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## **Jerusalem and Antioch: Inter-state, Intra-church Politics in the Family of God Church in Botswana.**

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### **Abstract**

*Most of the literature on religion and politics in Africa celebrates the role that churches have played in fighting the oppressive yoke of colonialism, in fighting the ills of ethnicity and tribalism and in the process of democratisation in post-colonial Africa. There are, however, few academic works that investigate how churches are affected by secular politics. This article contributes to such an investigation. It does so through a critical examination of the reasons that led to the division of the Family of God church in Botswana. Its argument is that the reasons that led to the division of this church are not only intra-church but also inter-state politics. From a study of the experiences of this church, the article concludes that although the church may have been experiencing internal problems, its division into two groups was also influenced by inter-state politics between Botswana and Zimbabwe.*

### **Introduction**

In December 2003 the leadership of the Family of God church (FOG) from Zimbabwe announced the division of the Botswana branch of the church into two groups. One group remained attached to the Zimbabwean chapter of the church; the other group went independent. No reasons were given by the leadership except mentioning some misunderstandings among the church leadership. This article discusses the possible reasons that led to the division of the church. Based on the reasons given, it also intends to test the hypothesis that both intra-church and inter-state politics contributed to the division of the church.

The title of the article, 'Jerusalem and Antioch,' is taken from accounts of Paul's collection project as stated in the Acts of the Apostles and in a number of Pauline letters. Jerusalem, as the place where the Christian church was born, was considered the 'mother' church. Antioch was one of the 'daughter' churches. Thus since the FOG was founded in Harare, the Harare church can be seen as the 'mother' church of FOG. The Botswana FOG, born out of the missionary efforts of the Harare church, can therefore be described as the 'daughter' church. The Harare church can be seen as Jerusalem and the Botswana church as Antioch. Throughout the article this analogy is used: Jerusalem stands for the Harare church while Antioch stands for the Botswana church.

The article is divided into four sections. The first section presents the methodology used to gather data for the article. The second section discusses the establishment of FOG in Botswana. It traces the history of the church up to the time that it divided. The third section presents the reasons given by church members for the division of the church. The fourth section is a critical analysis of the reasons presented by the members. In particular it asks and discusses the question: Is the problem in FOG a microcosm of inter-state relations? In other words, does

the problem, in a small way, reflect the state of relations between Botswana and Zimbabwe? A concluding section wraps up the article.

### **Methodology**

This article is a product of field research I conducted with the assistance of seven trained student research assistants from the University of Botswana. The field work was conducted between March and June 2006. Semi-structured questions were used to gather data. By the time we conducted the interview the Prophet group (as shall be shortly explained) had sued Pastor Nkomo for defamation of the prophet's character in the country's courts of law. Some leaders were therefore afraid that what they said could prejudice court proceedings. Because of the sensitivity of the issue we made the interviews more informal, by avoiding using tape recorders, for example. We interviewed about 35 people from the two divisions of the church. These included ordinary church members and leaders. The majority of these (60%) were female members while the remainder (40%) were male members. We also sought opinion from church drop-outs (2 men) and others (3 men) who were interested in the unfolding of events in this church. While I concentrated in Gaborone, I sent research assistants to Kanye, Mahalapye, Palapye, Serowe, Tonota and Francistown, towns and villages where the church commands strong followings. It was, however, very difficult to get information from members who still belong to the original branch of the church. Many suspected my research assistants to be journalists who were bent on tarnishing the image of the church and its founder. I was also asked by the church leadership to handle the issue 'cautiously' since it was still within the courts. As a result I decided to make most of my respondents anonymous except those who accepted to be identified.

### **The FOG in Botswana: A Brief History**

Although Christianity has been in existence in Botswana for more than a century now, the past fifteen to twenty years have seen the proliferation of a new wave of Christianity. I call this type of Christianity 'modern Pentecostalism' to distinguish it from classical Pentecostalism associated with churches like Apostolic Faith Mission and Assemblies of God. In Botswana modern Pentecostalism is associated with new charismatic churches, most of which have come from other African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi and Zimbabwe. FOG is one example of a modern Pentecostal church (Togarasei, 2005). Other examples are churches like Bible Life Ministries, Christ Embassy, Christ Citadel International Church, and Winners Chapel International Family of God.

