

**AN AFRICAN FACE OF CHRISTIANITY: A
THEOLOGY OF FIVE AFRICAN INITIATED
CHURCHES IN BOTSWANA**

KE MONYAI

**AN AFRICAN FACE OF CHRISTIANITY:
A THEOLOGY OF FIVE AFRICAN INITIATED CHURCHES
IN BOTSWANA**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the possibility of arriving at an African face of Christianity in Africa. The point of departure for this study is a detailed study of five African Initiated Churches in Botswana. This is an empirical research of five selected African Initiated Churches that are considered to be representative of Independency in Botswana. The study encompasses the following five churches: Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion, Forward in Faith, Galatia Church in Zion, St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana and St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church. The method of research was both quantitative and qualitative. A broad survey of the five churches was done through a close observation of and participation in these churches over the years, followed by in-depth interviews of both the leadership and the ordinary membership, including men, women and the youth. A concerted effort was made to align the five churches to the broader family of Independency on the African continent. In the process, an in-depth analysis of the interviews themselves was done, as well as of the sermons, constitutions, a selected sampling of hymns, rituals and all accompanying ecclesiastical activities. An equal cross-section of the membership of the five churches was interviewed; the research itself stretching over six years, from 1982 to 1988.

Chapter 1 provides the layout of the core of the research and states the problem, the rationale behind the selection of the five churches and how the research is going to be conducted. No Independency exists in a vacuum. Therefore, Chapter 2 gives the historical, socio-economic, political, cultural and missiological background of Botswana, into which the five churches were born. Chapter 3 gives an expose of how the five churches worship and all the variations that differentiate them from each other. Chapter 4, which can be described as the backbone of the thesis, gives the findings of the research on the five churches with regard to their ideas of God and everything connected therewith. This chapter covers a literature study on Independency to show that the African Initiated Churches in Botswana are not an isolated phenomenon. The following

are discussed in depth: Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, the Holy Spirit as the life force of the churches, God the Father as the Creator and Sustainer of life and the Trinity. Against the background of the wider literature, a detailed discussion follows of the faith of the five churches on Christology, the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the role of the Holy Spirit. Chapter 5 proceeds by addressing other major doctrines and moral issues of the five churches. These include marriage, prophecy, the concept of holiness, the Word of God, the care of children, *botho/ubuntu*, ancestors and the notions of sin, witchcraft and forgiveness. In the search for an African face of Christianity, Chapter 6 gleans from the intensive study certain aspects of the universal church and how these aspects can be marshalled to give better meaning and understanding of the Gospel to the African believer.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie navorsing is om die moontlikheid te ondersoek om by 'n Afrika-gesig van die Christendom uit te kom. Die uitgangspunt van die studie is 'n gedetailleerde studie van vyf Afrika-geïnisieerde Kerke in Botswana. Dit is 'n empiriese ondersoek van vyf geselekteerde Afrika-geïnisieerde Kerke wat as verteenwoordigend van Onafhanklikheid in Botswana beskou kan word. Die studie omvat die volgende vyf kerke: *Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion*, *Forward in Faith*, *Galatia Church in Zion*, *St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana* en *St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church*. Die ondersoekmetode was beide kwantitatief en kwalitatief. 'n breë ondersoek van die vyf kerke is gedoen deur middel van dieptewaarneming van en deelname aan die kerke oor die jare. Dit is gevolg deur diepte-onderhoude met sowel die leierskap as die gewone lidmaatskap, ingesluit mans, vroue en die jeug. Terselfdertyd is 'n poging aangewend om die vyf kerke in ooreenstemming te bring met die breër familie van Onafhanklikheid op die Afrika-kontinent. In dié proses is 'n in-diepte-ontleding van die onderhoude self gedoen, sowel as van die preke, konstitusies, 'n keuse van liedere, rituele en meegaande kerklike aktiwiteite. Daar is met 'n kruisdeursnit van die lidmaatskap van die kerke onderhoude gevoer; die navorsing self het oor ses jaar gestrek, van 1982 tot 1986.

Hoofstuk 1 gee die uitleg van die kern van die navorsing en stel die probleem, die gedagtegang agter die keuse vir die vyf kerke en hoe die navorsing gedoen gaan word. Geen Onafhanklikheid bestaan binne 'n vakuum nie. Daarom bied Hoofstuk 2 die historiese, sosio-ekonomiese, politieke, kulturele en missiologiese agtergrond van Botswana, waarin die kerke tot stand gekom het. Hoofstuk 3 gee 'n uiteensetting van hoe die kerke aanbid en al die variasies wat hulle van mekaar onderskei. Hoofstuk 4, wat as die ruggraat van die proefskrif beskryf kan word, gee die bevindinge oor die vyf kerke ten opsigte van hul Godsbegrip en alles wat daarmee saamgaan. Hierdie hoofstuk dek 'n literatuurstudie oor Onafhanklikheid om aan te dui dat die Afrika-geïnisieerde Kerke in Botswana nie

'n geïsoleerde verskynsel is nie. Die volgende word in diepte beskryf: Jesus Christus as Verlosser en Saligmaker, die Heilige Gees as lewenskrag vir die kerke, God die Vader as Skepper en Onderhouer van lewe en die Drie-eenheid. Teen die agtergrond van die wyer literatuur volg 'n gedetailleerde bespreking van die geloof van die vyf kerke ten opsigte van Christologie, die heerskappy van Jesus Christus en die rol van die Heilige Gees.

Hoofstuk 5 gaan voort om ander belangrike dogmas en morele vraagstukke van die vyf kerke te bespreek. Dit sluit in die huwelik, profesie, die idee van heiligheid, die Woord van God, die versorging van kinders, *botho/ubuntu*, voorvaders en die begrippe van sonde, hekserij en vergifnis. In die soeke na 'n Afrika-gesig van die Christendom onttrek Hoofstuk 6 uit die intensiewe studie sekere aspekte van die universele kerk en hoe dié aspekte ingespan kan word om groter betekenis aan en 'n beter begrip van die Evangelie aan die Afrika-gelowige te gee.

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CHAPTER 1

AN AFRICAN FACE OF CHRISTIANITY: A THEOLOGY OF FIVE AFRICAN INITIATED CHURCHES IN BOTSWANA

1.1 BACKGROUND PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study is that of five indigenous churches in Botswana. These are in alphabetical order: **Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion (BCCCZ)**, **Forward in Faith (FF)**, **Galatia Church in Zion (GCZ)**, **Saint Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana (STG)**, **St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church (STP)**.

Some names are obviously very long and could slow down the reading. Therefore, as appropriate, the researcher shall use the names as abbreviated above.

The aim of this thesis is to bring out as strongly as possible the salient features held by the five churches in the expression of their faith and understanding of Christianity through their teachings, constitutions, life styles, practices, interpretation of religious symbols and actions, worshipping, interviews and responses to questionnaires.

The deposit of faith as handed down from Jesus Christ is not changeable. It is a faith or belief system rooted in the teachings of Christ himself. However, down the ages, various worshipping communities and believing nations have expressed themselves differently and in diverse manners. Yet the core of the faith remains the same. It is largely the perceptions of human beings that blur the reality. The classical examples of these are the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, the great schism between East and West and, of late, the birth of African, Latin and Eastern indigenous churches grafted on Christianity.

The five churches that this author is writing about have also found a new way of understanding and expressing the same faith that was handed down the ages. In so doing, they have opened up a new chapter in the history of the church. This research study merely sets out to capture the mood of the times and in so doing, hopefully, open a new chapter in the life of the church as a new leaf is turned. Of necessity, then, this entails that what is recorded here *has* to be the faith of the five churches as they believe and interpret the faith themselves, not what the researcher wishes or thinks. Consequently, the story unfolding in these pages is that of the five churches. As a trained theologian the researcher will be as impartial as possible. All he is doing here is setting down what the five churches themselves believe and teach. Some issues are quite complex. A clear example is that of the *badimo*-ancestors, which will be treated fully in Chapter 4 under the questionnaire responses. Without going into too many details in this chapter, suffice it to say that there is the official policy of the five churches on the issue and the rank and file of the five churches have their own views on the matter. As an example, the Bible has its own teaching, the researcher's church has its own views on the matter, the researcher's community has its own convictions and he as an individual has his own interpretation. At the end of the day, however, it will be about the five churches themselves and what *they* believe and practise, officially and unofficially.

That is why the personal interviews, according to the questionnaire, were as long and as exhaustive as possible to research and probe every aspect of the faith possible, including practices in real life as members live out their faith.

What is written here is purely what the churches themselves hold and believe. The account of the faith of the five churches is given as recorded directly from them. Some researchers are inclined to allow their own opinions and personal convictions to creep into their exposition of a particular field of research to achieve what they think should be the case or consequence of that research. This researcher wishes to assure the reader that he has vigorously tried to stay

as closely as possible to his sources, both human and material, as enunciated by the five churches themselves. However, he craves for forgiveness if there should be any point wherein he may be shown to have misrepresented the five churches. But, to the best of his knowledge, he has tried consciously to remain true to the findings of his research.

As already stated, the research itself spanned a period of six years, covering the period from 1982 to 1988.

A word on percentages. The research hinges on the outcomes of live interviews, the one on one questionnaire, the preaching, with a random selection of sermons over a long period of time, selected church hymns, the constitutions of the five churches, church life and practices, tabulated percentage-wise, as obtained from the interviewees, namely, church officers and the general membership of the five churches. However, some of the time, even on key issues, there is a split understanding of a particular area of the faith or a particular issue. In this case, the majority opinion is given prominence, although all the other minor views as expressed by the results of the research are also given in order to give a complete picture. Therefore, the reader gets a global picture of what the five churches are about, down to the lone respondent whose answer or answers may differ from everybody else's. This will be particularly relevant when coming to the last chapter on conclusions, wherein the researcher exercises his mind on what has been gleaned after prodding by the research. These will be based primarily on the majority answers from the five churches but also on other answers expressed to a lesser degree percentage-wise.

1.1.1 Rationale for the selection of the five churches

There are several factors as to why the five churches under study were selected, which churches are given in alphabetical order for no special reason except logic and fluidity. One of the main reasons for selecting these five churches was that

the researcher considered them to be truly representative of Independency in Botswana as the researcher saw it emerging then.

African church Independency definitely took place in the then Bechuanaland in the early 1800s. Christianity came into head-on contact with Setswana culture, customs and practices, with some alienation involved because of political authority and hegemony over territory. The underlying misconception about the validity of the religion of the Batswana led to a very serious clash with the missionaries. The details of Independency in Botswana will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2 during an exposition of missionary work among the Batswana.

Geographically, the main focus of the empirical research was conducted within a radius of about 100 kilometres from the capital, Gaborone. Three of the churches were researched locally in Gaborone itself: Forward in Faith, St Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana and St Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church. Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion was researched about sixty kilometres away to the west in the capital of Kweneng District, Molepolole, while Galatia Church in Zion was researched about 100 kilometres to the south-east, in the village of Mogonye in the Kweneng District. Relative proximity was an important factor in the selection of the research area in all cases, so that fairly frequent visits and revisiting was a viable prospect for the researcher, who was lecturing at the University of Botswana at the time. As lecturers, they were encouraged to do vigorous research in their respective fields and the researcher seized on the opportunity.

A total of 40 people were interviewed. Given the fairly small numbers of the five churches, individually and collectively, the researcher judged the number 40 to be fairly representative in the sample. This was so also given the fact that the researcher had planned and would be able to attend the regular services of the five churches frequently. Eight people comprising of two (2) women, two (2) men,

two (2) male teenagers and two (2) female teenagers were interviewed in each church. The selection of those interviewed was made on a *pro rata* basis of one office-bearer to the ordinary congregant or lay member, in case of older people, in order to obtain a balanced and representative view within each church. Thus, one adult in each listed category represents the hierarchy and lay members respectively, giving an overall picture in all ranks of the church. The average age of the youth interviewed was 21.5 years, while that of the older people was 48.5 years. Thus, the views of all those interviewed are representative both of the sexes, the elderly and the all important factor of age differentiation. Noteworthy is the emphasis of most of those interviewed for a right to privacy and anonymity. Therefore, where applicable, respondents or informants are simply referred to as "a man", "a boy", "a girl", "a woman", "a church leader", and so on.

It is important to note that the questionnaires were not just posted to respondents. This was a qualitative research and the questionnaire was administered person to person for responses. This was done for the most part by the researcher and his assistants. This was a one-on-one research where clarity was sought clearly in case of any misunderstanding or miscomprehension. This was to establish exactly what the people understood themselves. This was highly interpersonal. Besides, the questionnaire was not just a simple ballad question "yes" or "no" enquiry. As stated above, it was in-depth, probing and as exhaustive as possible. Indeed each respondent had to answer 158 detailed questions as set out in the questionnaire.

1.2 OVERVIEW AND IMPORTANCE OF AICs

A brief overview of the importance of Independency is given to help readers.

In recent decades the African Initiated Church (AIC) movement has grown into the most dynamic movement in Southern Africa. It is proliferating among blacks in Southern Africa, attracting adherents of traditional African religions, and

drawing into its fold many former members of mainline churches (i.e. churches with their origins in the West).

The case of Botswana is not an isolated phenomenon. African Independency spans the whole of Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa. African Initiated Churches date back several hundred years, particularly in Central, West, East and Southern Africa.

The first known case of Independency in Africa occurred in the former Portuguese kingdom of the Congo in what is today known as Angola, in a town called Sao Salvador, in the 1700s. In this case, a young woman by the name of Kimpa Vita, who was a very devout Catholic, "was possessed by the spirit of St. Anthony" (Daneel, 1987:46) and started off on a course that would transform the way of thinking in the local Catholic Church.

Like the founders of the five African churches under study in this thesis, Kimpa Vita, later to be known as Donna Beatrice, was under the influence of some form of spirit, which drove her vigorously. There were three important aspects of her "calling". She led a very strong campaign against the tradition of Roman Catholicism of having crosses, crucifixes and images of Jesus Christ as part of the structure of worship and prayer. She preached against these practices and wanted to see all these destroyed, since according to her, they were no different from the old fetishes of Africa. Secondly, she proclaimed Jesus Christ as having been a black Messiah, who was surrounded by black apostles. Thirdly, she believed in the restoration of the ancient empire of the former Congo under a new king. Needless to say, this was treason of the highest nature at the time and she was accordingly imprisoned by the Portuguese authorities in 1706, tried and condemned to the fiery death at the stake because she was considered a heretic.

It is important, though, to note that the stance of Kimpa Vita on crosses and crucifixes has no bearing on the five churches, as they all use these ancient

symbols of the Christian faith; neither is her teaching of Jesus Christ as a black Messiah with black apostles reflective of the five churches. Unlike the then Congo, Botswana, from which the five churches operated, was also not in turmoil to the same degree.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo we later have the classic example of the church of Simon Kimbangu in the former Belgian Congo in the Twentieth Century. This represented a massive movement of protest against the then corrupt and violent rule of the Belgian government, which practised open slavery albeit proclaiming Christian principles. The movement was both a spiritual revolt and a cry for social and political justice (Oosthuizen, 1968:7). The echoes of the church of Simon Kimbangu were felt far and wide in and around Central Africa. Parallels of the movements of Simon Kimbangu and Dona Beatrice can be drawn in some movements in South Africa, which basically also upheld national sovereignty and self-determination. Hendrick Witbooi, for example, was considered as a kind of political messiah in the then South West Africa among the Hereros. He took on the German colonial power and died in a skirmish in 1905. Enoch Mgijima led the rebellion against the South African government in 1921 in Queenstown, which led to the death of 183 of his followers (Daneel, 1987:48).

In West Africa, in Nigeria, was born the Church of the Lord, Aladura, in 1925, which has a huge following in different West African countries (Turner, 1967:7), followed by Kenya in East Africa with the two churches of the African Israel Church Nineveh and the Church of Christ in Africa, in 1927 and 1957, respectively (Welbourn & Ogot, 1966:8ff).

In South Africa were also later born the twin churches of Isaiah Shembe (1911) and the Zion Christian Church of Lekganyane (1923) and a host of others (Sundkler, 1961:13ff).

1.2.1 Growth of AICs

In his pioneer work Sundkler emphatically states the AICs number in the region of five to six thousand (5,000 - 6,000) in South Africa. The list in the book confirms this, with all the names of the different churches known to him at the time listed (Sundkler 1961:354-374). Indeed, this eventually led to the theory of fission later on by Barrett, wherein his study shows that the propensity to more and more growth and splitting is ever-present in the dynamism of AICs (Barrett, 1968:206-212). The numerous numbers of AICs operating in Soweto and other black areas is evidence of this ever-present dynamism of proliferation (West, 1975:1-9).

An interesting observation is made by Kritzinger regarding the phenomenal growth of AICs. Basing himself on existing statistics, he points out that whereas in the 1950s black Christians in mainline churches formed about 75% as opposed to the 12% of AICs membership, in the year 2000 figures point to the fact that there are now 36% members of AICs as opposed to only 41% of black Christians in mainline churches (Kritzinger, 1985). Most recent figures further indicate that the majority of members in AICs are women. Indeed, recently, on SABC, it was indicated that of the total membership of 10 million in AICs, 85% of these were women (SABC: 17 November 2000).

1.2.2 The attraction of AICs

There are several elements that can be enumerated as forming the core of why many people are attracted to the AICs.

- Their sense of sharing and caring;
- the spirit of the traditional extended family finds expression in an ecclesiastical context;
- basic aspects of traditional culture and religion are prolonged;

- there is spontaneity in worship;
- there is mutual discussion of problems;
- healing services provide spiritual/physical refreshment; and
- exorcism sessions play a vital role and are very important to the African psyche.

1.3 CHARACTERISTICS

The movement of AICs is characterised by three types: the Ethiopian type, the Zionist, Spirit or Apostolic type, and the Messianic type. Briefly, this means that the churches referred to as Ethiopian-type churches are churches that broke away from mainline churches and did not deviate from doctrine. They have also largely maintained the ritual and format of worship of the mother church. The causes of the split range mostly from ideological to socio-political issues. In AIC studies by scholars these are considered orthodox. Two examples of these types of churches are the Order of Ethiopia and the African Catholic Church, which both broke away from the Anglican Church (Monyai, 1980). The Spirit, Apostolic or Zionist churches developed on their own and have no doctrinal link with a specific mainline church. Their theology developed independently with strong African cultural roots albeit still based largely on the Scriptures. Their style of worship is very distinctly African and so are most of their rituals. Some African customs are taken on board. The five churches under study fall under this category. The Messianic type churches form the third group. These are churches founded by powerful personages whose influence and thinking are synonymous with what their followers believe. They have their own unique way of worship and have also developed their own distinctive rituals. These churches have taken on board almost all the African customs in the community and blended them with church ritual, practice and worship. Three powerful examples are the churches of Shembe, Lekganyane and Kimbangu, although the latter was a breakaway from the Roman Catholic Church originally and thus straddles Ethiopian, Spirit and Messianic types. However, the researcher does not quite accept the

interpretation of the nomenclature by researchers of AICs. Some of them entertain an odd idea that the perceived Messiah and founder of the church has taken or usurped the place of Jesus Christ. The researcher disputes this, as will become evident in 4.1. These three types of churches are discussed in full when the origins of the five churches are introduced under Typology and Origins (2.6.2).

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

African Christian communities today (leaders and followers) are making specific contributions to understand the depth of the Gospel and to nourish their faith, although according to their own particular situations and felt needs and spirituality. This happens particularly in African Initiated Churches (AICs) where Christianity is portraying little by little a definite African face and most probably gives us a glimpse of the future form of Christianity on the black continent. In AICs we encounter a theology that is practised from a black cultural-religious background and renders an important contribution to a *theologia Africana*. The problem to be researched here is what face of Christianity can be discerned in the emerging theology of AICs – particularly in Botswana.

What contribution are the African Initiated Churches (Botswana) making to the emergent Christian African theology, especially these five churches? Black Christian theologians have pointed to the importance of AICs as a source for reflection and development of a separate African theology. There have been many ideas and comments thrown around in discussions and workshops but no concrete or cohesive systematisation have been written down, although some theologians in this regard are beginning to see the need for such an approach and are currently delving deeper into empirical research. To achieve this objective, the following will be the approach regarding the five churches:

The questions to be researched can be formulated as follows:

- Introduction and objectives of study.
- What is the origin of these five (5) churches and their relationship to the early missionary work in Botswana, previously known as Bechuanaland?
- What theological perspectives on God can be gleaned from the teachings of the five churches?
- What theological perspectives on salvation can be gleaned from the five churches?
- What theological perspectives on other major doctrines can be gleaned from the five churches?
- Theological lessons: an outline of the African face of Christianity.

1.4.1 Aim and objectives

The aim of this research is to look very closely at the origins of the five churches and also try and find out how the early missionary work affected their emerging theology. This includes a close look at all the doctrines, teachings, beliefs and practices of the five churches to see exactly how they conceive of their own theology and how the more clearly they themselves see the emergence of an African face of Christianity. To reach this aim, the following objectives will have to be met:

Clear objectives of the study

- Outline the origins of these five churches and their relationship to the early missionary work in Botswana.
- Identify the theological perspectives on God gleaned from the teachings of the five churches.
- Identify the theological perspectives on salvation.
- Identify the theological perspectives on other major doctrines; and
- Come up with a theological evaluation that gives a clear outline of the African face of Christianity.

1.5 TERMS USED IN THIS THESIS: A CLARIFICATION

There are several names by which AICs are known in Botswana. The following are some of the names used interchangeably in the thesis. *Dikereke tsa Semowa*- Churches of the Spirit; *Dikereke tsa Setswana* - African Churches; and *Dikereke tsa Metsi* - Churches of Water. These are all names by which AICs are known in Botswana and, more importantly, how *they call themselves*.

Throughout the thesis the researcher has used certain names interchangeably to refer to the same reality. These are African Indigenous Churches and African Initiated Churches. Churches that split off from Western-oriented churches are referred to as Independent; churches that were initiated by Africans themselves, never having had close ties to Western missions, are referred to as indigenous or African Initiated Churches.

The terms *Motswana* or *Batswana* are used to refer to a national or nationals of Botswana. Occasionally, however, the terms are used to refer to the particular ethnic extraction of Batswana as a group or tribe. In this case, the context will make it clear. The term *tribe* or *tribal* is used in its purely scientific meaning as a derivative from the Latin word *tribus*, with no cultural, political, socio-economic, psychological or religious insinuations.

In this thesis he/she, his and her, will be used and understood to include both sexes unless specifically stated otherwise.

In Setswana the name or translation for “king” is “kgosi”. Many of my sources use the word “chief” when actually referring to the Batswana kings. In this thesis king and chief are used interchangeably to refer to the same reality as understood in Setswana, namely, *kgosi*.

1.6 METHODS USED IN THE RESEARCH

The researcher employed basically three methods in his research.

The first method employed was the qualitative method.

Firstly, the researcher made as much physical contact with the churches as possible by following them closely over a protracted period of six years, from 1982 to 1988. He worshipped with them, celebrated their festivities with them, observed their baptismal and penitential rites and generally involved himself as deeply as possible with their rituals whenever he could. This was done in order to familiarise himself with their worship, beliefs, practices and operations in real life.

Secondly, in the process, he interviewed the leadership and followers of the five churches extensively. He also made use of a detailed questionnaire at various levels to probe and try and find out what the beliefs, faith and perceptions of all the faithful were in relation to their churches. Of necessity this entailed a quantitative research on the five churches, although the qualitative dimension remained firm throughout.

Thirdly, he did an analysis and synthesis of the literature study on AICs in general.

1.7 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of the research is that the theology of the African Initiated Churches, albeit mostly in verbal form and an experience of “lived” theology, is making a very important contribution in profiling the African face of Christianity for today, tomorrow and generations to come.

1.8 DIVISION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 contains the problem statement. Chapter 2 gives a background of the soil on which the five churches were planted, namely, the churches that played a major role in the Christianisation of Botswana. The origins, spread and role of evangelisation of the five churches in Botswana are then given. This is followed by Chapter 3, which deals with the five churches as worshipping communities and the beliefs and practices lived out in their lives. Chapter 4 gives an analysis of the responses to the questionnaire regarding the most important elements of the faith, while Chapter 5 continues to analyse the responses concerning other major doctrines. Chapter 6 then closes the research study with conclusions. It is here then that the researcher exercises his mind and allows himself the latitude of giving his own analysis and latent message or messages contained in the exposition of the five churches for the rest of Christianity to take lessons, especially his own worshipping family, the Catholic Church. Having given in full the faith of the five churches according to themselves, he now analyses and gives *his* evaluation as to what other members of the Christian family can take as a leaf to be treasured.

1.8.1 Correlation table

PROBLEM STATEMENT	OBJECTIVE	CHAPTER
Contribution of AICs to the emergent Christian African theology, leading to an African Christianity	1. Objectives of study	1 Introduction and objectives of study
	2. Origin of five churches and relationship with early missionaries	2 Early missionary work in Botswana: theological perspectives of the five churches
	3. Theological perspectives on God by the five churches	3 God's relationship with humanity
	4. Theological perspectives on salvation by the five churches	4 Jesus, salvation and the Holy Spirit
	5. Theological perspectives on other major doctrines by the five churches	5 Other major doctrines
	6. Theological evaluation	6 Theological evaluation and conclusions: an African face of Christianity

CHAPTER 2

EARLY MISSIONARY WORK IN BOTSWANA

2.1 THE WIDER CONTEXT

2.1.1 Political and socio-economic background

Botswana occupies roughly the central region of what is commonly known as Southern Africa. It is bounded on the south and east by South Africa, by Namibia in the west, by Zimbabwe in the north-east and on the north-west by Zambia, Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe (Census, 1981:1, 1.2).

A quotation from the prolific writer on Botswana, Anthony Sillery, gives us a comprehensive picture of the country.

“Bechuanaland has an area of about 274,000 square miles and consists largely of the Kgalagadi Desert, a great undulating sandy steppe with sporadic limestone outcrops. Away in the northwest lies Ngamiland, a shallow depression occupied by the Okavango and Chobe River systems. The Kgalagadi is arid and infertile but is not a desert in the popular sense, since it has a cover of grass and thorn bush and produces great quantities of wild melons during the rains. On the western edge of the Kgalagadi a number of Europeans contrive to rear cattle at Ghanzi, a limestone area with good underground water supplies on the boundary of South West Africa (Sillery, 1971:13).”

Generally speaking, Botswana is largely flat country, as evidenced by the long patch of land between Gaborone and Francistown stretching for hundreds of kilometres.

In spite of the Kalahari Desert occupying 84% of the surface (Parson, 1984:4) Botswana has one of the richest world-class attractions in the Okavango Delta on the Okavango River. This is a wetland delta that is always teeming with wildlife and game and attracts thousands of local and international tourists throughout the year.

The country is made up of various peoples who are collectively known as the Batswana. The Batswana include, among others, the Bakwena, Bafurutshe, Bakgatla, Bangwaketse, Barolong, Bakalanga, Bangwato, Batlokwa, Batawana, Baherero, and Bakhoisan, peoples of diverse origins, Asians and whites.

Although by now the population of Botswana is rumoured to have reached or passed the one million mark, the Census conducted by the Botswana government in 1981 put the population at 900, 000 (Census 1981:1,1.2).

Unemployment has a tremendous impact on Botswana's population. This has led to a high rate of the migratory labour system. At any one time in the course of the year the country is largely depleted of its menfolk in particular, most of who go to seek work on the mines and heavy industries of South Africa. The population of Botswana is consequently never stable and this has affected even the traditional Tswana family heritage system. This has resulted in family breakdown and disruption common to industrial and developing countries and has given the Batswana a new type of social problem, for example, *bana ba rona* (street or homeless children), homelessness, unemployment and vagrancy.

For administrative purposes, Botswana is divided into ten different regions, and the regions usually comprise of people who speak the same or similar dialects. These regions are the Central, Chobe, Ghanzi, Kgalagadi, Kgatleng, Kweneng, Ngamiland, North-East, South-East and Southern Districts (C.T.P. Map, 1982).

2.1.2 Botswana Independency

In this chapter Botswana independency is discussed by giving a synopsis of the country's historical, cultural, religious and socio-economic background. This will give the necessary background as independency never occurs in a void.

The events of church history in Botswana are clearly laid out by Sillery in tracing the times and life of the missionary John Mackenzie (1971:13ff) and in the life of Sechele (1954:60ff). The researcher's sources, namely, the authors from whom he drew most of his political and historical information, gave diverse spellings for Sechele, sometimes writing it as Setshele. In her account of the life of Tshekedi Khama, Mary Benson has also given interesting insights into the operations of Christianity in the then Bechuanaland and the influence that religion wielded on the lives of the Batswana (1960:24ff). In these accounts the influence of the kings is also highlighted, showing the interaction between these two powerful forces in the early days of the missionary era in Bechuanaland. When the missionaries arrived, Bechuanaland was already under the patronage of Britain and was later to become and then referred to as British Bechuanaland, sometimes as the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

2.1.3 First Christian contact

Christianity first reached Botswana in the early part of the nineteenth century in the persons of John Campbell in 1813, followed by Read and Hamilton at Dithakong. They were all members of the London Missionary Society (Sillery 1954:70). Many of the *dikgosi* in Botswana were not Christians but were generally persuaded by the missionaries to give up "their pagan practices" to follow the Word. But the Batswana rulers were more concerned with the attacks of the Ndebeles under Mzilikazi, as evidenced by the attitude of Kgosi Sekgoma, father of Tshekedi Khama, who would later on become a Christian (Benson, 1960:26-27). The London Missionary Society was a very ecumenical body and

adhered to the principle of unity in preaching a united Gospel rather than a fragmented denominational teaching (Sillery 1971:5). The Lutherans soon followed the London Missionary Society, and these were in turn followed by the Congregational Church Missionary Society, which was of mostly Scottish origin (Benson 1960:26). The latter two groups are said to have been very austere. The line of distinction between the various groups, however, seems to be very thin and does not seem to justify categorisation of one group over the other. Basically, all the missionaries were out to convert "the pagan" and turn him or her away from their traditional ways. This was also clearly demonstrated by the American Board Mission in South Africa, which misinterpreted and suppressed African culture in many ways.

A synopsis of some of the highlights of the Christian message in Bechuanaland and the interplay of the various players in the field, especially the kings whose influence directed the course of events, is now given.

2.1.5 Synopsis

When Christianity was first introduced into Bechuanaland in early 1800, the political and socio-economic situations were in a rapid state of change and movement. Events in the Cape colony had set everything in motion and different groups were making excursions into the interior. This was also the time of colonisation and nations were setting out resolutely in search of new land and territory to annex for the mother countries. Although the wars of the *Lifaqane* had recently subsided, there were still marauding hordes which dotted the landscape. Among these were the warriors of Mzilikazi who had traversed and conquered most of the then Transvaal and huge territory in southern Zimbabwe. Thus the influence of Mzilikazi, who was fleeing from Tshaka and conquering everything in his path, the Dutch colonists, who were moving away to avoid the authority of the Cape colonial government, and the British missionaries who were in search of new territory for evangelisation and annexation for the crown, combined to

produce a scenario that would plunge Bechuanaland into many phases of crises and development. The issues referred to here are beautifully summed up in his short chapter entitled "Problems of Southern Africa" (Sillery 1971:8-12).

It is important when we speak of Botswana today to note that in the nineteenth century the political landscape was different from the current dispensation. The Organisation of African Unity had to settle for the borders of Africa "as was" during the dawn of independence in the 1960s. Historically, when we speak of the then Bechuanaland, we are speaking of a huge territory that extended also into modern-day South Africa. Part of the problem, the researcher believes, has always been the problem of the language Setswana, which cuts across all artificial borders or legally constituted borders.

As soon as Livingstone arrived in Africa in 1841, he visited Sechele in the same year and during his second visit in 1842 stationed an African preacher at Bobi (Sillery, 1952:110)

One of the greatest highlights during this period has to do with the attack and looting of the mission station of David Livingstone. In the annals of church history the name Kuruman conjures up a lot of memories. This was the biggest mission station in the then southern Bechuanaland and present-day Northern Cape. It was a very busy mission station and travellers frequented it daily. Evangelisation was very strong there and the reputation of the mission station spread far and wide. It is important to state this because the very fame and status of the mission station caught the eye of everyone, especially that of Mzilikazi, whose very life and military successes intertwined with the successful spread of Christianity at the time.

The reputation of the station reached Mzilikazi and he sent envoys to go and hear from the missionaries down south. By 1835, Robert Moffat, who lived in Kuruman, had visited Mzilikazi twice (Sillery, 1971:19). David Livingstone arrived

in Kuruman in 1842 and worked for a brief period among the Bakgatla. However, he eventually attached himself to the Bakwena under King Setshele, whom he persuaded to move his headquarters to Kolobeng further north in Bechuanaland.

Both Livingstone and King Setshele were seen as obstacles by the Boers and Dimawe in Kolobeng was duly attacked and ransacked. Hundreds of women and children were taken captive along with large herds of cattle. This was on 30 August 1852. The next day the mission station of Livingstone was completely wrecked and looted. The Boers were accused of mounting the attack, the reason being advanced that King Setshele had given refuge to a fugitive, Mosielele of the Bakgatla of Mmanaana. The Boers were seeking the latter and the former refused to give him up. Another reason for also attacking the mission station of David Livingstone was that he was supplying the natives with guns and ammunition. However, different theories have emerged historically. The chief of these is that in their march to the north from the colonial government the Boers found that Setshele was an obstacle, a "native" who would not play ball. Therefore, he was punished.

In his biography of Sechele, Sillery records something very different and there is some doubt as to what really happened. One thing is certain, the Boers under Commandant Scholtz with Paul Kruger as his deputy did attack Dimawe, but denied attacking and ransacking the mission station apart from removing ammunition, arms and tools. They maintained that when they arrived, the mission had already been attacked and pillaged (Sillery, 1954:115).

At first glance the kings of Botswana seem to have danced to the tune of missionaries when they were converted. But a closer look at church history and the lives of individual "greats" in Botswana shows that the kings were very wily and knew how to make religion work in the interest of their own people and their own power and influence. In this connection their chief concern was the unity of the tribe. One of the classic examples is that of Tshekedi Khama.

“Although he admired the Western way of life, he never despised African ways and beliefs. At the same time, he was a dedicated Christian. The London Missionary Society was in an unusual position in the Ngwato country. Khama had given them the monopoly and had refused admission to other societies and sects. As a result they had become virtually a state church and both Khama and Tshekedi developed an attitude not unlike Henry VIII's towards the Anglican Church” (Benson,1960:57).

What this means in effect is that Khama was almost a *de facto* head of the London Missionary Society. This was clearly manifested in the case of a group of Bahurutshe, who, having been received into the Bangwato tribe, did not follow the precepts of the church as laid down by Khama. They were summarily dismissed from the confines of the tribe when they refused to comply.

Further back in history, when Khama III became king, the history of Christianity took a sharp turn. Whereas his father before him had not been a Christian, Khama III embraced Christianity wholeheartedly and firmly.

“As soon as Khama III was installed, he instituted reforms fundamental to his religious faith and his growing confidence in values of Western education and justice. Some of them could hardly have been more unpopular. He outlawed witchcraft, polygamy, the payment of *bogadi* (bride gift), barbarous forms of corporal punishment, traditional destroying of one of twin children, and other such customs. Prohibition was sternly enforced, and the conditions of the Masarwa (Bushman), who had long been in servitude to the Bamangwato, were improved. A law to protect big game and certain big birds was another innovation. He established a new capital of some 30,000 people at Palapye. He was never idle, and his tall, wiry figure, always clad in European clothes could be seen here, there and everywhere till the evening, when it was his custom to hold a prayer meeting for as many as he could induce to attend” (Benson, 1960:28-29).

