians were strongly implored to take the 2006 election as a serious task, and would therefore raise the standard of their choices because Zambia needed and deserved only the best (Agenzia, 2006).
2.7 The 2008 By-Elections

The 2008 elections did not come after the normal five-year term of office as outlined in the Zambian Republican Constitution. The five year term of office of the president was affected by the death of the then president Levy Patrick Mwanawasa who on 29 June, 2008, suffered a stroke while attending the African Union summit in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt and on 19 August, 2008, died from complications in a Paris hospital (CSEC, 2011, Carmody, 2002). Mwanawasa was succeeded by his vice president, Rupiah Bwezani Banda in an acting capacity until the elections were held within a period of ninety days as stipulated in the Zambian Constitution.

On 30 October, 2008, Zambians went to the polls to elect a new President who would take over from the late President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa. The Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2008 elections was quite minimal with reasons best known by the Church itself. After the polls, Rupiah Bwezani Banda emerged victorious with a simple majority of 40.63 per cent beating two other close contestants, namely, Michael Chilufya Sata and Hakainde Hichilema (CSEC, 2011). President Rupiah Bwezani Banda ruled the country for only 3 years and completed his 3 years term of office in October 2011. He stood again for presidency on 30 October, 2011 but lost the election to Mr Michael Chilufya Sata of the Patriotic Front Party. The 2011 tripartite general elections were quite competitive because a number of candidates vied for the highest office in the land.

2.8 The Catholic Church and the 2011 General Elections

Having come to the end of President Banda’s three years reign, Zambia was subjected to another general election in 2011. The election was competitive from the very beginning of the election year. The front runners who were identified early by political analysts were Rupiah Banda of MMD, Michael Chilufya Sata of PF and Hakainde Hichilema of UPND. The Catholic Church began to prepare itself for the 2011 general elections as early as March 4, 2010 (Chakwe, 2010). The Catholic Church got involved in the civic education for its members and the general public on the concerns over the 2011 elections.

To show relevancy and commitment to the cause of the 2011 elections, the Catholic Church in collaboration with other Church mother bodies in Zambia issued a joint Pastoral Statement on the 2011 tripartite elections entitled, A Call to Vote in Peace, Truth and Justice. A number
of issues were raised in the joint Pastoral Statement by the three Church mother bodies in relation to the elections. The issues were: the need to create a credible electoral environment to meet the conditions for peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections, a call for issue based campaigns, among others (ZEC, et al., 2011).

2.8.1 Issues raised by the Catholic Church concerning 2011 Elections

After being an observer of elections for many years, the Catholic Church alone raised specific issues and made particular decisions in relation to the 2011 elections. This Church came to a point where it decided to stop its former traditional role of being an observer of elections to being a monitor of elections. The monitoring of elections would be with effect from the 2011 elections. The decision to monitor the elections was made in order to enforce accountability and transparency in the electoral process and the entire public domain. Chakwe (2010) reports that the Zambia Episcopal Conference Secretary General Fr. Joe Komakoma then, said that accountability and transparency had to be at the core of whatever people did publicly, whether as politicians or ordinary citizens. “The forthcoming 2011 general elections will not be without accountability and transparency,” the Secretary General stressed (Chakwe, 2010). The concerns about accountability and transparency made the Catholic Church to formulate the “2011 Election Strategic Plan” in order to enable it monitor elections effectively.

2.8.2 The Catholic Church 2011 Election Strategic Plan in Monitoring Elections

During the launch of the Caritas Zambia 2011 Election Strategy at Kapingila Guest House, Fr Komakoma, who was the then ZEC Secretary General announced that, “The Catholic Church would for the first time take part in the monitoring of elections in 2011” (Chakwe, 2010). Fr Komakoma further said, “since Caritas Zambia was part of the Catholic Church in Zambia, the Church remained independent and as an institution would never support any political party” (Chakwe, 2010). He also said that the role of the Church in the electoral process was to promote good governance and ensure that people started voting for credible leaders who would develop the country.
2.8.3 The Electoral Process and gaps in the Electoral laws in Zambia

Chakwe (2010) points out that Fr Komakoma noted that elections had remained contentious in Zambian politics due to lack of confidence in the electoral process. Fr Komakoma also explained that the aim of the elections strategy was to ensure that there were effective and acceptable electoral laws and practices in place, which were adhered to by all stakeholders to rekindle citizens’ confidence and participation in the electoral process. The Secretary General also said, “Caritas Zambia realises that there are gaps in the current electoral laws which are unfairly exploited and reduce the quality of elections and democratic governance. There is also persistent lack of government commitment to implement, not only the recommended means to ensure equity in the electoral process but also political will to implement its own developed policy guidelines” (Chakwe, 2010).

2.8.4 Objectives of the Catholic Church in Monitoring the 2011 Elections

At the launch of Caritas Zambia 2011 Election Strategy at Kapingila Guest House, Fr. Komakoma said that it was hoped that through the monitoring exercise, the Church would contribute to the attainment of a credible and conducive electoral process leading to a free and fair 2011 election result. The other objective was to enable Caritas Zambia and other civil society organisations to establish all projects related to the structures for the elections programmes, such as lobbying, advocacy liaison, and continuous civic and voter education (Chakwe, 2010).

2.8.5 Other roles of Caritas Zambia in the Electoral Process

Fr Komakoma named the other components for Caritas Zambia as that of outreach and networking activities where Caritas Zambia would proactively engage with other like-minded civil society organisations in contributing to the attainment of a credible electoral process ahead of the 2011 elections. He said that Caritas Zambia intended to engage in public and stakeholder consultations and package an issues and demands document to be dubbed “People’s Manifesto” that would be subsequently used in advocacy and sensitisation of the electorate on policy issues that political parties and government should consider and attend to if they were to be worthy of people’s votes (Chakwe, 2010).
2.8.6 The issue of weak internal Party Democracy in Zambia

The ZEC Secretary General said that a growing number of literatures on Zambian political parties pointed to the fact that many political parties in Zambia were weak and lacked key elements to become ideal democratic political parties. He argued that, it is a reality that most political parties in Zambia have a generally weak internal democracy and there is an over emphasis on loyalty to the party, especially to the party leaders; some parties have tended to have self-appointed leaders with very limited internal debate on key issues such as leadership, democracy, among others (Chakwe, 2010). In addition, Fr Komakoma pointed out that information about parties was not easily shared, nor widely disseminated. “For instance, documents such as party constitutions or manifestos were not easily obtained or were a preserve of a few,” (Chakwe, 2010). At the same launch Chakwe (2010) reports that Caritas Zambia Executive Director Sam Mulafulafu echoed similar sentiments on political parties’ intra-party democracy which had been adversely affected in most political parties.

The Director pointed out that one of the areas of work for Caritas Zambia was to promote intra-party democracy. Mulafulafu said that many political parties were fraught with many problems to deal with intra - party democracy where there was hardly free flow of information whether in the ruling or opposition political parties (Chakwe, 2010). Mulafulafu further said that party leaders in political parties were the centre of the political parties’ life and anyone who challenged them was marginalised or removed from the party.

The Caritas Zambia Executive Director recommended that the tendency to export bad practices from the parties into governance should not be allowed while the Electoral Commission of Zambia public relations manager said that voter registration exercise was to be conducted in all provinces and not selected ones in good time before conducting the 2011 general elections (Chakwe, 2010).

2.8.7 Fr Peter Bwalya joins calls to Monitor 2011 Elections

Chakwe (2010) asserted that after ZEC’s announcement that the Catholic Church would for the first time take part in the monitoring of elections in 2011, Mpika’s Saint Monica Catholic Parish Priest-in-Charge Fr Peter Bwalya also made similar sentiments in Mpika that the Catholic Church would keep an eye on the 2011 elections at all stages. Fr. Bwalya said that previously there were allegations about vote rigging because the Catholic Church was never
involved in vote counting at polling stations and receiving centres where votes were being tallied. He told congregants in Mpika that with the resolution of the Catholic Bishops that members of Caritas Zambia would be involved in both voter education and monitoring at all levels, he was confident that politicians and their agents would not have any opportunity to rig elections. Fr Bwalya said any political party that would scoop or emerge victorious in the 2011 tripartite elections would win genuinely and indisputably because the Catholic Church was going to closely monitor the 2011 elections (Chakwe, 2010).

2.8.8 Results of the intervention by the Catholic Church in the 2011 tripartite elections

The Catholic Church stood for what it had promised for the first time to monitor elections as opposed to observing elections as was the case in the previous years. The civic education across the country was prudently conducted by the Church and on the polling day the use of Rapid Response Project (RRP) was used to avoid what Fr. Bwalya of Mpika called allegations of vote rigging in the previous elections simply because the Catholic Church was never involved in the monitoring of vote counting at polling stations and receiving centres where votes were being tallied (Chakwe, 2010).

The effect of all these arrangements by the Catholic Church to monitor and not to observe elections resulted into a free and fair election which saw Michael Chilufya Sata of PF emerge victorious in the presidential contest. The results pleased all stakeholders including the ruling party though at first Mr Rupiah Bwezan Banda tried to resist the outcome of the polls but later willingly accepted the final declaration of the election result by the Electoral Commission of Zambia and other international observers and monitors (CSEC, 2011). No allegations of rigging of the elections were reported from all polling stations in the country. It goes without saying that the Catholic Church achieved its vision of having a free and fair election result which was devoid of any allegations of vote rigging or malpractices. For instance, a study by Civil Society Election Coalition (CSEC) (2011:40) states that:

The September 20, 2011 Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government elections witnessed an enhanced level of transparency and accountability in the management and administration of the electoral process by the ECZ.

The reason for such evidence of an enhanced transparency and accountability in the management and administration of the 2011 elections was as a result of the vigorous mounted monitoring efforts put up by the Catholic Church and other stakeholders (CSEC, 2011).
It is clear from the reviewed literature in this chapter that the role played by the Catholic Church in the conduct of elections in different countries of the world has remained consistent. This is a similar role which has been played by the Catholic Church in Zambia.

2.8.9 Summary

In this chapter the literature review has revealed a number of important points about the Catholic Church and its political engagements in different countries of the world including Zambia itself. It is evident from the reviewed literature that the role of the Catholic Church in politics world over is one of engaging political players, Church leaders and other stakeholders in resolving issues surrounding elections and governance. The main reason for the Church’s involvement in elections is always to secure free and fair election results. The Church is motivated in getting involved in these matters due to its Social Teaching which seeks to meet the need for the Common Good of the human person (Hume, 1996). The Catholic Church is also motivated by its political theology which seeks to develop mediations of the Christian faith which will transform societies and cultures, healing the ravages of the widespread social injustice and creating genuine good social order in the communities (Komonchak, et al., 1990). The next chapter presents the methodology that was used in the study.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview
Chapter two provided an overview of the literature on the topic of the current study. This chapter describes the methodology that was employed in this study. According to Burns and Grove (2001: 26) research methodology is ‘the application of all steps, strategies and procedures for gathering and analysing data in a research investigation in a logical and systematic way. This implies that methodology is a research plan that guides the researcher. It involves a research design, sampling methods, data collection methods and analysis.

3.1 Research Design
Kombo and Tromp (2009) refer to a research design as, an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose. A research design in other words constitutes a blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data. In addition, Dahlberg and McCaig (2010) refer to a research design as an overarching strategy for unearthing useful answers to research problems. A researcher is free to use either quantitative methods or qualitative method in the research. The third approach is where the researcher uses both quantitative and qualitative.

Best and Kahn (2006) define a qualitative research as the type of research that uses non quantitative methods to describe what it is. It uses systematic procedures to discover non quantifiable relationships between existing variables. Quantitative research has been defined as a numerical method of describing observations of materials or characteristics. However, Neuman (2011) suggests that you can mix the features of qualitative and quantitative studies to build on their complementary strengths. Mixing approaches has advantages but adds complexity and is time consuming. Nonetheless, in this study, the research design was a qualitative case study. A case study seeks to describe a unit in detail, context and holistically (Kombo & Tromp, 2009).

3.2 Target Population
Kombo and Tromp (2009) define population as “a group of individuals, objects or items or elements from which samples are taken for measurements.” In addition, Best and Khan (2009) state that, “target population basically consists of the specific group with common
characteristics to whom the researcher plans to generalise the findings.” In this particular study, the population of the study comprised all parishes, politicians and non-Catholics in Lusaka and Mansa.

3.3 Study Site

The research study was carried out in Lusaka City and Mansa town.