FOG was founded by a group of youths under the leadership of Andrew Wutawunashe in Zimbabwe in 1980. Then a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, Wutawunashe had just dropped out of the University of Fourah Bay in Sierra Leone, claiming to have been called to take up God's work in Zimbabwe (Togarasei, 2006:215-225). Operating initially under the name Witness Ministries, the youthful group used aggressive evangelism strategies in order to win converts (Togarasei, 2005:349-375). They targeted the youth in schools, colleges, and universities. Soon the Witness Ministries attracted enough followers that by 1981 the FOG was born. Like earlier Pentecostal charismatic churches, the church emphasised speaking in tongues, the healing of the sick, and the gospel of prosperity. Through the church's aggressive evangelism strategies, by 1984 the church had established branches in all major towns of Zimbabwe. From 1985, following Wutawunashe's vision, in which he was told to focus on expanding the church,

the church started spreading its wings beyond the borders of Zimbabwe. This saw its arrival two years later in Botswana.

The church opened its first branch in Botswana in 1987 in Francistown. Like most churches, the beginning of this church in Botswana involved 'sheep stealing;' that is, bringing in Christians who had belonged to other churches. According to informants who requested anonymity, one Nicholas Ushe, a member of FOG in Zimbabwe, visited the Apostolic Faith Mission church in Francistown. He then, without informing the pastor of the church, invited some members of the church to a FOG conference in Zimbabwe. When the Apostolic Faith Mission pastor heard about it, he was upset and angry with Nicholas Ushe. He then excommunicated all members who had gone to the FOG conference. These went on to form the nucleus of FOG in Botswana. Initially the church had no full-time pastor based in Botswana. Because of its proximity to Zimbabwe, a Zimbabwean pastor came to Francistown to preach every weekend. One of the pastors tasked with this duty was Pastor Innocent B Nkomo, a young man who had left his profession as a college lecturer to take up the work of God (interview with Pastor I.B. Nkomo, Gaborone, 10 May 2006). He traveled the route between the city of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe and Francistown every weekend between 1987 and 1992 to take care of the new church in Botswana.

In 1993 the church leadership (Although FOG has a board of trustees, which could be the church leadership, because Andrew Wutawunashe makes most of the decisions as the Prophet of the church, one can talk of 'church leadership' as Wutawunashe himself) in Zimbabwe decided to have the church formally registered according to the laws of Botswana. That task was undertaken by Pastor Nkomo who then settled in Gaborone to take full charge of the work of the church in Botswana. His settlement in Gaborone saw the birth of the second branch of the church in the country. From 1993 the church witnessed an unprecedented growth. From two branches in 1993, by 1995 the church had grown to twenty-four branches. Between 1995 and 1998 the church witnessed another phenomenal growth, expanding from twenty-four branches to forty-two branches. The increase of the number of full-time church workers was also phenomenal as more women and men joined the Pastor to minister to the needs of the church. There was now need to organise the leadership structure of the church. Pastor Nkomo became the first President (the equivalent of the Bishop in most mainline churches) of the church in Botswana. The Botswana church even managed to build its own church building in Phase 2 in Gaborone. According to Pastor Nkomo, the Botswana chapter of the FOG also opened up branches outside Botswana (interview with Pastor I.B. Nkomo, Gaborone, 10 May 2006). For example, they opened a branch of the church in Namibia in 1999 and twelve more branches in Malawi in 2000. All seemed well and Botswana was one story of the missionary success of the FOG.