Unlike his father Sekhome Kgari before him, this was a man with an iron will and a very strong character. He boldly went against what his own people traditionally stood for. He went all out to be an unwavering Christian who adopted the Western way of life fully, including attire, and encouraged whoever he could, to follow the same way without coercion. He had no problem moving among his people to encourage them. To him it was a mission to be among his people, encouraging and cajoling (Harris, 1924:16 ff).

Khama III's brothers were vying with him for the rule of the Bamangwato. His favourite brother, Kgamane, was very calculating. He realised the importance of religion and devised a strategy to unseat his brother.

“Meanwhile, new dramas had developed in the Bamangwato royal family. Polygamous marriages had resulted in dynastic disputes and family feuds in most tribes, and the Bamangwato were no exception. Sekgoma I, the last pagan [sic] chief, had had nine wives and of his eighteen children sixteen were boys. The sons of the first, second and the seventh huts were principally involved. Khama's favourite brother, Kgamane, was moved by ambition. Soon after Khama had been installed as Chief, he had occasion to make Kgamane his deputy, while he himself led a force against raiding Matabele. Kgamane made a bid for the chieftainship, promising the people a return to heathen practices and beer-drinking if they gave him their support (Benson, 1960:33).”

Kgamane's bid failed and he was eventually exiled from the tribe. Khama continued in his new-found faith.

At the end of the day the Batswana kings had begun to accept Christianity not only for themselves but for their people with always one objective in mind, the unity of the tribe.

2.2 AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF SOME MAINLINE CHURCHES RELEVANT TO THE STUDY

2.2.1 Churches which stand out

A few churches stand out prominently in the history of Christianity in Botswana. Therefore, as far as religion is concerned, the researcher will go into some detail about the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, including its earlier history as the London Missionary Society, and the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana. These two churches are the oldest and, numerically, the strongest churches in Botswana. That is why the account of independency is very much related to them.

The two churches need special mention when talking about Christianity in Botswana, because they can fittingly be described as the pillars of Christianity in the country.

They experienced the birth-pains of early Christian missionary work in Botswana, particularly the efforts expended in preaching the Gospel to Botswana's kings. It is, therefore, important to state briefly how these churches were first founded, how they operated, what methods they used and the tensions they experienced, be these social, cultural or political, and how these tensions formed the basis for the eventual breakaway groups of Botswana independency. Without this history, the researcher believes that the full implication of Botswana independency will be lost to the reader.

2.2.2 Early endeavour: the London Missionary Society and the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa

As already indicated above, Christianity first touched the outskirts of Botswana in the early nineteenth century (Sillery, 1971:15). Some of the pioneers of this

missionary activity were John Campbell, David Livingstone, John Mackenzie and Robert Moffat, all of whom were members of the London Missionary Society.

The year 1821 marked the beginning of Robert Moffat's ministry. Moffat had settled in Kuruman, the northern part of the Cape, at the time regarded as part of the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Missionary expansion into inner Bechuanaland was given added momentum by Mzilikazi, who, from his location in Bulawayo, had dispatched envoys to Robert Moffat to learn of his teachings. On their way back, the envoys were escorted by Moffat through Bechuanaland. The eventual meeting with Mzilikazi bore fruit and the missionaries were now able to use their place as "a base for the proselytization of the far interior" (Sillery, 1971:18).

David Livingstone appeared on the scene around 1842 and his stay had a lasting impact on Bechuanaland. He worked vigorously among the Bakgatla and the Bakwena. After his library was burnt down, he became a great explorer and penetrated the Bechuanaland interior, eventually reaching the Atlantic Ocean via Luanda. In the course of all his travels Livingstone established mission stations, both among the Batswana and the Ndebele of Mzilikazi. He hoped that in this way he could reconcile the warring factions through the preaching of the Gospel and the influence of Christianity.

Missionary endeavour reached a peak in the late nineteenth century when missionaries settled permanently in Shoshong, which was then one of the biggest settlements in central Bechuanaland, and which remains so in modern Botswana. This region is inhabited predominantly by the Bangwato. By that time the Hermannsburg Society had already entrenched itself fully in this region, although the London Missionary Society, through its workers like Price, Moffat and Mackenzie, was able to operate freely. However, there was a great deal of tension between the two societies.

“For Mackenzie and Price the situation was not an easy one, although William Ashton may have been exaggerating when he said that the Germans were jealous and this jealousy showed. Outwardly, relations between the two missionary societies were friendly enough and at Shoshong they agreed to cooperate with each other rather than split the community. Nevertheless, the LMS always regarded Bechuanaland as its own special field, although it failed to replace Livingstone and, until then, had made no attempt to occupy Shoshong. Despite all this, the LMS continued to regard the Germans as interlopers (Sillery, 1971:29-30).”

Apparently, there were significant religious differences between the German and London missionaries. Their beliefs and observances, or rituals, seemed to be directly opposed to each other.

“Mackenzie considered that the German missionaries continued to practise medieval customs such as, for example, various Communion rituals. He maintained that they had retained too many rites of the medieval church which were, as far as the British Nonconformists were concerned, much too elaborate. The practice of lighting three candles at noon for Holy Communion was an issue which scandalised the LMS missionaries who considered such practices akin to Roman Catholicism and Robert Moffat even labelled the Hermannsburg minister at Dithubaruba and his colleagues “Jesuits”. There was a strong feeling that if the Germans went to do their mission work in other parts of Southern Africa, such as for example Swaziland, the LMS would be much better off in the then Bechuanaland (Sillery, 1971:30).”

The fact that the Germans were Lutherans and the British Calvinists, as Mackenzie maintained, led to permanent rivalry between the two groups.

The efforts of the entire missionary enterprise were dealt a very serious blow when Mzilikazi's warriors attacked Shoshong in 1863. However, in many villages, "any of the villagers known to be servants of missionaries were spared" (Sillery, 1971:31).

There were many converts among the Tswana tribes, although the Ndebeles remained completely impervious to Christianity, which seemed to them a religion that cut at the very roots of militarism, a concept that was sacred to Mzilikazi and his forces. Therefore, those who embraced Christianity had to face hardship.

Christianity among the Batswana also had its fair share of problems. The evangelisation of the Bangwato coincided with a lot of fighting within the tribe. This was due mainly to the fear that the sons of the reigning monarch, Sekgoma, namely, Kgama and Kgamane, would stray from the laws and customs of their forefathers since they had embraced Christianity. Matters came to a head when five sons of the ruler refused to undergo circumcision. Fighting broke out and the tribe was thrown into turmoil and factions arose in all directions. The missionaries lived through it all and survived (Sillery, 1971:32ff).

Although Mackenzie's proclamation of Christianity occurred in troubled times, Christianity nevertheless took firm root in central Botswana. Shoshong today (1983) has a population of 15,000 inhabitants, and has more African Initiated Churches than any other town, village or settlement in Botswana.

The biggest Christian church in the Republic of Botswana today is the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa. This is the largest church in Botswana, both in terms of numbers and in terms of mission stations, the oldest of these being in Shoshong, north-west of Palapye, which is the church's earliest base. Around this central mission station congregations are firmly established at Kalamare, Mmutlane and outlying districts. The United Congregational Church of

Southern Africa was firmly established among the Bamangwato in Shoshong and Serowe, the Bakwena at Molepolole and the Bangwaketse in Kanye.

Largely through the initiative of missionaries like Livingstone, Moffat and Mackenzie, the church grew steadily and today has mission stations in practically all of Botswana's urban and rural centres. The membership of the church includes kings, headmen, members of parliament, lawyers, clerks and people from all walks of life. The church is, in fact, an indigenous form of Congregationalism.

“The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa as a denomination is a product of the mission work of the London Missionary Society of England and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Although both these held beliefs which can be described as Congregational in present day terms, the United Congregational Church Southern Africa congregationalism is not an exact replica of British or American Congregationalism. It has its own distinctive history formed out of indigenous conditions and circumstances (Mokobi, 1984:72).”

The Bakwena are said to have been easy to convert to Christianity and, encouraged by this, the missionaries decided to ordain African ministers.

In 1931 the Mission work at Molepolole was put under the superintendency of the United Free Church of Scotland at their own offer, under Dr. P.M. Shepard, a medical missionary who arrived in 1930. He was ordained minister and worked in a happy partnership with Reverend M.T. Mower. Reverend Merriweather joined Dr. Shepard in 1944 and took over as superintendent minister of Kweneng five years later (Mokobi, 1984:76).

Under the missionaries and newly ordained ministers, the church prospered. The Scottish Livingstone Hospital was built at Molepolole and the church spread as

far east as Tlokweng, a village on the south-east border post outside present-day Gaborone. The church in this area has had African ministers like the Reverend Ramasaseng Mothibi, Reverend Solomon Moremong and Reverend K. Molokwe, all of whom graduated from the London Missionary Society Bible School in Kanye.

In 1963 Gaborone came into being as a town and with it was born the United Congregational Church of South Africa, albeit under the name Union Church. The birth of modern Gaborone was due to a decision to move Botswana's capital from Mafikeng to Gaborone so that the country's capital would be located within its own borders. This entailed the churches serving the Batswana to move also. This led to various inter-church talks, which in 1964 culminated in five churches pooling their resources to construct a church building, which is still known as Trinity Church today. The five churches were the Anglican, Congregationalist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches and the Society of Friends (Quakers). A union comprising the five participating churches was formed and two resident missionaries were appointed, namely the Reverend Alan Butler of the Anglican Church and the Reverend J.D. Jones of the London Missionary Society.

Today, the church is gradually becoming decentralised, which means that it is gradually falling under the leadership of ordained Batswana who run the church. This decentralisation process was given impetus when the last member of the union, the Anglicans, moved to their new premises, where their cathedral is situated.

“It will be noted, therefore, that the Gaborone Union Church formed in Trinity in 1964 has since disintegrated and only a thriving local church of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa remains in its place, clinging to the name of Gaborone Union Church because of constitutional expediency (Mokobi, 1984:78).”

Rational thinking dictated that unity was the only viable method of survival. Eventually, under a joint committee set up to investigate the possibilities of United Congregationalism, links were forged with the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa in South Africa. However, it soon became clear that the branches in South Africa and Botswana would have to part ways, which finally happened in 1980. The events that followed are an indication of the underlying discontent, which gives an insight into the basis for independency.

Right from the very beginning, there was a feeling that the two branches would not succeed as sister churches. Reports have it that, from about 1974, there was already a feeling that ideological and political preoccupation by South Africa left her little, if any, time to think of the sister church in Botswana. This was well put by the former general secretary of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, the Reverend Felix Mokobi.

“As a region we had no administrative authority apart from operating through the Assembly of the denomination. We had no right to determine the direction of the Church as regards the national concerns of the Black independent state in the Southern African setting. Moreover, the Assembly was so busy concerning itself then, as it still does, with the urgent matters affecting the troubled majority of its members within South Africa that it lost touch with the concern of its members outside that Republic (Mokobi, 1984:80).”

After this the branch in Botswana was accorded the status of a synod as a region. The immediate impact of this move was that the constitution was amended to allow all regions outside South Africa to be of synod status. This meant that from then on the church in Botswana was fully autonomous, with all the rights and duties of a full-blown synod. This eventually led to all other synods outside South Africa becoming independent synods.

Like the Organisation of African Initiated Churches in Botswana, which looks to the unity of all African Initiated Churches, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa remains, however, committed to union and ecumenism.

The United Congregational Church of Southern Africa as a denomination continues to engage in serious discussions with other denominations leading to possible union. It is hoped that one such union may soon be consummated with the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (Devitt, 1984:82).

2.2.3 The Dutch Reformed Church

The Dutch Reformed Church is one of Botswana's biggest churches. The oldest centre is in Mochudi, the capital of the Kgatleng District, which even has a mission hospital, the Deborah Retief Memorial Hospital.

The birth of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana came about as a result of the Cape Synod's decision, in 1857, to establish a mission station beyond the borders of the Cape Colony. The two pioneers selected for this purpose were Reverend MacKidd of Scotland and Reverend Henri Gonin of Switzerland. Reverend Mackidd was posted to Soutpansberg, where he ministered to the Bakgatla. Reverend Gonin worked among the Bakwena, under the leadership of Chief Kgamanyane of Saulspoort. Soon after this, there was a huge exodus of the Bakgatla across the border into Bechuanaland. The reason for this exodus was the oppression they experienced under Boer rule.

The deep sense of hurt experienced at this turn of events can best be expressed in the words of a Dutch Reformed Church Mokgatla missionary, the Reverend Cornelius Molwantwa.

“The Bakgatla people, while at Saulspoort, as one can expect, suffered what the rest of other African people suffered, namely oppression under the

Boers or Afrikaners of South Africa. In order to make the reader understand this church we must say something about the Bakgatla exodus. Because of the suffering and really painful suffering, which every Mokgatla child can never forget when thinking of what the Boers really did to our forefathers, our chief of the time Kgamanyane, was asked by the Bakwena chief to cross the Marico River to come here into Botswana. Although later the spirit of the oppressors, the Boers, rose again and followed them again. The exodus took place in the year 1870. Kgamanyane left his capital Saulspoot with his people and established a new village at Mochudi. However, a few people remained at Saulspoot (Molwantwa, 1984:101)."

Missionaries followed these people in their exodus. Pieter Brink, a young missionary, arrived in Botswana in 1874. When Chief Kgamanyane died in the same year, he was succeeded by Chief Lenchwe I, who gave Pieter Brink his blessing to operate in Mochudi. The first church building and school were erected and a printing press established in Mochudi. When Brink died in 1886, he was succeeded by the Reverend E.B. Beyers. In 1892, King Lenchwe I embraced the faith and it was his conversion that influenced the course of events in the years that followed.

It was the turning point in the history of the Bakgatla church. After undergoing catechism classes and going up into the hills for a quite period of meditation, King Lenchwe I handed down "a new law" for his people. His was going to be a Dutch Reformed Christian rule.

The chief, who was now a Christian, proclaimed strict laws in accordance with Christian conviction. Sunday's observance was enforced, and several "heathen" customs were abolished. No other denomination was allowed besides the Dutch Reformed Church, and for all practical purposes, the Dutch Reformed Church became the national church of the Bakgatla people (Devitt, 1984:101).

The church prospered under the able leadership of younger ministers who followed afterwards, namely the Reverend Neethling and Reverend Pieter Stofberg. The missionary work was interrupted briefly during the Anglo-Boer War, but resumed and doubled its efforts in 1903, culminating in the erection of a very big church building. The mission station went on to become the headquarters of the Dutch Reformed Church in Botswana. To this day, the Dutch Reformed Church is the strongest in Mochudi, although in the years that followed Reverend Phiri broke away from the church to form the Bakgatla Free Church, taking many members of the Dutch Reformed Church with him.

However, due to present-day administrative structures, with Gaborone as Botswana's capital, the head offices of the Dutch Reformed Church are now located in Gaborone.

2.3 STRATEGIES AND METHODS

The mainline churches all employed very similar methods to spread their sphere of influence in the so-called Third World. Their strategies were the same, irrespective of major denomination divisions. Even Protestant and Catholic churches used almost identical methods, underlining the suspicion that Europeans were first and foremost concerned with colonial expansionism rather than the spread of Christianity.

The methods employed by the mainline churches to widen their influence in Botswana were substantially the same as those employed in South Africa.

2.3.1 Ecclesiastical structures

Firstly, the mainline churches were keen to erect imposing church edifices that acted as focal points in the community. The presence of these structures effectively led local people to accept that the church was the centre of life and the

centre of village activity. Other factors came into play also. The mission centre offered employment to many categories of workers, thereby effectively drawing many people to the mission station. The mill, an important factor in the mission station, was perhaps the greatest attraction. What was perhaps of greater significance was the fact that the mission stations were what might be called "houses of healing", because it was here that medicine was dispensed from the clinic and hospital. Given the tremendous impact this has on African life, it is easy to understand why the mission churches became very popular and commanded a great deal of respect among the poor people in the villages. That is why, therefore, local people looked to the mission not only for their spiritual wellbeing, but also for their physical wellbeing. This was the colonial era; by buying goods at the European mission station, local people felt that they were, in fact, improving on their lot. European clothing and luxury items enhanced the lives of many, or so it was felt at the time.

2.3.2 The school

As an institution, the school probably ranks as the number one agent in aiding the missionary enterprise. It was, admittedly, designed to impart the skills of reading and writing, but unwittingly it was in many ways the instrument of colonisation, domination and cultural oppression. An example of this is the system of the American Board Mission. The customs and culture of African people were rigorously suppressed. African festive ritual dances became sins of heathenism and the traditional drinking of African brewed beer meant debauchery. Unfortunately, the same attitudes gradually permeated the European missions in Botswana also. European culture was propagated over and above and came to replace African culture, which the missionaries never rated very highly. A female colleague and lecturer at the University of Botswana tells how, at a certain mission school, they were absolutely forbidden to perform any traditional Tswana dances at all. Instead, all the girls in her class were taught

Irish-Scottish dances. According to an interview with Dr. Sheila Tlou, this was in the 1960s during her high school days (1983).

During a theology department workshop, a student addressing the issue of Christianity and culture, said: "The missionaries brought us the Gospel wrapped in plastic. Now, we want the Gospel alright. But now we want to unwrap the plastic, which is western culture and civilisation, throw it away and have the Gospel of Jesus Christ only" (Makhaya, 1984). What he really meant was that the time has now come for the indigenisation of the Gospel.

Before he died, the great Sir Seretse Kgama stated that a nation without a past was a lost nation and that a people without national roots was a people without a base. He put the matter even more forcefully when he addressed the conference of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party at Francistown on April 1 1972, when he said:

"Our aspirations, our goals, our politics, our principles must be identified and expressed in terms which our people understand. This means that we must build them on the foundations provided by Botswana's culture and by Botswana's values and traditions" (Kgama, 1972).

To this day, the battle-cry in Botswana during national festive celebrations is: *Batswana le tswa kae? Le ya kae?* -"Batswana, what are your roots? Where are you headed?"

Today, the role of the school has changed. Instead of Tswana dances being forbidden, some of the best traditional dance troupes are now touring abroad. These troupes are made up of school-going youth and children representing their schools and the nation.

In saying all this, the researcher does not intend to disparage the educational benefit that formed an intrinsic part of the missionary enterprise; however, we

should not lose sight of the damage inflicted on the psyche of the African people as a result of this enterprise.

2.3.3 Financial advancement and benefits

Under this heading, the missionary grinding mill, the goods store, the bookshop, the grocery shop and all other auxiliary services are included. All these played a role in the material upliftment of black people. But, when Africa counts the costs, was all this justified or justifiable? Or was it simply so that the European messengers could create hitherto unheard of, unknown, and unnecessary needs and demands in the proselytes and neophytes? There are no simple answers to these questions. As this story unfolds, we may all venture tentative answers. Later on, the researcher will examine contrasting methods employed by the founders of independency and their five churches in Botswana regarding the proclamation of the Gospel under 2.9.2, Geographical expansion.

2.4 AFRICAN CHURCH INDEPENDENCY IN BOTSWANA

The written history of independency in Botswana is rather scant. The preceding pages will have given the reader some idea why African Initiated Churches were so long in coming into being in Botswana before national independence in 1966. One of the factors is the power traditionally wielded by its kings. For example, a king who embraced the faith through one of the mainline churches, in all known cases, expected his subjects to follow suit. Although this helped to maintain the unity of the tribe, as a result religious independency was viewed with suspicion and founders and followers of such churches were persecuted. In Mochudi, a minister who, with a band of followers, broke away from the Dutch Reformed Church was promptly banished from the kingdom. Some of these incidents cannot but remind one of the turmoil of the Reformation when *cuius regio, eius religio* was the order of the day. Literally translated it means "the one whose region it is, the religion of him or her shall be". In effect, it meant that the religion

of the ruler had to be embraced by all his subjects. During the dark days of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation when the warring Christian factions, Catholics and Protestants, grew tired of the bloodshed, they agreed that the subjects of each ruler or monarch would follow his or her choice of denomination. This was an attempt to stem the bloodshed. In effect, this meant that subjects who were unhappy could move over to another land or territory where the ruler practised their preferred religion. *Cuius regio, eius religio* did not work in Europe then and failed to work in the then Bechuanaland also.

According to the literature, the history of independency in the various tribal areas of the Protectorate was from the very beginning characterised by suppression by both the respective chiefs and the church, through what Lagerwerf describes as “mutual interdependence”(Lagerwerf, 1982:29). When chiefs favoured a certain denomination, they colluded with missionaries of the said denomination to suppress a different choice. This hampered the aspirations of those who wished to found churches and was the main factor in delaying Botswana church independency until the sixties. Those defecting members who had followed a “schismatic” leader usually returned to the official mainline fold when things became very difficult.

A distinction has to be made, though, regarding conversion and revolting against Christianity and the inability to live according to the demands and precepts of Christianity, in which case it had nothing to do with independency. The case in point is that of Kgosi Sechele, described further on, who could not adhere to what was expected of him, namely, abstaining from sleeping with four of his “divorced” wives as required by the missionaries (Chirenje, 1977:42a).

Setiloane (Setiloane, 1976:1a) places the question of the acceptance of Christianity further back in history and maintains, based on records, that missionary work took place around 1816, in the then known Bechuanaland, among the Batlhaping. It then took place among the Barolong at Pitsane in 1823

at the same time as the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society proceeded to do missionary work also in Lesotho. This was followed by missionary work among the Bahurutshe at Motito in 1829.

Independency, however, did take place fairly early in Botswana.

Tlou (Tlou 1985a:8) gives an analysis of some of the early clashes between converts and missionaries where they did not see eye to eye. Some of these issues included belief in Modimo, the Most High God, as understood by the Batswana, and the traditional veneration of the ancestors.

“The very first case of independency seems to date as far back as about 1886 and took place among the Tawana in Ngamiland. According to Tlou, who bases himself on the LMS Annual Report for the year 1886, the outside agitators were men who having been expelled from the established churches among the southern Tswana for such offences as adultery, went to Ngamiland, preached independently, and sometimes turned some Tswana away from the LMS (Lagerwerf, 1984:30).”

It is clear that the opposing involvement of kings in any breakaway movement did a lot to curb independency from spreading and proliferating. Generally, whenever a split occurred, the leader took with him a large part of the congregation. Sometimes, as in the case of King Bathoen, a dilemma presented itself because many high-ranking members of the tribe were involved. However, in the final analysis, the broader and bigger unity of the tribe was considered more important and when circumstances demanded it, the kings acted firmly. Part of their control was to effectively ban anybody who led a splinter group from operating or preaching within the confines of the particular tribal territory (Lagerwerf, 1982:32). This discouraged potential leaders. The "schismatic" leaders were either banned or banished, failing which they were imprisoned. That is the fate that befell Sencho Legong in Ngwaketse territory. Any founder of independency,

therefore, had to operate against great odds, as was the case with Mothowagae, whose breakaway movement was, in fact, very strong.

Mothowagae Motlogelwa, who was a Mongwaketse by birth, had been a very active member of the London Missionary Society. However, he fell out with the missionary Eden Lloyd, who promptly dismissed him from office for "disobedience". Motlogelwa took with him a huge section of his congregation and outstations and founded one of the first African Indigenous Churches in Botswana, the King Edward Free Bakgatla Church in the early 1800s. The name seems very ironic but one has to remember that during this time claiming direct links with the crown could have been seen as a status symbol.

There were several attempts at independency in the area during the late 1800s and early 1900s but these were largely nipped in the bud by the authorities under the baton of the mainline churches. The kings or chiefs who belonged to one or other of the mainline churches usually acted firmly against "schismatic" once a decision had been taken.

“Chief Bathoen treated the schismatics very carefully as they included important people, but he fell out with Mothowagae in 1903 and ordered him to leave the reserve, a sentence that was reduced to banishment to another part of the reserve. Mothowagae apologized and there was a temporary reconciliation. Later, however, the movement took on a political complexion and just before his death in 1910 Bathoen attempted to suppress it. Bathoen's successor Seepapitso banished Mothowagae from the chiefdom and the dissident evangelist went to Taung in British Bechuanaland” (Lagerwerf, 1984:31).”

At the time Taung, which today falls under the Northern Cape near Kuruman, was still British Bechuanaland, which covered a very large area.

However, once Botswana gained national independence in September 1966, the way was paved for a staggering increase in the number of African Initiated Churches in the country. From a handful of black churches in the 1960s, independency has grown to a large number of churches in the 1990s.

2.5 DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCHES

Both mainline churches and African Initiated Churches are fairly well distributed throughout Botswana in all ten districts, although the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa accounts for about a third of all Christians in the country.

The five churches discussed in this study are concentrated mostly in a few prominent districts, such as the South-East District, where the capital, Gaborone, is situated, and the Central District, the capital of which is Serowe, the home of the first President of the Republic of Botswana, Sir Seretse Kgama. In fact, when four of the churches talk of "going home" for the festive seasons and great feasts, they trek to the Central District of Serowe. Only the Forward in Faith Church looks further north to its headquarters in Zimbabwe. For the sake of clarity, these five churches have been listed and their various locations stated below.

- (a) Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion, whose headquarters are in Tonota, Central District, and operates mostly in Kweneng and Kgalagadi.
- (b) Forward in Faith Church has its headquarters in Zimbabwe. In Botswana it operates only in the South-East and Southern districts.
- (c) The headquarters of Galatia Church in Zion are in Serowe, Central District. It operates also in the South-East, Southern, Kweneng and North-East districts.

- (d) St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana has its headquarters in Serowe, Central District, and also operates in the South-East, Southern and Kweneng districts.
- (e) St Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church has its headquarters in Selebi-Phikwe, Central District. It operates also in the South-East and North-East districts.

Mainline churches are generally fairly well distributed over most of the districts. However, in some cases, the numbers are quite small. The researcher shall therefore concentrate mostly on those districts in which membership is significant or at least noticeable.

As stated above, the numerically strongest mainline church is the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, which has the most church buildings and mission structures, including the Scottish Livingstone Memorial Hospital in Molepolole. Its headquarters are located in Gaborone. Apart from the Kweneng and Central districts, where membership is strongest owing to early missionary activity, the church is evenly spread throughout the country and is found in all other districts.

The Dutch Reformed Church has recently moved its headquarters from Mochudi, Kgatleng District, where the church is strongest, to Gaborone. After the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa in Botswana, it is numerically the largest church and is also found in the Central District, the Ghanzi and Kgalagadi districts, the Kweneng District and the North-East District (Devitt, 1984).

The Roman Catholic Church also has its main base in the capital, Gaborone. It too is found in all the other districts. The Anglican Church has its headquarters in Gaborone and is also found in all the other districts. The Seventh Day Adventist

Church is another numerically strong church, although its area of concentration is more limited. Its headquarters are in Kanye, Southern District, where the church founded and runs the local hospital. The other fairly numerically strong mainline churches found in virtually all districts are the Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church and Assemblies of God.

Other African Initiated Churches are found in all districts, with the top three heaviest concentrations in the South-East, Central and North-East districts, respectively. In all of these districts the main focus of research was the South-East District and the Kweneng District. The reasons for this were simple: three of these churches were located close to the researcher's workplace and thus enabled him to visit them frequently. The other two churches in the Kweneng District were also within reasonable reach and this also helped him to make frequent visits. These are also small, vibrant churches and are good examples of the vitality and effectiveness of AICs.

2.5.1 Past perceptions

In missionary and anthropological literature the religion of AICs was presented in a negative manner, for example, the literature was pervaded with irrational beliefs in magic, spirits, ancestors and so on. Western ideology and scholarship often undervalue African cultural heritage. Things African are seen as lacking significance. African thinking is perceived as "prelogical" because it does not fit the Western secular, intellectual approach. No written theology for most people creates the impression that theology is totally lacking. However, the value of people's perspectives can be destroyed by ignorance. Much can be learned from the indigenous Christianity of Southern Africa. The belief systems of the AICs are charged with African ritual, custom, tradition and an own individualised worship patterned on Africa. To a large extent they have thrown out of the window the customs and practices of the West, and in so doing, dispensed with the Eurocentricity of mainline churches. Like a past, now late, theology student in a

workshop at the University of Botswana in the 80s one put it: "The missionaries brought us the Gospel wrapped in plastic. Now we want to unwrap the plastic, which is European culture, and get down to the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (Makhanya, 1984).

When we look at the attitude of missionaries in former Bechuanaland and the rest of Southern Africa, which is the main focus of study, we find the pages of history littered with incessant and relentless attacks on the culture and customs of the Batswana to a point where one wonders whether the missionaries acted out of malice or selective ignorance, or both. The researcher will give a few examples of this war of attrition between European and African culture. However, it should be remembered that the missionaries were sent specifically to civilise, elevate and convert the depraved and lowly peoples of Africa. Indeed, this summed up the mandate that the Reverend John Campbell was charged with by the London Missionary Society in 1812. He was sent to inspect the state of mission stations already established and continue to evangelise in the sub-continent. His exact mandate was "the conversion of the heathen, keeping in view at the same time the promotion of their civilisation" (Sillery, 1974:15). The London Missionary Society (LMS) could not have been more wrong. Tlou discusses in minute detail the highly organised and civilised political, social and economic system of the Batswana at this time, including the hierarchical belief system embracing *Modimo* (The High One/God) and the lesser luminaries, namely, the ancestors (Tlou, 1985:8-113). Sillery sums this up beautifully in chapter 2 of his book wherein he quotes Schapera, who unapologetically states that the Batswana believed and worshipped *Modimo* (the Supreme God) and gave veneration to the ancestors. He says:

"Neither by instinct nor training were the missionaries qualified to recognize that the people of the vast field that opened before them had a well developed religious system of their own "(Sillery,1974:17).

According to Sillery, Robert Moffat was particularly hard on African culture:

“Moffat was a man of extraordinary zeal, perseverance and courage, but of all the missionaries of the Society he was the least sympathetic towards African culture. This to him was a mere hotchpotch of ridiculous and harmful superstitions. The missionary, he held, had only one important task. This was to spread the Gospel among the heathen. He therefore disapproved of those who, like the great John Philip, regarded it as their duty also to champion the cause of oppressed African peoples (Sillery, 1974:19-20).”

One redeeming quality about Moffat is that he was completely loyal towards the people among whom he preached and went to all lengths to protect their territorial integrity. When the *Barolong* were on the verge of attack and possible extinction by the marauding troops of Manthatisi, Moffat organised a counter attack by the Griquas under Adam Kok, Andries Waterboer and Barend Barends, who completely routed Manthatisi's hordes (Molema, 1966:11-13).

There are many customs and practices that have weathered the storm and continue to exist among the Batswana to this day. Most of these major customs and practices have persisted in the same way amongst the other African peoples and other groups of the area of study in various forms. These are *bogadi* or *lobola* (the marriage gift or dowry), *bogwera* and *bojale* (male and female initiation, respectively), veneration of the ancestors, ritual African beer brewing and drinking, the *sororate* and *levirate* customs, the traditional doctor consultations, *go phatsa* (ritual marks and incisions on the body), ritual slaughtering in times of death and marriages, blessing of the first fruits of the land, ceremonies to pray for rain and traditional doctor consultations, which white writers refer to as witchcraft. In Setswana, *boloi* (witchcraft) was always held as anathema, and this was true of all tribes in the subcontinent. Insinuating that

boloi was practised among the Batswana is a far cry from the truth. It was an aberration punishable by death.

Khama III was a suave ruler, very diplomatic, very popular and very strong. He was, therefore, able to take forceful decisions whenever he needed to. He was also respected for being mild on his vanquished plotters and traitors, such as when he forgave his father Sekhome and his brother Khamane (Harris, 1922:61-63). Khama III banned *bogadi*, *beer brewing and drinking*, *bogwera* and *bojale* and took a swipe at polygamy. He could not stop prayers for rain but personally stayed away (Harris 1922:59). In the same vein, however, when he saw the white man's liquor destroying his people he took decisive action. He condemned brandy and its associated ills in no uncertain terms:

“Take everything you have, strip the iron off the roofs, gather all your possessions, and go! More, if there is any other white man here who does not like my laws, let him go too. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves. I am trying to lead my people according to the Word of God, which we have received from you white people, and you show us an example of wickedness. You know that some of my brothers have learned to like the drink, and you tempt them with it. I make an end of it today. Go! Take your cattle, leave my town [probably kingdom], and never come back (Harris, 1922:55).”

Indeed Kgosi Moremi II, who had wanted to rule his people like Khama III as a Christian ruler, assured Hepburn that he would banish “old customs”. After having been a Christian ruler for some time, he went on to ask the missionary Hepburn that the Batawana customs be accepted and be allowed to run parallel with Christian customs. This was rejected, as everything African was considered belonging to savages and “heathen”. The result was that Moremi II pulled back and with him the Batawana people.

What the missionaries failed to realise was that they could never win by vilifying African culture and traditions. This was later on decried in a scholarly manner by Hastings, who puts it bluntly that the Western church was to blame for propelling independency in Africa:

“If the mission churches too were growing fast, their sense of direction and ethos had changed rather little in response to the quickly mounting waves of nationalism and cultural consciousness. In country after country the colonial system was manifestly weakening, yet African initiatives and ambitions still found all too little room for manoeuvre within missionary controlled structures and were turned increasingly into others channels and it seems likely that much of the mounting frustration found expression in religious independency “(Hastings, 1979:121).”

There is a rare recording of an exchange between the monarchs of Lesotho, Moshweshwe the Great and his counterpart among the Bakwena, Sechele. This must be seen against the background that Moshweshwe and Sechele were cousins by virtue of the two of them sharing the same totem, *kwena*. The Bakwena 's totem is the crocodile, like Moshweshwe who belonged to the clan of *Kwena ya Mokoteli* -The Crocodile of Mokoteli. This relatedness is described by the saying, “Cousin, we are all swimming in the same river” (Head, 1981:182). Around the middle of 1848 the former got wind of the fact that the latter was on the verge of becoming a Christian by being baptised. Moshweshwe sent envoys and urged him not to take such a step. His people could become Christians but not he, Kgosi of the Bakwena. He even sent animals and guns to Sechele as a sign of his sincerity. He promised him more guns if he desisted from being a Christian. Why would Kgosi Moshweshwe go to such lengths? Presumably, because, from the point of view of the culture and the belief and political systems of the Bakwena, the nation was better off without a Christian ruler. Sechele thanked him and went ahead anyway. He was forced to divorce four of his wives

and was baptised a Christian. A few months down the line one of his four “divorced” wives, Mokgokong, was pregnant and Sechele accepted responsibility. He was duly disciplined and suspended by the LMS until 1889. Meanwhile, probably because of political consideration for the unity of his own nation and the unity of their territories, Kgosi Mosielele of the Bakgatla had proposed marriage to one of the “divorced” wives of Kgosi Sechele. When the missionaries of the doddering church in his kingdom refused to sanction the proposed marriage, he promptly imposed an injunction against church attendance in his kingdom (Chirenje, 1977:42-43).

There is a need for the reassessment of the theology of AICs. Wholesale condemnation is definitely out. Bryan Wilson forcefully asserts this in the foreword to Marie-Louise Martin’s book, *Kimbangu*. He asserts:

“The pressure to conform to some generalized Christian standards as understood in the west has been moderated both by the growing ecumenical tolerance within Christendom, and by the increasing uncertainty about the contours of orthodoxy within the western churches. There are fundamentalist churches in the west that are as literal in their approach as are many Africans, even if the focus of their concern is different. What will become clear to the attentive reader of Dr. Martin’s investigation of the Kimbanguist Church is the complexity of spiritual evolution. That Christianity, even when transplanted with care, cannot function in identical ways in different cultures is a sociological truth that missionaries should long ago have recognized. That its local viability is dependent on a variety of particular conditions (and we have mentioned the economic cost as one) must also be apparent. That it must accommodate the particular cultural demands of its local clientele is also evident. That it will find its vigour by re-enactment in the specific folklore of a people (as indeed happened in other parts of the world) must also be expected” (Martin, 1975:xxiii-xxiv).