3.4 Sample size

A sample is a small group that is studied. Thus, Schulze (2002) defines a sample as “an element that is, a smaller group of a target population that is selected for inclusion in a study.” In this particular study, the sample size was drawn from Lusaka and Mansa. This sample consisted of thirty (30) respondents (20 males and 10 females) of whom three (3) were key informants. Key informants were purposively picked from among the Bishops and Caritas Zambia because they are a seat of knowledge and authoritative in issuing Pastoral Letters in the Catholic Church. The remaining twenty-seven (27) were also purposively picked from either Lusaka or Mansa. The 27 respondents consisted of 5 non-Catholics, 7 Caritas Zambia workers, 10 clergy men and 5 politicians. The selected respondents constituted a suitable, reliable and representative population in Lusaka and Mansa.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants in the study. Purposive sampling implies the researcher subjectively determining the type of sample to be represented in the population (Creswell, 2003). Feustein (1986) explains that purposive sampling helps researchers to pick on people who have information and experience to answer questions regarding the study in question. Creswell (2009: 217) explains that in qualitative data collection, purposive sampling is used so that individuals are selected because they have experienced the central phenomenon. Furthermore, in purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately picks the people who are believed to be reliable for the study. The credibility of this sampling method depends on the ability of the researcher to select data or information of rich cases suitable for in-depth analysis connected to issues under study (Bryman, 2008). In this study, purposive sampling technique was used. According to Creswell (2009), the researcher selects individuals who will best help the researcher to understand the research
problem and the research questions. Thus, all respondents in the study areas of Lusaka and Mansa were purposively sampled. The sampling technique enabled the researcher to subjectively determine the type of respondents to be representative of the population.

3.6 Research Instruments

Interview guides were used to collect data. An interview guide, according to Feustein (1986) entails designing a set of questions which are to be looked at in advance before the interview begins. In-depth interviews of one to one were conducted. Sources of secondary data on the subject included books available in the libraries, thesis, dissertations, reports, newspapers, magazines and the internet.

3.7 Data collection procedure

Respondents in the study areas of Mansa and Lusaka were interviewed. In-depth interviews which were one to one or face-to-face interviews were conducted. The researcher visited Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, Baptist Theological Seminary of Zambia, among others, and different Catholic institutions in Lusaka and Mansa to make arrangements before conducting any interviews with the concerned respondents. Only the researcher and the interviewee were present at any given moment of the interviews. The researcher took notes as the interviews progressed.

3.8 Data analysis

Data was analysed qualitatively according to emerging themes from the respondents’ description and presentations of their experiences. McCaig (2010) describes data analysis as a process that involves organising what you have seen, heard and read, so that you can make sense of what you have learnt. This form of analysis categorises related topics. Thus, responses in this study were analysed qualitatively. Later, conclusions were drawn and analysed with reference to the questions on which the study was based.

3.9 Ethical considerations

During the study, the researcher took into considerations all possible ethical issues. All data collected during the research was strictly kept confidential and was not used for any other purpose other than what it was intended for in the study. Consent was sought from the
participants to ensure that they voluntarily participated without any cohesion. The researcher also maintained an open and honest approach to the research in order to ensure that the participants were both physically and psychologically protected.

3. 10 Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology that was used to collect data from respondents. The next chapter presents the research findings of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Overview

Chapter three has outlined the methodology used in the collection of data. This chapter presents the findings of the study aimed at determining the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections in Zambia. The findings are presented in a sequential order according to the research questions of the study starting with the nature of the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections. The next part presents the findings on the task of the Catholic Church leaders in the 2011 elections, the role of Caritas Zambia in the 2011 elections and the influence of the Catholic Church Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections. This is followed by the views of politicians about the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections. The findings end with the views of non-Catholics about the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections.

The research questions of the study were: What was the nature of the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections? What are the views of the politicians about the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections? What was the influence of the Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections? What were the views of non- Catholics about the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections?

The objectives of the study were: to describe the nature of the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections, to analyse the views of the politicians about the Catholic Church’s involvement in 2011 elections, to establish the influence of the Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections and to examine the views of non-Catholics about the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections.

4.1 The nature of the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections as revealed by the Catholic Bishops.

In pursuit of the investigations into the nature of the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections, a visit was made to the Lusaka Archdiocese Offices at the Pope Square. The Pastoral Coordinator in the office of His Grace-The Archbishop of Lusaka arranged for an interview with two officers from the department of Catholic Commission for Justice and
Development and Peace (CCJDP) now Caritas Lusaka. When asked to shed some light on the nature of the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections, the Director for Justice and Peace explained that the Catholic Church played many roles in the 2011 elections. The Director further explained that the Church’s main role of getting involved was purely for the desire to see a free and fair election result in Zambia conducted under a democratic process and devoid of all forms of undemocratic tendencies of intimidation, violence, vote rigging, among other things.

The Director for Justice and Peace also explained that the Catholic Church got involved in the 2011 elections primarily to present to the nation of Zambia a free, fair and credible election held under a democratic electoral process with a result that would meet the aspirations of all stakeholders. “This was our major motivation for our involvement in the 2011 polls,” he stressed.

In order to demonstrate that the Catholic Church had an important role to play in the 2011 elections, the Director for Development asserted that it was incumbent upon the Catholic Church to make arrangements in different parts of the country where all aspiring Members of Parliament and Presidential candidates would be given opportunities to share with the people of Zambia their party manifestos. Such platforms would allow the candidates to show cause why they would be voted into office in the tripartite elections. All this was meant to empower the citizenry with the right information on how to vote from an informed position or decision.

The Director for Development also noted the following:

The Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections was also based on the resolve by the Church to train monitors and conduct a massive countrywide civic education drive on the entire electoral process in Zambia. This was to be followed by a rigorous monitoring of different activities related to elections before, on and after the poll of 20th September, 2011. As such, the Church was determined to present to the nation a free, fair and credible election result that would please all stakeholders. The Catholic Church also desired to uphold peace and justice in the nation through the provision of checks and balances on the ruling government and to promote good governance.

In attempting to show that the Catholic Church’s action was premised on its Social Teaching, the Director for Justice and Peace, had this to say:

The Catholic Church resolved to promote human rights which had deteriorated in the country causing citizens to become disoriented with government. The promotion of
human rights was meant to uphold the dignity of the human person who should be respected and protected from violence because every human being is created in God’s image and likeness and therefore is valuable and worthy of respect.

The Director for Justice and Peace concluded by saying that it was against this backdrop of the violation of human rights, the public being disoriented with the ruling party that the Catholic Church leadership felt duty bound to liberate the much oppressed Zambian citizens through the delivery of a free, fair and credible 2011 elections. He further indicated that the Church needed a delivery to the Zambian people of a democratic and well monitored election in order to avoid a repeat of the malpractices that had characterised some of the previous elections. Thus, the Catholic Church, among others, took up the mantle to locally lead the way in the monitoring of the 2011 elections.

In another development, when contacted to shed light on the nature of the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections, Fr Mpasa, the Vicar General for Mansa Diocese said:

There was tension in the nation in 2011 between the Catholic Church and the Government as Government accused the Church of being full of politicians who acted and spoke like opposition political parties. The Church leadership got involved to reduce that tension by distancing itself from such accusations and to remind government that the Catholic Church leadership had an important duty of preaching the gospel and offering civic education to the Zambian citizens on the electoral process in relation to the September 20, 2011 tripartite elections.

The Vicar General also observed that:

The Catholic Church got involved in the 2011 elections in order to encourage public and private media houses to practice fairness in their reporting by covering all political players during rallies and other political functions so as to level the political playing field for all stakeholders during the campaign period.

He further observed that the Catholic Church was involved because it played the role of a mediator between the Government and opposition political parties who were estranged by politics of insults. He also pointed out the Catholic Church helped to reduce tension between the Government and the general public who desired a change of Government as result of being disoriented with the style of governance by the MMD Government.

4.1.1 The task of the Catholic Church leaders/Bishops before the 2011 elections.

A visit was made to the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) offices in Lusaka. An interview was conducted with the Programme Manager for Faith and Justice Programme.
Asked to shed light on the task of the Catholic Church leaders before the 2011 elections, the Programme Manager replied that:

JCTR held different public fora to stress the importance of the elections and to highlight the qualities of a good leader. The electorate was sensitised on the need to participate and vote in an election as this was their birth right as Zambian citizens. The electorate was also tasked to choose leaders whose priority was servanthood to the people, especially to the poor. The Bishops were preoccupied with the task of educating the electorate about the elections in which they were going to be involved in September, 2011.

Regarding the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church in relation to the elections, the JCTR officer emphasised the principle of *human dignity* as follows:

In our sensitisation campaigns, emphasis was highly placed on the importance of the dignity of the human person who should be respected and protected from violence because he or she was made in the image of God. As such, a violation of any person’s rights, especially the poor would not be tolerated in society.

Commenting on whether there were fears among Church leaders due to bad comments made against the clergy by the Zambian politicians, the Programme Manager responded:

The statements made by politicians during the previous government were due to misunderstandings between the Church and Government. The misunderstandings were mainly due to a few misguided politicians who could not take in constructive criticism. Nonetheless, the comments did not bring any fears in the Catholic Church leaders. The clergy treated such comments as mere politics.

### 4.1.2 The role of Caritas Zambia in the 2011 elections.

The researcher visited the ZEC Secretariat at Kapingila House in Kabulonga in Lusaka where Caritas Zambia Head Office is located. Three officials, including the Manager for Caritas Zambia were interviewed on three different dates. All the interviews were by appointment due to different commitments by the officials concerned. The first to be interviewed was Caritas Zambia Manager. Responding to the question, ‘What is Caritas Zambia?’ the Manager replied:

Caritas Zambia is one of the seven departments in the Catholic Secretariat under the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) tasked with the responsibility of the promotion and protection of human dignity and sustainable development for the people of God especially the less privileged through witnessing, animation and institutional strengthening. Its rationale for electoral oversight is premised on its Governance and Human Rights Programme (GHRP). GHRP seeks to empower communities to participate and contribute to the governance processes and claim their rights. This
programme comprises sub-programmes of Human Rights and Access to Justice, Democracy and Local Governance, Parliamentary Liaison and Justice and Peace Formation. It is this empowerment of the communities which underscores the importance of this programme and its quest to participate in the Zambian electoral process.

Regarding the response to the question concerning the role that was played by Caritas Zambia in the electoral process of the 2011 tripartite elections, the Manager volunteered the following:

Caritas Zambia’s major role in the 2011 electoral process was to execute a mandate given to it by the Catholic Church through its ZEC Secretariat. The focus of this mandate was for Caritas Zambia to train 10,850 monitors countrywide who would monitor the elections. This would enable Caritas Zambia to present to the nation a well-monitored free, fair and credible election result that would be accepted by all stakeholders and eventually promote social justice in the nation. The mandate also included sensitising the Catholic Church members and the general public through the provision of civic education on how to have the right information on different pertinent issues on the entire electoral process in relation to the 2011 elections. Caritas Zambia was also tasked to raise awareness on human rights, right to vote and calling on political parties to provide a platform for their candidates to share their visions with the electorate and show cause why they would be voted into office on the polling day.

The Manager further explained that:

The reason for the Catholic Church’s mandate to Caritas Zambia was mainly to fulfil the significance it attaches to the issue of free and fair elections. This is because elections are regarded as democracy at work. During an election citizens can assess the performance of their representatives and choose to re-elect them or elect new ones. This means that elections form the basis for recruiting political leaders; making government accountable; providing representation at different levels of governance; contributing to building a sense of responsibility among political leaders; granting legitimacy to elected leaders; influencing policy changes and formulation; educating voters on social, political and economic readjustments. Caritas Zambia was also tasked to promote human dignity through programmes that endeavour to uplift the poor and marginalised from their situation and confronting structures that deprive and oppress the weak in society. All these arrangements were put in place by the Catholic Church to promote transparency and ensure that credibility returned to the entire electoral process in Zambia.

For the Catholic Church to consolidate its strengths, interventions, being better linked and coordinated, promote cost efficiency in the utilisation of resources and help to enhance efficiency in relationships, the Church sought to collaborate with other social partners beyond its boundaries. The Manager for Caritas Zambia had this to say:
During the 2011 elections, Caritas Zambia collaborated with other Civil Society Organisations in order to effectively carry out its mandate of monitoring the elections. In pursuance of this objective, Caritas Zambia joined hands with other Civil Society Organisations like the Anti-Voter Apathy Project (AVAP), Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP) and Operation Young Vote (OYV). Others were: Southern Africa Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (SACCORD), Transparency International Zambia (TIZ), Young Women in Action (YWA) and Zambia National Women’s Lobby (ZNWL). These, together with Caritas Zambia, formed an alliance in order to contribute to the effective electoral oversight by vigorously monitoring the elections as a means of achieving election integrity in the September, 2011 elections. The alliance was premised on speaking with one ‘loud voice’ and as a way of contributing to the consolidation of democracy in Zambia.