The success was, however, short-lived. From 2000 the church began experiencing internal problems. Church leadership in Harare began losing trust in the leadership of Pastor Nkomo, for reasons to be discussed below. According to Nkomo, they even tried to transfer him to South Africa, possibly in a bid to stop his influence in the Botswana church, but he resisted the move. Other developments within the church also proved that there was now friction between Pastor Nkomo and the church leadership in Harare: Jerusalem and Antioch were now in conflict. Because of the ever-increasing conflicts, it appears the church leadership in Harare started making arrangements to excommunicate Pastor Nkomo. Visits of the Prophet (only Andrew Wutawunashe is given the title 'Prophet' in this church) to the church became more frequent. According to Pastor Nkomo it was during the Prophet's frequent visits that a second church

office was opened in Broadhurst where, eventually, the Prophet's group went to meet after the break-up of the church. Initially, Pastor Nkomo was made to believe that this was an office for the Youth Ministry of the church. Pastor Nkomo said many decisions were made and passed without his knowledge.

Following the above developments, in December 2003, Senior Pastor Muzhari, from Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, announced the division of the church. Members were told that church leadership had had misunderstandings with Pastor Nkomo and had decided to part ways with him. They were given the opportunity to either follow Pastor Nkomo or to remain with Prophet Andrew Wutawunashe. In almost all the congregations the church was divided between Pastor Nkomo and Prophet Wutawunashe. The church leadership quickly held elections to put up a new leadership structure in Botswana to replace Pastor Nkomo. This involved the swearing in of Pastor S. Keoleletse as the President of the church in Botswana. In Gaborone the followers of Prophet Wutawunashe moved from the church building in Phase 2 to the Broadhurst office, while those who remained with Pastor Nkomo initially remained in Phase 2 but would soon move to the church's new stand in Block 9. The assistant pastor to Pastor Nkomo was then appointed as the Pastor of the Prophet's group. In Gaborone most of the people remained with Pastor Nkomo. According to one of the Gaborone pastors who belongs to the Prophet's group, only about forty members of the church's more than three hundred members remained with the Prophet (interview, Gaborone, 3 April 2006). We established that most of these forty people were Zimbabweans working in Botswana who joined the church when they were still in Zimbabwe. Most of the Batswana who had converted after Pastor Nkomo's settlement in Gaborone remained with him. Although the research could not firmly establish this because many people were not prepared to disclose their national or linguistic identities, the research team discovered that generally the Prophet's group had more Shona Christians than that of Pastor Nkomo. Even in music, the Prophet group sang more Shona songs than the Nkomo group. We were also told that Pastor Nkomo often identified himself with Batswana since his mother is a Motswana. We, however, could not confirm this with him.

The division caused a lot of mudslinging, which resulted in the Prophet's group suing Pastor Nkomo in the country's courts of law for defamation of the Prophet's character. By the time of the research, the case was still pending in court. But what exactly led to the division of this church?

### **Reasons for the Division of the Church**

Various reasons for the division of the church were given by those we interviewed. However, the reasons our respondents gave largely depended on which of the two groups the respondent belonged to. I will begin with those reasons given by those from the Prophet's group. As I mentioned in the introduction, this group was not forthcoming. Many of them refused to be interviewed always referring us to church leadership. Others wanted to know whether we had the permission of the Prophet first. Those who responded to our questions, however, gave power struggle as the reason for the division of the church. They accused Pastor Nkomo of having harboured intentions to start his own church for a long time. They said Pastor Nkomo did not want to be subservient to Prophet Wutawunashe. He wanted the Botswana FOG to be independent from the Zimbabwean chapter of the church, so that he could be its sole leader. As a result they said for a long time Pastor Nkomo did not cooperate with the church leadership in Zimbabwe. For example, they said, when the church leadership in Harare set out dates for fasting, the Pastor would not encourage members to fast. All this, they said, he did to defy the

orders of the Harare leadership. They also said he often criticised the practice of sending money to Zimbabwe, arguing that money raised in Botswana was supposed to be used in Botswana. This they said, he did in order to win the support of the Botswana church members. One respondent even explained Pastor Nkomo's action in dividing the church as 'devilish' insubordination to Prophet Wutawunashe (Anonymous, interview, Palapye, 26 May 2006). Some respondents also pointed out that the church was divided because of Pastor Nkomo's tribalistic tendencies. They said since Pastor Nkomo is Ndebele, he did not want to be led by Prophet Wutawunashe who is Shona. The Shona and the Ndebele are the two major tribes in Zimbabwe and their struggle for political supremacy goes back to as far as the time the Ndebele arrived in Zimbabwe in the mid-nineteenth century. Even the war of liberation from British colonial rule was fought by two groups, the Zimbabwe African People's Union under Joshua Nkomo (predominantly Ndebele) and the Zimbabwe African National Union under Robert Mugabe (predominantly Shona). Often these identity issues are brought forward by politicians to divide people for the politicians' benefit.