The following Setswana customs and traditions still remain in force among the Batswana: *bogadi*, *bogwera/bojale*, *go rapella pula* (praying for rain), *go phatsiwa* (to have incisions made on one's body), *go bona ngaka* (to see a traditional doctor), *badimo* (ancestor veneration), *bojalwa jwa merero* (traditional beer rituals), the *sororate* custom and polygamy in many rural areas but also, to a lesser degree, in the urban areas.

The customs and rituals will come again in later chapters. But in order to zoom in on the issue of missionary versus culture discussion, we can ask ourselves how the missionaries never condemned their own dowry system but had the temerity to condemn and attempted to obliterate the African dowry system. Clearly own culture got mixed up with the preaching of the Gospel.

2.6 OVERVIEW OF THE EVOLVING OF AICs IN BOTSWANA

2.6.1 Relationship between the state and religion

Botswana became independent on 30 September 1966. It was formerly a protectorate under British colonial rule and achieved its independence without any bloodshed when other African countries on the continent, following Ghana, started claiming back indigenous leadership. This point is important in that political independence opened the Batswana's eyes to the validity of their own customs and worth of local cultural values and African rituals and ideals. Indeed, the "proliferation" of African Initiated Churches only started gaining momentum after independence, in contrast to the earlier days when they were allegedly forbidden to operate freely (Sillery, 1974:117-119). The principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* referred to above and practised by different chiefs spurred on by various denominations, has been completely revoked by the constitution of the Republic of Botswana.

The important thing to note for the purpose of this study is the religious freedom enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of Botswana, which allows every religious group to operate freely. This in itself has acted as a catalyst for the birth, growth and further spread of African Initiated Churches.

A striking feature of Botswana's political structure is, in fact, the basic equality with which all religious groups, societies and churches are regarded, at least theoretically. The constitution specifically states this in Chapter II, paragraph 3: Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedom of the individual.

“Whereas every person in Botswana is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely:

- (a) life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of the law;

- (b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association; and

- (c) protection for the privacy of his home and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation, the provisions of this chapter shall have effect for the purpose of affording protection to those rights and freedoms subject to such limitations of that protection as are contained in those provisions, being limitations designed to ensure that the enjoyment of the said rights and freedoms of others or the public interest are protected (Constitution of the Republic of Botswana 1966:3).”

An important feature in the relationship between the state and the church is that, usually when there is a major religious conference or seminar, some member of the cabinet will be present, failing which someone else is sure to deputise for him or her. In fact, if the conference is an international one, the proceedings may even be opened by a very senior member of government. For example, during an international symposium of the Muslim Association at the Oasis Motel in Gaborone in 1986, the late vice-president, the Hon. Peter Mmusi, was the guest speaker. He firmly reiterated the policy of the Botswana government to accord complete freedom of worship and organisation to all religious groups within the country's borders. In almost all instances religious seminars and conferences have always been opened by the Ministry of Home Affairs, under whom the Department of the Registrar of Societies falls. The latter department never fails to honour any religious gathering upon invitation (Person observation of researcher over ten years and testimony of AICs in Botswana).

The government does not interfere in the churches' *modus operandi*. The only requirement is that, when applying for permission to operate, churches have to convince government that the rights and safety of all are safeguarded in the course of carrying out their right of freedom of worship and that no-one is likely to get hurt in the process. An example is that of a church minister who "gave a bath" to two people using a highly inflammable substance that caught fire, causing the death of the two participants. At almost every religious seminar or conference, people are told that the government does not interfere with religious freedom except where other people could be harmed, maimed or mutilated.

All mainline churches are exempt in Botswana. This means that they are not required to submit quarterly reports to the government on the church finances, progress, and the latest state of affairs. On the other hand, to date no African Initiated Church apart from the Spiritual Healing Church has been exempted. This situation has been challenged quite often during seminars with questions directed at the Ministry of Home Affairs. In January 1988, during the launching of

the Southern Region of African Initiated Churches in Botswana, an important policy statement was issued by the Minister of Home Affairs. These are the relevant sections of the policy speech:

“Botswana are fortunate in having a constitution, which guarantees any person or group of persons the right to worship and freedom of religion. Government policy therefore allows and creates an atmosphere conducive to the existence of religious societies of varying forms. Freedom of religion and worship, however, is permitted to the extent that it is not abused and does not encroach into other persons' freedom. In order to protect the individual from unscrupulous people, Government has also introduced the Societies Act which ensures that all societies and religious organisations operate within the law. During the last fifteen years, Botswana has seen an increase in the number of groups calling themselves Christian organisations or churches. This shows on the one hand that the climate for spiritual growth is good, and, on the other hand, that there is something wrong with our Christianity or religion if we find we have to form new churches to worship the one and the same God. In Botswana, there is no legislation to control the rapid spread of churches and the formation of splinter groups into fully-fledged churches. This is beginning to cause us problems and it is here that we hope an organisation like yours, the OAIC, can be of assistance. There is need for an organization which can bring these groups together and help to regulate and standardise their activities” (Disele, 1988).

The above notwithstanding, African Initiated Churches still feel left out in the cold. During the latter part of 1985, the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion had its first church building in Gaborone opened publicly. One speaker, who holds a high office in the church and is also a highly placed civil servant, actually went on to address the relevant administrative body and admitted that African Initiated Churches got a raw deal when it came to the allocation of church sites.

He said that African Initiated Churches were always given smaller sites, whereas the mainline sister churches always had much bigger sites on which they could subsequently expand.

Generally, the relationship between African Initiated Churches and the largest Christian church, the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa, is very cordial in all districts. There is hardly a trace of the bitterness or animosity that existed between early Independents and this church while it was still known as the London Missionary Society.

Botswana considers itself a Christian country. There is therefore a definite marked bias towards Christianity, particularly as exemplified and stereotyped in the major mainline churches of the country. Most ministers of government who are Christians belong to the government structures of the mainline churches and therefore the bias towards these churches, as opposed to African Initiated Churches, is very strong. The latter are treated almost casually. Hence, the complaint about small church sites and non-exemption stated above. It is only now that things are beginning to improve for the African Initiated Churches. However, as stated above, there are a few exceptions to this, the most important being the Spiritual Healing Church, a church that has been founded by Botswana blacks who have tried to graft the church onto the culture and customs of the Batswana of Botswana. This church is proving to be very popular with the government and today it is rated as equivalent to a mainline church. Although limited to specific areas only, the Spiritual Healing Church has a very strong membership, is financially self-supporting and very successful. There is a marked and growing respect accorded to this particular African Initiated Church. However, one can confidently state that the government itself treats all churches fairly. The question is whether junior officials are failing to apply government policy. This is why, perhaps, some tension occasionally occurs between African Initiated Churches and the government and between African Initiated Churches and the mainline churches. For example, in past meetings of the Gaborone

Ministers' Fraternal, some African Initiated Church members complained that in all the national prayer services they were given only minor roles to perform, such as leading people in short prayers, while ministers from mainline churches were given major roles such as delivering sermons. Although matters have improved, a certain bias does exist.

In spite of these minor problems, relationships between African Initiated Churches and mainline churches are, in fact, good. For example, they virtually all sit on local executive committees of fraternal. This is significant because these ecumenical bodies wield a certain amount of power and can aptly be referred to as the conscience of the nation.

African Initiated Churches in Botswana are aware that their overall educational level is lower than that of their counterparts and in meetings they actually ask for help and guidance in educational matters. Unfortunately, this honest humility may have an unfortunate effect on people outside clerical circles, leading them to regard African Initiated Churches as inferior bodies. The educated ministers of the mainline churches enjoy a certain social status in sophisticated circles, whether the circle is ecclesiastical, educational, legal, political or otherwise, which their African Initiated Church counterparts do not.

Another aggravating factor may be the fact that African Initiated Church ministers live in the poorer sections of the community, namely areas that are either rundown or simply known to be poor. This has obvious social implications. On the other hand, when it comes to bread and butter issues, they know that theirs is the more authentic voice, rooted in the plight of the *anawim Yahweh*, the poor people of Yahweh.

In this connection, the researcher wishes to postulate a certain hypothesis. This hypothesis is based on empirical data obtained from living and sharing the experience of both mainline and African Initiated Christians, both of whom he has

been associated with not only in his work as a researcher, but from childhood and through meeting people from many different African countries. The tendency to look down on members of African Initiated Churches as unsophisticated is common throughout the continent and in South Africa in particular, which has the highest number of African Initiated Churches. Ghetto or location type churches are looked down upon by a certain type of Christian, for whom sophistication is synonymous with mainline churches, in spite of their sometimes crude violation of African cultural religious, political, socio-economic and even basic human values. On the other hand, the study of the five churches referred to above showed that an increasing number of educated people are breaking out of their rut and joining African Initiated Churches. This could possibly add weight to the argument that African people are beginning to find it more meaningful to belong to black churches with a black leadership rather than to mainline churches, most of which have a white leadership. In Botswana, political awareness is beginning to gain ground and the tables are turning. African Initiated Churches are starting to appeal to the rank and file of black society.

The issue of exemption touched above is one of the key issues affecting the relationship of African Initiated Churches with government. Whereas major mainline churches are exempt, African Initiated Churches are saddled with having to provide quarterly reports of their finances. Their bitterness, or rather frustration, stems from the fact that while they are expected to account for every little hard-earned *thebe* (cent), their comparatively wealthy counterparts do not have to account for their millions. This has obviously cast suspicion on the government's attitude towards different churches operating in the same country. One of the problems here is that the government insists that, in fact, there is many more wrangling over finances in African Initiated Churches than is the case of mainline churches (personal communication with spokespersons from Ministry of Home Affairs).

Given all this, there is a very strong feeling that the Botswana Christian Council should speak out with a much more prophetic voice and take the lead in religious, socio-economic and political matters. On this score both African Initiated Churches and mainline churches are agreed: the church must speak with one voice.

In a recent address given to the Assembly of the Botswana Christian Council, Prof. Dr. I.J. Mosala had this to say:

“Exodus rescued the poor people of ancient Israel by plucking them out of the aristocracy of silence. Through the exodus, the people of ancient Israel were made into the people of God. Through their historic action against slavery, they were transformed into servanthood, they transformed servant hood into royalty but by abolishing royalty as a condition into government. And that is what Jesus died for. Jesus died for servant hood, the kind of servant hood that identified with the struggles of the poor and the oppressed. And so the early Church could not escape the destiny of servants and slaves. The early church had to be an oppressed church. It had to be a persecuted church. It had to be a church of unacceptable people. It had to be a church of people who were prepared to die if necessary” (Mosala, 1990).”

In an earlier workshop of the Botswana Christian Council Executive, the researcher told them:

“Now, talking of the nature of the church or churches or traditions or denominations, what is the mission of the church? It is to carry out the commission of Jesus Christ? The Church of God is directed by the spirit of Yahweh. And the Church of God has an obligation to listen, to be obedient to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. From time to time God will illuminate his Church. And from time to time, the Church will have to

make a response. And this is what is latent in the organisation of the churches in any given country. We do not want the Church of God to wait for civil power or civil authority to make pronouncements; the Church of God must speak in the name of Jesus Christ. By so saying, I am asking for unequivocal guidance and leadership from the Botswana Christian Council as the prophetic voice of the Church of God" (Monyai, 1989).

The two Botswana national holidays, President's Day and Independence Day, are always marked by an interdenominational service at the national stadium where the entire government, diplomatic corps and all the people join together in prayer. The hope is that the relationship between government and religion will continue to improve.

2.6.2 Typology and origins

There are a few areas that need to be referred to in this question of African Initiated Churches. There are a few problem areas to which the researcher would like to refer briefly to help us understand what follows in these pages. It is called problems because they are problems for those who are studying the churches, not problems from the perspective of the churches themselves. These are typology, life history and doctrine.

2.6.2.1 Typology

The question of casting churches into typologies is very risky because it can be arbitrary. However, the researcher ventures to place the five churches, but with a difference. Where a church shares two or more types, it is classified as such. In analysing and trying to place them into typologies, the works of Hastings, Hinchliff, Sundkler, Daneel, Turner and the researcher's own B. Phil. dissertation (1972) on African Initiated Churches were utilised.

Hinchliff gives a rather crude but accurate classification of these indigenous churches, although the researcher does not quite agree with some aspects of the wording. An example is where he talks about the jazz culture of the city when he is referring to vibrant African music during worship.

“One of the most obvious features of the modern South African religious scene is the number and variety of the so-called separatist sects. The 'sects' have been classified as belonging to three types. The two older types are the Ethiopian and the Zionist, distinguished from each other by the fact that, while the Ethiopian groups are 'orthodox' in teaching the Zionists have trained some elements of traditional African paganism along with a rather Pentecostalist kind of Christianity. Among the Zionists will usually be found an emphasis upon purificatory rites, speaking with tongues, ritual taboos, healing ceremonies, and often an admixture of the jazz culture of the cities. The third type is Messianic” (Hinchliff, 1968:90).”

In his reading list supplied to students at Makerere University in Kampala, Adrian Hastings lists the three types of African Initiated Churches.

“Very roughly, these bodies can be divided according to three chief types. Firstly, groups which have retained the main characteristics of the mission churches in doctrine, liturgy and organisation (at times, indeed, with a severe conservatism) but have divided on personal or racial grounds (often as a reaction to some form of missionary paternalism). In South Africa, these have come to be known as "Ethiopian" and in Nigeria as "African" Churches. Equally, from a general western viewpoint, these could be termed substantially "Orthodox". Secondly, there are those groups whose independence goes with deeply different forms of worship, organisation and belief. They have generally been founded by a

'prophet' with greater or less charismatic power and they seldom represent the breaking away of a group as such from a mission church; they concentrate considerably upon the cure of the sick through prayer. Historically, they are as a movement rather more recent in origin than the first group. In South Africa this group has been named 'Zionist'. In Nigeria they are known as 'Aladura' churches and in West Africa generally as 'Spiritual' churches. They retain the central Christian beliefs. They could often be classified as Pentecostal. Thirdly, there is the syncretistic and Messianic group (called by some 'Nativistic'). In these bodies the place of Christ has largely been taken by some recent African Messiah or, alternatively, there has been such a mixing of Christian (or more often, Old Testament) beliefs with traditional African ones, that either way the Christian character of the whole is no longer clear. This group seems smaller than the others" (Hastings, 1971).

It is always difficult to classify African Indigenous Churches into the three categories stated above. The reason for that is simply because the Messiah type churches merge into one with the Zionist practices in worship and ritual. Sundkler (1961) talks mostly of three main types of African Initiated Churches classified into Ethiopian, Messianic and Zionist. Daneel (1987) moves nearer the mark when he talks of spirit-type churches and Ethiopian-type churches. In Botswana, all African Initiated Churches are referred to as *Dikereke tsa Semowa* or *Dikereke tsa Mowa* - spiritual churches or churches of the Spirit. These are churches which preach with emphasis on the works of the Holy Spirit and use rituals lavishly, especially holy water and holy ash. That is why they are also known as *Dikereke tsa Metsi* – churches of water.

In the light of the above, therefore, the researcher thinks that one has to admit that the five churches under study are both Spirit type and Messianic types, understood in the analysis of Daneel expatiated below. The latter classification holds especially true because all of the churches, as described in detail in part

two of Chapter 4 onwards, owe their origins to powerful, charismatic leaders charged with a mission which they set out to fulfil. The five churches can, therefore, in the final analysis, be considered Messianic, while retaining their strong Zionist character. The churches under study have gone completely African and are a far cry from mainline churches, except perhaps in the tradition of the collection plates and emphasis on the Scriptures.

In an article of hers on religious change among women in Botswana, Parratt ventures a very broad classification. She says: "A comprehensive listing of these churches is a formidable task: many have only a handful of members, some change their names, and others operate as family groups. In general, they may be described as charismatic (in the wider sense), prophetic and healing movements" (Parratt, 1995:74).

It is interesting to note that scholars on African Church Independency are not unanimous in their classification of these churches and many names have been proposed. However, there are three broad classifications of African Initiated Churches that are generally accepted. These are the Ethiopian-type churches, the Spirit-type churches and the Messianic churches. These are the generally accepted divisions by all scholars, although there may be some variations. The researcher will concern himself with the current divisions or classification, patterned mostly on the classification of Daneel (1987), which is in turn based on the classification of Sundkler (1961).

There is general agreement among scholars that the Ethiopian-type churches are those churches that are considered orthodox, namely, churches that have retained the teachings of the mother church but have had to break away for one reason or another. In most cases, the break occurred because of differences in ideology, finances or racial factors. Daneel has a rather exotic idea about why and what led to the founding of Ethiopian-type churches. While the researcher agrees with the broad principles, one has to be careful not to read too much into

the aims, objectives or motives of the Ethiopian-type churches. The broad principle is that the Ethiopian-type churches are churches conscious of their negritude and their calling to worship God in their own idiom as African people. Almost invariably, the liturgy does tend to adopt an African flavour. It is indeed very doubtful if each and every Ethiopian-type church would go into the elaborate thought processes as enunciated by Daneel. However, one has to accept that the determination for self-esteem and independence is inherent in the movements. Also, the defiance is not always entirely against Whites. There are cases where the split took place in reaction to some other dominant group or person other than White but not African. This is very clear in the history of the African Catholic Church, an Ethiopian-type church that has its roots in the Anglican Church. According to Monyai (1980), the final split occurred primarily because the finances of the church were in the hands of someone that was not an African although he was not White. In this case, unlike what Daneel holds with regard to Shona Initiated Churches, the context was both "religious and organizational" and "socio-political" (Daneel, 1987:39).

The second type of African Initiated Church is what is called the Spirit-type churches. Daneel is a renowned scholar this field but he himself admits that there is great controversy on the issue of classification of this group.

As stated in Chapter 1, African Initiated Churches in Botswana are simply known as *Dikereke tsa Mowa* - Churches of the Spirit or *Dikereke tsa Metsi* -Churches of Water. Daneel prefers to use the terms "Spirit-type" or "prophetic" churches. Sundkler, on the other hand, is very much married to the idea of Zion, whereby the understanding is that these are African churches that are seeking fulfilment in this world in the Zion of "now". While the researcher agrees with the nomenclature and reasons put forward by both scholars, he tends to think that they read too much into the names of African Initiated Churches coming with notions that are very interesting but really academic. It will be noticed from the list

of churches provide on Botswana that the concepts in some of the names is really only to give the church that individuality and "sacredness" as a church.

The researcher will later on indicate that the African Initiated Churches in Botswana consider themselves "apostles", because of the sacredness of their ministry. To them the term is not exclusive and is understood to apply to all those African churches whose mission is to carry out the message of the Gospel.

There is one sense in which the five churches in Botswana can be considered to be both Ethiopian-type and Spirit-type churches. When and as they broke away from the parent body, they did not depart from the way of worship or the doctrine of the mother church. Rather, they went off in order to find themselves in self-determination and own expression. Basically, the tenets of the faith have remained the same and have never been an issue. The researcher is of the opinion that the scholars put too much emphasis on semantics.

The third classification is that of Messianic churches. Daneel sums up very well.

"Some researchers classify the so-called "messianic churches" in the same category as the Spirit-type churches. There is some justification for this in that both are largely prophetic movements, the difference being that in messianic churches the leader is elevated to messianic status. In these movements the attention of members is often captured by the eminence of the leader - his mystical powers, miracles and mediation between God and his followers - to such an extent that he usurps Christ's position, either wholly or in part. In extreme cases where the Christology is manifestly usurped by the Black Messiah, who is to some extent deified, we are in effect confronted with Black Messianism which can be typified only as non-Christian or post-Christian" (Daneel, 1987:41).

To date, the researcher has been studying over a score of African Initiated Churches individually. Having added to this also the five African Initiated Churches in Botswana, he had to accept the position of Daneel with great circumspection. He himself is not dogmatic on the matter and approaches the issue rather wearily, aware of all the implications this might have. One has to agree with Daneel, however, that followers are wont to have their own views and convictions about certain matters in the faith, sometimes way aside from the official position of their church. Indeed, there *is* a perceived over-emphasis of the leadership in some instances and, of course, this might ultimately lead to a wrong reading of the real ethos of these churches. But in the case of the five churches, based on the exposition of *their* faith, it sounds somewhat inconceivable that these people who are Christians and profess Christ would want to confuse the issue of the Son of God or the Messiah with a mortal human being.

A typology of African Initiated Churches is almost arbitrary in that it is coined by outsiders. At best it remains only a guideline for understanding the proliferating and mushrooming phenomenon of African Self Initiated Churches.

2.6.2.2 Broad origins and increasing number of AICs

One of the most difficult tasks in studying African Initiated Churches is their history. Quite often, there is no history written down and oral evidence and tradition then become the main methods of collecting data. It is important to capture this knowledge fast from old people before their memory fades. The proliferation of the African Church movement also makes it difficult to keep up with the pace. The history of most African Initiated Churches is that of fission, one group splitting from another. There are two ways of looking at this phenomenon. It can either be considered as chaotic or it can be viewed as a sign of growth and a vibrant faith, as attested to also by scholars on African Initiated Churches like Daneel. On this issue Parratt has this to say:

“Empirical studies of change of religion in Africa are somewhat rare. Within Christian adherence, it has been common to point to the rapid growth of the Independent African Churches in Southern Africa at the expense of the mainline churches, and more recent investigations have noted the increasing expansion of neo-Pentecostal movements. While the African churches continue to be the fastest growing group, the pattern appears to be significantly different from that of the sixties and seventies. The most striking factor is the very high movement between African churches themselves. This is particularly reflected in the very large number of churches involving smaller African churches. The indications are that the 'newer' New Religious Movements are more attractive than the 'older' New Religious Movements! Those churches which, like the Zionist, have become established -'churches ' rather than 'sects' in Troeltsch's terminology - are beginning to suffer the same decline as the mainline churches. If this trend is typical, we may expect a continuing proliferation of African churches with small memberships, despite the movement towards fellowship and unions of AICs” (Parratt, 1995:73 and 79).”

2.6.2.3 Doctrines of AICs

Not so long ago African Initiated Churches came up with an important document, *Speaking for ourselves*, edited by Mofokeng, which asserts in the editorial that from now on these churches want to speak for themselves (Mofokeng, 1985). The researcher believes that this has been due largely to people putting their own interpretations into the perceived theology of the African churches without much deeper dialogue. Unfortunately, there is nothing much written specifically on the theology of these churches and therefore whatever can be gleaned from their sermons, hymnologies, personal lives and rituals will always be subject to misinterpretation, unless a conscious effort is made to get down seriously to the doctrine of these churches. The researcher believes that this can only be

achieved by being in close proximity with the churches in terms of investigation and study. Once one has won the confidence of these worshipping communities, the rest follows. At this point of the development of African Initiated Churches, this seems to be the only way to go.

2.7 ORIGIN AND EXPANSION OF THE FIVE CHURCHES

The history of each of the five churches will now be discussed, which the researcher considers essential to this study. Once an historical account of all the five churches has been given, the focus will then be on certain aspects of each aspects that he believes, substantiate certain points raised in this thesis. This exercise will also help to show all the latent similarities or disparities in the histories of the five churches which, in turn, will also help to show how each church was affected by the spirit of the times.

It has to be noted here that, apart from a recent history of FF, there are no histories of the other four churches. The researcher found this to be new territory. He found himself trying to piece together the histories from the leaders and elders of each church. The histories have thus been largely pieced together from intensive interviews with the leadership and elders. There were no other sources. Even in the case of FF, with hindsight, the interviews with the local bishop were critical to augment further information. In this section, therefore, the researcher would like the reader to be aware that the names of the different leaders of the five churches will come up time and again, with a year against each name. This serves merely to indicate the year in which the interview or interviews were conducted with each bishop or archbishop. These are the names: Tanyala, FF; Akanyang, Setimela, BCCCZ; Seema, GCZ; Seithamo, STG, and Hlabano, STP. The five churches are analysed specifically in terms of their geographical settings and the milieu in which they operate. The common denominator of most of the African Initiated Churches in Botswana is that they have not come under the Ethiopian influence. Churches that have are said to be patterned according to the

parent body in mainline denominations. Almost all African churches in Botswana have split from other African Initiated Churches, as the history and life of each of the five churches will show, and they all share Zionist characteristics. However, FF does have traits of a charismatic church. The histories of the five churches also show that each of these churches has what can be termed semi-messianic traits, not in the sense of deifying their mortal leaders but in the sense of attributing to their leadership special powers from God. The researcher, however, thinks that the term these churches use themselves is the most appropriate: they refer to themselves as apostolic or apostles. There is a widespread belief among these churches that their mandate has been received from God, through the founders, to go to all the corners of the earth to proclaim the Word of God, to heal both physical and spiritual maladies and to baptise. What follows below shows that these churches have had to stand fast in previous times, and it was largely through the resoluteness of their founders or leaders that they kept on growing and survived against formidable odds. The researcher will start by examining the origins of the churches, based on the information available in the oral tradition that has been handed down by the older members of these churches, particularly those in authority. He has also drawn on a few authenticated occurrences. The lives of the founders and principal leaders are given in detail since these "biographies" contain important historical data. The organisational structure of the five churches is then given, with Galatia Church in Zion serving as the model. Model here simply means that the description is taken from GCZ in order to avoid unnecessary repetitive points that exist in all the five churches. After the description there follows a discussion of particular differences in the other four churches. For this section, the researcher has elected to use the full names of the five churches to ensure distinction and clarity.

2.7.1 Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion

The first account is given by Bishop Akanyang, the resident leader of the church in Molepolole.

The parent church originated in Swaziland and then became firmly established in South Africa in the fifties under the name Jerusalem Bethsaida. The original founder of the parent church in South Africa was Archbishop Philemon Mathunjwa. Co-founders were Archbishop Mdebele, Ezekiel Modiakgotla, J.B. Nkwane and A. Masumbuka (Bishop Seithamo, 1986).

The move by the church in Botswana seems to have had two aspects. When the group under study tried to register the church, they were told by the Department of the Registrar of Societies that the church had already been registered and that they would have to find a new name. The church was duly registered in 1975 under its new name: Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion. This not only ensured that it was autonomous, but also met the local requirements stipulated by the registering authority. Other members maintain, however, that the church had to split from the parent body because the Botswana government did not want church monies to go out of the country, namely registration monies, collections and donations. This is, of course, highly debatable and there appears to be no definite proof about what actually happened.

2.7.1.1 Isaiah Setimela

The Most Reverend Archbishop Isaiah Setimela, who had been working on the mines of South Africa, had also joined Jerusalem Bethsaida and became the founder of the new church in Botswana in 1973. The split was fairly peaceful, but permanent. The church in Botswana and the parent church in South Africa are totally independent of each other, although they still work together closely.

The following is a detailed account given by Archbishop Isaiah Setimela himself, who is affectionately referred to as "Archie" by his clergy.

Archbishop Setimela was born in 1921. Like many men in Botswana before him, he had been a migrant labourer in South Africa. A Motswana by origin, he was baptised in 1942 in the Jerusalem Bethsaida Church by the Mazezuri in Zimbabwe. After this he travelled down south via Zebediela with Matsapa Senyawwe, reaching Natal at the end of the Second World War. He worshipped with the Zulus in different African Initiated Churches right up to 1947 during *Tlala e Kgolo* -The Great Hunger. He then moved with his employers to Mozambique near the Swaziland border where he eventually met with Archbishop Philemon Mathunjwa, leader of Jerusalem Bethsaida in South Africa and Swaziland. They worshipped together until he, Isaiah Setimela, left for Kempton Park, Johannesburg, and later for Botswana with Matsapa Senyawwe in 1950.

Archbishop Mathunjwa had ordained him priest and bishop and charged him with the mission of establishing the church in Botswana. This he did with the help of his assistant, Bishop Ezekiel Modiakgotla. The first branch of the church was established at Moroka village near the Ramokgwebana border post.

At the time in Botswana, according to Archbishop Setimela, the Zion form of worship was still frowned upon and *badumedi ba Sesione ba ne ba santse ba ilega* - Zionist believers were still unwelcome - and "they worshipped with difficulty, under trees" (Setimela, 1986). He left briefly for the then Rhodesia between 1952 and 1957 and was back in Botswana "when the troubles started in Rhodesia". At this juncture, a huge, flourishing community of Jerusalem Bethsaida was established at Rabangana in Bokalaka, northern Botswana. The constitution of the church, whose headquarters were in Swaziland, was used until 1966, when "the church in Botswana felt that the attitude of the Swazis had changed" (Setimela, 1986).

There were new problems. Government insisted that all churches had to come out into the open and be registered. The authorities of the church in Swaziland refused to co-operate. They would not have the church registered. They insisted

that Jesus Christ never intended the church to be registered. Even when Isaiah Setimela chose a new name for the Botswana church - Bethlehem City of God Church - the Swazi hierarchy refused to agree that he use that name.

Bishop Isaiah Setimela and his companions took the matter up with Home Affairs and after a protracted dispute the church in Botswana was registered under the new name Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion. At the time, Archbishop Mathunjwa had come with his delegation from Swaziland. At the end of the proceedings, when the matter had been resolved, the new Archbishop Setimela of the new church refused to shake hands with Archbishop Mathunjwa insisting that he was not breaking up with Jerusalem Bethsaida as they were still united by the love of God. Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion had thus been fully established in Botswana.

2.7.2 Forward in Faith

The origin of this church dates back to Zimbabwe during colonial rule. Its founder was Ezekiel Handinawangu Guti in Harare, whose home language was Shona. Details of the life of Ezekiel Guti are given in the recently published biography by Erwin (1985). Although it is apocalyptic in many ways, the book does give a few important details.

2.7.2.1 Ezekiel Handinawangu Guti

Ezekiel Guti was born in 1923 in Umtali, Manicaland, in Zimbabwe. His name, Handinawangu, means "You have no people of your own. You love everybody". He grew up working hard on the family farm to help educate his younger brothers and sisters.

He came into contact with Christian teachings through his mother, who attended missionary services. He developed an intense thirst for the Word of God and for truth. He went into the view of the Vumba hills in search of light and

enlightenment for many days. Eventually, something happened, which changed his life.

“It was night and he was praying. Suddenly, a light surrounded him that was brighter than day itself. His first encounter in the jungle was accompanied with a surrounding music; this one was with light. Just as before, an angel appeared in front of him. Unlike before, the angel did not speak to him. Instead, he simply raised and lowered his arms to his side. Without words there was still a spiritual communication. Guti sensed that God was responding to his honest and diligent seeking and was affirming His presence in Guti's life. It seems the angel which appeared to him in Vumba was going with him. For twenty years, people saw an angel standing with him while he was preaching. One Sunday while he was preaching during a church service at Bindura, people saw an angel touching his jacket, but Guti did not know it. He was surprised to see people falling down as if they were dead. After the service, he asked why people fell down like that and was told they had seen the angel standing behind him “(Erwin, 1985:23-24).

This was the Vumba experience akin to Muhammad's "Night of Power and Excellence" when, according to Islam, the Koran was given to him. After this vision, Guti was eventually converted in 1947 and baptised by a missionary. He became a fervent and zealous preacher and preached in and around all the suburbs of the then Salisbury. He was a man of many visions and in one such vision his name was changed from Handinawangu to Ezekiel. He was a great leader, and is said to have performed many miracles during the services he led.

However, his fervour for the Word of God cost him his marriage because his wife could not stomach his countrywide crusades. He trained twelve assistants to minister the Word and went on more crusades in most of the Zimbabwean countryside. This new "body" eventually turned into a black church. He eventually

graduated at a Bible school in the United States through the help of some friends. He remarried back in Zimbabwe and continues to be the head of Forward in Faith.

According to Bishop Tanyala, the birth of the church is very significant, because Ezekiel Guti was a man who seemed to possess extraordinary powers and who had regular, visionary experiences. Sometimes, while he was in a room, the whole place would be "filled with glory and a radiant, overpowering light" (Tanyala, 1985). Tradition has it that, once while he was with friends in his room, dazzling light appeared and its radiance was so bright that his terrified friends hid themselves under the bed (Tanyala, 1985).

The founder of this church was also "harassed" by another phenomenon: he felt an intense "burden to preach". Spurred on by the Spirit, he eventually formed a body of disciples around him and the Forward in Faith Church was born. These were friends who had formed his inner circle and who had had an experience of the "radiance and glory" surrounding him. Soon afterwards, the church started sending out evangelists or preachers around the country and to neighbouring states. This marked a new phase in the church's history because, during this year, the church held its first service in Botswana. In the early seventies this church set up a tent in Bontleng, Gaborone, and a small community was formed. In 1972 there was a big Easter festival at Tonota in Botswana. Communion was celebrated and a number of members were appointed to different posts in the church; evangelists were appointed as leaders or *baruti* - ministers - in different districts. Subsequently, a permanent minister, pastor Fundira, was sent to take up residence in Botswana. A branch was established in Lobatse, although this never thrived because, according to church members, there was a "lack of teaching" (Tanyala, 1985). The church firmly took root in Botswana in 1974.

The present pastor, Bishop Ganetsang Tanyala, is a successful businessman who owns a butchery and who became a member of the church because, as he

puts it, "I gave my life to Christ later when the tent had already been moved and erected elsewhere." Yet, today, he is the pillar and bishop of the church in Botswana.

Today Forward in Faith has grown significantly and boasts congregations, though small, in Zambia, the United Kingdom, Zaire, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Several church buildings are planned in these various countries.

2.7.3 Galatia Church in Zion

This church's origins go back to South Africa. The church reached Botswana around the year 1956. It was first established in Serowe in the Central District, after which it spread southwards in the seventies. It became fully established and flourished in a village about 40 kilometres south-west of Gaborone, deep in a very secluded valley surrounded by indigenous forests. It is registered with the Ministry of Home Affairs.

2.7.3.1 Erastus Medupe Abeng

According to Bishop Seema of Mogonye, the founder of the church in South Africa was Archbishop Ndlovu Dlamini. This man is reputed to have loved God so much that he eventually received a call to be an evangelist. He then anointed the Reverend Erastus Medupe Abeng, who later decided to preach the Gospel in his native Botswana. Bishop Abeng was sent to Serowe as the local church leader and the headquarters of this church are still located there today, from which it grew and expanded steadily to the rest of the country.

Like almost all founders in Botswana, Archbishop Erastus Medupe Abeng had been a migrant labourer on the mines of South Africa and had lived in Alexandra, Johannesburg, when he came into contact with Galatia Church in Zion. He was later commissioned by Archbishop Ndlovu to found the church in Botswana, which he duly established in Serowe on his return to Botswana in 1956. His

ministry of healing and preaching became the greatest assets of the church. The first church building went up in 1959.

At this point, the church met stiff resistance from the local population. The London Missionary Society was the only "church" known to and accepted by the chiefs and so the new church was seen as a threat likely to bring disloyalty and disunity in the tribe. He was thus banished to Paje village in 1957. However, his work among the people continued to grow and he was then imprisoned towards the end of 1957 and in 1959. He was later released and taken to Kgama's *kgotla*, the tribal court, where he was reprimanded and told to suspend his church activities. His reply was that his was the work of the Holy Spirit and no human power could stop him or force him to disobey the Word of God. Kgama was touched and Archbishop Erastus Medupe Abeng was from that moment left alone to operate freely in his church with Serowe as headquarters. In 1967 he had the church duly registered in Botswana (Seema, 1985).