In trying to show oneness or unity of purpose concerning the reason for collaboration in the 2011 elections, one AVAP member in Lusaka had this to say:

We chose to form a coalition in order to speak with one ‘loud voice’ on the electoral process in the 2011 tripartite elections. It was a time to consolidate our democracy in unity through collaboration. This approach yielded positive results for the coalition and the nation. The positive results were actually a true reflection of the will of the people of Zambia.

Regarding the issue of the use of Rapid Response Project (RRP) in transmitting electoral results as opposed to Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) system, Caritas Zambia Manager asserted that:

Caritas Zambia and its allies’ mandate was not only to present to the nation a free, fair and credible election result but also to assess all the election results independent of the Electoral Commission of Zambia via Rapid Response Project (RRP) which used the principle of the government rejected Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) system. It was a very effective transmission system which brought to the fore the desired election results for the coalition and other stakeholders in the nation. The system secured almost every vote that was cast during the polls and made the Electoral Commission of Zambia accountable to the citizens of Zambia.

Asked to shed more light on the mandate that was given to Caritas Zambia, Mr Mulafulafu, one of the workers at Caritas Zambia responded by saying:

ZEC mandated Caritas Zambia to conduct civic education and sensitise citizens on the dangers of corruption, vote buying, violence and to equip citizens with the right information on the entire electoral process. The Church had also mandated Caritas Zambia to take care of the need to engage the Electoral Commission of Zambia on the process of conducting elections in the country. This is because the Catholic Church recognises the importance of elections as an aspect of expressing representative democracy as provided for by the constitution of Zambia.
Mr Mulafulafu further said:

The Catholic Church did not only mandate Caritas Zambia to monitor the 2011 elections, but to also continue to remind the government of the day of its campaign promises made to the people of Zambia. This would be one way of providing the checks and balances. Caritas Zambia was also mandated to provide continuous voter education and registration to the Zambian citizens beyond the 2011 elections. Caritas Zambia developed a special Voter Education Training Manual, which spelt out its role and mandate. The manual provides trainers with both the content of voter education and the teaching methods that may be used when providing voter education. This has been done because it contributes to Caritas Zambia’s response to its mandate that seeks to empower people to participate in the governance process of their country. Voter education, which is part of civic education, helps citizens contribute to a sound democratic society by providing voters with knowledge and information on their rights and responsibilities during the electoral process. This is done because voter information is essential for the successful holding of elections.

The researcher visited Caritas Mansa. An interview was conducted with the Director for the Catholic Commission for Justice and Development and Peace (CCJDP). Responding to the question on the role that was played by Caritas Zambia in the 2011 elections, the Director replied:

It was necessary for Caritas Zambia to be involved in the 2011 elections because it played many roles on behalf of the ZEC Secretariat by monitoring the elections, promoting of human rights, providing civic education, providing checks and balances, among others, to the Zambian citizens. Caritas Zambia played all these roles in a bid to erase the bad history that was attached to the previous elections in which elections had lost credibility due to rigging in the past twenty years. The promotion of human rights was one way of engaging people to exercise their rights to vote and choose leaders of their choice. The monitoring of the elections was one way of setting a precedent in the promotion of good governance, transparency rather than rigging of elections and promotion of abuses of power as was the case in the preceding years. Through such activities, the Catholic Church wanted to send a clear signal to the world concerning Zambia’s unique identity in the world of politics.

Apart from mandating Caritas Zambia to train monitors, monitor the 2011 elections, among other roles, the Catholic Church also used other means to achieve its objectives on the issue of offering civic education to the Zambian citizenry on the electoral process in relation to the 2011 elections. One of such means was the use of the Pastoral Letters that were written and distributed by the Catholic Church Bishops to all the faithful and the general public. The Letters were written in such a way that they exerted some influence on the recipients as can be noted in 4.2 below.
4.2 The influence of the Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections

The Catholic Church Bishops in Zambia have for a long time used the Pastoral Letters to interact with people on various issues (Komakoma, 2003). The Pastoral Letters have sometimes been delivered to all members of the Catholic Church and the general public as Statements for many years and the trend has continued to date. The Letters have created a long and outstanding interaction between Bishops and people on different fronts such as politics, economics, education, electoral process, among others. It was for this reason that the Catholic Church Bishops in Zambia extensively employed the services of the Pastoral Letters to interact with the Zambian citizens on the electoral process in the run up to the 2011 tripartite elections.

In order to show the important role played by the Pastoral Letters, the Catholic Church in 2011 chose to collaborate with other Church mother bodies in Zambia in the issuing of a joint Pastoral Statement entitled, *A call to vote in Peace, Truth and Justice* in the 2011 tripartite elections. So, the influence of the Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections cannot be over emphasised. For instance, the joint Pastoral Statement that was issued by the three Church mother bodies was categorical on the electoral process in the 2011 tripartite elections. The Statement highlighted the need for politicians to have issue based campaigns as opposed to character assassinations, the need for government to create an enabling electoral environment that would meet conditions for peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections, among others (Council of Churches in Zambia, (2011), et al). This shows that the Pastoral Statement was meant to sensitiise, educate and influence the electorate in a certain way on how the elections would be conducted in 2011.

In trying to find out on the influence of the Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections, Fr Mpasa, the Vicar General for Mansa Diocese responded:

> The Bishops used the Pastoral Letters as tools for information dissemination to the Catholic Church members and the general citizenry on the electoral process. For instance, Letters informed and equipped the electorate with the right information about the electoral process before, during and after the polling day. The Letters helped to create confidence among the electorate during the polling day because each voter knew exactly what to do when each one entered the booth to cast his or her vote. The letters also helped the electorate after the polls in that each one knew how to behave in the face of provocation as none turned violent after the announcement of the final
results by the Electoral Commission of Zambia. Instead, what the country witnessed was nothing but jubilation as a reflection of the commitment to the peace that has been enjoyed in the country for many years. Apart from being tools for information dissemination, the Pastoral Letters were also used for highlighting the dangers of vices such as corruption, bribery, violence and vote buying.

Responding to the question about the role of the Pastoral Letters prior to the 2011 elections, Fr Cleophas Lungu, the Zambia Episcope Conference Secretary General replied:

The Catholic Church used the Pastoral letters to appraise the nation by taking stock of events leading to elections and to prepare the nation socially, economically and politically in order for the people to make informed decisions and better choices in the elections. Bishops used Pastoral Letters as a unique way of speaking to the Catholic Church members and the general population on various issues that highly pre-occupied their minds, especially the 2011 elections. Letters also provided a unique message to the Catholic Church members and the nation as a guiding principle on how they would proceed in the September 2011 elections. The Pastoral Letters assisted Church members on how they would meet and overcome challenges before, during and after the elections. For instance, through the Pastoral Letters, members were encouraged to avoid violence and to base their actions on the love of Christ by keeping loving each other in the face of opposition from their perceived enemies. In addition, the Bishops’ Pastoral letters played the role of sensitising the Church members and other citizens on how to analyse issues and to vote wisely. The Pastoral Letters also provided guidance, checks and balances to the Government of the day and to the opposition political parties who desired Church counsel.

The ZEC Secretary General, Fr Cleophas Lungu further said:

The Pastoral Letters highlighted the need for electoral reforms, as people had lost faith in the electoral process of the country. There was a great need to improve the quality of life for the majority of Zambians, as poverty had reached alarming levels in the country. For instance, available information from JCTR Policy Brief-Third Quarter (2011) indicated that poverty levels were as high as 64 per cent in urban areas and for those extremely poor in the rural areas was at 80 per cent. Such a scenario of high poverty levels in the country eventually undermined the integrity of the government that was in power.

4.3 The views of politicians about the Catholic Church’s involvement in 2011 elections

The researcher visited the New Government Complex in Kamwala in Lusaka where a good number of Government Ministries were located to conduct interviews. An interview was made with Honourable Poninso Njeulu, the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services. The Deputy Minister had the following submissions on the role of the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections. He said that:
The Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections was timely in the sense that it provided checks and balances on governance issues under the MMD Government. The Church’s involvement in the election also served the purpose of preventing the then ruling party from rigging the elections which could have been detrimental to the country. The Church’s involvement in the elections saved the country from a possible civil war in that Zambians wanted a change of Government and rigging elections would breed chaos in the nation. The Catholic Church’s involvement in the elections induced fear in the minds of the politicians from the then ruling party because of the potential loss of power after the 2011 elections. The politicians from the opposition political parties were very happy to see the involvement of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections because the Church gave the government serious checks and balances in the governance of the country and also the Church proposed the use of the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) system into the electoral process, an idea which highly scared the Banda led Government.

Commenting on the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections, one losing candidate for United Party for National Development (UPND) ward councillor in Mansa said:

It was good to see the Catholic Church get involved in the 2011 elections because it prevented the then ruling party from election malpractices. It was also good to note that politicians from the MMD were saddened by the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections as it brought fear and uncertainties in their hearts and minds due to the perceived loss of power in the 2011 elections. It was equally apparent that due to this fear, the politicians in power did not take the statements made by the Catholic clergy lightly before the 2011 elections.

The researcher also visited UPND party’s Head Offices in Lusaka. An interview with Mr Kuchunga Simusamba, the Deputy Secretary General of the party was conducted. To answer the question regarding the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections, the Deputy Secretary General responded by saying that:

As a party they had no objections to the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections. It was a good idea that the Catholic Church got involved in the elections because it was able to contribute to the social, economic and political developments of Zambia. However, the only concern was the fact that the Catholic Church played a double standard role. It was so, in the sense that it served the purposes of being a monitor of the elections as well as that of an interested party. By being partisan, some Catholic Church members openly campaigned for the Patriotic Front party. Not only did they campaign for the PF, but they even provided candidates for Members of Parliament (MPs) and Councillors. The best example of this was Caritas Zambia which had some of its members running for political offices instead of concentrating on monitoring elections. This did not portray a good picture of the Catholic Church in Zambia. It showed a pure partisan stand with a compromised position on the part of the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, the Church’s involvement was good in that the Church monitored the elections well and as a watchdog it prevented the country from bloodshed as many Zambians wanted a change of the MMD Government to another
party of their choice. If the wish of the Zambian people was not granted that could have brought serious problems to the nation.

The UPND Deputy Secretary General further said:

The Church did well in its involvement because they brought out a lot of electoral issues that needed the attention of President Banda’s government. For instance, the Church spoke consistently on issues of the constitution; the desire to see the date of elections inscribed in the constitution and the desire to bring on board the introduction of an electoral reform process. All such issues were good intentions by the Catholic Church for the purpose of addressing certain concerns in the Zambian electoral process. It was also good to note that the Church allowed the use of its radio stations by any political party without discrimination. This was good for the development of the young Zambian democracy.

On the fears among the politicians regarding the Catholic Church’s active involvement in the 2011 polls, the Deputy Secretary General had the following sentiments:

The only fear among the politicians could have possibly been exhibited in the camp of the MMD party seeing that the possibility of loss of power was eminent during the elections. It was those in power who did not take the statements made by the Catholic clergy lightly because most of the comments were negative about the ruling party which made them very uncomfortable and unpopular. UPND as a party in opposition had nothing to lose but had almost everything to gain during that period.

4.4 The views of non-Catholic Church members about the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections

The non-Catholics in the study include pastors, elders, lay preachers, reverends and any other ordinary Zambian citizen. In pursuit of data for the study, the researcher visited the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zambia located along Twin Palm Road in Kabulonga area, in Lusaka. An interview was conducted with a Pastor and Principal of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zambia. Asked to shed light on whether the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections was justified, the Principal replied:

The Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections was justified because the stance and direction of the Government on several governance issues in the nation at that time were completely wrong. The country had at that time lost direction on many critical matters such as governance, handling of corruption, among others. There was need for an intervention of some sort. As such, the Church in general being the conscience and prophetic voice of the nation needed to intervene. Thus, the Catholic Church seized the opportunity and spoke fearlessly against the rampant vices of corruption, nepotism, bribery, to mention but a few. The Catholic Church’s resolve to speak fearlessly about the stated vices was in contrast with some of the non-Catholic Churches who had become compromised in many ways.
On advice to non-Catholics concerning advocacy on matters of social, economic and political developments in Zambia, the Principal said:

There is need to take a stand and speak out each time there was a miscarriage of justice in the nation contrary to being compromised as was the case before the 2011 elections.