The Nkomo group gave a lot of reasons for the break-up of the church. The administration of church funds topped the list of the reasons they gave. First, they said they were not happy with the idea of sending money to Zimbabwe. They said all money collected by the Botswana church had to be sent to the church's central coffers in Harare. According to one member who said he used to collect and count the money when the church was still united, between P35 000 (\$7 000) and P42 000 (\$8 000) was sent to Zimbabwe each week (interview, Gaborone, 10 May 2006). The figures surely seem inflated and one pastor I tried to verify with said such large sums were only collected during nationwide conventions when the Prophet himself came to preach (interview, Gaborone, 17 May 2006). Whatever the amount sent to Zimbabwe each week, the respondents from the Nkomo group said little to nothing came back for the development of the church in Botswana. Secondly, they said there was no transparency in the way the money they contributed was used. One pastor complained, 'While we were under the Prophet, there was no accountability on how our money was used, there were no finance committees. The Prophet was the secretary, treasurer, and auditor of our monies' (Anonymous, interview, Palapye, 28 May 2006). A number of respondents also mentioned that often times they were asked to raise money for booking halls when the Prophet came for crusades in Botswana. They would raise enough money but would be surprised that when the Prophet came, the money would be said to be not enough and so were asked to make more contributions (Anonymous, Interview, Gaborone 14 February 2006). Pastor Nkomo also said one reason he fell out of favour with the Prophet was his insistence on transparency in the use of the money (Pastor Nkomo. Interview, Gaborone, 25 May 2006). He also pointed out that he always complained about the way in which money was sent to Zimbabwe. He said instead of transferring the money through the bank, the money was transported as hard cash to Zimbabwe by road. This, Pastor Nkomo said, he pointed out to the leadership in Zimbabwe, was against Botswana law.

Related to the issue of money was the issue of lack of buildings. Despite the large sums that the Botswana church sent to Zimbabwe each week, members of the Nkomo group said no money came back to put up buildings for the church. The church even had a building fund to which members were asked to contribute, but to their surprise no such buildings were put up. In fact when Pastor Nkomo and the Botswana church leadership decided to build the first church building in Botswana, in Phase 2 of Gaborone City, they say they were accused of not remitting all the money collected to the central coffers in Zimbabwe. According to Pastor Nkomo, the putting up of this church building was one reason for his falling out with the Prophet's favour.

He said although he explained that the Gaborone business community had supported the project in cash and kind, his explanation was not accepted and the Harare leadership insisted that he had used the church funds without its authority.

The Nkomo group also gave many other reasons for the break-up of the church. Some mentioned the need for the independence of the Botswana church from reading the Bible from a Zimbabwean (Shona) perspective (Five Batswana women, interview, Kanye, 21 May 2006). Often cited was the reading of the women dress code in 1 Timothy 2:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:3-5. In these passages the authors mention the need for Christian women to dress modestly. FOG women in Botswana often complained of how the 'modest dress' was explained from the point of view of what they perceived to be a traditional Shona women dress. They were told not to put on trousers, mini-skirts or any other tight-fitting dresses (Togarasei 2002:59-69). Many of the Batswana women who were against this interpretation pointed out that what is considered modest differs from one society to the other and for them tight-fitting clothes are not immodesty.