2.7.4 St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana

Like many African Initiated Churches in Botswana, this church, although founded in Botswana, has its roots in South Africa. According to Archbishop Seithlamo, the predecessor of STG was St. Apostolic Church, which was founded in Pretoria in 1935 by Hosea Mashapa. Initially, this man was not a member of any church at all, but in a vision, he was instructed by a voice to found a church by the name of St. Apostolic Church. This he did and the church thrived. His co-founders and colleagues were Mokadiwa and Mathelela. Like Hosea Mashapa, "they were uneducated men who were just called by God" (Seithlamo, 1986).

2.7.4.1 Hosea Seithlamo

The founder of STG was Archbishop Hosea Seithlamo, who hails from Serowe and is also the present leader of the church. This historical account is from his

lips. He had himself been member of St. Apostolic Church and the right hand of Archbishop Samuel Phakedi. This meant that he was second in command in terms of authority and was effectively the archbishop's deputy.

In 1945, Samuel Phakedi brought the church from South Africa to Serowe, Botswana. The first church building was duly erected at Maunatlala, Phakedi's birthplace, a village lying between Palapye and Mahalapye. The church flourished, but it also ran into difficulties. By the time this church had established itself, two long-established mainline churches, the London Missionary Society and the Roman Catholic Church, both of which had a number of administratively and financially resourceful expatriate missionaries, had arrived. The chief favoured the older churches. The archbishop of the new African Initiated Church is reported to have been arrested twice, in 1958 and in 1959, by Rasebolai Kgamane and Serogola Seretse respectively, although later on Seretse granted the church freedom of worship.

Archbishop Hosea Seithlamo gave the following account of how he joined the church.

One day, while he was still a shepherd, he sat down under a tree and had a vision. He says that, as he sat there, "far from being asleep", his soul left him and he saw himself "going away, up and through the stars until he reached heaven, where he met Jesus." He was told by Jesus that his sins were forgiven and that he had to "go back and join the church." Jesus said that this church would be pointed out to him. At the moment of spiritual ecstasy, he, Hosea, was singing a hymn "*se ke na le Jesu*" - I now have Jesus with me". On reaching home, he narrated his experience to his father, who was a pastor of the London Missionary Society. His father predicted that he would be one of the apostles. As he grew up, he had another vision in which it was revealed to him that Samuel Phakedi would baptise him. Several years later he joined St. Apostolic Church. When St. Apostolic Church came to Botswana the then Bishop Seithlamo stood side by

side with the leader of the church in Botswana, Archbishop Phakedi, during the times when Zionist and Apostolic churches were forbidden to worship freely.

He was arrested in 1957 and in 1958 along with Archbishop Phakedi by his own paternal uncle. They were advised to leave their church and join some mainline church such as the Roman Catholic Church or the London Missionary Society. They refused. Eventually, they were asked to explain to the *kgotla* - tribal court - what they did in their church, upon which they replied that they prayed for the water, laid hands on the sick and that these were healed.

For several years Hosea Seithlhamo became the trusted apostle of St. Apostolic Church.

The details of the life of the founder of STG are best provided by Archbishop Seithlhamo himself at this stage.

There was a particularly hostile sergeant who wanted to see all the church members behind bars. His nickname was *Pitse e kochu* - coarse horse. He alleged that the church members had bought up all the knitting wool in the shops and that all the men were wearing dresses like women, an obvious reference to the Zionist garb of worship.

When they were brought before the *kgotla* presided over by his paternal uncle Rasebolai, the latter asked the sergeant why he had arrested the believers. When he replied that he had found them worshipping, Rasebolai ordered their release. He, however, blamed them for being noisy and giving people dirt, *sewasho*, to eat.

Drought changed everything in 1947. It was during the time of King Leapetswe Kgama and the land was dry. All the believers of Mmangwato were requested to pray for rain at the *kgotla*. The African Initiated Church members went in large

numbers in their full regalia. Members of other Christian denominations were not present. This act of loyalty and caring earned them the respect of the chiefs and the African Initiated Church members were thanked for their devotion. Later on, under Seretse Khama, "as shown Archbishop Seithlamo in a vision while Seretse was still studying overseas" (Seithlamo 1985), the African Initiated Churches were given freedom of worship when Botswana attained independence.

St. Apostolic Church operated freely and peacefully for many years after that. But matters came to a head in 1972 with the issue of registration. The Ministry of Home Affairs required all churches and organisations to be registered. Bishop Seithlamo, Archbishop Phakedi's right hand man, prepared all the documents and letterheads with the latter's name on all of them. All that was needed was the archbishop's signature. He refused to sign, saying that Jesus Christ never gave any injunction that churches should be registered.

Bishop Seithlamo failed to persuade the archbishop to sign, whereupon he went it alone and registered his section of the church under the name St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana. He appointed Bishop Elisa Kgomotso as his assistant.

The break was complete and permanent but he parted company on a very friendly note with Archbishop Phakedi, the latter giving him his blessing as archbishop of the new church.

2.7.5 St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church

Unlike the four other churches described above, St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church was founded in South Africa by a woman, and so was the emissary, who was sent to Botswana to establish the church; who also became the spiritual leader of the church. However, adapting to the patriarchal system of

Botswana, she ceded headship of the church to her husband, who is known as Archbishop, while she holds the title of *Mama* Archbishop – Mother Archbishop.

2.7.5.1 Gasenone Anderson

This church was first founded in South Africa in 1930 by Mrs. Talita Ntshe, otherwise known as MmaNtshe, who died in 1967. Mrs. Anderson, a Motswana lady from Mahalapye, joined the church while she was in South Africa and was later responsible for the establishment of a branch in Botswana, at Mahalapye. Branches then sprang up all over the whole country. A branch was established at Francistown in 1959, followed by other branches at Selebi-Phikwe, Serowe and, in 1978, in Gaborone. Other branches were opened in Orapa, Letlhakane, Shupa, Tsamaya, Mmadinare, Shoshong and Mokatakwe.

Mrs. Gasenone Anderson brought the church to Botswana in 1959, at the request of the church elders in South Africa. She herself had become a member of the church after being healed of a very serious illness by someone in the church. Before this, she had been a member of the London Missionary Society. Her husband is also at the "helm" of the church and bears the title of archbishop. Mrs. Anderson is, however, known as Mama Archbishop. The second highest rank in the church is that held by Bishop Hlabano, who is head of the church in Gaborone (Hlabano, 1986).

2.8 FEATURES COMMON TO THE LIFE EXPERIENCES OF THESE LEADERS

One notable feature of these five churches is that they all originated from outside Botswana. Four have their main roots in South Africa and one, Forward in Faith, in Zimbabwe. All of them are thus "imported" churches, albeit adapted to the conditions of Botswana and all of them are African Initiated Churches.

The most common feature in these life histories is that all of these leaders received their mission directly from the Holy Spirit in visions and dreams. These phenomena, namely visions and dreams, seem very much part of the life of these five churches, either directly or indirectly through the gift of tongues, as in the case of Forward in Faith.

All the founders of the five churches strike one as being possessed of very great powers, powers that have a profound effect on those they come into contact with. Their life histories indicate that these leaders are men and women specially chosen by God for a specific task.

Most of the founders were originally worldly people who were converted and turned into useful members of society, often through the agency of the churches they now lead.

Finally, it should be said that ancestors feature prominently in all the life histories of these founders. The living dead of Mbiti (1969:24-26) seem to be very much at work in and around the leaders and their churches.

2.8.1 Influences of leaders' life experience on their churches

Firstly, the very fact that the founders were people of the Spirit, namely people of visions and dreams, has had a marked effect on these churches. Their congregations are all very Spirit-orientated, and are directed by dreams and visions in their own personal lives. This is evidenced by the colourful garments worn by church members, the colour being usually given in a vision or dream. This is particularly true of GCZ, which has an abundance of colours, as prescribed in dreams and visions to the founders and the leaders. One always sees a sea of red, blue, white and green.

Secondly, the churches proclaim a message of returning to God, of repentance in faith. This is no accident. The sermons of their leaders are based on their own life-experiences. There is a perpetual call and invitation to a change of heart - *metanoia*. This can be traced largely to the personal lives of the leaders who were themselves touched and turned around to believe.

Thirdly, there is a very strong national awareness among these churches, which stems directly from the life experiences of the founders. Having fought to obtain national status for their churches, the congregations have themselves become very Botswana-conscious and pride themselves in this. If one examines this issue closely, this phenomenon can also be traced back to the founders.

Fourthly, the survival of the churches in the beginning meant great sacrifice and self-denial on the part of the leaders. This has also motivated congregations to give selflessly and generously towards the cost of ensuring the survival and maintenance of these churches.

Finally, one can state unequivocally that the founders have influenced and continue to influence their churches simply through sheer force of personality.

2.9 GROWTH, GEOGRAPHICAL EXPANSION AND STRUCTURAL FEATURES

As mentioned in Chapter 1, today African Initiated Churches are springing up throughout Botswana. Hundreds of people are flocking to these churches, to the point that anyone who feels called upon to be a church founder will just go to the Ministry of Home Affairs and simply attempt to register his or her "church", in some cases only members of a particular family. Occasionally, the Department of the Registrar of Societies has had to restrain prospective founders from following this course, because some have requested registration on the strength of family membership only. Indeed, the researcher has personally witnessed one

such request. For example, one day as the researcher was collecting research material from the Ministry of Home Affairs, a man just walked in and asked for registration of his church. When asked if he had a congregation, he mentioned only members of his nuclear family, whereupon he was advised to go and collect a few more names. He seemed much surprised. However, this does not detract from the fact that, by and large, African Initiated Churches in Botswana are collectively steadily growing. This is evidenced by the existence of numerous associations such as the Southern African Association of African Independent Churches, whose general secretary is Reverend O.O. Ditsheko.

The five churches in question, for example, cover the whole of the densely populated eastern belt of Botswana and are represented in various ways in every major centre. The area described as densely populated is one of Botswana's most fertile regions and the railway runs through here south to South Africa and north to Zimbabwe. Almost all the centres described in Chapter 2 are to be found here and it is here that practically all African Initiated Churches are represented.

What follows below is an account of the five churches under study, their branch structure and their *modus operandi*.

2.9.1 Growth

Notwithstanding what has been said so far, the total combined membership of the five churches is fairly small. From all the data available it stands at approximately 6,300. The largest of the five is GCZ, at 3000, and the smallest is FF, at 300.

2.9.2 Geographical expansion

Each of the five churches has its own individual and unique way of attracting followers and thus enlarging and spreading membership. However, central to all

is the emphasis on healing. The ministry of healing can be said to be the major power of attraction in all of these churches. Of course, there are ways in which the five churches differ from one another and these are also discussed below.

As has been said, all five churches seem to lay a heavy emphasis on the ministry of healing, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. This point is crucial to the research argument, because it is further proof that independency in Botswana is truly holistic, encompassing the human person in both his or her spiritual and material world.

A word needs to be said regarding the differences between the way these five churches conduct their healing ministries and why they continue to be successful. The five churches continue to flourish and steadily "erode" membership of the mainline churches because of several factors, the chief among these being the emphasis they place on healing. A few converts not attached to any Christian affiliation have also been converted, but there are very few of these in Botswana. BCCCZ emphasises healing through prophecy, while FF emphasises the laying on of hands. The healing ministry of GCZ operates through the healing power of the ancestors. STG's healing ministry is done through revival meetings, which are taken very seriously and by sending out missionaries throughout the country with the specific task of healing the sick. The latter method is the same one employed by STP, which has attracted many members to the church.

Apart from healing, these churches have an elaborate code of conduct, which seems to attract Botswana believers and sets them apart as a consecrated people. Works of charity and mercy are also emphasised in these churches and this, too, helps to swell their ranks. However, the underlying reason why the five churches have succeeded in "poaching" members from mainline churches is because they have consciously grafted Christianity onto African culture. Mainline churches simply could not compete on these terms; their own cultural barriers

and lack of vision have made it impossible for them to incorporate African values and traditions into their churches.

The proclamation of the Gospel and the emphasis on healing are two of the most important factors responsible for bringing new members into the fold of BCCCZ. It is estimated that between five and ten new people are received into the church every month. From the researcher's observation and the interviews conducted over the years, it would seem that this figure is perhaps slightly exaggerated. One or two converts a month would be more likely.

The first service in the Molepolole branch was conducted in 1974. Seventeen people were recruited on that very same day "because they liked the way the *moruti* – minister - put across his message to them" (Akanyang 1987). The fact that so many people find the sermons or preaching meaningful is another powerful means of attracting people to this church. Another is the healing, which takes place in the church through prophecy. Many people who get healed in the church end up joining it. A third factor is the way the church is constituted. Apart from the way it serves people through works of mercy and charity, the church specialises in attending and blessing birthday parties and wedding ceremonies. People are thus made to feel at home. According to the hierarchy, the presence of church leaders and elders during feasts is geared towards exorcising any demons that may be threatening to cause harm during the celebrations; indeed, one could describe the presence of the church's leaders as a protective presence.

Like all the other churches studied, the most important factor attracting people to join Forward in Faith lies in its healing ministry. Hands are laid on the sick during special services. Another factor evident in the growth of the church stems from the fact that small homogeneous groups of people who would otherwise be lost in "impersonal" cities such as Gaborone have a point of reference and are brought together by the church to form a closely-knit group. The church also

places great emphasis on fellowship with other believers. From the researcher's observation over the years, this is a genuine attempt at ecumenism without any ulterior motives of proselytising.

The number of people joining the church seems to depend largely on the number and success of revival meetings held during the year. This element of successful revival meetings is reminiscent of the powerful revival movement of Noo in Kenya, where the *Foremo* - the people of blood - set the countryside "afame" with their preaching (Ogot, 1966:29ff.)

Most of the people who join the church are women, who account for over 66% of converts, while men constitute a little over 33%.

The most attractive feature of GCZ is its healing ministry and the elevated place given to the ancestors in the ministry of the church as a whole. The development of its branch structures is said to have been facilitated by the work of GCZ missionaries, who operate throughout Botswana. Kindness, their convincing way of preaching, tolerance, for example, not condemning those who drink beer or alcohol, good and proper use of the *phalalo* - church dues given by the faithful, acceptance of all people as they are, supplying food during festivities, providing subsidised transport, usually trucks or buses for festive occasions, special care for the needy and compassion for the bereaved at funerals - all these have made Galatia Church in Zion very attractive to Botswana Christians.

STG's major attraction is, once again, healing, plus revival meetings and music, which in the case of this church, is backed by a strong choir that is a competitor in inter-church music competitions. Nobody is coerced into joining the church, even after they have been healed, and no fees are charged for healing services. Nobody is looked down upon and all people are treated as equals. *Phalalo*, church dues, and *ditsabolesome* - one tenth donation of one's salary - are used for church buildings, funerals and financing church trips so that members do not

bear the financial burden of these alone. Works of charity and mercy also win over many followers for African Initiated Churches, all of whom adopt this approach. Church members are taught to respect unbelievers and the church avoids publicly reprimanding its members in church. This creates an atmosphere of fellowship and understanding that is attractive to many people.

In STP, the church's ability to heal is the main reason why people join the church. Missionaries were sent out from Mahalapye to evangelise people, establishing this church throughout Botswana, and winning converts in the process.

2.9.3 Structural features

The five churches all have a similar and very elaborate hierarchical structure. Perhaps this is primarily due to the fact that the government insists on churches and societies submitting clear-cut constitutions of how they are going to operate. Constitutions therefore tend to be uniform in nature and very similar in content because administrative aspects have to be covered. The researcher speaks from experience, because he was once approached by an African Initiated Church to help finalise their constitution, which desperately needed doing if they were to operate as a church. Most of the hierarchy were from Zimbabwe. The researcher had to consult a lawyer-lecturer, Dr. Athalia Molokomme, who pointed out many of the details that the constitution needed to cover, details which, she insisted, were required by law.

The researcher therefore proposes to take only one church as a model to describe the hierarchical structure of these churches, namely, GCZ. It is the largest of the five churches and at the same time has one of the most elaborate hierarchical structures. The researcher shall, however, indicate variations that are noticeable or significant in the structures of the other four churches.

The hierarchy of Galatia Church in Zion (GCZ) consists of an archbishop and three bishops. The archbishop is the administrator who manages the church. The other three bishops act as consultants for the church and the archbishop. Then there are the *baruti* - ministers, *baokamedi* – overseers, deacons, evangelists, preachers and church elders. Overall organisation of the church lies in the hands of the archbishop and the executive committee, which is made up of clergy and church elders. The latter consists of the president, secretary, assistant secretary, treasurer and two additional members. No member who has been a member of the church for less than six months may be appointed to the executive committee.

The hierarchical structure at headquarters stands thus: first of all, there is the archbishop, who is regarded as "the father of all sections of the church" and is also "the biggest –highest - prophet of the church."

Next are *baokamedi* – overseers - who are the church's managers and who are responsible for the whole church, including church property. These are the people who preside over the church in the absence of the archbishop. *Batiakone* – deacons - are the church's messengers. They organise and run the revival meetings and they are the people entrusted with the duty and responsibility of baptising neophytes. *Magosa* - wardens - act as ushers in the church, receiving and seating visitors.

The executive committee is responsible for the management of the church and is made up of the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and two additional members.

There are very few structural features in the other churches under study that deviate significantly from that of the GCZ.

The executive committee of Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion (BCCCCZ) is made up of elected officials and representatives and the bishop and his deputy are not at all bound to attend their meetings. This stems from the fact that in BCCCCZ the bishop "has the executive authority to run the affairs of the church", as stated in the constitution.

The constitution of Forward in Faith (FF) specifically states that the bishop, who is also officially the director of Missions, shall occupy the position of bishop until his death or retirement.

Perhaps one of the unique hierarchical features of the five churches is that of St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church (STP), which was founded by a woman and which, today, is run by a woman *Mme* – Mother - Gasenone "Mama Bishop" Anderson. Her husband is, however, next in line and holds the position of archbishop.

What is common to all the five churches in their hierarchical structure is that the position of bishop or archbishop carries with it immense authority and power. The bishops or archbishops are almost princes and in fact wield as much power as a chief. These bishops and archbishops are revered and held in very high esteem. This definitely points to the fact that the concept of authority in these churches to a large extent accords with that of African traditional religion. This once again indicates that the five churches have consciously or unconsciously built firmly on traditional African cultural concepts and values. The only difference is that in a traditional *kgotla* - the chief - depends very much on the collective advice of the tribal elders. Quite often what they deem to be the right course of action carries the day. In ecclesiastical matters, the hierarchy of these churches wield decisive and unquestionable authority, all based on the concept of how they understand authority in the Bible. The executive committees of the five churches take decisive action within the space allotted to them by the constitution of the country.

Saint Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana (STG) differs, however. Here the exercise of authority is collective. The executive committee is responsible for controlling the affairs of the church, administration, finances and discipline. In other words, the archbishop, who is one of several members, wields decisive power and authority only in that he is one of many who may decide the vote on a specific issue.

2.9.3.1 Branches

When talking of the branches of the five churches, it is appropriate to define what is meant by this term. A branch is a self-contained worshipping community that may, or may not have a resident *moruti*. To all intents and purposes, branches are clusters of congregations that carry out virtually all the functions of the main congregation.

GCZ has branches in Mankgodi, Ramotswa, Shoshong, Good Hope, Moshupa, Molepolole, Kanye, Serowe, Letlhakane, Toromoja, Francistown, Sefhophe, Mojabana and Mahalapye. Branches are envisaged at Dinokaneng and Ghantsi also.

The main attraction to the Mogonye branch is its renowned *phodiso* – healing - ministry. Membership in the Mogonye branch alone stands at 800, adults and children.

The number of new members at a branch varies, depending on how active the *baefangele* – evangelists - and the *baruti* are in winning people over. The following is the organisational structure at Mogonye: there is one bishop, one *mookamedi*, four *batiakone*, three *baefangele*, five *bareri* – preachers - and six *amagosa* - wardens.

BCCCZ has nine branches altogether in the Kweneng District: at Molepolole, Kang, Tshou, Dutlwe, Salajwe, Motokwe, Thamaga, Medie and Tsabong. Other branches take in several districts, namely branches at Kanye, Ramatlabama, Gobe, Modipane, Serowe, Selibe-Phikwe, Serule, Bobonong, Tlholegong, Francistown, Tsamaya, Themashanga, Mapoka and Moroka.

In terms of numbers, the branches are much stronger than the headquarters of this church. According to the church's leaders, this is largely because the *baruti* at the branches travel to different villages, preaching and making converts. This is the usual arrangement at different branches: one *moruti* has an assistant, who is normally an evangelist, a deacon, two *barapeledi* - those whose function is to pray and lay on hands - and elders who are preachers, known as *amagosa*. Each branch also has its own choir. The general duties of all those listed above include preaching and healing, while administering baptism and officiating at funerals are left to the local *moruti*.

The creation of branches is owing to three main factors, according to church leaders. Firstly, the original or mother church or headquarters was too far away from many of the villages; this in itself called for the establishment of branches. Secondly, there was and still is a burning zeal among members to spread the church throughout the length and breadth of Botswana and thus make it popular. The third factor is simply that church members want rural people to know about God.

Before a branch can be established, written permission has to come from the general secretary of the church. To qualify for branch status, there has to be a local leader and preachers to assist him or her and the church must have more than five members in the locality. Some branches have relatively large numbers, such as Molepolole, which has over seventy people. Molepolole is Bethlehem City of Christ Church's biggest branch. There are, at present, one *moruti* and

assistant superintendent, three evangelists, two deaconesses and a group of *basebeleletsi* – healers-, preachers and *amagosana*.

In FF the local *moruti* is both the leader of the local church and the overseer who is the pastor of the church in his region. Then there are evangelists whose duties are to evangelise, to organise the affairs of the church and to organise and hold revival meetings. Finally there is the deacon, who acts on behalf of the pastor and leads the services. There are branches of FF in Nhlanhle and some outlying districts of Gaborone.

Unlike the other four churches, FF has only two small branches. Of these, the most important is Lobatse, where the church caters mostly for students at the Lobatse Secondary School. Membership numbers are deceptive because this congregation is in a state of flux; actual stable membership numbers only five. The local leader is a deacon. A new *moruti* has recently arrived from Zimbabwe.

STG has branches in the following places: Maunatlala, Gaborone, Molepolole, Sefhophe, Selibe-Phikwe, Bobonong, Letlhakane, Kanye, Thamaga and Mmadinare. For any given place to be constituted a branch there has to be a *mogogi* - church elder or catechist - and a minimum of 50 congregants. The following places are due to be given branch status soon: Palapye, Mahalapye, Lerala, Mochudi, Lobatse, Tutume, Nkange, Kanswazwi, and Kopong. There are about 200 members at the Gaborone branch, although the congregation at this branch changes constantly. Church membership is reduced owing to transfers and the fact that members are often short-term contract workers employed by various companies who operate in the area. About 60 people join this branch every year. This hierarchical structure is the same as at headquarters. However, in this branch the church utilises an *igosa*, who could either be a *modiakone* or a *morapeledi* - to act as doorkeeper.

STP has branches at the following places: Selibe-Phikwe, Gaborone, Mahalapye, Shoshong, Orapa, Francistown and Mokatakwe. In this church all branches have

at least one *moruti*, a deacon, an evangelist, and a preacher. There are more *baruti* in larger places, such as Gaborone and Francistown, which both have three *baruti* each. A branch can only be established by baptised members.

There are about 40 full members of the church in the Gaborone branch. Including new signees and children, the congregation numbers about 100. This number is based on personal observation and interviews.

The organisational structure in the various branches is as follows: there are two *baruti*, whose duties are preaching and laying on of hands to bless people and the sick; one deacon, who is second to the *baruti* and deputises for them; and then there are *basebeletsi* - women healers - whose duties are healing and prophesying.

Finally, apart from FF, which has only two branches, the branches of all of these churches are fairly evenly distributed throughout Botswana.

2.9.3.2 Education of clergy

The educational level among the clergy of the five churches is not high, ranging from Grade 5 to Grade 9. Most of the ministers have never been to theological college. There is generally no formal education envisaged and so school qualifications are not a requirement for ordination to the priesthood. Strength of character, good living and good behaviour seem to be among the most important criteria for the selection of candidates to the priesthood. Priesthood here in the five churches is understood as the elevation of a person or believer who already has the gifts of the Spirit to a position of service within the church. It is not an ontological concept. That is to say, it is not a power that resides in the one who ordains and is, according to Catholic theology, passed on to the recipient by the laying on of hands and then dwells in his soul, waiting to be executed or utilised. It is rather a selection and elevation by the assembly. In Catholic and Orthodox

theology Holy Orders or priesthood is one of three sacraments that leave an indelible mark on the soul, the other two being Baptism and Confirmation.

The churches do require, however, that those who are eventually chosen for the ministry be placed on a programme of in-service training. During this time senior ministers, namely those who have been ordained, and elders keep a close watch on the young aspirants and eventually propose them for ordination if they deem them fit. In the absence of academic qualifications, candidates are selected on the basis of experience and the degree to which they are active in the church. Churches that have the means, like FF, do, however, send a few young candidates to Bible schools for formal Bible training. FF also expects its candidates to be born-again Christians. In STG "there are special occasions when the Archbishop is guided by the Holy Spirit to appoint someone to a position" (Akanyang, 1987). In cases such as these, the church is just informed of the archbishop's decision and accepts that the person in question is God's choice. In STP "healing powers are the greatest requirement" for ordination (Hlabano, 1986).

At present, STG has the highest number of ordained ministers, eight, and FF the lowest, two, plus a new arrival from Zimbabwe.

From an educational point of view, the five churches appear to be on an equal footing, with no one church commanding an extraordinary number of literate members. "Educated" people are, however, gradually starting to join these churches.

From the preceding pages it is quite clear that the five churches have much in common. Firstly, all these churches have their main roots well beyond the borders of the Republic of Botswana. Four of the churches originated in South Africa, the fifth in Zimbabwe. In a very real sense the five churches were "imported" into Botswana from "foreign soil". The missionaries who carried out

this responsibility were all African people and as such their culture and outlook on life were the same as those of the Batswana people. We should also bear in mind that some of the co-founders were themselves Batswana who had worked outside Botswana. In this sense, the importation of independency into Botswana was not "foreign"; indeed, it is completely different from the way in which Christianity was imported into the rest of Africa by people of a completely alien culture. All these churches are African churches.

By and large, the majority of the members of the five churches put together cannot be put forward as people possessed of high levels of education. However, the researcher would be reluctant to "classify" them as illiterate because, although there is no formal education to boast about, the rank and file do know how to read and write due to the influence of a free country and a government that prioritises education for the land. Furthermore, as stated above, men and women from different walks of life and professions are beginning to trickle in into these churches as members.

2.9.3.3 Women in church and country

Botswana is a male-dominated society and the patriarchal system is very strong. There is only a sprinkling of women in public office and, by and large, at grass roots level, power rests in the hands of men. It is only in recent years that "fighting women" have emerged, with Batswana women demanding their rightful place in the affairs of the nation and the rights of their children. For example, government has been resolute in not recognising children born of a Motswana woman and a foreigner, namely, a non-Motswana, as Batswana citizens by descent, which carries with it all the rights and privileges that a Motswana can have in his native country. This was so until 1993. However, things changed drastically in the late 90s. In 1993 a judge from Botswana, Unity Dow, who had a child by a non Motswana national, took the government to the High Court of Botswana and won. Her case was upheld and this represented a landslide victory

for the women of Botswana because the law of citizenship was automatically overturned as discriminatory. Her child was declared a Motswana by descent. The women of Botswana have been fighting vehemently for this law to be changed, as they considered it discriminatory because children born of a union between a Motswana male and a female foreigner or non-Motswana were considered Batswana nationals by descent, not the other way round.

It is, therefore, interesting to note that only one of the five churches, STP, was actually founded and established in Botswana by a Motswana woman. Of equal significance is the fact that it was a woman who founded this church in South Africa also.

CHAPTER 3

MAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD: LIFE AND FAITH IN THE AICS

3.1 FOCUS ON THE PEOPLE IN THE FIVE CHURCHES

In the preceding chapter we saw how the Christian faith, together with a powerful Western influence, had entered Botswana (previously Bechuanaland) and caused far-reaching changes, among others, on the religious scene. Adaptations to these changes set in. As far as religious independency is concerned, it was "imported" mainly from South Africa. Early in the Twentieth Century, Pentecostalism was brought to Southern Africa by European missionaries. The historical dependence of the Zionist churches upon the early Pentecostal mission activity seems to be indisputable (Hollenwegser, 1976:150), although it took several decades before Zion as a movement grew conspicuously in Botswana.

The primary aim in this chapter is to give the African Initiated Churches of Botswana a face; to translate the vagueness of what is usually described as the Independent Church Movement into the concreteness of relationships among living people. The focus is more on the inner life of these churches. Church organisation has already been extensively covered in Chapter 2 when discussing the emergence of the African Initiated Churches in Botswana. Appendix I on the five churches gives a detailed account of the exact organisational structure in the constitution of each church. The following nine aspects will now be addressed: Ministry; Church finances; Discipline; The role of women; Beliefs and religious practices: Baptism service, Holy Communion, Easter and other festivals; Preaching; Symbolism; Healing; and Worship.

3.2 THE MINISTRY

A significant feature of African Initiated Churches is that, unlike "mainline" churches, there is never any shortage of priests. Preachers of the Word, baptisers of the faithful and leaders of burials are always at hand. Why is this? Does this lie with the leadership of these churches? Why are there always men and women available to perform the rituals and religious functions?

Some constitutions are specific on the issue of evangelists. For example, in STP a programme is laid down for the training of the "evangelist", who is only one step down from the office of "preacher". After a fairly arduous period of training (two years) evangelists are commissioned and then charged with the duty of preaching and conducting weekly services. The two years of this training lays great emphasis on Biblical knowledge because, once evangelists are awarded their certificates, they are charged with the responsibility of "establishing branches in outside districts" (art.3).

The same duties are allocated to people termed "preachers" in the constitution of (GCZ). Preachers are "automatically" the "ministers" of the locality in which they find themselves and their duties entail "preaching the Gospel, praying for the sick and being responsible for the burial of the dead" (arts. 20 and 22 in the Constitution of the STG).

"Evangelists" are treated as "officers of the church" and rank one step above preachers (art. 5(v)).

In the five churches the selection and ordination of candidates to the ministry rests entirely either on the local bishop, the archbishop or the Conference or General Assembly. The latter, though, normally just recommends a candidate (BCCCZ, Article 7).

(GCZ) sums up what the church is all about: "The vocation of the churches to bear witness to its Lord to worship God in His name, to build its members in faith and righteousness and the spiritual unity and to proclaim the Gospel of God to all the corners of the earth (GCZ, Paragraph 6).

In GCZ, episcopal duties are summed up in this way: "The bishop of each area shall preach the Gospel, pray for the sick, lay to rest the dead, baptise believers, dedicate children, administer Holy Communion and be entitled to solemnise marriages, visit all districts under his charge and supervise the duties of the minister and attend to the execution of the objects of the church (GCZ, Paragraph 24)". STG lists the "objects of the church "as to "spread the teachings of Jesus Christ throughout the world, baptise believers in the name of Jesus Christ, to assist the old, orphaned and disabled through prayer and material assistance, to receive donations for the furthering of the objects of the church, and to raise money by subscriptions or otherwise for these objects" (STG: Paragraph 3).

Generally, all the five churches prepare their prospective ministers, deacons, preachers and evangelists meticulously, mostly through in-service training before and after ordination. STP devotes most of its constitution to this (STP: Paragraphs 2, 3, 4 & 5) out of a total of eleven paragraphs. .

3.3 CHURCH FINANCES

Touching on the question of finances: regarding the daily running of the churches at headquarters and the branches, the researcher would like to lift a few useful and clarifying snippets from the constitutions. Generally, all monies in the five churches are held in trust and administered by the treasurer, who does not have exclusive rights of signature. Usually, the Conference, archbishop, bishop, *moruti* in charge as the case might be, has to attach his signature for authentication. Financial administration is considered essential. Monies are kept in a church

banking account. Financial reports and statements are submitted to the General Assembly or Conference bi-annually and annually (STG: Paragraph 9, a-e).

Subscriptions and donations are levied for the efficient running of the churches and a small fee is asked for certificates and documents. Ministers are asked to give more to the church (BCCCZ: Article 12).

Usually, trustees are appointed to take care of church property mortgages and investments (FF: Paragraph 2, k-s). The wording is different in the other churches, but basically, what it means in essence is that church property and investments are not in the hands of an individual but rest with the highest authority of the church. Auditors help to keep an eye on the fortunes of the churches (FF: Paragraph 14, a-c). Moneys come from collections, special collections, prescribed fees for certain activities, donations and moneys bequeathed to the church. Reports to government are submitted quarterly.

When a grave situation such as death or poverty, the churches, through their Executive, can and do waive the duty to either donate or pay subscriptions to the church. In other words, for the period of bereavement or tragedy or dire need that the family has no funds to give to the church, as the case may be, they are duly exempted or excused for that period of time. The constitution clearly states: "The Executive waives payment of membership subscription under extreme circumstances such as death and poverty" (GCZ: Paragraph 10, h). What this means according to the leadership of the church, is that the affected family is absolved from paying church dues during the period of bereavement for a period of time, as dictated by local conditions.

All the churches ask for a nominal fee for membership annually, usually about P1.00 (STP: Paragraph 1).

As already stated in Chapter 2, all branches throughout the churches are expected to contribute to some sort of central fund (BCCCZ: Article 12, iv).

Sometimes, membership of a person may be withdrawn when they stay for more than a year without paying subscription. In the same way, the Executive can restore it again (GCZ: Paragraph 10, g).

3.4 DISCIPLINE

When it comes to discipline, the five churches are unambiguous; it is an either or situation, although the door for mercy and forgiveness is always open.

Members are all taught the do's and don'ts of the church and compliance is expected (BCCCZ: Article 2, g). The supreme body of the church has the power to remove any offending member, be it a lay person, a minister, a bishop or an archbishop (BCCCZ: Article 7, a-d). This is effected by the highest body in each of the five churches.

On the local level a minister may suspend a member after consulting and agreeing with the local branch committee (BCCCZ: Article 12, vi) and "The Executive shall expel any member whose actions are a disgrace to the Christian religion (GCZ: Paragraph 12, c)".

All the churches are dead against the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. "The use of drugs, alcohol and the smoking of tobacco is strictly prohibited" (BCCCZ: Article 12, x).

Although punishment may be meted out in the branches, members have a right of appeal (STG: Paragraph 10, d).

STP is very strict when it comes to property and the good name of the church: "All members of the church are strictly warned against any activities without the knowledge and the consent of the Diocese Executive Committee. Anybody who does so shall be liable to be brought before the law for defamation of character by the above body. Any property involved in this matter shall be confiscated (STP: Paragraph 6).

The following quotation from STG sums up the issue of discipline in the five churches.

Annexure A: Church rules

The Rules of the church which each member agrees to obey upon joining are:

- To qualify for the position of Archbishop a member must be married.
- All are subject to discipline, including the Archbishop himself, upon breaking the rules.
- An expelled member and a member who resigned are not to use the name of the church,
- All members shall obey the laws of Botswana.
- No money should be paid to any member upon performing services of baptism, prayer and healing.
- No woman member shall go bare-headed in public,
- All members are prohibited from eating clove-hoofed animals,
- All members are prohibited from drinking beer.
- All members are prohibited from smoking.
- Each member shall contribute annually the sum of 15 thebe to the church funds (STG: Annexure A).

Each church administers its discipline according to the regulations of its own constitution (Appendix I).