Responding to a question as to why people should vote in elections, the Principal said:

Voting is the only way citizens exercise their God given democratic right to choose their own leaders. Not only does voting give everyone a democratic birth right but it also allows the participation of the citizens in the governance of their country. It is voting that political changes come through because it is non-negotiable. As such, all citizens need to vote to bring about such desired change and not complain later when things become bad.

In an interview with a Pastor of the Apostolic Church in Mansa, I was told that:

The Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections was done in partnership with a political party whose presidential candidate was a confirmed Catholic Church member. In a nutshell, the Catholic Church was an interested party in the 2011 tripartite general elections.

The Pastor argued that as a result, the Catholic Church was failing to speak against the shortcomings of the Patriotic Front (PF) due to the partisan stance that was taken by the Catholic Church during campaigns. He cited some irregularities that had resurfaced owing to the partisan stance of the Catholic Church. For instance, the Constitution making process had been hijacked by the Catholics, Father Frank Bwalya had been appointed as Chairperson for ZESCO Board and Mpika Guest House had been donated to the Catholic Church by the Republican President, among other things. This was a clear demonstration of how partisan the Catholic Church had become and how vulnerable it was to the manipulation of the sitting government.

Regarding issues of advocacy on matters of social, economic and political developments in Zambia, the Pastor said:

Every non-Catholic should be encouraged to avoid being mute on speaking out on matters of social, economic and political because these are issues that mostly affect ordinary Citizens. This is not the task for the Catholic Church only, but for all concerned citizens. Everyone should be brave, be involved and not silenced by any form of intimidation from talking about crucial matters in the country.

Answering a question on why people should vote in elections, the Pastor said:
People should feel proud to vote. This is because voting is their democratic birth right. Voting allows citizens to vote out those leaders they do not want. In the same vein it allows citizens to vote in leaders they want. It also gives the people a chance to check on the leaders’ performance and makes the leaders accountable to the electorate.

The researcher also visited the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) Head Office located along Kamloops Road in Lusaka. Rev Pukuta Mwanza, the Executive Director for the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia was interviewed in relation to the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections. In his response he had the following to say:

The Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 polls was two-fold. The first perspective showed clearly that the Catholic Church had taken a partisan stand because some clergy men from the Catholic Church openly campaigned for the Patriotic Front (PF). The best example was Fr Frank Bwalya who is one of the priests in the Catholic Church who went round the country with the Patriotic Front president to campaign with him. Sometimes Fr Bwalya organised campaign rallies with other members of the PF in different parts of the country with a convincing partisan stance of openly campaigning for the PF. Sometimes the PF president before ascending to power as a Catholic member openly campaigned in Catholic Churches wherever he went for his countrywide campaigns.

The EFZ Executive Director also observed that:

The Catholic Church had a non-partisan stance because its sole purpose was to mobilise members from other Churches and civil society to join hands in order to fight the evils of corruption, violence, tribalism, among other things in the society. This aspect even encouraged those from the other Church mother bodies to join hands and work together with the Catholic Church to find a solution to the problem of violence that had rocked the country during the bye-elections especially that of Mufumbwe Constituency where there was bloodshed. As a result, the coming together of the three Church mother bodies in 2011 witnessed the formulation of a joint Pastoral Statement on the 2011 Tripartite Election entitled ‘A Call to Vote in Peace, Truth and Justice.’

Regarding advice to non-Catholics on getting involved in advocacy on matters of social economic and political developments in Zambia, the EFZ Executive Director had this to say:

It is advisable for all non-Catholics to emulate what the Catholics were doing in the country in getting involved in the advocacy on matters of social, economic and political developments. This is one way that can enable Churches to provide a holistic approach in meeting both the spiritual and physical needs of the people in the country. It is not only the preaching that is important for the Churches to do but it is also cardinal to meet the physical needs which are critical to man’s survival in life.

Responding to a question of why people should vote in elections, the EFZ Executive Director said:
It is important for people to vote in elections because it is their birth right. This is one way of contributing to good governance. It is voting which contributes to democratic governance as opposed to dictatorship. This is because leaders are made accountable to the electorate as they are expected to deliver according to their campaign promises. It is voting which allows the elected to show forth their political philosophy, whether capitalist, communist or democracy. In that case, the electorate become the best judges of that particular philosophy of that particular leader. As a result, the electorate may decide to vote him or her in or out of office on the basis of that philosophy or ideology coupled with its policies. If citizens do not vote in an election, then they have no right to complain later because they would have missed an opportunity to use their vote as a stronger voice in expressing their own personal choices and feelings.

Responding to a question on the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections, one lay preacher from the United Church of Zambia in Mansa noted that:

The Catholic Church tried by all means to enhance the provision of equal opportunities among the political players by engaging politicians in intra and inter-party dialogue. Such an initiative by the Catholic Church helped to level the political playing field for both the ruling party and the opposition political parties in Zambia.

In trying to offer an opinion on the involvement of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections, one man, a non-Catholic Kalingalinga resident in Lusaka observed that:

The Catholic Church worked very hard in trying to reduce the tension that had existed between the ruling party and the general citizenry due to discontentment that had grown to high levels as a consequence of bad governance in the country. The people of Zambia began to hate the MMD Government because they (people) had become disoriented with the style of governance.

Expressing her opinion on the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections, one female student from the Pentecostal Assemblies of God at the University of Zambia noted that:

The Catholic Church was better placed in its involvement because it was eager to act as mediator by using dialogue as a tool to reduce tension that had existed between government and opposition political parties. The Church was focused on the need to provide civic education to all citizens on the electoral process in Zambia and to promote human rights by advocating for the right to vote and upholding of human dignity.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings based on the research questions of the study with the view of establishing the role of the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 tripartite elections. There were many roles played by this Church. Nonetheless, its primary objective was a desire to present to the Zambians a transparent, credible, free and fair election result.
that would be held under a democratic electoral process that would meet the aspirations of all stakeholders in the nation. However, there was a feeling among several stakeholders that the Catholic Church was partisan before the polls. Some felt that it helped to level the political playing field in the country. There was also a feeling that the Catholic Church did its best in getting involved in the monitoring of the elections because it saved the nation from a political crisis. Other stakeholders felt that the Catholic Church’s involvement in the elections was good because it prevented the MMD government from rigging the elections by providing checks and balances on governance issues. Others felt that the Catholic Church did a good thing to get involved because it acted as a mediator between the opposition political parties and the MMD government by calling for dialogue in resolving the intra and inter-party misunderstandings that were common before the elections. All in all, the Catholic Church managed to monitor the elections as planned. The next chapter presents the discussion of the research findings of the study.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.0 Overview

Chapter four has presented the research findings of the study. This chapter discusses the findings of the study which sought to establish the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 tripartite elections in Zambia. The discussion of the findings is presented according to the research questions of the study which were: What was the nature of the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections? What was the influence of the Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections? What were the views of the politicians about the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections? What were the views of non-Catholics about the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections?

The findings will be discussed in the same sequence as they have been presented in the preceding chapter.

5.1 The essence of the use of the Research Questions

It is prudent that at the end of an enquiry, answers to research questions or objectives phenomena related to them are shown (Yin, 2008; Creswell, 2005). In this study the researcher opts to use the research questions model as opposed to objectives because research questions are the essence of most research conducted as they act as the guiding plan for the investigation (Mertler and Vanattar, 2001). In general, research questions are, “specific questions that researchers seek to answer” (Creswell, 2005:117). According to Maxwell (2005: 69), ‘research questions state what you want to learn.’ Therefore, the answers to the four research questions are the basis of the discussion and are presented under headings derived from the research questions stating what we want to learn as follows:

5.2 Description of the nature of the Catholic Church's role in the 2011 elections as revealed by the Catholic Bishops

This study obtained data that show that the nature of the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections was a Church’s conviction and desire to present to the nation of Zambia a transparent, credible, free and fair 2011 election result that would be held under a democratic
electoral process that would meet the aspirations of all stakeholders in the nation. This Church’s desire was premised on a rigorous and focused monitoring system of the entire electoral process which would cover the period before, during and after the elections. The significance of monitoring the 2011 elections was stressed and reflected in the ZEC Secretary General’s statement that was made in Lusaka at Kapingila Guest House at the launch of Caritas Zambia 2011 Election Strategy. The Secretary General said, “It is our hope that through the monitoring exercise, the Church will contribute to the attainment of a credible and conducive electoral process leading to a free and fair 2011 election result” (Chakwe, 2010).

In order to achieve this mammoth task, the Catholic Church played many other roles in the 2011 elections. For instance, the Church through Caritas Zambia, trained about 10,850 election monitors to monitor the elections country-wide. The Church also provided civic education to Catholic Church members and the general public on their rights and duties as citizens and collaborated with seven other Civil Society Election Coalition members (CSEC) to monitor the elections, among others.

The launch of Caritas Zambia 2011 Election Strategy by the ZEC Secretary General shows that the main objective of the Catholic Church was to monitor the election and contribute to the attainment of a credible and conducive electoral process that would lead to a free and fair 2011 election result. This also implies that the previous elections were not credible because they lacked a conducive electoral process that would bring about free and fair election results. It is evident that in 2011, the Catholic Church was determined to create a conducive electoral process that would meet such requirements through a well-coordinated monitoring exercise. This means that creating a conducive electoral process would enable the Catholic Church monitor and deliver a free, fair and transparent election result that would reduce on the occurrence of all forms of undemocratic tendencies of intimidation, violence, vote rigging, among other things. The Catholic Church also called upon all Zambians to maintain peace during the election period in order to create a conducive electoral process in the nation. This is similar to the findings of Nyabate (2013) who in his study found that the main reason why the Catholic Church got involved in the Kenyan general elections in 2013 was to monitor elections and to call upon all Kenyans to maintain peace during the general elections and
avoid all forms of intimidation and violence in the nation before, during and after the elections (Nyabate, 2013).

Similarly, the training of 10 850 monitors by Caritas Zambia and the collaboration with other civil society organisations were part of the Church’s 2011 Election Strategy that would enhance the attainment of a credible and conducive electoral process that would lead to a free and fair 2011 election result and reduce on all forms of maladministration in the 2011 elections. The provision of civic education to the Catholic Church members and the general public was equally part of the Church’s strategy to achieve its main objective set in the whole approach to the 2011 elections. Seemingly, the whole idea of the Catholic Church getting involved in the 2011 elections was to try and apply its political theology in the electoral process and avoid the wide spread of social injustice that had characterised the previous conduct of the elections in Zambia.

That is why Metz in Komonchak (1990:773) articulates the importance of the Catholic Church’s political theology which allows the Church to mediate in the occurrences of disorders of society, when he says that:

Sometimes the Catholic Church employs political theology to resolve disorders in society by seeking to develop mediations of the Christian faith which will transform societies and cultures by healing the ravages of the wide spread social injustice and creating genuine good social order.

The mediation by the Catholic Church in issues affecting people, not only in Zambia, but world-wide may usually be a motivation derived from its political theology or Church Social Teaching (Hume1996). This is likely to be the reason why in the 2011 elections, the Catholic Church was motivated to monitor elections in Zambia. The other motivation for this Church getting involved in the elections might have been derived from its Social Teaching which always seeks to meet the need for the common good of the human person (Hume, 1996). For example, the findings indicate that the Church resolved to promote human rights through the provision of civic education to its Church members and the general public in order to educate them on their rights such as the right to vote and to make decisions on who should become their political leaders and take up public offices. The promotion of human rights is synonymous with the promotion of the common good which is meant to uphold the dignity of the human person who should be respected and protected from violence. This is highly imbedded in the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church under the principle of the common
good which states that social conditions should allow all people to reach their full human potential and realise their human dignity because every human being is created in God’s image and his likeness and thus, man is valuable and worthy of respect (Hume, 1996).

It appears like this was the reason why the Director for Justice and Peace at Caritas Zambia explained that the Catholic Church resolved to promote human rights in 2011 because observance of human rights promotes human dignity. This is simply because all human beings are created in the image of God and his likeness. This implies that the Catholic Church in 2011 had a conviction that the promotion of human rights was going to be possible through a rigorous monitoring of the elections which would result into a free and fair election result that would then uphold the dignity of the human person who deserves respect and protection from violence and exploitation of man by man. It also shows that the Church’s resolve to monitor elections was that if there was a free and fair election result, then that result would act as the foundation for the creation of a genuine good social order in the community thereby fulfilling the political theology and the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church.