Wutawunashe's alleged dictatorial tendency was another reason given. A former pastor with the church mentioned that Wutawunashe is regarded as the father of the church (Goemaone Ratlhobolo, interview, Palapye, 27 May 2006). All other members of the church including pastors are children. As a result, pastors are not free to give their own sermons, as all sermons have to come from him. According to this informant, no one is supposed to question his views which he claims to receive through revelation. In a study of Andrew Wutawunashe's claim to prophecy Lovemore Togarasei (2006:215-225) observed that, like Old Testament prophets, Wutawunashe just gives directions on church activities without consulting anyone. It is probably this that the Nkomo group and other malcontents considered dictatorship. No activity should take place without his knowledge and consent. Because of this perceived dictatorial tendency, Pastor Nkomo said his invitation of Pastor Joe Kayo from Kenya to Botswana in 2002 (without the prophet's authorization) precipitated the break-up of the church. Joe Kayo is a Kenyan evangelist who helped Wutawunashe a lot when he started the church (Togarasei, 2005:215-225 and Parsitau, 1995). He was active in the activities of FOG between 1982 and 1986. However, according to Parsitau, Joe Kayo was excommunicated from the church following a spate of adultery issues, some of which involved school children. Although I could not confirm this, I think this is the reason why Wutawunashe no longer wants anything to do with him. Having known Pastor Joe Kayo from the time FOG started in the 1980s, Pastor Nkomo said he invited him as a Christian brother to come and encourage members of the church in Botswana as he had done earlier during the foundation of the church in Zimbabwe. It is said that Wutawunashe was so infuriated with the invitation of Pastor Joe Kayo that he had to send pastors to cleanse the church of demons when he finally heard about the visit. For him this was one act of Pastor Nkomo's insubordination.

As can be seen from the reasons discussed here, there was accusation and counter-accusation between the two parties. But what really caused all these accusations and counter-accusations? Can these reasons, in any way, be seen as a microcosm of the larger political situation? This can be addressed through a critical analysis of these reasons and to this we now turn.

### **A Critical Analysis of the Reasons for the Division of the Church**

Most of the reasons given by our respondents had to do with intra-church or institutional politics. However, when one takes a close look at the reasons, one can also suspect inter-state politics to have played a role in the break-up of the church. In fact the two are so inter-mingled in this case

that it is difficult to discuss them separately. Thus to understand these reasons better, there is need for a brief look at the political-economic contrasts between Botswana and Zimbabwe. My working hypothesis is that these contrasts contributed to the division of FOG in Botswana. I therefore present the contrasts first and then move on to discuss how these could have led to the division of the church.

Since independence from Britain in 1966, Botswana has proved to be a model in Africa in terms of political stability and good governance. It has been described quite positively both within and outside Africa. Indeed, others have described it as Africa's beacon of democracy (Barnard *et al*, 2005). Botswana has managed to maintain a stable, democratically elected government, although this has been challenged by Kenneth Good who looked at the practice of automatic presidential succession in the Botswana Democratic Party and concluded that it is undemocratic (Good, 2005). This stability in government has enabled the country to put in place sound economic policies that have seen the economy of the country growing from one of the poorest at the time of independence to one of the strongest today. At an exchange rate of about 1:6 to the United States Dollar, the Botswana Pula remains one of the strongest currencies in Africa (see Makgala in this volume). The economy has been supported by the discovery of diamonds, which have become the backbone of the country's economy. With a per capita GDP of \$10 000 as at 2005, the World Fact Book ranks Botswana as a middle-income country. The prices of goods are stable, resulting in a low rate of inflation. In all this, Botswana stands as a contrast to Zimbabwe today.