3.5 THE ROLE OF WOMEN

During the treatment of the emergence of African Initiated Churches in Botswana, it became clear that women were heavily involved, including actually founding and establishing churches in that country. Later in the treatment of healing (3.8.2) we shall see how women are especially involved in the healing ceremonies. Looking further field we know that Manku was a powerful character in the St. John Apostolic Church. Something known by very few people also is the fact that during the heyday healing days of the church of Manku a little girl in her early teens was actually healing and performing the miracles reported by the church. Her name never came to the fore. She was Sekati Diale (Diale 1979).

As stated in Chapter 2, women constitute 66% of the congregation in the five churches under study. This necessitates women taking on roles that would normally have been reserved for men culturally. The barriers have fallen, because the women missionaries account for many of the conversions to their churches from among women who do not belong to any denomination and those from mainline churches.

In all the five churches the role of *basebe/etsi* – helpers - is reserved for women, who seem to be preferred to men when possible. This can be picked up from the constitutions, which are severe on male healers regarding their code of conduct. No such precaution or ruling is made with regard to women healers. For example, BCCCZ states in its constitution that “No male prophet shall be allowed to pray for a female person in a secret place unless he has been required to do so by the individual but there should be a kind person to witness such praying (Article 15).

Most of the five churches have special weekly prayer meetings for women (BCCCZ: Article 12, xiii), while deaconesses “assist the church especially amongst women and children”. Women are expected to cover their heads. “No

woman member shall go bare-headed in public (STG: Annexure A, Church Rules, 6).

In at least one of the church's women can attain the highest position in the church as exemplified by the head of STP, Mrs Talita Mmantshe. As a woman, she cannot carry out priestly functions but she appoints all bishops and archbishops, who in turn owe allegiance and obedience to her. What this means in effect is that for priestly duties and *kgotla*-like responsibilities, she has to rely on her male counterparts. In Setswana culture there are certain functions exclusively reserved for men and here it would seem that the idea is for the church to walk as closely as possible to these guidelines without saying it. This is what one may call ecclesiastical acculturation in action.

3.6 BELIEFS AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

3.6.1 Baptism

Baptism is undoubtedly the highpoint in the lives of all the members of the five churches under study. All members, young and old, look forward to the great day when they are baptised. Perhaps its importance lies in the fact that baptism is seen as both a form of cleansing and healing, even if the main emphasis is on the believer's internal, spiritual experience (Tanyala, 1984). The deduction from this particular interview seems to imply and indicate that through baptism one is initiated into the Kingdom of God.

A common perspective of African Initiated Churches is that baptism is also a ritual cleansing. Water figures prominently in the cleansing ceremonies and rituals of African traditional religion. People assailed by bad luck are always washed clean by a process of ritual bathing, in which water is mixed with healing herbs and roots to effect the purification as outlined in the comments that will follow regarding *sewasho* when dealing with healing under 3.8.2.

African Initiated Churches in Botswana are aptly referred to as *Dikereke tsa Metsi* -- Churches of Water.

As in African traditional religion where water is frequently used as a means of purification and sanctification, the ceremonial usage of water in African Initiated Churches is extremely common. Water is believed to possess an innate, life-giving power, whether it is consumed by human beings, animals or plants. Perhaps a small example from the Christian ministry itself will illustrate this point.

During the 1960s the researcher was stationed as a priest in a large village in the archdiocese of Pretoria. At the time, one of the most important ministries was the care of the sick, particularly the elderly, to whom he regularly gave Communion on Thursday mornings. In one of the houses there was an old woman communicant whose husband adhered to African traditional religion. The couple were in their eighties. Devout women and men in the parish tried to talk him into baptism but he refused to oblige. Finally, the women of the sodality approached the researcher and asked him to talk to the husband. For a long time he resisted the idea from an ecumenical point of view. However, when told that church members feared that the old man might die without baptism, he gave in and went to see him. They sat outside as usual, on a mat, and they held their weekly discussion mostly about his reminiscences and experiences of the Second World War. The researcher then broached the subject to him. The smile vanished from his face. He stared at the researcher with anger and disappointment. He asked: "You, tell me", he said, "you, can you enter the house of a white man by the front door?" If you are black this is not a difficult question. The researcher retorted simply: "Of course, not". "There you are", he said and continued, "these white people, they came into our midst in our land and told us that they are preaching love and yet they have no love. They do not love us; we cannot even enter through their front doors. No, Sir, thank you for your baptism. You see, I was baptised on the day I was born. When I came forth from the womb the women

were there and they washed me clean with water. That was my baptism. I do not need the white man's baptism" (Monyai, 1980).

After this all they could do was to switch to another topic, but the researcher had learned his lesson well. The "ritual" waters of nature had purified the old man.

Baptism is very important in African Initiated Churches in Botswana and is considered essential for adults who want to live in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In African Initiated Churches, baptism is considered immersion, a dipping in water which cleanses the believer of sin. It is also considered the ultimate sign of acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Lord and God of one's heart. Baptism is also understood as being akin to the baptism of Christ. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the believer is believed to take place at baptism, confirming one in faithfulness to God's law by spiritual rebirth. Baptism is also regarded as a sign of repentance, as it was in the days of John the Baptist.

The duty to baptise believers is a linchpin of doctrine in all the five churches under study. Baptising as Jesus commanded features in all the constitutions and is sometimes expressed in various rich symbolisms. The churches are expressly called to baptise the believers of Jesus Christ (BCCCZ, art 2[b]; STG, art e[b]; STP, arts [1] and [4]) and to proclaim the mission of Jesus Christ by teaching "the necessity of the new birth through the Holy Spirit and consequent imburement of power to witness for God" (FF, art [h] [iii]). In an obvious reference to baptism through immersion, "all believers in Jesus Christ shall undergo water baptism" (GCZ, art 11). The constitution of BCCCZ is more specific and states that "an evangelist shall conduct baptism in any pool of water. Baptism shall be conducted by immersing the whole body of a person in such a pool of water" (art. 12 [xii]).

In all the five churches, baptism is performed by total immersion and this takes place either in a river or a pool, usually the latter due to the fact that poor rains in recent years have caused many rivers in Botswana to dry up. The water level has to be at least breast-deep and is always first tested by the priests and church elders.

Baptism is considered extremely important for those who accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour, but believers are reckoned to be saved by Jesus Christ whether they are baptised or not, since He has the power to save them from their sins irrespective of anything else. Most of the people interviewed maintained that baptism establishes "a relationship between me and Jesus". Baptism helps one to refrain from sin, gives one the Holy Spirit, strengthens one's faith and transforms one into a good person.

In BCCCZ, believers can be baptised from the age of twelve onwards; it is very much a believers' baptism: "for those who confess that they want to follow Jesus". The believer is immersed thrice, in the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Another ceremony that is akin to baptism is the ritual of *go hlambolola - ukuhlambulula* - to wash clean, to cleanse. When this takes place, immersion is made seven times and this time the sacred mixture, *sewasho*, is used "to purify the unclean" (Seitlhamo, 1984).

In FF, baptismal immersion is made on the express understanding that candidates are those "who gave up their lives to Christ and understand what they are doing" (Tanyala: 1984). Baptism is understood to mean and signify that believers "are born of Christ". Children are blessed and consecrated in church, to qualify them for Sunday school attendance until such time that they are baptised.

In GCZ, baptism, which takes place in a river, is performed by the church's evangelists; children are blessed at the age of one or two months. Only adults are baptised because this is considered a sacrament of deliberate choice leading to the cleansing of sin. Children have no need for baptism because of their innocence before God. Adults are baptised once in their life. The evangelists baptise those who have expressed a desire to be baptised, and considerations such as regular church attendance and Christian commitment are also taken into account. There is no fixed time of the year for baptising. The church strongly believes that immersion is the only true baptism. All converts from other churches that were baptised in these churches by water being poured or sprinkled on their foreheads are considered to have been merely blessed and are baptised by total immersion once they have joined GCZ. Here again, the believer is immersed three times during the baptismal ceremony while invoking the names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This should not be confused with another immersion ceremony which is performed annually at the end of the year. This one here is a purificatory or cleansing ceremony and the names of the Triune God are not called upon. This is a cleansing ceremony called *go wash* -.literally, to wash. But here those to be cleansed are dipped seven times in a river or pool in order to be purified. The rationale given is that seven is based on the holy number 7 in the Bible. For example, Naaman the leper was asked by the prophet to go and wash seven times in the river Jordan in order to be purified (2 Kings 5:10).

STG will baptise people only after they have expressed their desire for baptism. Baptism, which again means immersion, presupposes "repentance as preached by John the Baptist". Before baptism takes place, the bishop and the church elders who will take part in the ceremony test the water, which has to "reach the waist according to Matthew 3 and not reach the neck because that would be suicidal" (Seitlhamo, 1984). A ceremonial silver cross is then placed in the centre of the river once the right spot has been chosen, but not before the water has been struck with the same cross to indicate a renunciation of unacceptable

traditional practices on the part of those who are about to be baptised; the cross sanctifies the water. The bishop dips the candidate four times first, in silence, and then three times, while loudly calling out the Trinitarian formula to complete the number seven. The bishop then hands the newly baptised believer over to one of the evangelists who are standing in the river on the other side of the silver cross; the evangelist then lays hands on the person and prays for him or her. The dipping in the Jordan is twofold. The person is being cleansed first by being dipped four times in silence and the actual baptism transforming them into a new person takes place as the minister says, while immersing them three times, "I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Researcher's field work and observation). As in all the churches studied, baptism is very much a communal affair with a number of people, both men and women, being baptised at the same ceremony. Infant baptism is not recognised in these churches and "only those who can account for their wrong-doing are baptised" (Seitlhamo, 1986). At the end of the baptism ceremony the bishop usually dips himself in the water several times. At this point the baptised, now already dressed, come forward to the edge of the water and a prayer of benediction is said over them. The bishop holds his silver cross with two hands above his head, closes his eyes and prays for those who were baptised with *meets a polka* - the waters of salvation. He prays for the sick, the children, the infants and the whole congregation.

In the same way, in STP, people who want to be baptised have to be adults "above twelve years of age and who have given their lives to Christ and expressed their desire to be baptised" (Hlabano, 1984). Immersion is done three times.

From the preceding pages it is clear that baptism, as baptism of those who accept the message of salvation and become believers and the elect of God, is a once-for-all in the five churches. It is distinguished from the purification rites, which, as stated above, take place from time to time and are seen as a sign of

repentance. During baptism there is an invocation of the triune names, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the person being baptised is immersed three times into the waters of the river. Baptism is not used as an exorcism. It is an induction into the Kingdom of God and the household of the faith.

As has been said before, apart from the baptism, there is a ritual cleansing or immersion which takes place at any time of the year, when the believer is dipped seven times. During this ceremony, "which is meant to revive one's life" (Hlabano, 1984), the *sewasho* is poured into the pool or the river for purification. What this means is that the *sewasho*, which has been blessed and prayed upon, is poured into the river or pool precisely to ward off harmful, evil, earthly spirits which may be residing in the water, and drive them away so that the holy work of sanctifying the believers through the ritually blessed bath in the river or pool of cleansing may not be hindered in any way by Satan. This is an occasion for repentance in Jordan just like during the days of John the Baptist and sin and whatever power of evil or darkness are duly removed during this ceremony. It could also be described as a kind of exorcism. People who go for this ritual are those who feel the need to be cleansed from all their sins, transgressions and shortcomings.

3.6.2 Holy Communion, Easter and festivals

The five churches all observe feasts and rituals, which are celebrated annually. Apart from individual church celebrations, most of them are feasts which are well known in the Christian calendar, like Holy Communion.

We have by now seen that the five churches really adapt and make the faith intelligible to their followers by at times involving African culture and traditional tools.

The ritual that most closely resembles Holy Communion in African traditional religion is the sacrificial meal. The sacrificial meal in African tradition consists of the meat from a sacrificially slaughtered beast, or beasts, together with samp, *ting* - sour sorghum, soft porridge or mealie-meal, sometimes vegetables and always accompanied with plenty of African traditional beer. Depending on the nature of the feast, there may or may not be snuff supplied, which people sniff as they enter the gate. The sacrificial meal is given on numerous occasions; for example, a baby being taken out of the house for the first time - *go ntshiwa ga ngwana mo tlung* - literally, the taking of the child out of the house, allowing it to venture outside as of then, *badimo* - ancestral commemoration, marriage or death. The significance of the meal lies in the fact that it is a meal of fellowship. The person or family which has provided the feast can look forward to the blessings of the ancestors. Holy Communion in African Initiated Churches can be regarded as a communal meal, the *agape*, the meal where love is manifested, received and given. When one attends a night service with any of the spiritual healing churches, a communal meal of friendship is enjoyed the next morning after the service is over. This seems to be quite Biblical and in accordance with the understanding of the Last Supper.

Holy Communion, or *selalelo* in Setswana, is very important in many African Initiated Churches in Botswana and is central to their beliefs and preaching on fellowship. The same is true in the five Churches under studied. The emphasis is on togetherness in these churches because *selalelo* is seen more in the context of loving one another and sharing, as written in the fourth Gospel in John 13. There is certainly no detailed analysis of what does or does not happen during Communion, as is the case in mainline churches, where the issue of transubstantiation has been debated for many centuries. In African churches *selalelo* simply means receiving the Lord in love and fellowship. This is manifested in the liberal attitude these churches show in allowing anyone to partake of Communion, as long as they are people who believe, are active members of their churches and are committed to the Christian way of life.

Selalelo in Setswana literally means the evening meal or the meal through which you sup for the day; it is thus the last meal of the day and is used appropriately to refer to the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist.

Now follows exactly what the adherents of the five churches hold as their faith regarding Holy Communion.

According to the five churches, Communion is regarded and believed to be food that is taken to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. It is also referred to as the Holy Spirit and food for peoples' belief. However, a significant proportion of young people have no idea what Communion really signifies. The majority of believers see Communion simply as a sign, reminding them of the death of Jesus Christ. Taking Communion is seen as an act which renews and purifies the soul and body, and which therefore enables people to accept and follow Jesus. It makes believers holy and resolute, gives them power and assistance, and blesses the individual, making one feel strengthened in life. All believers are of one mind in claiming that Communion reminds them of Jesus' days on earth and that it forges a closer relationship between themselves and Jesus. Communion gives blessings and strengthens people's faith in God. Communion is considered necessary for salvation.

In everyday life Communion helps the believers to know Jesus better, to think of him constantly and remain steadfast in prayer. Communion is also believed to heal the participants physically and spiritually, to bless and keep them holy, to serve them and to keep them as part of the church.

In two of the churches under study, Communion is explicitly referred to in the constitutions: in BCCCZ and GCZ. The former places Communion within the context of fellowship during the annual conference: "At the annual conference held in March/April the Holy Communion shall be served to all members and they shall pay 10 thebe for it" (art 12 [v]). There is also a regular administering of

Communion during ordinary weekly services: "Rev. Superintendents shall administer Communion to all members" (art 12 [iii]). GCZ states: "The District Minister shall also administer Holy Communion." (art 22) and "the Bishop of each area shall administer Holy Communion" (art 24).

Although the researcher has indicated that African Initiated Churches do not go into the semantics of transubstantiation, consubstantiation, memorial symbolism and so on, their religious conviction regarding Communion should not, however, be underestimated. While researching across the eastern belt of Botswana, the researcher encountered St. Morian's Episcopal Church in Palapye. Interestingly enough, this church sees Communion in the same way as do Roman Catholic, high Anglican and Orthodox churches, and celebrate Communion with chalice, ciborium, and the white wafer. The leader of this church, who is a fairly well-educated man, was at pains to try and make me understand that in his church they believe in the absolute change of the bread and the wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ namely, transubstantiation (Founder, 1985).

In BCCCZ, Communion is served once a year, during Easter. This church believes that those who lead holy lives should partake of Holy Communion. Interestingly enough, this extends to children, who are considered sinless and who are therefore allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper - *selalelo*.

FF is probably one of the few African Initiated Churches where Communion is celebrated fairly frequently. Communion is not restricted only to festive seasons and quarters. Sometimes it may be celebrated as often as once a month, depending on the occasions that arise during the month.

In GCZ Communion is served three times a year. The first service is held at the beginning of the year to commemorate the birth of Christ. The second service is held at Easter in March or April to "celebrate the Passover and to remember the sufferings of Jesus Christ. Jesus said he should be remembered with this"

(Seema, 1986). The third celebration takes place in August, "when there is a rebirth and regeneration of nature because at this time of the year the spring begins and the earth gives new life to plants and plants grow again after the dry winter season" (Seema, 1986). Unlike St. Morian's Episcopal Church referred to earlier, this church does not regard the bread and the wine as being the actual body and blood of Christ, and the bishop says as much. These are "used as a remembrance of Jesus Christ who instructs us in the scriptures to do so" (Seema, 1986). Altar bread and wine are used.

Some years ago the researcher visited a big village north of Pretoria. One day he asked the young black Lutheran pastor how often his church celebrated Communion. He replied: "Well, we celebrate Communion once a quarter. You see, these are very sacred things and we do not want the believers to get too used to them lest they forget to accord the necessary respect for these heavenly things."

STG has taken this statement a step further. Communion is viewed with such awe that it is celebrated only very occasionally, anything from one to several years. In fact, one bishop last received Communion as long ago as 1948 and does not serve the Lord's Supper in the church. "I feel it is something too precious and special to tamper with", says Bishop Seithamo, but he still hopes, however, that they "will eat Communion one day" (Seithamo, 1984).

In STP, Communion is regularly served to baptised church members in remembrance of Jesus Christ. This is done "because Jesus commanded that it should be done" (Hlabano, 1985). Children do not communicate but are merely blessed in church because they are too young to understand the implication of what they are doing, maintains Bishop Hlabano.

3.7 SYMBOLISM

Worship has always taken pride of place in old Africa. Men and women have always prayed to God and the ancestors on many occasions. God was usually called upon in extreme cases of need or disaster, while the ancestors were regularly praised, thanked and petitioned for favours, either for the family or the community as a whole. This form of praying took place mostly in the form of *badimo* - sacrificial celebration to the ancestors- and visiting graves. African people have always believed that they could communicate directly with their ancestors who, in turn, received power to grant their requests from God, the supreme one, *Modimo*, Setswana for Most High One or *Unkulunkulu* in Zulu. During national crises, however, God was addressed directly by people themselves crying out to *Ene*, that is, to him or to her in the English language. The people were thus put on a person to person basis with God.

The ritualism in all of these churches takes its life from the African Initiated Church believer himself or herself, who believes that he or she can call upon God directly, frequently and without any inhibitions, as a son or daughter to a parent.

It has to be remembered that the five churches do not exist in a vacuum; they exist within a particular cultural context, located in a very traditional Setswana society, which is one of the few countries in Southern Africa which pride themselves in their rich cultural heritage as manifested in many customs and traditional practices, chief among which is the respect with which ancestors are treated. That is why in the five churches there are no outbursts against ancestors. In the same vein there is a tacit or quite acceptance of the role of ancestors in the daily life of the members. The matter of ancestors will be looked at in greater detail in Chapter 5.

In order to bring the discussion of worship to a close, the author shall now proceed to give a brief interpretative analysis of the salient, symbolic features of the worship in these five churches.

Let it be noted, however, that when it comes to FF, there is no special uniform and hence there will be no reference to the church as church regarding symbolism concerning tools of worship as worn, carried and practised by the other four churches. However, all the interviewees have definite opinions about what these tools of worship and colours signify or symbolise. Their answers are, therefore, legitimately included in the sample.

When we talk of African Independency, we are talking about dance, and ritual dance in particular, expressed in the rhythmical, bodily movements that are unique to the worship of African Christians. From a careful study of ritual dance in Africa, this one expression of the faith seems to have captured the soul and identity of Africa. There are copious examples in the writings of theologians regarding dance in Africa, like Mbiti (1969:67), Dickson (1984:111) and Setiloane (1976:37). Dance for the five churches has become part and parcel of a heritage of worship which can no longer be discarded as a peculiarity. Although the dance element is less pronounced in FF, it is nevertheless still present. As far as the other four churches are concerned, the worship services are characterised by their vigorous, ritual dancing, which is, as has been said, unique to African church life.

If one took an experienced missiologist and led him or her blindfolded through the whole of Gaborone, from the rich suburbs to the poorer outskirts of the town, he or she would probably soon tell where he was simply by listening to the music. One type of music definitely dominates the mainline churches, and another the new, Indigenous Churches. The difference between the music of the mainline churches and African Initiated Churches is too obvious for even a lay person to miss. The former is as foreign to the soil of Africa as the steam engine was, while the latter is one with nature herself. To African Christians, the music of the mainline churches is dull and boring, while that of the African Initiated Churches reflects the spirit of old Africa. By this is meant that the Christian hymns that are sung are sung to the tune and rhythm of African music and therefore rendered

meaningful to the African worshippers. The one form of music is simply European and the other is African; that is the distinction. The translation of the hymns or songs may be the same but the rendition is different. In the same way the five churches use African melody, beat and rhythm.

One has to understand Botswana before one can understand the preaching in the African Initiated Churches in that country. The whole country is run on a very strong *kgotla* system. It is here that men and women have ample opportunity to put across their case. They speak with great power and oratory. Although the researcher is a Motswana by birth, he entered the Botswana society as an outsider. Coming from ghetto township life in South Africa, the system of *kgotla*'s was quite new and unique to him and very fascinating. He would personally describe *kgotla*'s as "seedbeds" or "nurseries" of African oratory. The five churches, all of which specialise in the art of preaching, have drawn heavily on the *kgotla* system of rhetoric. It is as much here, as in the dancing that the researcher personally believes the soul and identity of old Africa has been captured. Virtually the whole congregation is imbued with the idea of standing up in an assembly of people to address them. In emphasising the need to preach one sermon after another, these five churches ensure that every sermon is as forceful and as fiery as the previous one. This is indeed reminiscent of the *kgotla* system of delivering and emphasising a message repeatedly regarding a very important matter. Service of the Word in church is by far the most elevated and lofty undertaking *par excellence*. The case in mainline churches is, of course, quite different. Flat services, with lack-lustre preaching and a liturgy devoid of vibrant expression, mark the day. This contrasts sharply with the music and services of African Initiated Churches.

However, this thesis is not about the Setswana *kgotla* system, but for the sake of the reader, the author would like to explain very briefly, in one paragraph, how this unique system operates and why he thinks the five churches have taken a leaf from this national custom and practice, which is still very strong and fully in

use in Botswana among all the tribes of that country. Obviously, the *kgotla* system is very wide, encompassing as it does many issues regarding birth, life and death, among them welcoming ceremonies for babies, male and female circumcision, marriage, *kgotla* judgements and litigation and so on. The focus here will be mainly on what pertains to the topic.

In any given village in Botswana, the whole village is divided up into different sections, which handle and run their own affairs. Perhaps the systems of cantons in Switzerland and communes in China are the closest examples. In the case of Botswana, those divisions or sections referred to are known as *dikgoro* - gates or entrances. There is an overseer for each *dikgoro*, whose singular is *kgoro*. The person who presides over this *kgoro* is normally a male person and is known as *mokgomane*. His duties are primarily to liaise with the households under his care and the *kgotla*, the big kraal where the king himself presides. It is through him that all the affairs of the tribe are given to the *kgoro* from the meetings of the *kgotla* of the king and through him also that the requests and suggestions of this *kgotla* are put forward. When there is an issue that needs urgent attention, the opinion of the different *dikgoro* will be sought and everything is liaised through the *mokgomane*. This system ensures the smooth and efficient running of the affairs of the tribe. When the researcher was posted as a parish priest to the big village of Mosetlha north of Pretoria in 1969, born and bred as he was in Potchefstroom, Tlokwe, he took it upon himself to be very civil and polite by going within days to the *kgotla* to announce his arrival and thus pay his respects to the kgosi in his administrative offices. Luckily, the general secretary of the tribal authority saw him first before he entered the door, although the eyes of the king and his had already met. He asked how he could help the researcher and when he replied that he had come to greet the king, he pulled him aside and gently asked him who his *mokgomane* was, and where the church was located. The researcher told him that he did not know, whereupon he suggested that he go back to the congregation to make enquiries and that the *mokgomane* would then accompany him (the researcher) to go and *bega* – announce - me to the

king, as he could not be seen alone. The researcher was then able to pay his respects the following day. In fact, it turned out that the king himself was also a member of the researcher's congregation.

The *bakgomane* are able and eloquent speakers during the *kgotla* sittings. Almost invariably, they are orators and speak up in loud voices, arguing their cause forcefully and passionately. They communicate the message with clarity in such a way that even the person sitting furthest behind in the kraal hears what is being said. The researcher's own assessment is that the preachers of the five churches in Botswana have inherited something very rich and positive from this ancient custom and culture of "old" Africa.

Everything that follows below regarding the understanding and meaning of ritualism, symbols, church attire and colours is taken directly from the mouths of the adherents of the five churches.

3.7.1 Shoes

As far as symbolism itself is concerned, the first obvious symbolic gesture is that of taking off one's shoes before worship. This is clearly an indication of African Christians' belief in the holiness of the soil on which they stand, an idea taken directly from the book of Exodus (Ex 3:5).

3.7.2 Colours

However, the most obvious symbolism in these churches is their "uniforms". The distinctive robes and garments worn in these churches are regarded as a sign that sets apart the members of these churches from other people. The colours of these church uniforms represent, among other things, the rainbow, the visible sign of reconciliation between God and humanity (Gen 9:13-16) (Jerusalem Bible, 1966).

The dominant colour of these uniforms is red, which is, of course, symbolic of the blood of Jesus, recalling both his glory and his cross. It also represents the power of Jesus to heal from illness.

The colour blue symbolises heaven and, again, the power to heal.

The colour white symbolises various qualities, such as the shiny white snow or the spotless clouds, both of which are good or considered to be full of radiance. The colour white is also symbolic of light, or a pure heart, Christianity, or pure blood.

Green symbolises life and is therefore also a symbol of protection from illness. It is also considered to represent the blood travelling in one's veins and is presumably indicative of the fullness of life in Christ as John says: And the grass was green (Jn 6:10).

The colour yellow represents the glare of a sacred flame, such as the candles which are used in worship services. The colours are all about symbolism and they aid the senses of the believers in putting themselves in a particular frame of mind for worship.

3.7.3 Holy cords

These are particularly important in four of the churches studied. Ropes or cords have a clear symbolic meaning and, because they are regarded as laden with spiritual power, they are quite often used in healing ceremonies.

In the four churches concerned these cords symbolise protection and help for the worshippers.

In BCCCZ, ritual ropes play a very important role. The girdles wrapped around the loins are used so that members may not deviate from the truth. More importantly, these ropes are used in treating diseases, as instructed by the Spirit of God.

3.7.4 Holy rods

Rods play a very important role in STG. They are divided into three types. The first signifies bodily weakness, the second signifies that God has sent one, like Moses' rod, and the third is used in healing and increasing the output of prayer.

3.7.5 Drums

The symbolism of drums is that they recall what is written in the Bible. The drums are traditional among the *Baapostola*, as members of apostolic churches are sometimes called, and Zionists. They not only symbolise, but they also give worshippers the power for ritual church dancing and they are also very strong symbols of healing power, especially when someone is very ill.

3.7.6 Closing the eyes

Closing the eyes in prayer is regarded as a sign of respect and fear, symbolising humanity's lowliness. God, who is far greater than humanity, cannot be addressed audaciously with open eyes all the time.

3.7.7 Dance

The ritual dance is described more fully under Worship. However, the researcher would like to touch on the symbolism that occurs in a particular setting. In our model church, GCZ, ritual dancing takes on a very special meaning when performed by the youth choirs, particularly the young boys. Dressed in long blue

trousers striped with red down the side, wearing blue jackets and blue hats striped with red, the boys choir is a wonder to watch when they go through their paces, with arms outstretched and their faces all turned towards heaven.

The symbolism was explained to the researcher by the most senior *moruti* after the bishop at Mogonye church. When the boys look up they are praying to the Holy Spirit. By stretching out their hands heavenwards, they are asking the Holy Spirit to descend as they pray and dance in the centre of the church. When they retract their arms and hands, as though clutching something, this means they have received what they were asking for from the Holy Spirit (Senior *moruti*, 1985).

Raising up one's arms in prayer is common in all the five churches. This is generally regarded as a sign of respect to God, symbolising praise and the receiving of gifts from God. This action is also based on incidents in the book of Exodus, when Moses raised his arms in prayer, and Jesus is considered to have done the same.

3.7.8 Bending

Another important symbolic gesture occurs in Galatia Church in Zion. The people walk bending under the hands of the priests, as they, the priests, stand with outstretched hands before the altar. This symbolises the worshippers humbling themselves before approaching God in worship and is also a sign of repentance for transgression.

3.7.9 Silence

Celebrants of the five churches always file in silence before entering the place of worship. This symbolises dedication and consecration to God before entering the holy tabernacle.

3.7.10 Facing the East

Finally, as the service comes to an end, some of these congregations kneel and face the East. This symbolises facing the Holy One of Israel, the Author and Source of life from whom all help and strength come. It is a symbolic gesture, in recognition of the Mighty One, before whom every knee must bow.

As stated above, these are all expressions taken from the mouths of the leadership and members of the five churches during interviews regarding worship.

In African culture, as in most cultures of the world, people are buried "facing" the East, namely, the Morning Star, and, in Christianity, they face the place from where the Saviour will come for the second time. This is how sacred the issue of facing the East at the end of the service is in the five churches.

3.8 HEALING

From the body of literature on African Instituted Churches and the writings of African theologians healing seems to be the centre of all operations in church life and community life.

As Sundkler put it, the African Instituted Church is an "institute of healing" wherein healing plays a pivotal role. Many of the members of African Instituted Churches are those who were once ill and were healed through the prayers and ministry of Zion (Sundkler 1961: 22).

In the Setswana-Sotho culture the issue of healing is very central. The *ngaka* - traditional doctor - features strongly in the wellbeing of the individual and the community. The *ngaka* is not only respected for his or her skills but especially

because that which he or she performs derives its power from the unseen but experienced world of the ancestors. In his description of the role of *dingaka* Setiloane also attests to this (Setiloane, 1976:58-59).

In The Church of Christ in Africa, great emphasis was placed on prayer for healing, to a point where even medical treatment was rejected. Confession of sins and healing from physical and spiritual maladies were interrelated (Ogot, 1966:31).

It just so happens that the five churches, in their own right, place healing high on the agenda of their faith and take it very seriously. To them it is something that emanates from the teachings of Jesus Christ and is part of their proclamation of the Gospel in action.

The theme of this kind of healing is echoed throughout the life histories of the five churches and their daily lived experiences in real life. This will become particularly clear in Chapter 5, 5.6 (Sin and Forgiveness), when we deal with an analysis of the hymns selected as a sampling for our study of the five churches.

Undoubtedly, the major attraction of African Initiated Churches in Botswana, as indicated above, is healing. Membership of these churches stands or falls by a church's ability to heal people. In fact, the issue of healing in these churches is so important that the Department of the Registrar of Societies has to keep a close watch on the types of medicinal instruments or aids used by these churches to ensure that unnecessary accidents or injuries do not occur or recur. As cited above, accidents have occurred in which people have actually died during healing sessions. After doctrinal beliefs, healing is perhaps the most important feature in the life of African Initiated Churches. Indeed, healing forms the "core" of all the rites and rituals practised in these churches.

As said above, prophecy and healing are part and parcel of the African heritage. The existence of mediums, seers, diviners and traditional doctors are ample proof that prophecy is part of daily life in Africa. The practice of healing is part of life in every ethnic group of people in Africa. The ability of the church to heal diseases or illnesses that have defied Western medicine is a clear indication of the power of healing in African Indigenous Churches. There are numerous cases where African medicine defies human reason. In fact some years ago, during the University of Botswana Open Day, a tube of gel, made in Germany, was featured and listed as a cure for arthritis. The roots that were used to make this ointment actually come from Botswana. These roots are dug here and exported to Germany where they are processed, synthesised and then sent back as a healing ointment. This particular example is cited because there are cases of the San who are very skilled traditional doctors and who use a lot of these wild herbs in Botswana, in their raw, root state. The point here is to illustrate that the five churches exist within the context of a world of healing and that thus their emphasis on healing when it comes to the divine is not unexpected. But this in no way detracts from their faith and commitment as Christians. This is a lived experienced, a natural phenomenon but taken to greater heights through faith.

There are striking similarities in the healing ministries of these five churches. To start with, there is a very strong emphasis on the health of the whole person, namely a holistic approach that explodes the myth that African Initiated Churches are only interested in the spiritual welfare of their believers, rather than their material welfare. The fact that the African Initiated Churches are deeply interested in the physical wellbeing of the believers suggests that they would like to see their material welfare improved a point that can be proved from the answers to the questionnaire.

There is great emphasis placed on the laying on of hands during healing. The physic -spiritual touch element is common to all of these churches. In St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church it is highlighted by the ritual drinking of pure,

blessed water by all the worshippers, including the ministers. This practice would seem to be reminiscent of the total and complete cleansing of the people of God in Exodus at the foot of Mount Sinai (Ex 24:8).

The healing ministry of GCZ is unique: far from being condemned as "heathenish", the system of *diagelo* is very strong and ancestors play a central role in healing services (Seema, 1986). It has been argued that sometimes, not without justification, African Initiated Churches have turned their backs on anything remotely connected with the religious beliefs of Old Africa. From the interviews with the leadership, this does not seem to be the case in GCZ. The emphasis on the role of ancestors is so strong and explicit that the researcher is personally inclined to believe that, in its veneration of the ancestors, the devotional life of this church is parallel to that of Anglo-Roman Catholicism with their "cult" of the saints. In this instance GCZ, and not the researcher, believes that it has taken something positive from old Africa, just as further down in Chapter 4 Bishop Dwane of the Order of Ethiopia will indicate.

In this church, when someone is ill, they may be required to offer some form of sacrifice, either directly to God or to the ancestors. The sacrificial beast may either be a goat, a sheep, a cow or pigeons. According to information collected by GCZ itself, it seems that many people who perform these sacrifices are, in fact, healed.

In all the churches studied, including another study in which I compare sixteen African Initiated Churches in Botswana, prophecy and healing are virtually inseparable (Monyai, research notes, 1985). The dividing line between the two is very thin and one seems to complement the other; for example, prophets and prophetesses are normally the official healers. Healers who are not officially recognised as prophets or prophetesses will be possessed or seized by the Holy Spirit during healing ceremonies, giving them at least a temporary power of prophecy, without which healing could not be effected.

In BCCCZ, healers are told or shown precisely how an ailment has to be handled. In this church, *sewasho*, a holy mixture of ash and water is used extensively during the laying on of hands.

Healing services are somewhat more "ordinary" in FF. Healing is effected simply through faith in Christ and the sick person is healed as he or she and the minister pray to God for help. In this church, the bishop is emphatic that healing takes place directly through the intervention of God and Jesus Christ.

In GCZ the *sewasho* administered is made from the ashes of a *mothware* - olive tree - and burnt *sibi sa kgomo* - dried cow dung.

These five churches are willing to heal all illnesses, from the simple to the complex, for example fractures, insanity and psychiatric disorders. People who cannot be helped at hospitals are often healed in these churches, although, of course, there are exceptions. One day on his way back from the somewhat isolated church of GCZ, the bishop asked the researcher to give one of his sick church members, who was accompanied by a relative, a lift back to Gaborone Hospital as the patient's condition, acute diarrhoea, seemed to be deteriorating, despite the fact that a healing ceremony had been performed on him. The incident is given in parenthesis simply to illustrate the point that the five churches are well aware that healing is not, in fact, always successful.