This shows that there was a paradigm shift by the Catholic Church from being an observer Church for the many past years to being monitors of elections in 2011. The findings attest to this fact because the ZEC Secretary General, Fr Cleophas Lungu openly stated that, “... we have as a Church resolved to stop being observers of elections but have now become monitors of the elections because we desire to make a difference in the forth coming  2011 elections” (ZEC, 2011). This suggests that the earlier paradigm was not as effective as it was anticipated by the Catholic Church to ensure that a democratic process was upheld in Zambia in order to achieve a free, fair and credible election result in the September, 2011 elections. I feel that by conducting civic education, planning to monitor elections and upholding a democratic process on elections, the Catholic Church meant to empower the citizenry with the right information on how to vote from an informed position or decision.

Similarly, Kayula (2012) notes that elections represent a platform for expression of people’s political decisions, and that, they are a sign of legitimacy for the exercise of power. Not only do elections become a sign of legitimacy for the exercise of power but they also provide a privileged opportunity for healthy and serene public political debate, marked by respect for different opinions and different political groupings. This implies that elections that are free and fair are an indication and encouragement of real and active participatory democracy by
citizens in the political and social life of the nation. Thus, Moyo (2011: 3) defines the words ‘free’ and ‘fair’ in reference to elections as follows:

A ‘free’ election refers to an election and electoral process that is characterised by the enjoyment of civil and political rights such as the freedoms of expression, assembly, association and movement by people, especially the electorate, in an environment that is peaceful without intimidation, coercion and violence. A ‘fair’ election is an election and electoral process where electoral conditions such as the law and access to the media are the same for all the participants in the electoral process.

This sort of a free and fair election is what the Catholic Church had envisaged in the September, 2011 elections. Apart from presenting a free and fair election result, the Catholic Church desired to reduce tension that had existed between the Government and the Catholic Church leadership and its membership who were accused by the Government of being full time politicians and thus, urged the Church leadership to form political parties if they wanted to speak like politicians. Peter Henriot in JCTR Reader (2008:8) notes this kind of attitude displayed by politicians against the Church leadership and states: “Whenever Church leaders make a comment on some important issue of economic or political justice, some politicians tell them to be quiet because they have no right to talk about such issues.” However, Henriot argues that such sentiments from politicians simply boarder on dualistic worldview which states that,

Only the government should be paying attention to earthly affairs, material and secular matters. The Church should focus on heavenly affairs, spiritual and sacred matters. Sunday is the Church’s day–leave to the government the business of the rest of the week! (JCTR Reader, 2008).

Henriot further argues that the Catholic Church’s Social Teaching message is very clear in telling all the people that the Church has a proper role in influencing the political and economic policies of government since these directly affect human dignity and rights. This implies that the Catholic Church as an independent institution has its own rights to play its own roles in the spirit of contributing to the welfare of the nation during the election period like that of the 2011elections. This is the reason why Peter Henriot in JCTR Reader (2008) states the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that:

The Church has the right to pass moral judgements, even on matters touching the political order, whenever basic personal rights….make such judgements necessary.

This shows that the Catholic Church is free to speak on matters of moral and political nature without any interference from any quarters including politicians.
That is why the Catholic Church leadership distanced itself from the accusations of being politicians and reminded the government that the Church leadership had an important duty of preaching the gospel and offering civic education to the Zambian citizens on the electoral process rather than being politicians. This suggests that the Catholic Church was free to do whatsoever it needed to do because it has the right to perform duties that touch on political order and basic human rights. Similarly, the findings of this current study are consistent with this study’s theoretical framework in that Audi (1989) asserts that, *the theory of separation of Church and State* does not require, nor do any sound principles demand, that churches should not take moral positions, even if there is political controversy about them. Audi (1989) further asserts that although some people feel that the Church should be neutral in politics, this principle of political neutrality would not, however, prevent churches from encouraging their members’ participation in politics; and it certainly does not restrict political participation by religious citizens, or imply that they should not consider such participation an aspect of their religious commitments. Thus, in 2011 the Catholic Church encouraged Church members and the public to participate and exercise their rights to vote.

Apart from encouraging its members and the public in participating and exercising their rights to vote, the Catholic Church had also an interest and duty in encouraging the public and private media houses to practice fairness in their reporting and coverage of all political players during rallies in 2011 and other political functions in order to level the political playing field for all stakeholders.

Fr Mpasa, the Vicar General for Mansa Diocese asserted that the Catholic Church got involved in the 2011 elections because it played the role of a mediator between the Government and opposition political parties who were estranged by politics of insults. The Church took a stand to mediate and help in reducing tension between the Government and the general public in order to avoid civil unrest in the nation. Fr Mpasa further observed that due to economic hardships experienced by people at that time, a lot of Zambian citizens desired a change of Government through the conduct of a free and fair democratic election. For instance, some politicians like Mr Michael Chilufya Sata would openly call for the MMD regime change by making statements like, “This regime change agenda is irreversible… one thing that is obvious is that the Zambian people have made up their minds that this is it with the MMD,” (Chellah, 2010). Such calls for regime change were supported by other citizens
like Fr Frank Bwalya, the Executive Director for Change Life Zambia who introduced the “red card campaign” strategy and flashed red cards against the leadership of the MMD everywhere he went with his supporters in Zambia (Phiri, 2010). This citizens’ desire for regime change was as result of economic hardships created by high poverty levels of about 60 per cent in urban areas and about 80 per cent in the rural areas of Zambia (Moyo, 2012). So, mediation was the only option left for the Church to avert the problem of civil disorientation. Metz in Komonchak (1990:773) emphasises the importance of mediation in accordance with the Catholic Church’s political theology when he states that:

Sometimes the Catholic Church employs political theology to resolve disorders in society by seeking to develop mediations of the Christian faith which will transform societies and cultures by healing the ravages of the widespread social injustice and creating genuine good social order.

Komonchak’s (1990) emphasis on mediation by the Church is in tandem with the conceptual framework of this study in that it declares that when the Catholic Church considers the long outstanding Church-State relationship that has existed for many years in Zambia, it becomes imperative for the Church not to ignore the many social, economic and political events taking place in the country. It further points out that the Church cannot afford to ignore social issues affecting the poor, aged, orphans, and the vulnerable groups in general.

This is the reason why in the 2011 elections, the Church could not remain mute but to take necessary steps to participate with other stakeholders in providing some solutions to the social, economic and political ills that had affected the citizenry in the country. This means that the Catholic Church’s employment of its political theology in the resolving of the civil disorientation through mediation in 2011 was justified because the Church averted civil disobedience which could have been costly to the nation.

5.3 The task of the Catholic Church leaders/Bishops before the 2011 elections

An investigation into the task of the Catholic Church leaders/Bishops before the 2011 elections showed that they were responsible for organising public sensitisation meetings in different parts of Zambia on various issues related to the elections. For instance, an interview conducted with the Programme Manager for Faith and Justice Programme at the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) offices in Lusaka, stated that:
JCTR held different public fora to stress the importance of the elections and to highlight the qualities of a good leader. The electorate was sensitised on the need to participate and vote in an election as this was their birth right as Zambian citizens. The electorate was also tasked to choose leaders whose priority was servant hood to the people, especially to the poor. The leaders/Bishops were also preoccupied with the task of educating the electorate about the need to avoid vices like corruption, vote buying, intimidation, violence, among others, in the elections they were going to be involved in September, 2011. Adherence to all these would bring about a peaceful, free and fair election result.

This task for the Catholic Church leaders/bishops in Zambia is similar to that of the work of the Catholic Church leaders in Kenya where citizens were sensitised to maintain peace in the 2013 electoral process (Nyabate, 2013). The action that was taken by the Catholic Church in Kenya and in Zambia in sensitising the citizens to maintain peace during the elections was basically driven by the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church under the principle of the common good which seeks the comfort of the human person in terms of respect and protection of human rights (Hume, 1996). This implies that the Catholic Church’s main focus in the sensitisation programmes of the citizens before the elections was meant to bring about the common good that would promote human rights and the general welfare of the people.

This is the reason why the JCTR officer said that the Catholic Church’s sensitisation campaigns during 2011 elections placed a lot of emphasis on the principle of human dignity. This shows that the dignity of the human person was to be respected and protected from violence because he is made in the image of God. ‘As such, during elections, a violation of any person’s rights, especially the poor was not tolerated in society,’ JCTR Programme Officer stressed. So, the major task of the Catholic leaders/Bishops during the 2011 elections was to sensitise the electorate on the need to participate and exercise their right to vote as their birth right, to avoid vices like corruption, vote buying, violence, among others. It is evident here that the major concern for the Catholic Church in sensitising the citizens was to promote and protect human rights and avoid vices like corruption, violence, among others, in the nation. The purpose of adhering to all these issues by the electorate was to translate into a peaceful, free and fair election result that would please all stakeholders in the 2011 electoral process.
5.4 The role of Caritas Zambia in the 2011 elections

The role of Caritas Zambia in the 2011 elections cannot be over emphasised. The findings indicated that for the Catholic Church to effectively play its role in the 2011 elections it had to mandate and employ the services of Caritas Zambia under the auspices of the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) Secretariat which is located at Kapingila House in Kabulonga area in Lusaka. Findings from three officials, including the Manager for Caritas Zambia explained in detail how Caritas Zambia performed its duties before, during and after the 2011 elections. In spelling out its role, Ms Milimo Mwiba, the Manager for Caritas Zambia said that Caritas Zambia as one of the seven departments in the Catholic Secretariat under the ZEC was tasked by the Catholic Church to promote and protect human dignity and sustainable development for the people of God especially the less privileged in the society. Through its civic education strategy, Caritas Zambia promoted various civic awareness initiatives to encourage the electorate to exercise their rights to vote in the 2011 election. This shows that the Catholic Church values the promotion of basic human rights. This makes people to be aware of their responsibilities as citizens and causes them to participate in the democratic processes like voting in an election.

The Catholic Church tasked Caritas Zambia to have an oversight on the elections because Caritas Zambia’s rationale for electoral oversight is premised on its Governance and Human Rights Programme (GHRP). It is this GHRP which seeks to empower communities to participate and contribute to the governance processes and enable communities to claim their rights. This programme comprises sub-programmes of Human Rights and Access to Justice, Democracy and Local Governance, Parliamentary Liaison and Justice and Peace Formation. It is this empowerment of the communities which underscores the importance of this programme and its quest to participate in the Zambian electoral process as was the case in the 2011 tripartite elections (CSEC, 2011). This suggests that the Catholic Church could not take up and execute the duty of the electoral oversight without the input of the department of Caritas Zambia under the ZEC Secretariat.

This input by Caritas Zambia in the Zambian electoral process in the 2011 elections is similar to the study of Demichelis (2013) of Mali who observed that the Catholic Church through Caritas Mali made important contributions to the presidential elections that were held in 2012 in that country. Caritas Mali did not only send observers to monitor Mali’s elections but also
promoted the conduct of a series of meetings and debates among the various political leaders prior to the election date. It also promoted various civic awareness initiatives to encourage the electorate to exercise their right to vote similar to the civic education conducted in Zambia by Caritas Zambia. Such mammoth tasks carried out by Caritas Mali and Caritas Zambia during crucial elections speak volumes of how vital the department is in the Catholic Secretariats in Africa and the world over.

Caritas Zambia did not only conduct civic education in 2011 but its mandate given to them by the Catholic Church included the training of 10 850 monitors who would then monitor the elections countrywide under the auspices of the ZEC Secretariat. The roles of training monitors and monitoring of elections by Caritas Zambia were intended to enable the Catholic Church to present to the nation a well monitored, free, fair and credible election result that would be accepted by all stakeholders. For the Catholic Church, such technically monitored elections would eventually promote social justice in the nation. Caritas Zambia was also mandated with the task of sensitising the Catholic Church members and the general public with the view of giving them the right information on different pertinent issues on the entire electoral process. The other task for Caritas Zambia was to raise awareness on the human rights, such as, the right to vote (franchise). It also called upon all political parties to provide a platform for their candidates to share their visions with the electorate and show cause why they would be voted into office on the polling day.