At independence in 1980, Zimbabwe stood as Africa's promising democratic and economically powerful country. Robert Mugabe's policy of national reconciliation (de Waal, 1990) was praised by friends and foes. All seemed well until 1998 when the Zimbabwe dollar started a free-fall following the unbudgeted payment of gratuities to war veterans in November 1997 and the following year's intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo war. This was worsened by the country's chaotic land reform programme in 2000, a programme which negatively affected the country's economic backbone, agriculture (Marongwe, 2003:60-74). White commercial farmers lost land to indigenous 'new farmers' (the indigenous farmers who benefited from the government's land reform programme), who out of lack of knowledge, financial support, and farm inputs, have not managed to harvest enough for the country's food needs. The chaotic land reform, alleged vote rigging (Dorman 2005; Kriger, 2005 and Raftopoulos, 2002), and intimidation in the years since 2000 have led to targeted economic sanctions against high-ranking ZANU-PF officials, sympathizers, and praise-singers, which sanctions have seriously affected the economy of the country. The purchasing power of the country's currency has been eroded as the country continues to print money to ameliorate the dry foreign currency channels. This has resulted in the loss of the currency against major currencies with the current (August 2006) rate of exchange to the United States Dollar being one to over two hundred and fifty thousand Zimbabwean Dollars. Electricity, water, fuel, and other basic commodities are in short supply. The available goods are beyond the reach of many due to inflation, which in August 2006 stood at over 1700%. The rate of unemployment is unprecedented and the majority of Zimbabweans now live far below the poverty line. This state of affairs has seen increased migration of Zimbabweans to countries with better economies. Worst affected by Zimbabwean immigrants (particularly illegal ones) are Botswana and South Africa. It is estimated that there are over three million Zimbabweans living in Botswana and South Africa, respectively.

The flocking in of Zimbabweans to Botswana has not been well received by Batswana (Botswana citizens). It has resulted in some Batswana having xenophobic responses against Zimbabwean immigrants, whether documented or undocumented. These Batswana accuse Zimbabweans of stealing their jobs, stealing their cattle, breaking into their houses, breaking into their cars, and committing all kinds of criminal activities. Wadza Morapedi (2003) puts this xenophobic attitude candidly, 'upon learning of a crime, especially house-breaking and theft, the most likely immediate response by many Batswana would be "*e a bo e le ma-Zimbabwe*" (it must be Zimbabweans).' Although at the official, level the countries' relations are said to be cordial, one cannot fail to notice acrimony between the two in the way they address issues that affect them both. I have in mind here the recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease in areas of Botswana close to the Zimbabwe border. Botswana officials believed the disease was from Zimbabwe. Although the Zimbabwe Embassy in Botswana issued a statement that there was no foot and mouth disease in Zimbabwe, the media continued referring to Zimbabwe as the source of the disease (*Mmegi*, 5 May 2006). Politicians, journalists, and the general public think Zimbabwe is weighing down Botswana's economy. Notable was Botswana's vocal Specially Elected Member of Parliament, Botsalo Ntuane, who criticised Botswana's policy of quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe on World Press Day (*Mmegi*, 12 May 2006). He said this policy had done more harm than good for the people of both countries. There is also a strong opinion among Zimbabwean illegal immigrants that the electric fence Botswana is putting up at its border with Zimbabwe is meant for Zimbabwean 'border-jumpers,' not for animals as the Botswana government claims.

These contrasts and the resulting xenophobic attitudes to Zimbabweans among some Batswana, should surely have played some role too in the division of FOG. To start with, the problem of money discussed above as having contributed to the division of the church, is better understood in the light of the contrasts between the two countries. Some of our respondents from the Nkomo group mentioned that they felt the Botswana church was sustaining the activities of FOG in Zimbabwe (interview with three men, Serowe, 27 May 2006). They felt that since the Botswana Pula had more value than the Zimbabwean Dollar, they were the ones sustaining the church in Zimbabwe. They suspected that this is the reason why the money was not sent through official channels. This is because in Zimbabwe the foreign currency unofficial (black) market has higher rates than those of the official market. For example, as at the end of June 2006 the exchange rate of the Botswana Pula to the Zimbabwean Dollar was 1:76 000 while the official rate was 1:20 000. One is also struck by the coincidence of the economic downfall of Zimbabwe and the rise of problems leading to the division of the Botswana FOG. It is very possible that the xenophobic attitude of some Batswana towards Zimbabweans might have penetrated the echelons of the FOG in Botswana.

Many of our respondents also cited the many times Prophet Wutawunashe came to Botswana since 2002 and the large sums of money they contributed for him whenever he came. There is a sense therefore in which one can suspect that they saw him in the light of Zimbabwean immigrants in general. Many Batswana also narrated how they felt some sermons were meant for them whenever they went to conferences in Zimbabwe. They mentioned sermons that were related to xenophobia and said this made them feel the need for an independent FOG in Botswana. This need for local church independence is well-known in the history of Christianity. For example, the rise of African Independent Churches was partly a result of the need for such independence (Daneel, 1987).