3.8.1 *Diagelo*

The distinguishing feature of GCZ is its *diagelo*, which are always filled with the sick and the convalescing.

The word *diagelo* means dwellings, buildings or habitat. In GCZ, the *diagelo* are houses or huts where the sick are received at the headquarters of a prophet.

Here they will pray, eat, wash and sleep while they are undergoing treatment and until they are discharged. GCZ has one of the biggest *diagelo* in Botswana; indeed, the whole place is almost a village in its own right.

The notion of *diagelo* in GCZ is rooted firmly in the New Testament, in which *diagelo* were found by the pool of Bethesda. Just as the angel of the Lord was believed to descend and stir the waters of healing amongst the community of the sick and crippled of the Bethsaida of Jerusalem, so the same is believed among the community of the Bethsaida of Botswana. In this case, the angel of the Lord will come and stir the wind and the elements of nature, thereby stirring the pains and ailments of the sick to effect recovery (Seema, 1985).

In STG, after the sick have been prophesied over, hands are laid upon them and they are then given holy water to drink and a purifying bath.

There is no fee charged because those who are healed are considered to have been healed by Jesus Christ himself, and not by any mortal healer (Seitlhamo, 1985).

In STP, the water given to all worshippers is to help heal those who may not actually be aware that they are ill, even though they have contracted a virus, for example (Hlabano, 1985).

According to the leaders, whom were all interviewed personally, in GCZ, *diagelo* originated primarily as accommodation or shelter for those patients who lived far away, sometimes as much as 200 km, and had come for healing at the church's headquarters. In GCZ the main *diagelo* are in Serowe, while the minor *diagelo* are at other branches such as Mogonye.

BCCCZ has its main *diagelo* at Tonota, while others are located in some of the branch churches. The origin of *diagelo* in this church is more or less similar to

that in GCZ. According to leaders of BCCCZ, *diagelo* were formed to accommodate the growing number of people who came for healing in BCCCZ. Church leaders argue that *diagelo* enable a larger proportion of the sick to be taken in for healing and that this then makes it possible for patients who need to stay for a longer period to do so.

Biblical arguments are also put forward for the justification of the phenomenon of *diagelo* both on Old Testament and New Testament grounds. In the Old Testament, an example is the ritual cleansing of Naaman the leper and in the New Testament, the purifications performed by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. According to the belief of the churches that have *diagelo*, in both cases there were some sort of *diagelo*, some permanent place where people could go to for healing. Even Jesus is considered to have healed the sick from an early form of *diagelo*. The argument advanced is that the 5,000 people who were miraculously fed by Jesus had to wait on that hillside for quite some time before Jesus appeared. The argument is also advanced that people started to live close to the source of healing, Jesus, by pitching tents close to where he was known to operate at any given time. This is considered to be the origin of *diagelo* in the New Testament.

FF has no *diagelo* but simply believes in the power of faith in healing.

STG has its main and only operative *diagelo* also in Serowe. Again, *diagelo* are based partly on the New Testament (John 5:1-9) as in GCZ and BCCCZ (Seema & Seithamo, 1986).

In STP every piece of church ground is a *diagelo*. In other words, although there are the main *diagelo* at the church's headquarters and some minor *diagelo* at branches of this church, believers consider that all church ground is *diagelo* simply because all the sick are brought to the church for healing. The arguments

for *diagelo* are also based on Jn 5:1-9 as well as the Old Testament Jewish ceremonies such as, for example, the Passover.

Diagelo are referred to explicitly in the constitution of BCCCZ and are described as a place of healing. "There shall be a special place where praying for the sick takes place and such a place shall be called *diagelo*. The prophet shall be present at *diagelo* to pray for the sick daily" (art. 16).

The constitutions of the five churches have references to the ministry of healing, which is considered a key aspect of these "Churches of Water" - *Dikereke tsa Metsi*). The emphasis laid on healing sometimes carries through even to the very names of the churches themselves, for example STP, although interestingly enough, this church does not specifically mention its healing ministry in any constitutional article, despite the fact that its whole life and ethos are geared towards this ministry.

BCCCZ specifically designates the ministry of healing in one of its constitutional aims and objectives (art 2 e). As mentioned above, a prophet gifted in seeing, namely diagnosing and healing, is elected by the church's highest ruling body, after which this prophet, the church's major prophet, assigns and names other prophets to act on his behalf in each branch. The major prophet's duty is, primarily, to pray and heal the sick throughout the whole region in which the church operates. The prophet and those appointed by him are allowed to charge reasonable fees to defray travelling expenses (art 15). This is explicitly stated in the constitution of BCCCZ. However, any unauthorised acceptance of payment from sick clients leads to instant dismissal. Prophets normally perform healing during worship services and in this case no travelling fees are charged (art. 16). Finally, there is a clause in the constitution that stipulates that if the prophet is male, he is not allowed to pray for a female patient alone in a sacred place unless he has been asked to do so by the patient, and then a third person must be present (art. 16).

In FF healing is seen as “part of the vicarious work of Christ in man” (art. h. ii.) Healing is considered a sacred task and is regarded as being based on the New Testament Ministry of prayer for the sick and the operation of the Gifts of the spirit (as in I Cor 12 [art. h. iv.]).

GCZ regards a successful cure as the consequence of divine healing by prayer and water with the help of medical treatment given at the hospital (art. 12). Every minister and preacher is commissioned and sent out not only to preach the Gospel, but also to pray for the sick (art. 22).

Even the bishop is under the same obligation to pray for the sick although his mission covers many duties: baptising believers, dedicating children, administering Holy Communion, solemnising marriages and burying the dead (art. 24). In GCZ, healing takes place with, through and in conjunction with the ancestors, usually in *diagelo*.

One of the objectives of STG is “to assist the old, the sick and the disabled through prayer and material assistance” (art. 3 [c]). No fee may be charged for the services of baptism, prayer and healing (art. 5).

All the churches under study, except FF, employ similar methods of healing: prayer, the laying on of hands, shaking the patient, using holy water and *go kappa* -cleansing of the person through vomiting. *Sewasho* and *go kapa* have already been discussed above.

A delicate matter was touched upon during the researcher’s fieldwork, namely, the question of hospitalisation. How do the five churches, which emphasise bodily and spiritual healing, view any of their members who go to medical doctors or visit a hospital? African Initiated Churches are often regarded as being against Western medical technology, but these five churches seem to contradict this

assumption. The example above of Bishop Seema sending one of his patients to hospital bears testimony to this. Below follows a summary of the position of each church regarding hospitalisation.

BCCCZ recognises that healers may fail to cure a patient or be unable to identify an illness, and in such cases members are expected to go to hospital. Even the *moruti* is expected to do the same. Members are also allowed to receive medication of any kind. Members may even receive medication and psychological help from traditional doctors, provided they have obtained the consent of the church's leaders. Problems are unlikely to occur in this area because even the bishop is the son of a traditional doctor. The researcher was told of a case where a deacon took his children to a traditional doctor when they were taken seriously ill with tuberculosis; they were healed and are now in good health. Another case is cited, namely that of a man who had a venereal disease and was hospitalised and who was cured as a result of the treatment he received.

FF allows its members to go to hospitals and visit Western-style medical doctors. Unlike BCCCZ above, however, which leaves it to its members to decide, the members of FF are forbidden to go to traditional doctors, either for healing or for psychological counselling.

Members of GCZ are allowed to receive both hospital and Western medical diagnosis and treatment when they need to. They too, however, are forbidden to go to traditional doctors. The perception is that traditional doctors dabble in practices that militate against the faith and the practice is seen as a work of darkness rather than light, although nobody says it explicitly. The policy of GCZ is to allow church members to take people to hospital any time they feel this is necessary, although, of course, patients are always welcome at the *diagelo*. During one of the researcher's visits to this church, a member had to go to a mental hospital for healing.

STG allows its members to receive treatment from both medical doctors and hospitals whenever necessary, but only after informing the church. Members of this church are also not allowed to go to traditional doctors. Cases of chronic illness, which persists even after the person has received Western-style treatment, are treated by the church, as are cases in which the cure is only partial. Patients are given a mixture of *sewasho* - salt and water - to drink at home. If the water runs out before the person is healed, he or she goes back to the church for more holy water, which is always prayed over before being given to the patient.

STP has a curious arrangement regarding traditional doctors. Firstly, members are not allowed to see traditional doctors for healing and treatment. However, if parents *have* taken their child to a traditional doctor, the leadership insists that the parents have to report the matter to the church so that both child and parents may be cleansed before being admitted back into the church. This seems to imply some form of automatic "excommunication" and a conscious acceptance, on the part of believers, of the church's authority. In effect, this means that the church rejects traditional healing methods. The mere fact that both child and parents have to be cleansed after being exposed to traditional rituals seems to imply that they need bringing back into the realm of light, after having encountered the powers of darkness.

In African traditional religion, there is no dichotomy between the healing of the body and the healing of the soul, a belief that has now been grafted onto African Christianity. Cleansing affects the whole person, as can be seen in the hymnal used by these five churches.

There is a tribe up north in Botswana where the surviving female spouse of a late husband is consoled by the menfolk of the village. This means that they all have sexual intercourse with her, presumably to ensure that the late man has progeny.

Such a practice is undoubtedly the mark of an isolated community that is cut off from the rest of the "sophisticated" world, dominated by Western values. Interestingly enough, the researcher's informants were virulently criticised for importing this information, but they insisted that what they had told me was the truth because they had been on the spot. The researcher has subsequently discovered that among some tribes in South Africa along the East Coast, the menfolk are indeed expected and known to "console" widows. The culture does not seem to say anything else about women "consoling" widowers, however. This can be traced to the roots of a real patriarchal society.

3.8.2 Sewasho and go kapa

When talking of healing in the five churches, it is quite clear that *sewasho* and *go kapa* also form an integral part of the whole healing process. Although these have been referred to above, it is important at this juncture to give a detailed analysis of *sewasho* and *go kapa* because they feature so prominently in the healing aspect of life among the African people and the five churches themselves. Quite often the two are used together to heal ailments, misfortune, endemic diseases and to ward off evil.

3.8.2.1 Sewasho

In African society, *sewasho* - holy mixture of ash and water or ash, water, salt and herbs - is like a recipe in a European household. It is always near at hand and ready for a variety of usages: medicinal, protective and so on.

In African society, *sewasho* is regarded as essential. This ritual mixture is made up of about seventy five percent water, with a few herbs, mainly aloes, added, and ash, which makes up about twenty-five percent of the mixture. Ash has to be understood in its African setting. It is regarded as ritually protective. For example, parents who have attended a funeral and who have small children, from a baby

of a few months to a toddler, must rub their hands and parts of their body with ash before touching their children, otherwise they may be passing on to their children the *sefifi* - bad luck or omen - of death. *Sefifi* is a noun derived from the noun *lefifi* – darkness - and can best be translated as the state of being under the spell of darkness, namely, death, a catastrophe, disaster or tragic loss. African traditional religion believes that after a catastrophe, such as stated above, it is necessary for the person to be ritually cleansed. By so doing, ritual heat, ritual impurity, bad luck or the bad spell is removed. This can be better understood by the following two examples.

First, in African society, among some black peoples of Southern Africa, there is a disease known as *kokwanyana*. Literally this means a small, invisible but devastating insect. The disease is reputed to kill off all members of the same family one after the other unless arrested and treated. The bad spell or omen has always to be washed away and driven out of the family household (Old Sotho-speaking people during field work).

The second example is that of *go tlhaphisiwa boswagadi* - being washed of widowhood or widowerhood. The case of the report of the isolated and unique community above notwithstanding, when either of the spouses dies, the remaining spouse has to be treated for what in Setswana is called *boswagadi*, understood to mean the diseased state or the hot state of widowhood, male or female, which is regarded as a debilitating disease. During the period that the spouse is still in mourning, a period of one to two years, he or she is considered dangerously hot – *bollo* - or ritually unclean. To engage in sexual intercourse with such spouses, either before the mourning period is over or before the ritual purification has taken place, is to invite trouble. According to the stories told by the elderly all over Southern Africa, people who do this develop swollen legs that become ugly and perforated with sores. Unless professionally treated, that is, according to African traditional religion ritual, it is believed the person may even die. Here the person has to be cleansed ritually by being washed in *sewasho*,

being induced to go *kapa* to remove all dirt and impurities, both physically and emotionally, from the body (Old people, widows observed during field work).

This applies equally well to the question of funerals. For example, if an adult comes back from a funeral he/she is not allowed to touch babies because he/she is considered to be dangerously hot - *bollo*. They first have to *fodisa dinao* - cool their feet, that is, relax for a while and afterwards they have to smear themselves with ash or consume a little of it and only then can they go on to touch or hold a baby. This phenomenon of ritual heat and cold is outlined very well by Verryn (Verryn, 1972).

The five churches recognise the need to have people cleansed from ritual impurities although for them the key instruments are prayer, laying on of hands and holy water.

In all these cases, the *sewasho*, based on faith for its efficacy, is the key to a lasting remedy. African traditional religion can never be understood apart from *sewasho*. *Sewasho* is used by a good number of African families, whatever the nature of the other religions, such as Christianity, to which they may adhere to. The five churches are no exception; they use *sewasho*.

Sewasho is the most widely used of all the ritual cleansing potions. People bath or are bathed in *sewasho*, which is usually emptied into a bath full of water during childbirth, pregnancy, puberty rites, marriage, illness and death, in other words: rites of passage. In the case of illness, the idea is to give and restore the person to fullness of life or completeness, by removing the *sefifi* - bad luck - that caused the illness and keeping the person healthy, so that the individual's path through life may be unimpeded from then on. A person may also be ritually washed by applying the *sewasho* himself or herself. For example, a person in need of purification and healing may be given a package of *sewasho* in the form of dried powder. He or she will then go down to the river, apply the powder to his or her body and then wash in the river water. The symbolism here is that the life-giving

waters of the river will carry the bad luck, evil spell, sickness and disease downstream and away into the sea.

The wide use of *sewasho* seems to prove one thing. In spite of the many centuries of colonisation and missionisation, African people still remain people of nature and therefore people of ritual *sewasho*. This is a very difficult one. Some of the churches do not *per se* practise this custom. However, they know that it is happening among their members and they can do nothing about it and end up tolerating it by turning a blind eye. However, they have countered this by making available buckets of free blessed water.

3.8.2.2 *Go kapa*

Go kapa is very common, particularly on the mines, because miners are very particular about their health. Usually a large amount of lukewarm water, about 50 millimetres, is consumed very early in the morning, and this induces vomiting. In the churches using this method a lot of salt is added to the lukewarm water to facilitate vomiting. Bishop Akanyang of BCCCZ told the researcher that this is what keeps church members healthy and fit to dance for hours on end. *Go kapa* is the infinitive form of the verb *kappa* – to throw out, to vomit. When the researcher made enquiries at BCCCZ as to how it was possible for the believers to make so many revolutions in the sacred rotational circle dance without getting dizzy, the answer was that the ministers and elders kept their equilibrium through the practice of *go kapa*.

Work on the mines is one of the most strenuous occupations. Some years ago when the researcher was chaplain to the miners on the West Rand from Deelkraal in Carletonville to Vaal Reefs in Orkney, he saw miners utilising *go kapa* very frequently. It would appear that African people know of a health practice that is very efficacious. The question of *go kapa* was therefore put to the members of the five churches under study.

Go kapa is considered very important in African Initiated Churches. The five churches stressed that *go kapa* removes dirt from and cleanses the stomach and the body and also removes *sejeso* - witchcraft poisoning - through food or drink.

Although a widely practised custom in most of the five churches studied, *go kapa* is not mentioned in any of the constitutions. It can only be classified as part of the tradition of the church or observance of an unwritten law.

3.9 BASEBELETSI

Basebelelsi is from the verb *ho sebeletsa* - to work for. The singular form is *mosebelelsi* - one who works for. These *basebelelsi*, who are mostly women, are accepted as having supra church powers, that is, their power is recognised as coming directly from God and that, as such, the church cannot restrain this power or tamper with its methods of operation. For example, in Molepolole, BCCCZ has one *mosebelelsi* who is assisted by the pastor's wife. She is a woman and was chosen through prayer. According to the church's leaders who were personally interviewed, this entailed the congregation praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their choice. It is recognised by the leadership that a *mosebelelsi* may be more powerful than the pastor himself, a very significant fact in Botswana culture. It actually means that the woman healer virtually overshadows the pastor, although everything is regarded as the work and preference of the Holy Spirit.

This ministry of *basebelelsi* is considered a full-time assignment and those who are called to this ministry of healing are expected to be available twenty-four hours a day, especially if they are resident in *diagelo*. STG has no resident *basebelelsi* because this is considered a full-time ministry and in Gaborone everybody is working.

Basebeletsi feature prominently in STG. As seen above, the word *basebeletsi* means “those who serve”. This has come to mean working for the health of someone, hence the ultimate notion of healer. In African Initiated Churches these are usually women healers whose sole duty is to perform special healings. In STP these women preside in the absence of pastors and their duties normally include healings in the mornings when they help to bathe the sick and help them to *kapa*, making the sick ritually clean inside and outside. In STP these *basebeletsi* are distinguished by the headgear they wear.

3.10 PREACHING

In all the five churches, preaching constitutes the most important component of the faith. The ministry of the Word of God ranks foremost and second to none. In fact, the preaching in the five churches can be likened to the centrality of the Word in Protestant theology as compared to the sacramentality of Anglo-Catholic and Orthodox theology. It would be correct to say that if one removes the ministry of the Word in these five churches then the five churches cease to exist.

People go to church on Sundays (and other days) to hear the proclamation of the Word of God. This is the focus and central theme of worship and renewal for all the believers. We have seen above how Holy Communion is rarely celebrated in these churches. In contrast, preaching is *the* celebration in church, a feast of the living Word of God.

In all the five churches the long Sunday services are taken up mostly by sermons, followed by prayers for the sick. The centrality of the Word of God is unmistakable. The constitutions of the five churches place great emphasis on the preaching of the Word of God.

BCCCZ has as its very first opening line of the aims and objectives the preaching of the Word: “To preach the Gospel of the Almighty God” (Article 2, a). In FF, the

emphasis is on training suitable “evangelists, religious leaders and pastors to evangelise” (FF: Paragraph i, b and c). The church also urges all preachers to exert themselves in proclaiming the tenets of the faith:

- “To contend earnestly for the faith which was once believed unto the Saints recognizing the fundamental truths which form the basis of our belief;
- The trinity of God the Head, God the Father, God the son, God the Holy Ghost;
- The vicarious work of Christ in man;
- His death, Resurrection, Ascension and the promised return;
- The necessity of the new birth through the Holy Spirit and consequent imburement of power to witness for God;
- The New Testament ministry of prayer for the sick and the operation of Divine Gifts as in 1 Cor 12 (Ibid, Paragraph h).

GCZ also opens its constitution by affirming the Power of the Word of God:

3.10.1 The faith of these churches

The church receives the Word, which is contained in the Scripture of the Old and New Testament, as its supreme rule of faith and life and arouses {sic} the fundamental precepts and teachings in the Holy Bible. The Church’s faith is the exchanging [sic] Gospel of God’s Love made manifest in Jesus Christ as declared in the Scriptures; by the prophets and Apostles and as God’s revelation of this nature it is its own evidence and authority and its birth is known to Christians, through the testimony of the Holy Ghost” (GCZ: Paragraph 2). Also, in paragraph 6: “The vocation of the Church is to bear witness to its order to worship God in His name, to build its members in faith and righteousness and the spirit of unity and to proclaim the Gospel of God to all the corners of the earth” (Ibid, Paragraph 6).

As stated above, even bishops are ordered to preach the Word of God (Ibid, Paragraph 24.

STG has as its primary objective the proclamation of the Word of God in order to “spread the teachings of Jesus Christ throughout the world” (STG: Paragraph 3, a).

STP has a unique programme whereby prospective preachers are really grounded on how to preach, based on the Bible. For their efforts the successful candidates are rewarded with certificates:

3.10.2 Preacher

As the member progresses in the church he/she then qualifies into another category known as a “preacher”. In order to become a preacher, one is taught the Bible for a period of three years. This course is taught to the member step by step, beginning from the book of Genesis until he/she attains his/her qualification. The duty of a preacher is also to be given an opportunity to preach during service. At the end of this three-year course the successful preacher is then awarded a certificate (Preacher Certificate), which costs R1.00.

3.10.3 Evangelist

The next category after preacher is “evangelist”, for which it takes two years to complete and qualify. The evangelist is responsible for conducting and preaching in weekly services. During this two-year course one is still taught the Bible. Evangelists’ main duty is to establish branches in outside districts. After two years the successful candidate is awarded a certificate. The fee for this certificate is P1.50 (STP: Paragraphs 2 and 3).

The importance of preaching is further elucidated in the description of the service of the five churches immediately below, under Worship.

3.11 WORSHIP

African Initiated Churches are distinguished from other churches by the form that their rituals take and their African style of worship. These forms have assimilated and taken on an African expressiveness that is now common to all the five churches; even their theology is indigenised. What follows is a close look at the rituals, worship and liturgical patterns that form the worship of God in the five African Initiated Churches. In trying to present the reader with the worship patterns of the five churches, the researcher shall not go into a detailed, repetitive, descriptions of phenomena that are similar in content, for example the Lord's Prayer.

In order to introduce the reader fully into the lives of the five churches, a detailed description of the ritual and worship of each church is given. This means that when given the interpretative analysis immediately afterwards, the salient details will still be fresh in the reader's mind.

The researcher has again selected GCZ as model because it is the largest of the five churches and possesses the most elaborate structure of worship, combining both Zion-African and Quasi-Ethiopian elements. Most of what happens in worship in GCZ happens in the other four churches. This "model" is used to avoid unnecessary repetition, while the variations of worship in the other churches are discussed fully.

3.11.1 Liturgical patterns

3.11.2 Setting and attire

As described in Chapter 2, the village of Mogonye lies about 50 km from Gaborone deep in the Botswana forest, about halfway between Ramotswa and Thamaga, two big villages that lie south and south-west of Gaborone, respectively.

As one drives towards GCZ, two plastered, brick pillars about one metre high flank the first set of church gates. A white cross on each pillar against a light blue background tells the worshippers or visitors that they have arrived in Galatia Church in Zion. The motif is the national flag of Botswana.

This is the first enclosure of the church grounds, and it is fenced off from the church yard itself. In this enclosure are located the various huts housing the patients of the *diagelo* and huts used as kitchens and other utility rooms.

Towards the far south-east is the bishop's open-air consulting office. Two wooden stools and low tables are its only furniture. It is here that the bishop greets and receives visitors. Further inside the yard lies the bishop's house, where he lives with his family. It is in one of the living rooms of this house that the bishop makes himself available for confession for an hour before the service starts at 11:00 on Sundays. This is a very striking feature of Galatia Church in Zion. It is here that those who have transgressed on any issue during the past week "pour out their stains", namely, so that those who may need to confess their sins can do so in the presence of the bishop, who then prays with and blesses the penitent. All the people who come to church to worship on Sunday have to arrive about an hour or so before the service starts, so that those who need to, may confess their sins. Those who have a heavy load or loads - burdens of sin - go individually with the senior *moruti* to the bishop, where they cleanse their hearts by telling all. They tell the senior *moruti*, who in turn tells the bishop. The senior *moruti* then moves out of earshot. This means that he is in the vicinity of what is taking place but cannot hear what is being said. The bishop weighs the matter, gives his counselling to every member and prays for their purification.

Thus absolved, the penitent may proceed to church. This ritual is considered to be absolutely sacred for church members' spiritual welfare and one ignores it at one's own peril.

A woman in one of the Sunday services at GCZ was suddenly possessed and caused mayhem in the congregation as she shrieked and criss-crossed the whole building, knocking over other worshippers. She was later subdued by several men after a protracted struggle and removed. At the end of the service, the bishop explained that she had been found with unwanted medicines on her person. All visitors to GCZ have come to know and appreciate that the bishop is simply not available during the time set aside for confession. As indicated above, not everybody goes to confession – *maipobolo* - every Sunday. It is only considered necessary for those who have transgressed, or who have dark secrets that are, so to speak, “weighing them down”.

After confession, the worshipper proceeds to the churchyard. The church building itself is fenced off and faces towards the east. Sand is strewn in front of the simple rectangular brick building, which measures about twelve metres by five. It is here, on the sand, that all worshippers and visitors leave their shoes before entering the corrugated roofed church building. Why does GCZ place such emphasis on this practice? The main source seems to be the emphasis of the Old Testament in the story of the burning bush in Ex 3:2. When the believers go to church on Sunday, the first thing they do in the church grounds is to take off their shoes because *the ground on which they stand is holy*. They are entering Zion, *the holy place of Yahweh* and sin has no place in Yahweh's presence. Anyone entering Yahweh's temple with the stain of sin is considered to be violating the holiness code. However, this can also be explained through a very close study of the purification and wholeness beliefs of African culture. In many African healing ceremonies the healer quite often operates barefooted and this would seem to be something or a practice inherited from African traditional

religion being imported and utilised in the church, alongside the Old Testament to achieve the ultimate healing.

3.11.3 The service

The bishop is the first to enter the church and he prays alone for a while. All the other church members in their order of seniority then follow him. This is a common feature. The *baruti*, namely ordained ministers and church elders, go towards the altar, which is a Communion table or a table from which the service of the Word takes place, pray and take their positions in a straight line before the altar, facing the pews. The bishop will eventually seat in the episcopal chair in the sanctuary itself on the right-hand side of the church building. The bishop is dressed in a white alb, a green chasuble and wears a benediction stole over his shoulders. On his head he wears a white mitre and he holds the episcopal staff in his right hand. The priests also wear clerical hats shaped like a mitre, of different colours, but usually red, and long garments, also usually red. The boys of the church choir wear blue hats, blue shirts and blue trousers with stripes or red on each side. White ropes finish complete the attire. The girls of the church choir wear blue skirts, white blouses, and blue capes over their shoulders; they, too, wear hats. The younger children are mostly dressed in capes over their shoulders in various colours. These are children whose parents or the church elders were shown how to dress up, sometimes after a healing ceremony, when the bishop was "shown" the colour that the healed person had to wear. Any visitor attending a service with Galatia Church in Zion is always struck by the overall appearance of the congregation: a sea of different, bright colours meets the eye. The men in the congregation are dressed in white dustcoats with white, blue or red ropes around their waists and over their right shoulders. The men and the boys are seated on the left as one enters the building and women and girls occupy the right benches. Usually, the believers themselves organise their own garments financially and seem to manage pretty well. This is a paradox because

although the members are generally poor, they always find the money needed for the activities of the church.

Once the bishop and the priests are fully settled down in the church building, the *igosa* - doorkeeper - opens the doors and all the worshippers enter in single file and proceed towards the foot of the altar, where the priests are standing with their right hands raised up in blessing. All the congregants bend as they walk under the priests' outstretched right hand from north to south before proceeding to their own sitting places in the church. This blessing ceremony takes place while the following hymn is sung, which is sung deliberately slowly, in contrast to the fierce and fiery tempo that gains momentum as the service progresses. Once everybody has reached their places, the bishop intones the hymn.

Ha ke hopola Galatia, lebitso lena

ha ke le bitsa

ke a roroma

ke a roroma

[When I think of Galatia, this name,

when I call on this name

I tremble

I tremble].

Initially, the service proceeds at a very slow pace; the hymns sung slowly. The most popular and the most often sung hymn is the one above: "*Ha ke hopola Galatia* - When I think of Galatia.

Other hymns are then sung, intoned one after the other. The pace of worship gradually quickens and the hymns are sung louder and louder. The rhythm of dancing and clapping accelerates and the service eventually explodes into a melee of drumming, clapping, dancing, whistling and ululating. This sudden explosion seems to shake the very foundations and roofing of the church building

and Westerners may be inclined to liken it to the sound of a storm breaking. The dramatic act of vigorous worship punctuated with whistling and ululation is explained by the bishop later during the service.

After a while the bishop intones another hymn. The congregation takes it up vigorously, clapping and drumming. At the end of the hymn, the bishop calls the assembly to prayer and all fall down on their knees as each member prays his or her own prayer. The ensuing sound is similar to a large swarm of bees. However, the voices of the congregants gradually die down and the bishop rounds off the prayer session alone. After this he invites the congregation to recite the "Our Father". At the end of this prayer follows another hymn, after which announcements are usually made. This is followed by another prayer session and then by hymns and dancing. It is at this point that the singing, clapping and dancing become most vigorous, with the congregation whistling, shrieking and shouting with joy. The whole service is punctuated by ululations and whistling throughout the time of worship, which is a vibrant affair that conveys an impression of immense celebration.

After the initial dancing, clapping and singing have died down, one of the priests announces the verses for the day. One of the women is usually then asked to read. The people who are asked to read are trained readers, who prepare for the reading in advance. One is struck by their fluency and articulation. Here are examples of the verses which are sometimes read in church: Acts 1: 10-11 and Mk 16: 19-20. After the verses have been announced the congregation sings the following short refrain, clapping hands only:

Re a ho leboha/Re a ho leboha
[We thank you/We thank you]

The bell calls a stop to the music and the appointed reader reads.

They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, "Why are you men from Galatia standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back the same way as you have seen him go there." (Acts 1:10-11) (Jerusalem Bible, 1966). The interpretation of the church seems to imply that Galilee and Galatia is one and the same thing. This is easy to understand, as translations in the Setswana Bible and other African languages tend to be very liberal, although they do convey the original message conveyed by the author.

"And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it" (Mk 16:19-20).

After the Scripture reading, the *baruti* and the senior churchmen and women take turns in preaching on the verses chosen, based on Scriptural exegesis. Hymns and shouts of "Amen" - Alleluia" punctuate the responses to the sermon and from time to time hymns are sung while the preacher is busy. Then he or she simply stops in order only to continue more vigorously after the hymn, which may be very short. Everybody is given a chance to preach and the preaching carries on with salutations in between, mostly *Tshwarelo* - Forgiveness, *Tshwarelo ya Jesu* - Forgiveness of Jesus, or *Tshwarelo ya Modimo* - Forgiveness of God.

When everybody has had a chance to preach, the bishop comes in and, as leader of the church, his message brings the service to an end after the worship has come to a climax of the most vigorous singing, clapping, drumming and dancing that the researcher had ever seen.

Here are a few examples of some of the most popular and most frequently sung hymns of Galatia Church in Zion:

No ya na? No ya na?

[Will you reach heaven? Will you reach heaven?]

Unzima Lomthwalo/Unzima lomthwalo

[This Load is heavy/This Load is heavy]

Uthando luka Jesu/Luyamangaza/Lerato la Jesu/Le a makatsa

[The love of Jesus is surprising]

Siya ezulwini/Amen, Alleluia Galatia

[We are heading for heaven Amen, Alleluia/Galatia, we are heading for heaven]

The closing ceremony is particularly moving. When everything has been done and the final communal prayer has been said, all the worshippers line up against the walls with the bishop and priests maintaining their line also down the altar. At this point the final hymn is sung and everybody, from the youngest to the oldest, shakes hands with everybody else. The hymn of dispersal is then sung, and sung slowly:

A re tshwaraneng ka matsogo

[Let us take each other's hand]

The youngest takes the hands of everyone else until he or she reaches his or her standing place, and so on, until the bishop himself has shaken everyone's hands.

After this everybody leaves the church and the Sunday service is over except for any member who may have some church business to attend to. Those responsible for a variety of projects of fundraising usually remain behind.

3.12 VARIATIONS IN WORSHIP

The following variations in the attire and setting of the four other churches need noting for the purposes of comparison.

In BCCCZ, worship services are held in an old rectangular dilapidated Tswana hut, in which there are a few benches for the pastor and his wife and the two drumbeaters. The rest of the congregation sits on the floor. The doorkeeper is a middle-aged man dressed in green attire.

Everybody else dresses differently. The pastor wears a long white dustcoat with thick ropes around his waist and a yellow cape over his shoulders, depicting the sun and the moon at the back. He also wears navy blue headgear, patterned with stars and little moons. The women wear long white dresses with navy-blue headgear and capes. There are two girls whose attire differs from that of the rest of the congregation. These are called "the thrones" and these girls wear green capes over white dresses. Their headgear, which is white, is allowed to flow loose right down to their shoulders. A prophet whose duty it is to pray for the sick wears a long, yellow coat with a white collar. All the boys and men in the church carry rods, sticks or rods tied together with green ropes. These rods are placed in the middle of the church just before the morning sermon for prayer and blessing, which is conducted by the faith healer.

In FF the place used for worship is an ordinary five-roomed house in Bontleng with a spacious hall used as the actual place for service. People live in the other rooms. A simple board on the wall facing the street simply reads: Forward in Faith. Apart from a dozen or so benches, a few chairs and the table from which the sermon is preached, the chapel is bare. The only embellishment is a small crucifix mounted against the wall next to a picture of Jesus. Men and women sit on different sides, even the pastor and his wife, who are out in front in chairs, occupying different sides of the hall. A striking feature of this church is that the congregation wears ordinary clothes, and women are not obliged to cover their heads.

In STG the place of worship is a huge rectangular tent, about fifteen metres by twelve. A large chair, placed against a table placed way out in front signifies the bishop's position of honour. A few other chairs and tables, at which sit the various ministers, evangelists and official preachers, are placed at the sides of the building. Benches line the side walls of the tent, leaving plenty of room in the centre, which is needed for the prayer-dance that takes place during worship. A cross on the centre pole holding up the tent imposes itself on the congregation, wrapped in a white coat. Another cross dominates the wall of the tent behind the bishop's chair, while a red cloth lies neatly folded in front of him on the table for use during the service. Against the chair hangs a pink cloth, which will be prayed over and then used to bless the water that will be offered to the sick during the service. The same cloth will be used to touch the bottles or containers of this water when it is taken home by the sick or for sick people unable to attend the service.

In this church, the ministers wear long gowns, some white and some a bright red, while the women wear long, white dresses, a white cape with a cross design that hangs over their shoulders and a white headgear. A green cord tied around the head, across the chest and then around the waist completes their attire. All the men are expected to wear jackets.

Upon entering the church building, all worshippers remove their shoes and women have to cover their heads.

A tent, about twelve metres by nine, dominates the backyard of a simple five-roomed brick-building located in a section of Gaborone known as Bontleng. This is STP. The tent is held up by a long, central pole. A small bare table, the altar, on which stands a burning candle, faces the entrance at the opposite end. The bishop's, or main preacher's chair, stands behind the altar. As worshippers go through the door, the men and the boys move towards the left, and therefore end

up standing or sitting on the bishop's right, while the women and girls move towards the right, and therefore end up standing or sitting on his left. Technically, as stated above, the bishop is head of STP. The researcher enquired about the logic of this since Mama Anderson is the charismatic leader of the church. He was told that this was in accordance with the cultural perceptions of the Setswana society. To him, this represented giving in to patriarchal pressure because in Setswana there is an idiom saying: *Tsa etellwa ke e e namagadi pele di wela ka lengope* -"Those (animals) that are led by a female end up in the ditch." The argument advanced here was that a male was needed for all state and tribal dealings involved in running a church.

There are few significant variations in the actual worship ceremonies of these five churches.

In BCCCZ, the priests and evangelists gather in a different section of the yard and enter a rondavel that is separated from the main church building. Here they kneel together in absolute silence, with bowed heads. Not a word is uttered; everybody prays silently. The ministers then all rise and walk in procession silently to the church building.

As the priests step on the doorpost of the church building, they are met with a burst of music and clapping, accompanied by the ringing of bells; this is the start of the service. This is immediately followed by the usual Zion dance where members dance in circles, round and round, to the tune and rhythm of the hymns.