Evidently, Caritas Zambia played all these roles in order to contribute to the successful holding of the 2011 election which would create harmony in the country. The sensitising of Catholic Church members and the general public was meant to equip people with the right information about the electoral process. Unfortunately, not all Zambians got sensitised by the Catholic Church because time was not enough for the Church to go round the whole country. This situation deprived some voters of vital information that was needed for their use in the 2011 elections. The good intentions of the Church could not be fulfilled because of this time factor. All these efforts made by the Church implies that the Catholic Church attaches great importance to the citizens’ civic education on issues that matter in enhancing democracy in the country. This is so, because elections are regarded as democracy at work. Elections are democracy at work because they enhance people’s participatory democracy, especially the right to vote for the candidate of one’s own choice rather than imposing such candidates on
the electorate. For example, during an election citizens can assess the performance of their representatives and choose to re-elect them or elect new ones. This means that elections form the basis for recruiting political leaders; making government accountable; providing representation at different levels of governance; contributing to building a sense of responsibility among political leaders; granting legitimacy to the elected leaders; influencing policy changes and formulation; educating voters on social, political and economic readjustments (CSEC, 2011). This was what the Catholic Church through Caritas Zambia was trying to achieve in 2011.

All these issues imply that the Catholic Church’s main objective in participating in that election was to enhance the promotion of human dignity through programmes that endeavour to uplift the poor and marginalised from their situation and confronting structures that deprive and oppress the weak in society. An election enables people to vote for the leaders of their own choice who in turn take care of the needs of the people once elected into office. It appears like by mandating Caritas Zambia to carry out tasks like civic education, training monitors and monitoring of elections, the Catholic Church’s desire was to promote human dignity, transparency and ensure that credibility returned to the entire electoral process in Zambia.

Caritas Zambia’s activities in 2011 were similar to what 153 Caritas Mali observers did during elections in Mali. They were also mandated by the Catholic Church in collaboration with other stakeholders in Mali to monitor the elections and secure a credible and peaceful election in Mali. The 153 observers performed their tasks prudently and secured a peaceful election and government transition amidst fears of attacks from the opposition Muslim militants (Demichiles, 2013). The International Community was pleased with the work of Caritas Mali and its allies just like stakeholders in Zambia applauded the work of Caritas Zambia on their accomplished work in the 2011 elections. The involvement of the Catholic Church in politics, particularly in elections, highlights the impact of the Catholic Church’s political theology that is employed in mediations to resolve political issues in many countries in the world. Metz in Komonchak (1990) agrees with this assertion that sometimes the Catholic Church employs political theology to resolve disorders in society by seeking to develop mediations of the Christian faith which will transform societies and cultures by healing the ravages of the wide spread social injustice and creating genuine good social order.
in communities. This assertion also agrees with the conceptual framework of this study which asserts that, ‘the Church cannot afford to ignore social issues affecting the poor, aged, orphans, and the vulnerable groups in general.’ It further asserts that the Church should advocate for peace and justice, promote human rights and provide checks and balances on governance issues in a given country.

It goes without saying that, most of the mediations done by the Catholic Church in different countries of the world have to a large extent been successful. For instance, the Catholic Church in collaboration with other stakeholders have in the past few years achieved free, fair, peaceful and credible election results in Mali, Ghana, Kenya, among others(Nyabate, 2013, Demichelis, 2013, ZEC, 2011). This shows that there is power in the unity of purpose among civil society organisations who choose to work together not only during elections.

Similarly, in order to effectively carry out its mandate of monitoring the 2011 elections, the Catholic Church in Zambia, through Caritas Zambia, sought to collaborate with other social partners. The collaboration was meant for the Catholic Church to become better linked and coordinated, consolidate its strengths, strengthen its interventions, promote cost efficiency in the utilisation of resources and help to enhance efficiency in relationships with other stakeholders like Anti-Voter Apathy Project (AVAP), Foundation for Democratic Process (FODEP), Operation Young Vote (OYV), among others. These, together with Caritas Zambia, formed an alliance which was called Civil Society Elections Coalition (CSEC, 2011). The alliance was largely premised on the idea of speaking with one “loud voice” on issues concerning the elections and as a way of contributing to the consolidation of democracy in Zambia. The fact that the Catholic Church chose to work with other partners in the 2011 elections shows that the Church values unity of purpose in association with other social institutions. This agrees with one of the ten principles of the Catholic Social Teaching which states that, “Human beings are social; therefore they grow and achieve fulfilment by association with others in families and other social institutions” (Catholic Education Office, 2012).

In trying to show oneness or unity of purpose concerning the reason for collaboration in the 2011 elections, one AVAP member in Lusaka said that they chose to form a coalition in order to speak with one ‘loud voice’ on the electoral process in the 2011 tripartite elections. This implies that for the civil society organisations, it was a time to consolidate democracy in
unity through collaboration. The democracy in unity yielded positive results for the coalition and the nation. This is because the elections that were monitored by the coalition through Rapid Response Project (RRP) were accepted by all stakeholders as a true reflection of the will of the people in Zambia.

The general peaceful acceptance of the election results by most stakeholders suggests that Caritas Zambia and its allies diligently used the RRP in transmitting electoral results to the totalling centres in Lusaka. Although the government rejected the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) system, the RRP system was used on similar principles with PVT and the system favoured neither the opposition nor the ruling party. It also suggests that the system used by the alliance allayed fears from the MMD government that the system was going to favour the opposition political parties. This in itself suggests that RRP was a transparent and effective system of transmitting election results from the different polling stations. Being an effective system, RRP cut off corrupt practices in the transmission of results to the national totalling centres in Lusaka. This means that the fears of government over the RRP system were unfounded.

The Church’s mandate to Caritas Zambia is best exemplified by the views of Mr Samuel Mulafulafu, one of the workers at Caritas Zambia National Office. He observed that Caritas Zambia to conduct civic education and sensitise citizens on the dangers of corruption, vote buying, violence and to equip them with the right information on the entire electoral process.

The Church’s mandate to Caritas Zambia shows that the Catholic Church is not in favour of vices such as corruption, vote buying and violence during elections. This attitude is one way of promoting, maintaining peace and tranquillity in the nation. The findings also showed that the Catholic Church had also mandated Caritas Zambia to take care of the need to engage the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) on the process of conducting elections in the country. This illustrates that the Catholic Church recognises the importance of elections as an aspect of expressing representative democracy as provided for by the constitution of Zambia. The need to engage the ECZ in the electoral process highlights the fact that the Catholic Church desires to see transparency being exhibited by the Electoral Commission of Zambia in the entire electoral process.
The Catholic Church also mandated Caritas Zambia to monitor the 2011 elections and to continue to remind the government of its campaign promises made to the people of Zambia as a way of showing continuity in providing checks and balances to the government. This would strengthen democracy in Zambia. Caritas Zambia was also involved in the 2011 elections to provide voter education to the Zambian citizens and continue to do beyond the 2011 elections. This is because voter education, which is part of civic education, helps citizens to contribute to a sound democratic society by providing voters with knowledge and information on their rights and responsibilities concerning the electoral process. This is done because voter information is essential for the successful holding of elections.

Caritas Zambia also collaborated with other civil society organisations in the 2011 elections. The whole essence of such an engagement was a decision made to fulfil one of the ten principles of the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church which seeks to promote peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. Pope John Paul II states the following:

> Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements. There is a close relationship in Catholic teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings (Nichols, V. 2012).

The words of Pope John Paul II provides the basis for the Catholic Church to collaborate with other stakeholders in its quest to diligently monitor and present a free and fair 2011 election result. The working together with other civil society organisations underscores the fact that the Catholic Church exercises mutual respect and confidence for other people. This attitude creates understanding and brings about peace among people. This peace and understanding were demonstrated before, during and after the 2011 elections among the Zambian people who accepted the 2011 election results without reservations.

5.5 The influence of the Catholic Bishops’ Pastoral Letters on the electorate prior to the 2011 elections

Based on the findings, it is evident that the Catholic Church Bishops have for a long time used the Pastoral Letters to interact with people on various issues. Cardinal Adam Kozlowiecki in Komakoma (2003: vi) states that,

> As Church leaders we have always to speak out for human rights, for the rights of the people….we are still speaking out today….We have always spoken on behalf of the
people. This is the essence of the pastoral letters the Bishops have been writing since 1953!

Looking at the above assertion, it can be deduced that the interaction between Bishops and people through Pastoral Letters on different fronts has been in force for many past decades and has continued to date. This suggests that the influence and impact of these Pastoral Letters on the people who read them cannot be underestimated. It is for this reason that the Catholic Church Bishops in Zambia extensively employed the services of the Pastoral Letters to interact with the Zambian citizens on the electoral process in the run up to the 2011 elections. For instance, Fr Mpasa, the Vicar General for Mansa Diocese stressed that, “the Bishops used Pastoral Letters as tools for information dissemination to the Catholic Church members and the general citizenry on the electoral process in 2011.” This implies that Letters informed and equipped the electorate with the right information about the electoral process before, during and after the polling day. As a result, Letters helped to create confidence among the electorate during the polling day because to a larger extent, each electorate knew exactly what to do when he or she entered the booth to cast the vote. The letters also educated the electorate on how to behave in the face of provocation. Apart from being tools for information dissemination, the Pastoral Letters were also used for highlighting the dangers of vices such as corruption, bribery, violence, vote buying, among others.

With such findings, it can be deduced that the Pastoral Letters highly contributed to the non-violent behaviour exhibited by the Zambians after the announcement of the final election results by the Electoral Commission of Zambia. What was widely noted in the country by monitors, observer missions, ordinary Zambians and those abroad was nothing but jubilation among all Zambians as a reflection on the commitment to non-violent behaviour and to the peace that has been enjoyed in the country over the past decades.

The significant role of the Pastoral Letters was also echoed by Fr Cleophas Lungu, the Zambia Episcopal Conference Secretary General who observed that the Bishops used the Pastoral Letters to appraise the nation by taking stock of events leading to the elections and to prepare the nation socially, economically and politically. This in itself implies that the Pastoral Letters prepared people’s mind sets before the polling day as the letters enabled them to make informed decisions and better choices in the elections. Socially, people interacted, formed opinions on different issues including elections making them to vote from an informed mind. Economically, people prepared their physical needs before they could go for
voting, especially those who had relocated to other towns or places other than the places of registration. Politically, people had made up their minds concerning which of the politicians they were going to vote for, long before the polling day. This was because the Letters provided a unique message to the Catholic Church members and the entire nation as a guiding principle on how they would proceed in the September 2011 elections, though no politician names were highlighted to be voted for in the Pastoral Letters. However, the Pastoral Letters sensitised the public on the qualities of a good leader. In addition, the Bishops’ Pastoral letters played the role of sensitising the Church members and other citizens on how to analyse issues and to vote wisely. The sensitisation of voters by Pastoral Letters helped the voters to cast their votes wisely because guidance on how to go about was freely provided for them in the Letters. All these issues that were raised by the Bishops’ Pastoral Letters had an influence on the minds of the electorate during the period of voting as each voter had been equipped with the right information on the electoral process.

The discussion with the ZEC Secretary General revealed that the other use of the Pastoral Letters was to highlight to the public the need for electoral reforms and the effect of the high rate of corruption in Zambia. Corruption is a cancer which if left unchecked, affects the moral fibre of society. This was the scenario in Zambia, such that by 2011 citizens had lost faith in the electoral process of the country. There was a lot of corruption going on among politicians and in the civil service. A good example of such a case, was the embezzlement of government funds by Mr Henry Kapoko in the Ministry of Health (Phiri, 2010). The corruption among politicians was evidenced by a high number of nullified seats of the Members of Parliament in constituencies like Solwezi Central, Mulobezi, Petauke, Senga Hills, among others. All such seats were nullified by the courts of law after petitions were raised by opposition political party candidates. One vivid example of such corruption, was the case of Rufusa MP and former MMD Sports Minister, Kenneth Chipungu, who was pursued and cautioned by police over the theft and misuse of K25 million (Mukwasa, B., & Phiri, C., 2011). Another example of corruption in the 2011 elections involved the MMD Masaiti MP, Mr Michael Katambo whose election was nullified by the Ndola High Court. He later appealed to the Supreme Court, but his case of appeal was thrown out by the Supreme Court and upheld the earlier Ndola High Court ruling (Chanda, 2015). All these cases of corruption and lack of electoral reforms suggest that there was a breakdown of law and order in the country. The situation had become unbearable by the citizens. The powers that be had
lost grip on the governance of the nation. Thus, the Bishops highly utilised the Pastoral Letters to highlight such inadequacies and vices to alert the Church members and the general public about such vices in the nation (ZEC, 2011).

Apart from the rampant corruption cases, there was unprecedented poverty levels in the nation prior to the 2011 elections. As such, there was great need to improve the quality of life for the majority of Zambians. For instance, available information from JCTR Policy Brief-Third Quarter (2011) indicated that poverty levels were as high as 64per cent in urban areas and for those extremely poor in the rural areas was at 80per cent. Such a scenario of high poverty levels in the country eventually undermined the integrity of the government that was in power. The Letters highlighted some of these governance issues as a critique on how these had affected the Zambian people. Poverty is one of the developmental issues that had affected the quality of life in Zambia by 2011 with the rural areas being the worst hit.