The replacement of Pastor Nkomo as the President of FOG in Botswana by Pastor Keololeitse, a Motswana, possibly also shows the influence of politics in the church. Politicians in Botswana are calling for foreign institutions in Botswana to promote Botswana citizens. Recently there have also been calls by politicians that some foreign churches are in Botswana just to 'loot' the economy of the country. Thus the appointment of Pastor Keololeitse, without questioning his qualifications as a leader, could be the church leadership's response to a political call. It may explain why the church wanted to transfer Pastor Nkomo to South Africa.

Zimbabwean political legacies might also have played a role in the division of FOG in Botswana. Above I discussed how some of our respondents accused Pastor Nkomo of tribalism. Politicians in Zimbabwe are often accused of using the Shona and Ndebele identity to get political mileage. A number of studies allege that 'tribalism' in Africa was invented by European imperialists during colonial rule in order to divide and rule the Africans (Akyaamong, 2006:1-11). Ellis (1994:120-121) even goes to the extreme by suggesting that since most African political parties have nothing to offer people, they can only get support from people by promoting tribalism. Some respondents attributed the Shona-Ndebele identity as the cause of the division of the major opposition party in Zimbabwe, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In fact the state of the FOG in Botswana today presents an interesting comparison to the state of the divided MDC in Zimbabwe. Just as the MDC is divided between Morgan Tsvangirai (Shona) and Welshman Ncube (Ndebele), Botswana FOG also stands divided between Wutawunashe (Shona) and Nkomo (Ndebele). Again just as the two groups of MDC are both using the same name, the two FOG groups are also still using the same name with each group claiming to be the legitimate one. Pastor Nkomo's group claims to be the legitimate group since Pastor Nkomo is the one who registered the church in Botswana and is the 'office bearer' of the church in all government records. The Prophet's group also claims to be the legitimate one since it is the one which has remained loyal to the founder of the church.

The political legacies are also seen in the accusation of dictatorship levelled against Wutawunashe by the Nkomo group. In Zimbabwe some people think of Wutawunashe as a ZANU-PF sympathiser. This is possibly because until 2001 he often appeared at state functions and in state media speaking in favour of the status quo. As Chitando (2005:230) correctly notes, '(this) constant interaction between political and religious leaders serves to blur the distinction between them and to lend legitimacy to politicians.' Wutawunashe endorsed the government's land reform programme. He even declared as the 'will of God' the results of the 2002 Zimbabwe presidential elections widely regarded as fraudulent. Thus some quarters of the church in Botswana attributed his dictatorial attitude to his association with the ZANU-PF leadership which is also accused of dictatorship. This factor may also have contributed to the division of the FOG in Botswana.

## **Conclusion**

Studies on religion and politics in Africa have often centred on the role played by main-line/traditional churches. The studies have shown how these churches have contributed to the democratization of Africa (Linden, 1980, Hallencreutz and Moyo 1988; and Hallencreutz and Palmberg, 1991), to improving education and health (Smith, 1928; Murphree 1969; Gelfand 1988 and Togarasei 2003), and to issues of human rights and civil society (Dorman, 2002). However, there are few studies (Maxwell, 2000) that focus on how secular politics can affect the life of the church. This study has attempted to fill in this academic lacuna by looking at how inter-state and intra-church politics could have contributed to the division of the FOG. We can

therefore conclude that the division of the FOG in Botswana was a result of both inter-church and intra-state politics. The church itself had its problems as seen in the administration of finances, but those outside the church also influenced the course of events in the church. As argued above, there is also a possibility that politicians in Botswana and Zimbabwe indirectly played a role in the division of the church. I, however, want to end by pointing out that FOG has only been used as a case study here but what we have said about this church and inter-state and intra-church politics might be true of other modern Pentecostal churches as evidenced by many schisms in these churches. There is therefore need for further research on church-state relations in modern Pentecostal churches, especially on how secular politics affect churches.

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### **Referece**

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