The closing stage of the service in BCCCZ is characterised by prayers for the sick. This is an essential part of the total service and should be regarded as such. A passage relating to the healing ministry of Jesus is read and the sick are prayed over. This is accompanied by a prophecy in which the sick person is told what his or her affliction is. Meanwhile, the music continues and hands are laid

on the sick in prayer as those who wish to be prayed over come forward. The healing part of the service is coupled with a great deal of prophecy with shouts of "Amen" and "Alleluia" resounding all the while.

At the end of the service all kneel, facing the east with bowed heads and the leader prays in a loud voice, shouting *Thuso - Help'*. The service then ends.

Services of FF are more frequent: a number of services, namely, one in the morning and another in the afternoon on Sundays plus a weekly service on Wednesdays at seven in the evening. Holy Communion is usually celebrated on Sunday afternoons.

There is a lot of kneeling in FF and praying is expressive, with the worshippers usually closing their eyes and raising up their heads, with arms outstretched in an act of worship.

Everyone entering the church, irrespective of what the rest of the congregation may be doing, falls on his or her knees and prays silently before joining the main body of the congregation.

An important aspect of the worship in this church is that there then follows an important part of the ceremony: prayers for the sick. Sick people in the church go forward and hands are laid on them by the pastor. The ceremony is accompanied by music throughout.

"The gift of tongues" plays a very important role during the services of Forward in Faith. At the end of each song people either kneel or remain standing, praying with outstretched arms and it is at this point that some people start praying in tongues. This is "when the Spirit prays for a person" and the talk of tongues is said to be "understood by God alone" (Tanyala, 1987).

The collection of funds is unique in FF. During the course of the service a scale is brought up for collection. This is a simple structure with a tin on either side, one labelled "men" and the other "women". The congregation is encouraged to give generously in these words of a recurring chorus:

Give when you give, and give
As unto the Lord and
The Lord will give it back to you.

The different sexes proceed to place their donations in the respective tins and at the end of the service quite a substantial amount may be raised: about P50.00. There is competition between the sexes to tilt the scales to show that once their sex had, so to speak, "won". This means that at the end of the collection counting the money takes place and it is announced whether males or females had contributed more. This is a kind of incentive to ensure good collection. After this follows the prayer for the sick and the laying on of hands. St. Mark's stories on healing are favourite passages for the occasion, for example Mk 10: 46-52.

The ceremony for the sick is characterised by an altar call, during which the following invitation is issued by the leader of the service: "If you want the Lord to save you from your sins that you may be ready for his coming, walk with your feet to the front and we shall pray for you that your sins may be forgiven."

Then follows the prayer, asking God to "touch these people who have denied themselves to come before you that their lives may be changed and they may be made new now". As hands are laid on the sick, the congregation sings continuously: "I surrender all, all to thee my blessed Saviour."

Once the ceremony for the sick is over, a closing prayer is said and the congregation disperses.

Before the service starts in STG, a bucket of water is brought in to be blessed to enable anyone who has attended a funeral to be "cleansed" before the service starts (Seitlhamo, 1985).

The sitting arrangement is such that the wives of the *baruti* have special places assigned to them, from which they lay hands on and pray for the sick and handle cases related to pregnancies and deliveries.

A striking feature of services in this church is that the Bible from which the readings are taken is positioned next to a burning candle on the table, and remains there throughout the service.

The ceremony of the laying on of hands closes the service and at this point everybody goes forward to be blessed. The blessing of and prayers for the sick then follow. A unique feature in STP is the "blessing ceremony", which comes immediately after the preaching. This is a ceremony in which all the children present are blessed. White buckets, full of water, are placed in front of the altar. This water is pure water; nothing has been added to it. All the ministers present, including visiting ministers, are then asked to go forward and all are invited to take part in invoking God's blessings on the water. The congregation, on its knees now, sings and claps without ceasing. Meanwhile the bishop, aided by the other ministers, prays over the water, with each minister uttering his individual prayer aloud. With the congregation still singing, the children approach the front and kneel down; praying, the ministers lay hands on each child and each is given a glass full of water to drink. The adult congregation then follows suit, then the ministers themselves kneel down and drink the blessed water. Those who are sick or disabled in any way follow suit until everybody in the congregation has partaken of the holy water, while kneeling. The minister then says prayers of benediction and the drinking utensils are gradually cleared away from the centre; throughout all of this, the congregation continues singing.

Below follows a few extracts from a few samples of random sermons when the researcher took notes during the fieldwork of six years as he was gathering information during Sunday services. The idea is to give the reader a feel of what is communicated by way of content, namely, the teachings and faith of the five churches during worship.

- "We belong to God. Because we belong to Him, we are more than conquerors. The one who is in us is more than the one in the world. We shall be victorious at all times if we trust in Jesus Christ. When we pray, being under His control, we shall be victorious, just as when Christ defeated the devil during His trial."
- "If we follow the steps of Jesus Christ, we will be real winners. We will be victorious if we connect ourselves with Jesus Christ: as set out in the story of the vine tree in John 15."
- "You must be strong when you are a child of God. You must pray unto God day and night. Our victory is to love. Do not worry about what you are going to eat, to drink or to wear. Seek first the Kingdom of God."
- "It is possible for a person to be born again. That which is born of flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the spirit is spirit."
- "The person who knows God takes the yoke and when that person has taken it, they live under it."

Finally, as stated and analysed above, at the end of the service, some of the congregations fall on their knees and face the East as a finale.

CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3 we saw how man's relationship with God is lived out in the life and faith of the five churches. We followed them in worship, daily rituals and practices, in symbolism and the way the five churches are ordered. We also looked at their sacraments and how these tailor in into their general execution of what they teach so that being Christian has meaning for them. Now, in Chapter 4, we look at the content of the belief systems because it is on the basis of these that the life of the five churches is lived out in real life. What they believe becomes, so to speak, the very engine of all their actions in life, the *raison de vivre* for them.

Chapter 4 is the backbone of the beliefs of the five churches under study. What follows is a result of the recording of the answers to the questionnaire dealing with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, with a closing notion of the understanding of the five churches regarding the Trinity. The teachings of the five churches as recorded in sermons during services are also given to underpin the doctrinal issues raised in this connection. This is not about this or that researcher but "from the horse's mouth", so to speak. That is why the chapter is of critical importance. It is not about what the researcher wishes or would wish, it is about the five churches saying it as it is in their own lived experience of theology, across the board, namely, young and old, leaders and ordinary membership.

However, since the five churches do not exist in isolation, the author does refer to the wider picture of independency but always with the focus on the five churches, which is what the current research is all about. As mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, this is the result of a research spanning six years, from 1982 to 1988.

Therefore, the discussion will be in conjunction with the wider school of independency through which we look at the findings or observations of other writers who have written on the subject to compare and see how or what the five churches say on each matter raised. The whole issue of Christology, the Holy Spirit and God the Father will be discussed against the background of well-known scholars on the subject. While proceeding, a lot will be drawn from the writings of these researchers to make a proper comparison and analysis of the findings in the five churches under study.

First and foremost the beliefs and convictions of the five churches as coming from the five churches themselves will be given through the results of the questionnaires and interviews. Against this backdrop a discussion of other researchers follow to tease out the various issues involved and state whether or not the issues expounded agree with the faith of the five churches or not. This will form the closing part of this chapter.

4.1.2 Background

Before presenting the findings of the five churches, the vast literature on the AICs is engaged so that a balanced picture will be created regarding the five churches under study in Botswana. No study exists in a vacuum and therefore it is important to bring into play as much as possible all the other findings already available on AICs.

4.1.2.1 Pointers on Christology

In order to introduce the research findings on Jesus Christ, Daneel (1987) is used as a pointer regarding the view of Independents (these five churches) on Jesus Christ.

In his book *Quest for belonging* (1987), Daneel makes four observations as a kind of ruler or guide for AICs, as originally laid down by Peter Beyerhaus. He states that there are four aspects to be considered when dealing with AICs.

First, he mentions that Christ must be proclaimed as *Christus Victor*, namely the One who triumphs over sin and death, that is, over evil forces (Col 2:15).

Secondly, he must be proclaimed as the *Crucified One* who took the curse of our sins upon him:

Thirdly, Christ must be proclaimed as the *One who is present*, still working powerfully among his people and assisting them in their needs, dangers and temptations.

Fourthly and finally, he must be proclaimed as the *One to come* who will appear at the full revelation of God's kingdom (Daneel, 1987:256).

4.1.2.2 Agreement

In this chapter the findings of the five churches will indicate basically that these agree with the four criteria set by Daneel, albeit almost arbitrarily on his part. The researcher must, however, point out that the point of the curse of the cross and Jesus taking upon himself that curse on the cross is not very well spelt out in the five churches. Therefore, it would be great to one day witness a theology that, according to Mofokeng (1983), would be an emotional outburst and identity with the Christ hanging on the cross, suffering and tortured on behalf of humanity (Mofokeng, 1983:27). This gives "credence" to the assertion of some researchers that perhaps the necessity of Christ dying on the cross is not understood by the AICs. (The research points in the different direction). As Daneel says, the cross is almost underrated since, as he rightly states, the emphasis is on good health and justice, which calls for a strong King who is perceived to be victorious (Daneel,

1987:256-258). The researcher has also, through his research, personally found that the emphasis is on Christ the triumphant Victor. There is not much emphasis on the scandal of the cross, although one would like to ask why there should be such a slant when the Victor has decisively conquered sin and death. Is this not where the emphasis of those who follow the Risen Lord should be? However, as indicated before, the teachings and beliefs of the five churches basically agree with what is proclaimed in the “historic” churches, maybe even more so because they are Biblical, relying on the inspired word of God, unadulterated by the baggage of the Reformation or Counter Reformation.

This brings us to another problem. Who are we or who is anybody to come up with a “measuring” stick or ruler against which the AICs are to be measured? More importantly, who is the qualified researcher from so-called mainline churches to lay down the rules into which AICs have to fit in? It is here that the question of subjectivity creeps in. The mainline researchers in the main thus far are either reformed theologians, or catholic, and their own bias and subjectivity is brought to the fore. For that matter, even if it had been research by the Independents themselves there would still be the question of subjectivity but maybe to a lesser degree. Therefore Daneel, although a celebrity in writing about Independents, does not claim to be dogmatic regarding AICs nor can anybody else be. The ultimate authority and ruler is the Bible, against which everything has to be measured.

The findings and analysis on the five churches with the findings and analysis of other researchers besides Daneel shall be interspersed in the following discussions.

4.1.2.3 Four issues

Four issues need to be addressed by way of preparation in understanding the faith of the five churches.

4.1.2.3.1 *Impoverished Christology?*

The first perception is that regarding Christology in the AICs. There is a general perception that “because of the enormous emphasis placed on the work of the Holy Spirit in these prophetic groups” this impoverishes Christology in the AICs. This is not altogether accurate. If anything based on the current research, emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit enhances rather than diminishes Christology. After all, the Lord says: “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you” (Jn 14:26).

According to the research on the five churches they do not make a dichotomy between the humanity and the divinity of Jesus Christ. They just believe in Jesus Christ the Saviour. The research will indeed show that for the five churches the historical work of Jesus Christ in the flesh is relevant to the whole concept of salvation. One cannot divorce the salvific work of the Saviour from the Holy Spirit, who is the Paraclete through whom the Son of Man operates, as the passage from Jn, 14:26, clearly states. That AICs emphasise the divinity of Jesus Christ is no accident. The Gospel is strewn with examples of this understanding of Jesus Christ as God.

4.1.2.3.2 *Salvation limited to healing and purification?*

The second issue is the assertion that the understanding of salvation in the AICs is limited to healing and purification, and that, consequently, nobody needs to die for that. At this juncture, as one who has researched the five churches for a period of six years, the researcher would like to call time-out on this one. Admittedly, in the churches healing goes beyond just bodily healing. Salvation is understood as the healing of the soul, the person, and the community, in other words the state of sinful humanity in all its dimensions. Healing in terms of other maladies of the person, spiritual, physical or psychosomatic, is definitely not the sum total of salvation in the understanding of AICs. There is a very strong Christology running

through the faith of the five churches. The pages of the results of the intensive research bear testimony to this in the five churches. It is thus incorrect to assert that the “the unique and once-for-all deed of salvation of Christ proclaimed in Word and Sacrament is substituted by a formal grace or laying-on of hands”, as one sometimes reads in various articles and theological statements. As the pages unfold it will become clear that “Christ, God Incarnate, who gave Himself unto death for our sins” *does* indeed play a significant role in the so-called thought-world of AIC believers. The answers to the questionnaire and the sermons also show that there *is* “an understanding shown for the reality and need of reconciliation”. This clearly throws out the notion of *autosoteria*, namely that AICs presume to work out their own salvation through sacrifices and their own efforts at salvation, just like in the old “pagan” religions. This is not consonant with what the research has unearthed in the five churches. Indeed, as the pages of this very chapter unfold it will become clear that the faith of the five churches stands out clearly without reproach or question in what the church universal believes about the central message of the Gospel.

4.1.2.3.3 *Usurping the place of Jesus Christ?*

Thirdly, there is a disturbing report emanating from various sources and indeed deductions based on observations that some of the membership of some Independents, albeit in the minority, tend sometimes to confuse or at best view the founder or leader of the particular church as some form of messiah or prophet on whom their very lives and vocation as believers seem to depend. It is for this reason that some of the researchers feel that quite often the prophet, messiah or leader of a particular independent movement usurps the place of Jesus the Saviour. This is not altogether true, because even in cases where the founder or leader is a very strong personality, Jesus is still held as *the* Messiah. The case in point is that of Isaiah Shembe, as described by Oosthuizen (1967) below. This is put very clearly in the *Izihlabelelo* of the church of Isaiah Shembe.

*And the hosts and the hosts of heaven
Through Jesus the uMkhululi
Who does not die (is eternal). [sic]
Amen, Amen, my Nkosi.*

In Is 5 the way of Jesus is pictured as hard and difficult (verse 1); that the gate is narrow (verse 2); that He had no place to rest (verse 3) and that they have to take up the Cross (verse 5). All these are specific scriptural reminiscences. This is also the case in Is 23, where Shembe states that Jesus said if they love Him they will stay with Him (cf. Jn 15, 17). Only “the brave ones are of Jesus” (*amaqhawe ngaka Jesu* Is 50) and in this same Is Jesus is still pictured as the judge (verse 6). (Oosthuizen, 1967:35).

Furthermore, when Bengt Sundkler (1958) was interviewing the son of Isaiah Shembe in 1958, Galilee Shembe had this to say:

“Most missionaries are hide-bound by their own little theological text-books. When people tell us that we are not Christians, we simply are not interested. Shembe is not God. But who Shembe was I do not know. I am Shembe’s son and I grew up under him, but I do not know him. He is of the Spirit and he is Spirit. In order to understand Shembe we must look to what he did. Jesus of the Scriptures speaks of him. Read Jn 14:12: ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also: and greater works than these shall he do’ (Sundkler, 1958:16).”

There is no denying the fact that leaders in African church movements become very powerful characters or personalities. The reason for this is simple. Most of them are charismatic leaders who appear on the scene at the right time and moment of history. A case in point for example, is Simon Kimbangu, who filled a big void in the then Belgian Congo, or even Ma Nku, who burst on the scene when woman leadership was sorely lacking and badly needed in the healing ministry. So

also, Isaiah Shembe, Lekganyane, and many others, among them notably Mgijima, who paid the ultimate price.

4.1.2.3.4 Jesus only a background figure?

Occasionally, some writers on independency do express the concern that among some groups Jesus Christ appears to be mostly a background figure. However, the picture is different with the five churches. The answers of all the categories of respondents speak for themselves. Jesus Christ is central, absolutely central and even in many instances eclipsing the traditional ancestors or at least relegating them to second place, so to speak. This fact is strewn with many examples in literature on independency, as shall be seen in Chapter 5 when dealing specifically with ancestors.

4.2 THE FAITH OF THE FIVE CHURCHES

4.2.1 Jesus Christ

In dealing with the AICs, one would naturally expect the first topic to be treated to be the Holy Spirit because these worshipping communities are churches of the Spirit. However, the sequence followed here will be Jesus Christ, God the Father and then the Holy Spirit. The reason is that this research found the theme of Jesus Christ running very strongly in the lives of the five churches. One thus cannot deny the centrality of the Son of God as preached and lived by these churches. There is nothing definitive about this; one could argue one way or the other. But as the pages unfold it will become apparent why the name of Jesus features so strongly in the five churches. This does not in any diminish the role of the Holy Spirit. The opening statements on the questionnaire featured Jesus Christ first, perhaps betraying a bias of mainline theological training by the researcher.

The answers contained here in Chapter 4 are exactly what the five churches say, even where at times the flow of reading has been paraphrased or summarised. It is what the churches believe, not what the researcher thinks. The reader must clearly bear this in mind.

The first question in the field research work was: Who is Jesus Christ? This was deliberate. The name Jesus Christ in African Initiated Churches is *the* watchword. As it turned out in the research, it is a watchword for the love of God, mercy, forgiveness, and compassion, Emmanuel, the God who came to live among human beings in the visible, tangible form.

Let us now take excerpts from our random samplings of sermons to hear what the churches have to say officially about Jesus Christ.

In one of the sermons the role of Jesus Christ is described thus: "Jesus Christ is the way and the life. Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father, whether we are in happiness or in sorrow we must follow his teachings."

Another sermon puts it thus: "The Word of the Lord is the Law. You must not go to the right or to the left. You must follow what the Lord says. If we obey God, we shall succeed."

Again: "We must have faith in God. Jesus Christ rebuked His disciples for their lack of faith during the storm when they were in the boat. This was to test their faith, to find out what was in their heart."

The great church councils of the past have always emphasised the fact that Jesus Christ is truly God and truly human. African Initiated Churches accept this doctrine, although they tend to emphasise the humanity of Jesus. This shift of focus is seen in their conviction that Jesus Christ is, so to speak, a step below the Father. The Father is greater, Jesus is the Son, the greatest after the Father although in the

subconscious he is himself God, as seen in the answers given to the questionnaire, 76%. This issue of Sonship is based on cultural perceptions in African traditional society. This is the perception whereby the one who is the son wields the immense power of *mojalefa*, the heir, on behalf of his father. Indeed, virtually all power, or rather, the execution of all power, lies with him. He wields immense power for his father, just like an *induna*, headman, in the African tribal setting. The son is thus placed in subservience to the father. Seen in this light, Jesus is the power of God, endowed with the Holy Spirit, the latter signifying his ability and power to heal. Sermons given in the five churches often refer to the faithful subservience of the Son of God, reminiscent of the Christological hymn in Philippians (Phil 2:6-11). Some 70% of young people and 85% of the adults do regard Jesus as being undoubtedly the Son of God. Jesus Christ is regarded as king, the one to whom all glory belongs. In sermons: "Jesus Christ is the only one who should be preached. This is Jn 15:7: What you ask from God, he will give you. He is going to come back to reign as king. In other words, the divinity of Jesus Christ is never at stake. These cultural concepts of sonship simply help to enhance his position and the Son of God and *the* Ancestor through whom all must go to the Father. That is why in the liturgy of the five churches Jesus is always referred to as *Kgosi ya dikgosi* - King of kings. The concept of Ancestor used of Jesus here is simply to highlight that all other ancestries have their origin in him as the one who is uncreated, the Son of God, namely, that Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, Moses and all the others derive their being from him who has no beginning and no end.

It is important to note here that African Initiated Churches are completely in line with the debate of the universal church on the Godhead and humanity of Jesus Christ. There were several heresies, which were condemned by the early church. They came in different forms, like modalism and adoptionism.

"Modalism: Now another school, the Modalists, advanced the notion that "Father" and "Son" are merely two names for one and the same Person. Condemned at Carthage and at Smyrna, they modified their teaching in such a way that their

attempt to refute Ditheism without having recourse to the Logos doctrine was tolerated for a while by Pope Zephyrinus, who was no theologian. But they were attacked by Hippolytus and Tertullian in about the year 220. Callistus condemned Sabellius, the Monarchian leader. Adoptionis: About the year 268 a council composed of seventy or eighty bishops of Asia Minor and Syria deposed Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, for teaching a doctrine akin to both Adoptionism and Monarchianism. According to Paul, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are but a single person, whereas in Christ there are two Persons, the Logos and the Man" (McSorley, 1961:65).

The issue of the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit or the Father has never been an issue in African Initiated Churches. One could say that the waters in the church over the years have been purified so that true doctrines have sifted themselves. This can be ascribed in a large way to the councils of the early church. One such example is on the divinity of Jesus Christ.

"The most significant assembly of the fourth century, the first "Ecumenical" council, was convoked by Constantine the Great at Nicaea in the year 325, in order to settle a dispute about the relationship between the first and Second Person of the Blessed trinity. The emperor invited the bishops of the whole Empire to attend the council and placed the imperial system of transportation at their disposal. Some 318 bishops gathered at Nicaea in response to the invitation - including the president, Bishop Hosius of Cordoba, and bishops from Africa, Gaul, and southern Italy. The great majority were Orientals. Two priests from Rome represented Pope Sylvester. The council condemned the teaching of Arius, vindicated his opponent, Athanasius, and formulated the Nicene Creed, placing the Divinity of the Second Person of the trinity beyond question by the affirmation that the Son is "consubstantial with the Father" (McSorley, 1961:78-79)."

Some examples from the direct answers in the questionnaire would be helpful at this stage. This is how the five churches conceive of the Person of Jesus Christ. They do not have a problem with the *homoousios* issue that caused such a bitter debate in the West during the early days of the church (Frend, 1965:158-159).

"Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (75%).

"Jesus Christ is the Holy Spirit" (10%).

"Jesus is the Christ" (7, 5%).

"Jesus Christ is the Child of God" (2, 5%).

"Jesus Christ is the Saviour" (2, 5%).

"No idea" (2, 5%).

The researcher believes, then, that an analysis of questionnaire responses indicates the importance accorded Jesus Christ in the five churches under study. The majority of believers undoubtedly hold firmly to the conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Does this mean that he is regarded as being one and the same with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit? Some 35% of young people and 42, 5% of adults claimed that this was their understanding of Christology. The understanding of officers and lay people among adults is similar. The churches are also evenly distributed in their conception of Jesus Christ being the Son of God, the highest being Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion and Galatia Church in Zion at 87,5% each.

Jesus is also seen as the Christ, that is, the Saviour who was sent to save the world. This is expressed in this way in sermons: "Jesus Christ came and died on the cross to save you from all the sins you are committing. All the problems you have, he can save you from them. He says that he is here and he is alive. There are problems around you and people around you are pointing fingers at you. Jesus Christ can forgive you." This is reflected in answers 2 and 5. Jesus is also regarded as one person with the Holy Spirit, that is, his actions and those of the Holy Spirit are considered as one. Only 2,5% of the youth of Galatia Church in Zion view Jesus as God in an absolute sense and the same percentage, 2,5%, have no real

Christology at all, namely, that they do not know who or what Jesus Christ really is. The point here is that for the size of the sample of the research this cannot be ignored, it has to be treated with the necessary respect.

The following example from sermons indicates the position of Jesus as *the* Moses, as the one who saves from fear and sin and the one who draws people to himself: "Moses went to God and came back with the Law of God. We must look at ourselves and check if God is not calling us to hear from Him."

All in all then, the faith of the five churches rests squarely on the belief that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, God or the God-man of Christianity. This, in the researcher's view, places the churches beyond a Messianism that usurps the power or mediation of Christ, and gives us a perspective into the Christology of these churches. In the sermons it states that: "The way of Jesus Christ is open for everyone. Each and every person, even those that are stupid, they will not get lost when they have taken this road." Again it states in sermons that: "This love of Jesus Christ saves men and women."

By virtue of being the Son of God, Jesus Christ is full of love and wisdom and possesses the all-important spiritual healing power, which is so important to African society. In other words, He is perceived to be foremost among all the known healers of the world, past, present and future, because He is God. This is what made Jesus so special in the five churches, namely, 35% of the total sample of respondents. Jesus is holy and when He talks He talks with authority. Whereas ordinary human beings have to depend on what the Spirit reveals to them through prophecy, Jesus has the full knowledge of God. This is the quality that sets Him apart from all the Biblical prophets, including Moses, Israel's greatest visionary leader.

The sermons have this to say and use Matt 5.1 where Jesus Christ taught this to his disciples. "The teachings are very important and we who are alive today, we are

supposed to follow the teachings. We must learn these teachings. Blessed are the poor in the Spirit for the kingdom of God is theirs. Everyone, whether young or old, this applies to them."

"People backslide while there are ministers in the church. You must love God in all that you do: through giving, through serving God. You must also pray at all times. In the morning you must pray."

"Moses was the servant of God. He was sent to liberate the Israelites from the land of Egypt."

Jesus is the way to salvation. He actually died for the people of God and was not simply a messenger like Moses. What Moses had to learn, Jesus knew. Moses was "shown the way and the truth through Jesus", as attested to by 2,5% of respondents. He indeed is the Saviour (100% of respondents). He saved the world by dying on the cross for the sins of the people so that they might be forgiven (77, 5%). His status as Saviour manifests itself in various ways: it is apparent through his authoritative preaching and his ability to heal diseases. He is the author of peace and everything was created through him. He is thus the source of life and a font of healing, to whom believers can go for healing, just as people in the community will flock to the traditional leader or the *sangoma* or traditional doctor. He not only offers healing of the body, but also of the soul because "He saves from sin" (80% of respondents). His Messiahship continues today. During his time on earth, he fed the hungry. The five churches specifically believe that today Jesus still saves people from hunger and want; Jesus is not only the Jesus of the supernatural but a Jesus who cares about the temporal needs of human beings. The myth that African Initiated Churches are not concerned with the temporal needs of their adherents is just that - a myth. Although the answers given were spread out over a wide spectrum of responses, it is quite clear that members of the five churches believe that Jesus takes care of them in every part of life, including their health and the provision of their daily needs. For example, the responses of the 40

interviewees who were questioned on the matter are now summed up. These were the twin questions, 6 and 7, respectively, put to the interviewees. The questions were: "(6) Does Jesus save from sin? (7) Does Jesus save from hunger and poverty?" The reader must remember that the spectrum covers all five churches, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, ordinary members and the hierarchy. There was a resounding "Yes" to both questions. However, the element of believing was emphasised, that if a person had faith, Jesus would do it for him. The answers to question 7 unequivocally stated that Jesus "saves from everything" and even included the fact that he saves also from diseases, not only hunger and poverty.

All the adherents of the five churches (100%) - without exception - believe that Jesus blesses them with good health. This He does through giving them all the things they need in life (52,5%) helping them to attend church and blessing them (40%) and giving them life through the power of the Holy Spirit, so that they can always do what is right (7, 5%).

These answers can be summarised by saying that the adherents of the five churches regard Jesus as their benefactor and guide.

Jesus is very much involved in the life of the believer by keeping him or her from evil (20%), by being the shepherd of their lives (15%) and by helping them to lead good lives (12, 5%). What is distinctive in the theology of the five churches is that Jesus Christ provides believers with their material needs. This point is important and reflects traditional African belief. In African society the *kgosi* – king - provides for his subjects, ensuring that none suffers hunger and deprivation. The kingship of Jesus is no different. He is trustworthy and "gives power for living". He cares for the lives of his own, "gives them what they are looking for", protects them, helps them to pray and, more than that, He actually enables people to work, so that they can make an honest living (2,5%). The significance of this answer lies in the fact that

the young respondent believes that one's material condition should be changed only through legitimate means. Society is not blamed for the ills of the individual.

From the answers given, it is clear that the five churches believe in Jesus Christ by and large because he is experienced as being present in every part of their life. This is evidenced by the answers to the questions.

The staunch faith of the five churches in Jesus is based on his good works (25%), his Sonship (20%) and his power to save (30%). These teachings encouraged and convinced one to believe in him (7, 5%). However, some believe in him, as one respondent put it, "in order to follow the path of my father", while others believe in Him because He reveals himself to them (2, 5%). The significance of this answer lies in the fact that the believer has experienced the Lord in a very personal way. Belief in Jesus Christ is very much tied up with salvation; members of the five churches believe in Jesus as one who leads them to salvation through their faith. Justification through faith definitely forms part of the doctrinal position of these churches.

Jesus Christ is believed to be the Son of God born of the Holy Spirit (22,5%) and his work is intimately connected with his birth, death and resurrection (40%). The churches teach their members the good news: Jesus is their Saviour, he died for their sins and he will come again. What is more important is what the churches teach about Jesus' mediatory powers, given the role that the ancestors are believed to play. By stating that Jesus is the link "between the churches and God", the five churches are stating that Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and humanity. He is regarded as the "big Interceder" by virtue of being the Son of God and intercedes with God on the people's behalf. This is even more so in this case because he is the Son, the heir to the Father. His mediatory powers are therefore even greater than those of ordinary ancestors. Jesus is the archetype of all ancestors.

As many as 85% of all the adherents of the five churches under study have no hidden reservations about who Jesus is; those who do (12, 5%), are puzzled by the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. This highlights the acute lack of systematic theology in the five churches under study. Leaders have blithely assumed that their members understand major dogmatic issues whereas, in fact, the theology of ordinary members is ill-defined in the extreme in certain areas.

Some 65% of all the adherents believe and maintain that Jesus came "in the fullness of time" to do God's work on earth. However, 30% believe that he needs to come again to direct the lives of believers and await his second coming impatiently.

No less than 80% of church members firmly believe in the *Parousia* (second coming of the Lord) as portrayed in Acts 1, namely, that Jesus will come again as he went away. Apart from 5%, who do not know about the *Parousia*, and 12,5%, who do not believe that Jesus will come again there is a very strong theological view that Jesus is eternally present in His church and that this is tantamount to His glorified, physical presence (2,5%). What happens here is that the believer has a certain mystical experience of God's presence and is one of the privileged few. In other words, the theological belief expressed here is that uttered by Jesus himself: "And behold I shall be with you all days" (Jn 7.18-20)(The Jerusalem Bible, 1966).

By way of summing up we could, therefore, say that in these churches, Jesus Christ is believed to be truly the Son of God. Adherents believe in him for the following reasons: because He died for everybody to save people from their sins, because of His good deeds, because He is the way to God, because His teachings have power, because He can forgive people's sins and because He reveals himself individually to human beings. Above all, adherents believe in Jesus Christ because He has God's power. These are valid conclusions based on the responses of the interviewees, not the researcher's own fabrication.

Jesus Christ helps people by comforting them in times of crises, encourages people to go to church, guides and protects them and provides for their daily needs, including their need for food. It is through Jesus Christ that Christians are able to do what is right in life. Jesus guides and protects people and encourages them in prayer. He is the one who preserves life and bestows good health on people. The hopes of all believers are centred on Him.

As believers, members of these churches are aware that their churches give a great deal of teaching about the birth of Jesus, His mission on earth and His death. He is the Saviour of the world, born of the Holy Spirit and therefore the Son of God. He died for the sins of human beings and His unique relationship with God is taught by all these churches. Christians believe in Jesus Christ not only because of the teachings of the church, but also because of personal conviction and because of the fact that Jesus' teachings constitute the good news of salvation. Believers profess everything that their churches teach about Jesus Christ.

As indicated above, respondents were asked a very sensitive question, namely, whether they had any hidden doubts about the person and work of Jesus Christ. A tiny minority answered in the affirmative. The problem areas were: How did Jesus manage to rise from the dead after three days? How was he conceived? The vast majority did not question the teachings of the church regarding His miraculous conception, resurrection and teachings; these people accepted everything "in faith." It was not surprising, some respondents argued though, that people had questions about Jesus, even during Jesus' time on earth, there were people who did not believe in him.

At this juncture the researcher would like to give a few quotations from sermons of the five churches, sermons which have a bearing on the doctrine and understanding of the Trinity or the works of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As stated in Chapter 1, this is a random sampling of sermons over a protracted period of time.

- "You need to humble yourselves so that the Holy Spirit can work through your life. Do not complain about other people. Trust in the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that teaches us to speak in tongues. Other people are afraid of speaking in tongues. When you are holy, you are free to speak to God."
- "The disciples were astonished that Christ commanded the storm to be calm. He did so in faith. We need faith in Jesus Christ so that His faith can be alive on earth."
- "Let your faith not make you ashamed. Be strong at all times. Let nothing move you from your faith in God. Let your faith in God grow strong."
- "While Jesus Christ and His disciples were inside the boat, Jesus fell asleep. A furious storm started, and the disciples were afraid. Christ asked them why they were fearful. They were amazed at what type of a person this was that was able to command the sea to be calm. The emphasis is on the fact that Christ came to take humankind out of their problems."
- "The disciples watched as Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven. The same way He ascended, is the same way He will descend, in a cloud."
- "When Stephen was stoned, he was looking up at Jesus Christ. He replied that he knew Christ because he prayed and Christ answered."

John 1:1-5, John 3:16: Talking about life and light

- "All the people need light. There is no one who needs darkness. We want to see where we walk. The life of Jesus Christ is a life that was to preserve life. From the start of His life to the end, He was preserving life."

Jesus Christ is considered to be the living embodiment of the act and action of God, working among human beings. He is one of us, yet He shares in the nature of the Godhead. This Christology dominates the theology of the five churches.

4.2.2 The Holy Spirit

Of all the persons of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the most difficult to understand. However, the conception of the five churches regarding the Holy Spirit is very clear and can be summarised succinctly.

All the answers given below are taken directly from the questionnaire with no addition nor subtraction. The researcher has recorded the answers as they were given from the mouths of all the forty interviewees directly and he has not tried to refine the language to make the answers more "intelligible". The reader must bear this in mind as they read the responses given by the five churches.

To the question: Who is the Holy Spirit?, the following answers were given: He is Jesus Christ, he is the Spirit of God, he is an angel of the Lord, he is the Spirit associated with good deeds, He is faith and He is the one who helps Christians foresee oncoming events. The Holy Spirit is also perceived as a member of the Trinity because he is called God and the Everlasting Spirit.

The role of the Holy Spirit in the world and in the church is, however, clearly understood by adherents of these churches. The Holy Spirit is regarded as the Person who promotes fellowship and unity, who keeps the church holy, who protects and directs the church, who teaches God's truths, God's revelation and God's love. The Holy Spirit blesses people and gives them everlasting life. It is the Holy Spirit who makes people humble themselves to God; who makes people obedient and kind; who heals people; who makes people repent and who guides them in the way of the truth.

The relationship of the Holy Spirit and the other two Persons of the Trinity is expressed in the following manner. The Holy Spirit is found in both God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit ranks third after the Father and the Son. God sent Jesus through the Holy Spirit. It is God who controls the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is regarded as a messenger of God the Father and God the Son.

The Holy Spirit is further described as the power of God and the Person of the Trinity who encourages people to lead exemplary lives. He is regarded as the good Spirit and he is a gift of God. It is he who gives people power, the Holy Spirit is confessed through repentance and it is He who blesses and heals people. The concepts of the Holy Spirit referred to here reflect what believers regard as their church's teachings. The majority of the respondents, in answers to the questionnaire along these lines, maintain that Christianity would be "incomplete" without the Holy Spirit.

The respondents' answers indicate that they believe people can be "possessed" by the Holy Spirit. Those affected are regarded as people of great faith, and they are full of the Holy Spirit. These "possessed" believers are not regarded as mentally abnormal; instead they are regarded as modern-day prophets, and they are peace-loving people of prayer. According to respondents, possession by the Holy Spirit entails various observances on the part of others. Other believers present have to pray immediately for the person, calm them down, please them, pray for them and listen to them intently because, at this point, it is believed that the "possessed" have a special message to deliver. Possession occurs among believers of both sexes, and, although some respondents say it is more commonly seen in female believers, the majority maintain that the phenomenon occurs with the same degree of frequency among both males and females. The researcher's own experience among these African Initiated Churches under study suggests that it is more often a woman who is possessed by the Spirit.