This is similar to what Ross (1990) in Gifford (1995) acknowledges as an impact of the Pastoral Letters in the Catholic Church when he refers to the Pastoral Letter of 1992 which was written by the Bishops of Malawi as a critique on the Malawian Government over its political and social administration on the poor in Malawi. In their Letter (Gifford, 1995), the Bishops appealed for a more just distribution of the nation’s wealth which had created a growing gap between the rich and the poor in society leaving the poor under circumstances which were hardly compatible with their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Although the critique of the Letters was not on elections in Malawi, the Bishops observed that the life of the poor in Malawi was a struggle for survival while at the same time a minority enjoyed the fruit of development and could afford to live in luxury and wealth (Gifford, 1995). As such, there was need for justice to prevail and improve the quality of life for the people of Malawi. This demand made in the Malawian Pastoral Letters over the poor was similar to the demand made by bishops in the Zambian Pastoral Letters because both demands bordered on the improvement of the quality of life for the ordinary people in both countries. So, the impact of the Pastoral Letters in the 2011 elections cannot be underrated. It should be noted that the courage to speak out by the Catholic Church on issues affecting the poor has not only been done in Zambia and Malawi, but the world over. The motivation for the Catholic Church to have such courage to speak out on such issues is derived from its Social Teaching and political theology (Komonchak, 1990).
This means that the use of Pastoral Letters by Bishops to sensitise, educate and influence people on the electoral process in the 2011 elections in Zambia was justified in the sense that the Church was motivated by its political theology that encourages the Church to participate and mediate on how to resolve disorders in communities (Komonchack, 1990). The Catholic Bishops in Malawi and Zambia were also motivated by the principle of ‘preferential protection for the poor and vulnerable’ as taught by the Catholic Social Teaching which reiterates the Gospels’ call onto the needs of the poor. By this principle, the Catholic Social Teaching exemplifies the teaching of the Gospels’ as follows: “The Gospels call on us to place the needs of the poor and vulnerable first, so that their needs as well as the common good may be realised.” (Hume, 1996, Catholic Education Office, 2012). This principle places a heavy responsibility on the Catholic Church as it strives to meet the needs of the poor and the vulnerable world-wide. This is why the Catholic Church has been involved in the electoral processes in Zambia and other countries in the world in order to fulfil the demands of its political theology and the Catholic Social Teaching.

5.6 The views of politicians about the Catholic Church’s involvement in 2011 elections

As stated in the findings, the researcher visited the New Government Complex in Kamwala in Lusaka where a good number of Government Ministries were located to conduct interviews. The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services, Honourable Poninso Njeulu was interviewed in connection with the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections. He pointed out that, the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections prevented the then ruling party from rigging the elections. His argument was that if the MMD was not prevented from rigging elections, it could have been detrimental to the future of democracy in Zambia. He further argued that if the Catholic Church was not involved in the elections there would have been a maladministration of the electoral process and the country would have experienced a civil war because Zambians wanted a change of Government. Meaning that rigging elections would have bred chaos in the nation. It is interesting to note that although Honourable Njeulu was interviewed as Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting Service’s, he was not a member of the PF but UPND. He had just been appointed to the post by the Republican President in a bid to woo support from the opposition political parties in Zambia. Looks like his argument came in, in the wake of just wanting to keep his job and may be to simply express his opinion on
the subject matter. For example, he accused the MMD government of wanting to rig the elections without any concrete proof of such a vice. Seems like it was mere politicking.

A losing United Party for National Development (UPND) ward councillor in Mansa was interviewed concerning the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections. In his response, he praised the Catholic Church for getting involved in the elections because the Church provided the checks and balances to the ruling party on a number of governance issues. It is true that the provision of checks and balances to the MMD government was vital at the time. Yet, the politicians from the MMD were saddened because as time drew near to the polling day, there was fear and uncertainties in the minds of those politicians in the ruling party due to the perceived loss of power. The Catholic clergy made a lot of statements against the MMD officials that made them scared due to dubious activities like corruption that they were involved in during their tenure of office.

Mr Kuchunga Simusamba, the Deputy Secretary General for the United Party for National Development (UPND) was interviewed at the party’s Head Office in Lusaka with regard to the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections. Mr Simusamba indicated that as a party they had no objections to the Church’s role in the 2011 elections because by monitoring those crucial elections, the Church contributed to the social, economic and political developments in Zambia. He, however, noted that some grey areas emerged in the course of executing their duties. According to the UPND Deputy Secretary General, the Catholic Church played a double standard role by being monitors and wishing to be candidates as MPs in the same elections they were meant to monitor.

As such, they openly campaigned for the PF, the party that had sponsored them. Although, the Catholic Church was accused of being partisan, it is easy to argue that, whoever chose to stand as an MP or Councillor from the Catholic Church, such a person was merely exercising his or her democratic right to freely participate in the democratic process in Zambia. Exercising a democratic right does not necessarily mean playing double standards. This agrees with the study of Chaponda (1999:32) who states, “The Church is right to be involved in socio-political issues because this mission stems from its Founder's mission to uplift the plight of his suffering people.” It is through the citizens’ participation in the socio-political issues that the Founder’s mission of the Church shall uplift the plight of the suffering people. So, politics should not be shunned by Christians, neither should Christians be condemned for
participating in the socio-political issues like what some Catholic Church members chose to do in the 2011 tripartite elections.

On a positive note, the UPND Deputy Secretary General commended the Catholic Church for highlighting a number of electoral issues that needed the attention of President Banda’s government in 2011. For instance, the Catholic Church spoke consistently on issues of the constitution and the desire to see the date of elections inscribed in the constitution. Other issues that the Catholic Church was commended for, included; its desire to bring on board the introduction of an electoral reform process and for allowing different political parties to use its radio stations set up in different parts of the nation without discrimination during the politicians’ campaign trails. The issues for which the Catholic Church was commended show that this Church is committed to seeing to it that issues to do with governance are well dealt with if democracy has to flourish and be strengthened in Zambia. According to the UPND Deputy Secretary General, the Catholic Church’s involvement in the elections deserves even more commendation. For example, the Church, acting as a watchdog, prevented the country from bloodshed because at that time many Zambians wanted a change of Government. As such, a change of such magnitude needed close monitoring. Surely, Zambia being an oasis of peace in Southern Africa, could not afford to opt for bloodshed in the 2011 elections. In safe guarding such interests, the Catholic Church acted swiftly to avert any looming danger by engaging stakeholders in dialogue, mediating in such talks and actively being involved in the monitoring of the elections. These undertakings based on the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church paid off, as peace prevailed in the whole country; before, during and after the conduct of the 2011 elections.

Davies (1996:21) agrees with the Catholic Church’s involvement in the political processes based on its Social Teaching, when he says:

The principles of social teaching cross party political boundaries and Catholics may, in good conscience, form different opinions on the candidates and parties standing for election….The good of the individual and the good of society as a whole must be brought together in harmony. When they are, we have the common good. Catholic tradition holds that the common good is underpinned by the promotion and protection of human dignity. Implicit in seeking the common good is the desire to serve the poor, the marginalised, the sick and the forgotten in our community. As Catholics, we need to take our democratic freedoms seriously and become involved in the political process. This might mean joining a political party or even standing for election. We should all take the opportunity to meet with local candidates and make our concerns
known. We offer strong encouragement to the many Catholic people who are already engaged in political life at various levels.

In accordance with the observations above, one can say that, the whole issue of the Catholic Church getting involved in the 2011 electoral process was meant to promote the common good for the community as the promotion of human dignity by the Church was at the centre stage in the 2011 elections. This implies that the Catholic Church meant well to get involved in the elections because it was one way of the Church taking the democratic freedoms seriously and making a difference in the political processes in the country.

5.7 The views of non-Catholic Church members about the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections

The final research question was about the views of non-Catholic Church members concerning the involvement of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections. Some of the findings indicated that the Catholic Church was justified in getting involved in the electoral process in 2011 while others were at variance because there were few respondents whose views were not wholly in favour of the idea of the Catholic Church getting involved.

In pursuit of this variance, one Baptist Pastor, who is also the Principal of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Zambia located along Twin Palm Road in Kabulonga area, in Lusaka was interviewed. As stated in the findings, when asked to shed light on whether the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections was justified, the Principal said that it was justifiable for the Catholic Church to do so. He argued that the action of the Church was justifiable because the stance and direction of the Government on several governance issues such as: corruption, nepotism, bribery, violence, among others, had at that time gone out of control in the nation. “How could such happen?” he wondered. “Law and order were neglected. It was free for all. Most government systems had become moribund,” he stated. It is evident that at that time, government had lost grip on governance issues. This means that the country had indeed lost direction on many critical matters. As such, there was need for an intervention of some sort. Though it is not obvious, the Church in general, being the conscience and prophetic voice of the nation needed to intervene. Thus, the Catholic Church seized the opportunity and spoke fearlessly against the rampant vices of corruption, nepotism, bribery, to mention but a few. The Catholic Church’s resolve to speak fearlessly about the
stated vices was in contrast with some of the non-Catholic Churches who had become compromised in many ways.

Under normal circumstances, when one is not compromised, and when things are not right, there is need to speak out. This is exactly what the Catholic Church did in 2011. When non-Catholic Churches were quiet on issues of governance, the Catholic Church seized the opportunity and spoke fearlessly against vices like corruption, bribery, violence, among others. The Catholic Church at that critical moment spoke against what was not right in society. This fits well with what Searson (1991) points out in JCTR (2008:7) and states that, Church should “be involved in life,” which implies that, “the Church is pointing out the values of Christianity and challenging the disvalues of society.” This suggests that the Church should be like a mirror of the society. It should reflect the values of Christianity in order to challenge the disvalues like corruption in the society. It goes without saying that the Catholic Church got involved in the 2011 elections for the purpose of challenging the disvalues of society that had emerged in the governance of the country. There was need for sanity to return into the area of governance for the country’s progress.

In contrast to the above sentiments, a Pastor of the Apostolic Church in Mansa argued that the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections was done in partnership with a political party whose presidential candidate was a confirmed Catholic Church member. He stressed, ‘The Catholic Church was an interested party in the 2011 tripartite general elections.’ Arguably, if the Catholic Church was in partnership with the Patriotic Front, was it the Catholics only who voted for the PF candidate to win the elections? How come that Pentecostals did not vote for Dr Nevers Mumba or Dr Danny Pule to win the elections since these are confirmed members of the Pentecostal Churches in Zambia?

The Pastor further argued that as a result, the Catholic Church at that time was failing to speak against the short comings of the PF due to the partisan stance it had taken during campaigns. He also cited some irregularities such as the Constitution making process which he claimed had been hijacked by the Catholics. For instance, Father Frank Bwalya had been appointed as Chairperson for ZESCO Board and Mpika Guest House had been donated to the Catholic Church by the Republican President. He insisted that all such irregularities had resurfaced owing to the partisan stance of the Catholic Church. He further observed that it
was a clear demonstration of how partisan the Catholic Church had become and how vulnerable it was to the manipulation of the sitting government.

Some of the arguments advanced by the Pastor could be true while others could not be true, in that some of them lacked merit because they could not be substantiated. Seemingly, an appointment of people like Fr Bwalya to the post of Chairperson for ZESCO Board, was not just an ordinary appointment but a reward for his campaign efforts. However, that alone does not suggest that all Catholics in Zambia were partisan. To the contrary, Fr Frank Bwalya was simply an individual priest who had personal persuasions and convictions that made him to do what he did during the election year. It is not surprising that he later quit his position and formed his own party. Why was he not questioned when he called it quit? Nonetheless, each person is entitled to his or her own opinion.

Another non-Catholic member who was interviewed as stated in the findings was Rev. Pukuta Mwanza, the Executive Director for the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ). As earlier indicated in the findings, the researcher visited the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia Head Office which is located along Kamloops Road in Lusaka where the Executive Director was interviewed. In his response on the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections, the EFZ Executive Director said that the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections was two-fold. Firstly, the Catholic Church clearly showed that it had taken a partisan stance because some clergy men from the Catholic Church openly campaigned for the Patriotic Front (PF). He gave an example of Fr Frank Bwalya as one of the priests in the Catholic Church who went round the country with the Patriotic Front president to campaign with and for him. This view from the Director exposes what might be termed as “lack of knowledge” on how the Catholic Church operates. The Catholic Church operates through elected leaders at every level of governance beginning with the small Christian communities at the grassroots to the national level forming an Episcopal Conference (EC) (Samasumo, 2010). The EC comprises Bishops drawn from Dioceses. This group of Bishops elects one Bishop who becomes the president and the spokesperson for the entire Catholic Church. In Zambia the group of Bishops at national level is called Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) (Samasumo, 2010). ZEC runs a Secretariat which is headed by the Secretary General. Every official communication for the Church is done by the elected president. If this channel of communication is abrogated by any person by making any statement, such a statement is
regarded as personal opinion and not the official position of the Catholic Church and is rejected forthwith by all (Samasumo, 2010).

This is similar to what happened to Fr Bwalya when he went with the PF president to campaign and/or sometimes organised rallies to campaign on behalf of the PF party before the elections. In all these political activities, there was an abrogation of some sort. Fr Bwalya was all by himself without any formal support from the Catholic Church. There has been no evidence to show that ZEC had a hand in Fr Bwalya’s political manoeuvres, later on in the formation of his political party. According to the ZEC Secretary General, Fr Cleophas Lungu, that was simply one priest who decided to take up that challenge to campaign for the PF not the entire Catholic Church. The ZEC Secretary General observed that,

Under such isolated circumstances, the Catholic Church cannot be accused of campaigning for the PF because that was simply a lone and personal democratic right decision of a member of the Catholic Church which can be taken up by any Zambian citizen.

This suggests that it is somewhat naïve to think that the Catholic Church took a partisan stance in the elections forgetting that its core business was to monitor the 2011 elections. As such, a wholesome condemnation or inclusiveness of the entire Catholic Church might be unfair. One should simply single out one priest and talk about his political ambitions and leave out the rest. The fact that one priest was seen campaigning for the PF does not necessarily mean that the whole Catholic Church openly campaigned for the PF. The issue of being partisan should not arise, but only puts Fr Bwalya in the limelight as the one who publicly campaigned for the PF and its presidential candidate Mr. Michael Chilufya Sata. Evidently, it can be argued that it was an individual priest and not the entire Catholic Church that was partisan, because there was no official position of any statement made by the Church president in support of Fr Bwalya. All what Fr Bwalya did and said in 2011 were personal deeds and opinions and subject to rejection by the Catholic Church.

As for the PF president, being accused of campaigning in the Catholic Churches, the ZEC Secretary General observed that no one could chase away a member of the Church who would attend Church service on a Sunday simply because he or she was a politician. Such an action would contravene the ‘principle of association’ of the Catholic Church Social Teaching which says, ‘human beings are social; therefore they grow and achieve fulfilment by association with others in families and other social institutions’ (Hume, 1996). It is evident
that the PF president did not go to any Church to hold campaign rallies during mass, but went to Church to worship God as a confirmed Catholic Church member and as according to his usual practice of Church attendance. It would be sad for him to miss a Church service simply because he was away from Lusaka where his congregation was, but as a social being, he would find fulfilment in having the freedom to associate with other Christians anywhere and in any congregation in Zambia. There is no law that forbids such associations of people in Zambia. It would be unfair to discriminate against the PF president on the basis of him being a politician.

Secondly, the EFZ Executive Director observed that although some known Catholic Church members were seen to be partisan, in general the said Church exhibited a non-partisan collaborative approach in dealing with the issue of evil vices like corruption, violence, among others, in the society. With this approach, the Catholic Church’s sole purpose was to mobilise members from other Churches and civil society to join hands in order to fight the evils of corruption, violence, tribalism, nepotism, among other things, in the nation. This action encouraged even those from the other Church mother bodies to join hands and work together with the Catholic Church to find a solution to the problem of political violence that had rocked the country during the bye-elections, especially that of Mufumbwe Constituency where there was bloodshed. As a result, the coming together of the three Church mother bodies in 2011 witnessed the formulation of a joint Pastoral Statement on the 2011 tripartite elections entitled *A Call to Vote in Peace, Truth and Justice*. The objective of the Church mother bodies was to call upon all Zambians to avoid violence and vote in peace, truth and allow justice to prevail before, during and after the 2011 elections (ZEC, 2011). This agrees with the principle of “association” of the Catholic Social Teaching which states that, “Human beings are social; therefore they grow and achieve fulfilment by association with others in families and other social institutions,”(Hume, 1996). This principle suggests that the Catholic Church values peace and team work. Thus, they chose to work together with other social institutions to formulate a Pastoral Letter in 2011 to curb violence and other vices in the nation. A closer examination of issues, shows that the Catholic Church desires to promote peace among people. For example, the principle of ‘promotion of peace and disarmament’ states that:

*Catholic teaching promotes peace as a positive, action-oriented concept. In the words of Pope John Paul II, "Peace is not just the absence of war…. It involves collaboration*
and binding agreements.” There is a close relationship in Catholic teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings, (Nichols, 2012).

So, in trying to meet the demand of the Social Teaching of the Church and promote peace, disarmament and justice in the nation, the Catholic Church chose to collaborate with other stakeholders in curbing violence and bloodshed as was reported in Mufumbwe Constituency of the North Western Province of Zambia. That case of disorder in that part of society needed the efforts of everyone to overcome through collaboration. That was the reason why the Catholic Church sought the services of other Churches and the civil society.

Another respondent, a lay preacher from the United Church of Zambia in Mansa, noted that the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections was justified. He said that it was justified because the Catholic Church tried by all means to enhance the provision of equal opportunities among the political players by engaging politicians in intra and inter-party dialogue. The intra and inter-party dialogue provides opportunities for the aggrieved parties to amicably sort out their differences. Such an initiative by the Catholic Church helped to level the political playing field for both the ruling party and the opposition political parties in Zambia.

The other respondent, a non-Catholic Church member, a resident of Kalingalinga in Lusaka observed that the involvement of the Catholic Church in the 2011 elections was encouraging and good for the nation because the Catholic Church worked very hard in trying to reduce the tension that had existed between the ruling party and the general citizenry due to discontentment that had grown to high levels as a consequence of bad governance in the country. Discontentment can set a nation ablaze if not well handled. Civil wars begin among citizens of nations with simple matters like discontentment if there are no interventions to mitigate a particular crisis. In this case, the Catholic Church acted swiftly to avert a crisis by engaging the stakeholders in dialogue and allowed people to reason together and fined solutions to their problems.

A female student from the Pentecostal Assemblies of God at the University of Zambia noted that the Catholic Church was better placed in its involvement because it was eager to act as mediator and use dialogue as a tool to reduce tension that had existed between government and opposition political parties. The Church was focused on the need to provide civic
education to all citizens on the electoral process in Zambia and to promote human rights by advocating for the right to vote and upholding of human dignity. Mediation is an important approach that is employed by the Catholic Church to settle disputes among people in the communities (Komonchak, 1990). It is not only sorting out disputes but protecting fundamental human rights as well that bring about human decency in communities. This was an important observation because it agrees with the study of Nichols, (2012) on the Catholic Social Teaching which is based on the principle of the ‘rights and responsibilities’ which states that:

Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency—starting with food, shelter and clothing, employment, health care and education. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities - to one another, to our families and to the larger society” (Nichols, 2012).

So, the Catholic Church tried its best by mediating between political parties on one hand, and between government and ordinary citizens on the other hand in order to achieve the protection of human dignity among families and the society at large. In this case, the Catholic Church was interested to see to it that the government performed its duties and met its responsibilities in order to maximise on the promotion of human decency in the country.

5.8 Summary

This chapter of the discussion of findings has analysed the findings based on the research questions of the study with the view of establishing the role of the Catholic Church in the 2011 tripartite elections. The Catholic Church’s major role was that of monitoring the election. The discussion has been framed by the Church’s political theology and Social Teaching. The theoretical framework of separation of Church and State has shed light on the findings in the sense that the Church was not inhibited by the ecumenical sort of cooperation with the state.

The next chapter concludes on the findings of the research and makes recommendations based on the findings.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Overview

This chapter concludes the study and also makes recommendations based on the findings of the study.

6.1 Conclusion

The study’s results show that the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections was multifaceted and shaped by history. The findings revealed that the Church had in the previous elections been only an observer of elections. However, in 2011, the Church changed its strategy from being an observer to being a monitor of elections with other stakeholders.

The findings also indicated that through Caritas Zambia, the Catholic Church initiated the formation of Civil Society Election Coalition (CSEC) and its collaboration with seven other CSEC members in order to monitor elections and speak with one ‘big loud voice’ before, during and after the Electoral Commission of Zambia’s (ECZ) declaration of the 2011 election official results.

The study results further revealed that the Catholic Church also initiated the use of Rapid Response Project (RRP) after the MMD Government rejected the use of the Parallel Vote Tabulation (PVT) during the 2011 elections. The findings also revealed that the Catholic Church played the role of an advocate on the promotion and upholding of peace and justice in the nation through the issuance of Pastoral Letters. The Church also provided checks and balances on governance issues and the promotion of human rights in the nation. The findings also indicated that through Caritas Zambia, the Catholic Church recruited and trained 10,850 election monitors and provided civic education to Catholic Church members and the general public order to sensitise them on their rights and duties as citizens and against the dangers of corruption and its offshoots of bribery, vote buying, violence, among others.

It also emerged from the study that the Catholic Church’s involvement in the 2011 elections was timely in that it provided checks and balances on governance issues under the MMD Government. Results also indicated that the Catholic Church did well in getting involved in
the elections because it helped in the reduction of the election malpractices such as rigging, vote buying, among others.

It was also revealed that the involvement of the Catholic Church in the elections was good in that it served as mediator by using dialogue as a tool to reduce tension that had existed between government and opposition political parties. It was also indicated that it was good in that the Church focussed on the need to provide civic education to all citizens on the electoral process, including the advocacy on the promotion and upholding of human rights in the country.

Above all, what emerged from the study findings was that, although the Catholic Church’s role was multi-faceted in the 2011 elections, its major objective in collaboration with other stakeholders was the delivery to the nation of Zambia a free, fair and credible election result that would be devoid of all election malpractices and meet the aspirations of all Zambian stakeholders.

### 6.2 Recommendations

Arising from the study findings, the following are the recommendations:

1. The Church should continue to play the critical role of advocacy on matters of social, political and economic developments in Zambia; but should avoid being too vocal on matters they lack competence to avoid making alarming statements to the nation.

2. The top leadership of the three Church Mother Bodies comprising priests, bishops, pastors, among others, should continue playing a non-partisan role in the political field.

3. The Church in general should continue to play the critical role of providing checks and balances on matters of governance to any sitting Government with impartiality.

### 6.3 Area for further research

This study was limited to Mansa town in Luapula Province and Lusaka city in Lusaka Province of Zambia. For future research, there is need to broaden the study to other towns and cities in the country.
REFERENCES


John Paul II (1991), *One Hundred Years*, No. 46.


Vatican II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, No.76


**Websites**


APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CATHOLIC BISHOPS

1. How would you describe the role of the Catholic Church involvement in the 2011 elections?

2. What role did the Bishops’ Pastoral letters play before the tripartite elections in 2011?

3. What was the general influence of the Bishops’ Pastoral letters on the electorates in the 2011 elections?

4. Were the bishops justified to do what they did, if so why?

5. How did the bishops and the clergy take the bad comments from the politicians?
APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CARITAS ZAMBIA WORKERS

1. What is Caritas Zambia?

2. The name Caritas Zambia was frequently mentioned before the 2011 elections. What role did Caritas Zambia play in the 2011 polls?

3. What actually did Caritas Zambia do and why?

4. Is Caritas Zambia satisfied with its role in the 2011 polls?

5. After the elections, what is Caritas Zambia doing in relation to politics in the country?
APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CATHOLIC LEADERS/BISHOPS

1. What was the major task of the Catholic Church leaders before the 2011 elections?

2. Why were the Catholic Church leaders, if any, so involved in the 2011 polls?

3. Were there any fears among the church leaders? If ‘Yes’, or ‘No’, why?
APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR POLITICIANS

1. How do you view the Catholic Church’s role in the 2011 elections?

2. What was good about the Catholic Church being involved in the 2011 tripartite elections?

3. Were there any fears among the politicians seeing that the Catholic Church was going to be fully involved in the 2011 polls?

4. How did the politicians take the statements made by the Catholic Church clergy before the 2011 elections?
APPENDIX V: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NON-CATHOLIC CHURCH MEMBERS

1. What is your opinion on the Catholic Church having been involved in the 2011 elections?

2. What is your advice to non-Catholic Church members on getting involved in advocacy on matters of social, economic and political developments in Zambia?

3. Why should people vote in elections?