Some respondents maintained that they themselves had been possessed by the Spirit and seen "things that cannot be seen by ordinary people".

In the theology of the five churches the Holy Spirit is none other than the Spirit of God (35% of respondents). As far as the theology of the five churches is concerned, this same Holy Spirit is identical with Jesus or, better still, does the same work as Jesus (27, 5%). He is the good Spirit, the Comforter, the Everlasting Spirit of power and faith, the Spirit who keeps the faith of believers alive. Indeed, the Holy Spirit is identical with the Father and the Son. The latter point is important; it expresses, albeit in very limited or constrained language, the belief in a Triune God.

Indeed, the theology of the work of the Holy Spirit is very orthodox: His primary function is that of sanctification (30% of respondents) and keeping the community together through His light, knowledge, power and spirit of humility and fellowship. He is, so to speak, the cement of love in the church and community. He is the one who empowers Christians to perform healing and saving acts among the church and community.

Paul says "we have received the Spirit by which we cry Abba". The theology of the five churches maintains that the Holy Spirit is the new Spirit which those who believe, receive after baptism. The five churches express the divinity of the Holy Spirit in a unique way. He is considered to be a member of the Triune Godhead who is found between God the Father and Jesus. He is the Spirit given to Jesus by God to help him, Jesus, do that which pleases God. The adherents of these churches believe that the Holy Spirit is the result of the love between the Father and the Son, a concept found in Western theology. The Holy Spirit is regarded both as the intermediary and as "one of the Trinity in God" (2, 5% of respondents).

The Holy Spirit is also perceived as the Person or principle that combines the power of Jesus and the power of God.

These churches teach that the Holy Spirit helps believers to repent. He is God's Spirit, the Good Spirit. This is a vital part of African theology, for happy and righteous living depends on the spirits, *mewa/imimoya*. Evil spirits are believed to be numerous and, since they seek to destroy, sacrifice and propitiation are made and offered to enlist the help of good spirits. The five churches under study teach that the great, good spirits abide with believers always and, as a result, believers are protected, guided and sanctified. The theology of the Holy Spirit is, in fact, closely bound up with the notion of the spirit world in African traditional religion. This is why adherents of these five churches believe Christianity would be incomplete without the Holy Spirit (82, 5% of respondents). To emphasise this point, 22, 5% of respondents reported experiencing Spirit possession at some point in their lives. People are believed to be regularly possessed by the Holy Spirit in these churches (80%). Those so possessed are said to be filled with the Holy Spirit, they are the people of faith, courage and determination; the messengers and prophets of God. What is more, these people are considered to be completely mentally stable. In other words, there is nothing bizarre or irregular about possession.

There is a case of a woman being possessed during prayers for rain in Gaborone in 1991. Her condition induced laughter from bystanding mainline Christians because as far as they were concerned the woman concerned was perceived as having entered a state of abnormality. This is so because in mainline churches, which are for the most part influenced by Western culture, the phenomenon of Spirit possession is virtually unknown.

The Holy Spirit is believed to descend on those who are possessed (47, 5% of respondents). When this happens, respondents believe that something akin to ancestral possession occurs: the possessed are shown or told what mission to undertake. Possession by the Holy Spirit is seen in a number of ways: those so possessed are said either to have too much faith, too much Spirit gets into them at baptism, the angel of God causes them to be possessed by the Spirit, they are shown something, a revelation, they need to prophesy about something, they are

possessed in order to chase away sin, they are possessed because of their intense concentration or simply because Jesus Christ said so. The general feeling, however, is simply that "it is not asked how or why they are possessed by the Holy Spirit"; the phenomenon is simply an Act of God. Those possessed have no control over what is happening to them.

In the case of traditional doctors or *sangomas*, possession by the spirit is believed to manifest itself in convulsions and trance-like states; and the same phenomena are seen among those possessed by the Holy Spirit - they are manifestations of an immense power. These can be traced to the Bible in the case of the servants of Saul and Saul himself who was possessed (1 Sam 10:9-12) and the powerful phenomenon of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-5).

The irony of Spirit possession, however, is that those possessed need help to carry out their duties, so overwhelming is the experience. They have to be prayed for and restrained in various ways to prevent them from hurting themselves.

Both women and men may be possessed by the Spirit (52, 5% of respondents). However, women "are possessed more often "according to 7, 5% of the total sample because they are believed to be weak and easily "overcome". On the other hand, "men are possessed more because they head families" (2, 5%), "women because God's strength is on their side", (also 2, 5%). The significance of these answers is that both sexes are equally represented in possession. The individuals concerned clearly see a balance in God's creation. These observations are theologically and culturally significant. Women in patriarchal African culture are traditionally regarded as the weaker species whose existence and status largely depend on male recognition. Their husbands' instructions and commands are regarded as final, and women are expected to be submissive and unquestioning in their obedience.

In some Botswana marriages, on the day of her marriage, the bride is advised by older women to remember that, from that day onwards, her husband is no longer hers alone, but hers communally, that is, she must expect to share him with other women he will choose to love. Women are culturally perceived as being virtually as weak as children. On the other hand, "God's strength is on their side." This saying reflects on the status of women within the very same culture, from a very different angle. In Setswana there is an idiom which says: "*Mmangwana of tshwara thipa ka bogale*". Literally, this means that the mother catches the knife by the sharp edge of the blade in order to protect her children or household. In other words, the African woman is also regarded as being possessed of superhuman power and strength.

However, the issue of more women being possessed by the Holy Spirit should be put into its proper perspective.

In terms of numbers, women predominate in these churches. The current world estimates are that women outnumber men 4 to 1 on the planet. This in effect means that the population of the world is decidedly in an imbalance. This then means that any study we lay our hands on in any part of the world will necessarily reflect a heavy tilt towards women. Nothing can be done about this phenomenon and the problem is not unique to Botswana.

There are, however, various factors worth noting as far as Botswana is concerned. First and foremost, Botswana is financially heavily dependent on its neighbour, South Africa, as stated in Chapter 2. As a result, the male labour force is, in fact, resident in South Africa throughout the year, apart from during the Christmas holidays and some Easter holidays. That is why the number of women *vis-à-vis* men always reflects a distinct lopsidedness when it comes to church attendance.

Secondly, a study of religions throughout the continent of Africa seems very much to suggest that African men, mostly in rural areas, apart from adherents to Islam, whose religious structure and emphasis is very much more male-oriented, tend to

regard church attendance and worship as a preserve of the mother and her children. The researcher found this to be the case both in the rural areas of Natal and what was formerly Griqualand East, where he worked as a pastor and he has found that the same was true of Botswana. The Batswana also claim that the absence of men from churches may be largely due to the fact that women are occupying an increasing number of higher positions in the church.

Another factor that cannot be ignored when dealing with rural Botswana is that traditional African customs are still very much alive and that one has to accept the fact that these inevitably affect the structures of African society. Old Africa has always had very specific roles for men and women and this role definition is still very much part of Botswana society. The separation of the sexes seems to affect every part of society, including the church. This also goes to explain the preponderance of women in the five churches under study.

Since Spirit possession is so vital to the life of African Initiated Churches, the experiences of ten adherents of the five churches are given in full below. These, drawn from all the five churches and representing both sexes and all age groups, give a clear insight into the varying experiences or levels of Spirit possession.

Number one, a teenage girl of 20 years from St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana, said: "I felt I was floating as the people became smaller and smaller."

Number two, a teenage girl of 20 years from Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Botswana, said: "I felt dizzy as if I was drunk, like during the first Pentecost, and I couldn't control myself."

Number three, a young man of 25 years from St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana, put it this way: "In Spirit possession the body changes and I see what cannot be seen by ordinary humans."

Number four, a young man of 28 years from Forward in Faith, stated of his experience: "I feel that I have power which I did not have before."

Number five, a male adult of 49 years from Galatia Church in Zion and holding a position of authority in the church, said: "During Spirit possession I feel great, I see unseen things."

Number six, a male adult of 32 years from Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Botswana and holding a position of authority in the church, said of his experience: "I became dizzy and I felt a kind of suffocation."

Number seven, a male adult of 29 years from Forward in Faith and holding a position of authority in the church, described his experience thus: "I enjoy the state of Spirit possession because I pray eloquently."

Number eight, an adult female of 29 years from Galatia Church in Zion, said of her experience: "It is very nice".

Number nine, an adult female of 29 years also from Galatia Church in Zion, described her experience: "Yes".

Of the interviewees in STP, only one person, an adult woman, had experienced Spirit possession and answered in the affirmative.

Not everybody has the Holy Spirit (55%) but some (40%). The Spirit dispenses special gifts to those especially chosen by God, such as priests (37% of respondents). There are others, however, who receive special gifts of the Holy Spirit; for example, those who refrain from bad deeds, believers and the baptised. In other words, the Holy Spirit is the moving force within the five churches, and the spirit who leads the people of God.

The Biblical prophets undoubtedly distinguish between the power, which is considered to emanate from the Spirit of God and other sources of power. A good number of African Initiated Churches do not necessarily condemn power which comes from a different source. This seems to suggest that the five churches recognise power that may come from an unexplained source, that is, other forms of supernatural power. Ultimately, all sources of power are attributed to God, who rules and directs the world.

African traditional experience lies at the very heart of the understanding of the Christian life and the place of the Holy Spirit in the work of salvation wrought by God. What some scholars have regarded as simply one more theological interpretation of the work of the Holy Spirit reflects, in fact, African Christians' belief in the efficacy of the customs and ritual of Africa. The power of the Holy Spirit has not been usurped; it is simply that African Christians have placed the God of Salvation in the context of Africa. Had they not done so, every trace of African custom would have been obliterated. As it is, throughout Africa, African Initiated Churches are regarded as ideal models of true religion, and true religion is regarded as being the veneration of whatever is sacred to Africa. The classic example of this is the respect given to the traditional rites of death. African Initiated Churches generally observe customs and taboos concerning death, irrespective of what these churches preach or teach regarding death and the hereafter.

It is fair to say, then, that genuine African Initiated Churches, unlike various syncretistic movements, have struck a balance between what is good and traditional and what is truly Christian. Any study of African Initiated Churches has to begin by acknowledging the role played by African traditional religion in the soteriology of Africa.

4.2.3 God the Father

However, the best judges are the five churches themselves and this is how *they* view the theme of God the Father, over and above what we have already seen when dealing with the role of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. For the five churches the involvement of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit represents one saving act of God albeit expressed differently.

The theological conception of God the Father is based on love; a love which manifested itself in God sending his Son, Jesus, into the world to save the world (25% of respondents). God the Father does not only cater for believers' spiritual needs but gives whatever is needed for life itself: rain, food and health (17, 5% of respondents). God the Father gives people protection, forgiveness and "by sending special people to earth shows the way of goodness and holiness".

This is important: in every African community, especially traditional villages: there are always special people who perform special functions. There are traditional doctors, rainmakers, midwives, healers and headmen. When God sends specially gifted people to the five churches, this shows His love for His people on earth (97, 5% of respondents).

Apart from summarising the answers to the questionnaire, the following observations on God the Father give a general picture of what is generally believed regarding God's Fatherly role. It reflects the concept of fatherhood as understood by the African, not the Western mind.

God the Father is regarded as the giver of life's basic necessities, the One who protects people and who blesses them with good health. Not only does the Father listen to his children; He grants their request for He is the Provider. It is He who directs people's lives, such as encouraging them to pray, helping them to repent and blessing them through His Word, either as it is preached in the church or

experienced in the reading of the Bible. Furthermore, God the Father is seen as the one who helps young people progress in their studies and any success they enjoy is attributed to Him. This is directly from the lips of the youth of the five churches who spelt it out in no uncertain terms. This is not surprising. For example, in response to the question 30: "How does God (the Father) love the world?", the answers of the young people emphasised that God showed His love for the world by also giving it peace, rain, food, sunshine and protection, apart from the fact that His love was first and foremost manifested by sending His Son into the world "to die for us", "to save us".

God the Father is the Author of all creation. He loves the world and He showed His great love by sending His only Son into the world to die for humanity. This same love sends rain, provides people with food, forgives sins, grants people peace and helps them to discern the good from the bad.

The respondent of the five churches obviously have no doubt that God takes care of them. The five churches all conceive of God as a loving, caring and sustaining Father. Only one person, a young man, wanted proof. Such a person represents the young agnostic mind of the new Africa.

The God of the five churches is not an abstract God. He is a personal God who involves himself with those who believe in Him as their Protector, Liberator and Conqueror, just like the living and personal God of the Israelites and as preached by Andrew Murray (Landman, 1993:47.2).

It is very interesting how Western researchers go problem-hunting and fishing by making the faith of the AICs seem so difficult. At times one wonders why these researchers like coming up with mind-boggling exercises useless to practical living and foreign even to the very bodies or organisations they are purporting to study. This is true of the notion of God the Father.

For some strange reason probably only known to themselves, some theologians from mainline churches have concluded that the God of the Independents is a God far removed from the members; a God who is unapproachable and disinterested in the affairs of humanity. This is the so-called *deus remotus et otiosus*, a remote and rather hateful God.

By all accounts, based on this research, God is indeed a living God in the AICs and a determining factor which deeply influences the life and beliefs of the adherents. It is misleading to talk of a dichotomy between the Christian religion and the daily lives of the believers of the AICs simply because ancestors play a so-called pivotal role. Reference is also made to “magic”, healing, wonders, ecstasy, and other phenomena to try and justify the point. This is unfortunate because even the Old Testament is full of purification rites, healing wonders and other phenomena that never militated against the faith of the Jews. Rather, if anything, it complemented their faith. God speaks to people in their own culture and teaches them through their everyday life experiences, experiences of their own age and era. This in no way negates the fulfilment of the Old Testament as explained in Hebrews in relation to the New Testament. Jesus was *the* fulfilment of the Old Testament in the new but he never stopped being a Jew.

4.2.4 The Trinity

African Initiated Churches do not dichotomise God, the sort of thing one reads in some of the histories of some mainline churches where indeed the whole exercise seems to be on nothing else than semantics. The “winner” seems to be the one that can philosophise best, in the most sophisticated language. A serious observation of the AICs makes it abundantly clear that the members are too busy living out their faith than to enter into hair-splitting debates that are irrelevant to loving God and loving and caring for one’s neighbour.

However vague and complex this doctrine might appear to be, the notion of the Trinity is very strong among adherents of the five churches; members are very clear that God is three in one. In spite of the silence of these churches' constitutions on the doctrine of the Trinity, the theme of the Trinity runs throughout sermons and instructions.

The Holy Trinity is referred to and understood as "God, Son and the Holy Spirit in one" (30% of respondents). The Son is truly God (20% of respondents) and He is the Power and the Messenger of God. He thus sets out to do what God the Father commands him to do, to accomplish what God has sent him to do.

The idea of the Holy Spirit being sent to accomplish the work of the Father is very significant in African culture. He is the good Spirit sent out to give life, to heal, to comfort and to nurse the broken-hearted, unlike the evil spirits of the witches, who invade the atmosphere and cause ruin and destruction. There reigns in the firmament a Spirit whose mission is to preserve the tranquillity and equilibrium of the universe. This Spirit can do this because he himself is the power of God. According to African culture, a messenger is invested with the same sort of power as the king who sent him.

"He is God"; "the three work together"; "the three are one thing". These statements are a powerful indicator of the faith of the adherents of the five churches regarding the Trinity.

In the preceding pages on Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and God the Father, it will have become clear how the five churches indeed have a very strong understanding of the Trinity in action without any hair-splitting pronouncements. Theirs is a "lived theology", as Nolan (1999) so clearly explained regarding AICs as we started on the journey of the faith of the five churches.

It was not possible to look at the beliefs of the five churches regarding their understanding of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit without at the same time giving the soteriology. These include, among others, the works of the God who saves and the works and involvement of the Holy Spirit in the five churches.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF WIDER LITERATURE

4.3.1 Rationale for the inclusion of wider literature

The five churches do not exist in a vacuum but are part of a continuum, a phenomenon that has swept the whole of Africa. The purpose here is to relate this study's findings to the broader picture of independency in Africa. In this section the researcher looks into the different themes running through the writings of people who have written on the subject with the main focus being the findings of the five churches. In other words, when presenting the wider study, the researcher shall, basing himself on the findings of the research, say where the five churches stand on each issue and what their contribution is if they concur.

Having seen how and what the five churches believe about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, we can now look at what happens across the board regarding Independency and relate the material of the researchers to the beliefs of the five churches, for better or for worse. By this is simply meant that it will then be indicated how the five churches are affected by the issues concerned or whether or not the five churches are in agreement, according to the findings.

This section is an approach to show that the five churches are part of a wider family and that issues discussed affect them one way or the other.

Ultimately, this approach regarding the discussion on the subject of the wider literature on independency will help the reader to better understand and appreciate the stand of the five churches and how they themselves fit into the broader picture of an emerging African Christian theology.

4.4 THE HOLY SPIRIT

4.4.1 Rationale for the selection of the Holy Spirit

When looking across the board at the African Indigenous Church movement in Africa we are confronted by a massive outpouring of the reality of the Holy Spirit, which seems to be the enlivening force in AICs. Many books have been written about the Holy Spirit and many recordings made of what was achieved through Him. Even our very body or researchers of reference have written copiously about the Holy Spirit. Frankly, the existence of the AICs cannot be conceived without the involvement of the Holy Spirit. He is in fact the essence of the existence and *raison d'être* of the AICs. The names by which AICs are known bear testimony to this. As we have seen, in Botswana, the African Initiated Churches are referred to as *Dikereke tsa Metsi*, Churches of Water, because of their lavish use of holy water, or *Dikereke tsa Moya*, Churches of the Spirit, under whose auspices they operate.

4.4.1.1 Pneumatology

When dealing with pneumatology, Oosthuizen (1972) refers to the subject as the most intricate theological problem of Africa in the light of all the “confusion” around the ancestors and the Holy Spirit. Indeed, this is a unique problem, not just a problem as seen by Oosthuizen. There are *de facto* problems regarding the explication and understanding of Spirit possession in Christian circles and possession as experienced in the African traditional rituals, especially the *sangoma* - healing ceremonies.

4.4.1.2 Role of ancestors in understanding Christology and pneumatology

As an African, Bishop Dwane (1994) makes no bones about the role of ancestors for understanding both Christology and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He says:

“I venture to say both African and black theologies have much to learn from the Latin American rediscovery of the importance of the Kingdom of God to our understanding of the Person of Christ. The ancestral categories, in which Christology in Africa is couched, bring enrichment to theology. Their usage is the bringing forth out of Africa’s storehouse, ‘treasures both old and new’” (Dwane, 1994:15).

4.4.1.3 Workings of the Holy Spirit

On the other hand, a theologian like Nolan, drawn from a different cultural and sociological background, comprehends fully the workings of the Holy Spirit. In his response to a paper by Archbishop Ngada quoted above, he says:

“I have of course heard him many times before – in public and in private. But today, in response to his talk, I would like to touch very briefly on three of the things he said – three things, I believe, we all need to hear and reflect upon seriously. The first is the emphasis on the Holy Spirit. When we were searching for the focal point of this particular theology, the centre or hub around which we could order all their other beliefs and practices, we discovered that it was without doubt the belief in the inspiration and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. The Archbishop referred to this in his talk, and in response to him I would just like to say that I am sure that these churches are indeed inspired by the Holy Spirit and that is why they have had the freedom and the spontaneity to develop their own interpretation of the Bible and their own ways of being Christian” (Nolan, 1999:9-10).

On the question of the Holy Spirit, Sundkler (1958:1) clearly states that the Holy Spirit is free and has no borders and that he blows where he wills.

“There is, moreover, no impenetrable screen between mission churches and Independent African Churches, or between the two or three types of Independent Churches we distinguish. In the kraals of the reserves, in the townships and cities, and in the hearts and of men and women, there is a constant exchange of ideas and valuations between representatives of all these different groups. This fluid and dynamic character of the situation is something which was brought home to me every day in the field. We are dealing with things of the Spirit ‘which bloweth where it listeth’; it transcends and breaks through any wall of doctrine or organisation” (Sundkler, 1958:1).

Ngada (1999) considers the role of the Holy Spirit to be critical in the understanding of the Bible and the role of culture and “Africanness” under the banner of the Holy Spirit. He says unequivocally:

“The African Indigenous Church (AIC) theology is instinctively embodied in its members’ everyday lives. They do not necessarily have to study a certain acclaimed theologian to know and worship God. They are totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit, as commanded by Holy Scripture. These academically (in Western terms) ‘unqualified’ AIC theologians are obedient to the theology of the Bible in their own right. They are uneducated but certainly cultured in their Africanness. Their African values are of uppermost importance, because, without them, it would be very difficult to understand the Gospel” (Ngada, 1999:1).

The analysis of Ngada takes us ever closer to Christianity with an African face.

The role of the Holy Spirit can never be over-emphasised. It is a great pity that sometimes in the West, and that includes some Western-trained theologians, the

role of the Holy Spirit is little understood except here and there. The two obvious examples by way of exception would be the belief in the Roman Catholic Church that when the cardinals are gathered together to elect a new pope, the Holy Spirit is in their midst to guide their choice. The second example is the strong belief in Protestant theology that indeed the Holy Spirit is active in the preaching of the Word of God.

After all, it is through the Holy Spirit that human beings encounter God, as Erasmus van Niekerk (1989) so aptly puts it:

“The reality of the knowledge of God stands or falls by God’s indirect - hence in a secondary sense objective - presence with human beings in divine revelation. The fact that God as a subject in revelation encounters the human subject, also means that the Holy Spirit enables the human subject to conceive of and perceive God as an object in revelation. Barth’s whole view of human knowledge of God is based on revelation as the turning point between God and human beings. Human beings can know something about God because God as the subject expresses God self as an object in revelation to human beings” (Van Niekerk, 1989:21).”

4.5 SHARING, TRANSFORMATION AND AFRICANISATION

In the opening proceedings in this chapter the author would like to refer briefly to Ngada’s reflections on theological transformation in AICs (Ngada, 1982:2).

He opens by asserting that in the past, presumably up until recently, AICs have had abuse hurled against them by the “so-called mainline churches and the powers that be”. Yet these despised churches minister to the poorest of the poor, as Jesus did. Theology is embodied in the lives of the members which they live out daily and they are obedient to the Bible in their own right, namely, their “Africanness”. The Gospel is thus understood and interpreted through their own culture, which makes it

relevant to understand the message of Jesus Christ. This is the crux of the matter because, as Ngada so aptly puts it, the African people were made to consume three-quarters Western culture and only one-quarter Christianity. As one of the researcher's students once put it at a religious conference at the University of Botswana in Gaborone: "The missionaries brought us the Gospel wrapped in plastic. Now we want to remove the plastic and get to the Gospel on our own" (Makhaya,1985). Discovering that they were serving God in a foreign idiom, the African people went the way of AICs. Says Ngada:

"As the converts were getting acquainted with the Bible, they studied it according to their own understanding and interpretation. In that process the Holy Spirit was at work in the hearts and minds of the black converts of the foreign churches (Ngada, 1998:2)."

As Ngubane (1986) puts it, religion has always been the battleground of cultures meeting to try and unravel the mysteries and symbols but, like he says, the missionaries tried to use their own culture as the only vehicle for understanding the message of the Gospel, unlike Paul who used the very Greek culture and understanding of the deity to put forward the message of the Gospel (Ngubane, 1986:76).

A poignant point made by Ngada is that the AICs eventually brought something precious to theology: a sharing, caring, fellowship, humanness and tolerance. This love, *philadelphia*, is the one that drives AICs so that there is no failure on their part but a living out of the Gospel, unlike the missionary establishments which failed in love (Barrett, 1968:155-156). Not only that, but the living out of their theology in their lives has transformed not only the members of the AICs themselves but those of other people around them (Ngada, 1998:2). He says further that it cannot be concluded that AICs are a poorer and bankrupt theologically because they do not study in the same way. He argues that theirs is a lived theology. In other words, they do not study but *do* their theology.

From the above pages of the five churches a few issues stand out prominently. First and foremost is the sense of communalism and togetherness as a worshipping family. In this connection the researcher wants to pick on the issue of community and corporate personality, so ably put across by Kealotswe (1999). The five churches have made it abundantly clear that their existence and philosophy of life is a communal one and the individual is part of the whole according to culture and the understanding of the Gospel. They can thus truly align themselves with Kealotswe (1999) when he says:

“In Deuteronomy 25:6-7, the Israelites see themselves as a community of people who suffered oppression in Egypt, where they cried to the Lord of their ancestors with one voice as a community. They see themselves as one community, in spite of the fact that individuals are highly respected. Individuals make personal offerings to God for individual sins, but in general life people see themselves as one community. The sins of the individual are also the sins of the community and as a result, much emphasis is put on communal sins. Sin offerings are therefore more communal than individualistic. Corporate personality can simply be defined as a way of life which puts more emphasis on the communal good than on individual interests. The individual person sees him/herself as part of the community rather than as an individual and the interests of the community are given attention before those of the individual” (Kealotswe, 1999:299-300).”

The work of the AICs is seen as the work of the Holy Spirit and their very *râison d’être* is seen as a direct intervention by the Holy Spirit himself (Ngada, 1998:3). In response to Ngada’s paper, Nolan (1998) rightly states:

It was not that these churches did not have a theology of their own, but it was a lived theology, a practical way of living, celebrating and preaching the Christian faith (Nolan, 1998:8).”

Speaking on the same issue regarding the Kimbanguist Church, Martin (1975) puts it very clearly:

“We have already referred to the fact that it is not easy to describe the theology of the Kimbanguist Church because it is lived and sung and not formulated. It is expressed in pictures, wood-carvings and music. Here there is a basic difference between the intellectualist West and intuitive Africa” (Martin, 1975:140).

This researcher has been learning (more appropriate term than *studying*) about AICs for many years now and regards the points raised by Ngada as an executive summary regarding the AICs (Hearing the AIC Voice, 1999:1-6). Ngada delivers the *coup d'État* when he states categorically:

“It is clear that the AICs are heavily involved in the transformation of theology because, due to their growth and their theology, the mainline churches are now imitating the AICs in their worship services” (Ngada, 1998).

He refers to attempts by mainline churches to Africanise their theology and how they make blunders in the process by, for example, wanting to use *umqombothi* (African beer) in their Communion services. The author does not agree with Ngada on everything, like alleging, for example, that it is scripturally wrong to use fermented juice for Communion. A number of Christians have a problem with the fact that Jesus Christ himself used wine (Lk 7:33-34) and that indeed during the Last Supper he left the church a legacy of commemorating him with the fruit of the vine, however one interprets it.

At this juncture the researcher would like to bring in Jacques R Kriel van Niekerk (1986). In trying to reach out to other religions and other Affiliations within the broader movement of Christianity we seem to be caught in a cobweb of self-righteousness and self justification. We forget that we are all limited, we turn our

backs on our ecumenical calling to be witnesses for unity and understanding with an equal humility to accept that we are *not* the final word in exegesis or the faith. Says Kriel van Niekerk (1986):

“Lastly I believe that if we wish to overcome the estrangement between Christianity and Judaism on the one hand and the scandalous divisions between Christian denominations, then we need to find methodological common ground in scriptural exegesis. Before flying at each other’s throats in defence of our interpretation of Scripture, let us take a rigorous, scientifically defensible and critical look at the methodology which has produced those findings. One of the most important methodological insights of modern science is that *results are determined by the method that has been chosen, and there is no absolute method that will give absolute results*. If theologians read a bit more science, they would stop saying ‘but God said...’, and they would start saying ‘but according to the method that I have applied, it seems to me as if God may be saying...’. As Labuschagne put it: ‘De Bijbel bevat niet de *door-God-gesproken woorden*, maar de *door-mensen-gesproken woorden* over en namens God. De gedachte als zou God bijbelboeken gedicteerd hebben moeten wij uit ons hoofd zetten’...If we accept this as our starting point, we may actually be able to start listening to one another. And that may be the beginning of loving one another - which after all is what the Bible is all about!” (Van Niekerk, 1986:10).

It is the author’s hope that the above powerful and passionate passage from Kriel van Niekerk will help all researchers reach out to the AICs with a new understanding and tolerance, realising that in entering AIC territory they are entering being *tabula rasa* in every sense of the word. No researcher enters this territory as an *expertus*, *emeritus* or *justus judex*. The deposit of faith that lies in the bosom of AICs can only be brought forth forward by themselves and themselves alone. We, the researchers, are only witnesses of a reality that is already in existence; nothing more. We are not qualified to raise our voices over above those

of the Independents. All we can do, as Kriel says, is “to start listening”, as stated above.

This is consonant with the Jesuit Michael Hurley’s second principle of love:

“The second principle of ecumenism reaffirms the primacy of love, the truth that the nature of the church is to be ‘rooted and grounded in love’, a community which obeys the word of Jesus: ‘Love one another’” (Monyai, 1972:46).”

In order to appreciate the role of AICs in providing Africa with an African face of Christianity, we should dig deep into the history of the black Church in this very continent and see what strides were taken in theology by African pioneers, a factor hitherto largely ignored and very obscure. Over the years we have relied exclusively on the interpretation of theology by writers writing on everybody else except the Africans. Hennie Pretorius (1988) says in *Christian faith and African culture*:

“This obscurity is partly due to the fact that church historians have mainly been writing the histories of white missionaries who originated from South Africa, Europe and North America. It is relatively recently that scholars have come to realise that Africans themselves have been the main vehicles which the Lord has used to further the *missio Dei* on this continent. It is, thus, a fortunate development that more and more attention is being paid to African pioneers and co-workers spreading the Christian message in Africa” (Pretorius, 1988:30).

Pretorius goes on to outline the role played by Nehemiah Xoxo Tile and Tiyo Soga in the development of the faith, which I would call Christianity with an African face. To these two names must be added a few more, especially the name of the prophet Ntsikana. The latter pioneered the vibrations of African music in the form of Xhosa lyrics, which even today still form the backbone of the Music Department of the University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape. Indeed, there can never be a true

Christianity with an African face if music, one of the most important African cultural tools, is left out of the equation.

Unity is of paramount importance in the five churches. Harmony is expected of those who believe and profess to be followers of Jesus Christ. The Church of God is a beacon to the world and his to succeed. Says Cilliers Breytenbach (1986) when he talks about the necessity of unity in the community of believers:

“Not only does the division within the body of Christ injure the church. It also affects the witness of the church to the world. It causes people to give up the Christian hope, to despair and to doubt; even worse, an injured church like the one in Corinth in the first century can give the opponents of Christianity the opportunity to blaspheme the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ (47:7). When the *soma Christou*, the body of Christ, is enjoying eternal peace, when the members of the body are living in the concord of love (50:5), then the church is a challenge to the world. When there is strife, division and fragmenting in the church, the body is injured, and although the church does not die it fails the world” (Breytenbach, 1986:11).

This author always reads with interest the theories of division and fission among African Indigenous Churches, like the *zeitgeist* of Barrett (1968:109ff) and finds himself in disagreement. Even Sundkler (1958) tries to come up with a formula that might help to stem the divisions in Independency. The point is, we are dealing with a living organism and as long the organism is pregnant with life there is no possibility of stopping it bursting forth at the seams to generate more life. Fission and division are definitely here to stay as long as human beings keep on discovering newer, fresher and better ways of expressing their faith in God every day. What satisfied and gave meaning to life for my neighbour yesterday may not necessarily satisfy me or give meaning to my life today and what satisfied me and gave meaning to life for me today may not be true for my son or daughter tomorrow. It is important, however, to note that, as Kretzschman puts it, “Every theology is context-bound” (Kretzschman, 1988:10). There are bound to be

limitations in almost any approach. We are, however, duty-bound to get to the bottom of the matter as far as possible as researchers.

When dealing with the faith of the AICs, and in our case, the faith of the five churches under study, one cannot but recall something beautiful from De Visser (2000). In *Kyrios and Morena* there is a lovely answer by one of the respondents who says that “*Jesu o a re tsamaisa. Jesu o a re protecta* - (Jesus leads us. Jesus protects us)” (De Visser, 2000:75)

The following quotation from the same author really sums up the faith of the five churches on this subject for this researcher:

“Evaluation shows that the work of Christ is understood primarily in terms of creation/providence and of protection. The notion of Christ as the Owner of His believing subjects, who has authority over their lives, did not figure strongly nor was it entirely absent. It is important to note here that ‘protection’ is not so much thought of as protection against spiritual dangers (like falling in sin, temptations) but rather against earthly dangers (accidents, bad luck). One of the missionaries I interviewed confirmed this. He felt that Jesus is primarily seen as a Provider (of good fortune, life force) and a Protector (against dangers, bad luck, and disease)” (De Visser, 2000:76).

There is no contradiction here. To the Independents there is no dichotomy of life: it is one life ruled, governed and regulated by God.

Speaking on Christology, in the Report of Bossey in *Jesus Christ in African and Asian perspectives*, African and Asian participants make it very clear that Jesus Christ is the Saviour and life-Giver who takes care of the totality of human life.

“He is the Liberator from all chains that keep the nation in bondage, be it fear, domination, political, socio-economic or psychological oppression. In the

African perspective in particular, he is the Healer, the mender of broken relationships and *the* Intermediary who pleads on behalf of the people” (Mbiti, 1976:101-102).

He is always present because wherever individuals and communities are involved in the fulfilment of human dignity and justice, we discern the work of Jesus Christ. Wherever relationships of love and righteousness are fostered, we discern him at work (Mbiti, 1976:103).

Essentially, belief in Christ emanates from the fact of acceptance of the Living God, which is the basis of Christianity, and a realisation that this Living God communicates with peoples in their own idiom and culture, something in which the missionaries have failed dismally, says Appiah-Kubi (1976:52-53). Indeed Appiah-Kubi states that there is “a kind of common ‘Africanness’ about the total cultural and religious beliefs and practices of Africa” (1976:51). As Dr. Kofi Busia says:

“The churches have failed to provide the African with a Christian world-view to replace the one he has lost (Busia, 1963).”

This means the African world-view from which he (the African) derives strength and guidance. He argues that the African then falls back on his “heathen attitudes and customs” (Busia, 1963: 9-10) to solve his problems. It is unfortunate that he moves into the other extreme. One cannot simply write off the African world-view as “heathen attitudes and customs”.

“The Gospel needs to be viewed in a new light in terms of its presentation. It has to be presented positively as a salvific message. Because it has been preached in terms of law and not of Gospel; as a burden to be borne instead of as a liberating and life-giving power” (Busia, 1963:11)

John Pobee sums up the African people's belief in God in Ghana beautifully when he says that "God is the Creator who has put his imprint on his Creation, an imprint which stares man in the face and can lead to a sense of God. God is the ruler and Preserver of the world and his creation. Jesus' references to the care of the birds and lilies, quoted above, make the point that God is the ruler and preserver of his creation (Pobee, 1979:75).

In his *Community of the saved*, Dubb (1976) traces the faith of the founder Bhengu and his followers and observes that faith for them means salvation, which is freely given to them unto eternal life because the believer "ensures his forgiveness and salvation by accepting that through Christ's death mankind is exonerated from sin" (Dubb, 1976:113).

The foregoing will have given the reader a glimpse, a hint, of where our journey is headed. We are on a journey to realise or discover a new face of Christianity. There is a saying: "Radical problems need radical solutions." Indeed we can never embark on a road of rediscovery unless and until we have confronted the reality of the Gospel being preached and understood in the idiom of African people and their understanding of their relationship with the God who saves without destroying culture and self-understanding.

This particular section will be concluded with a very strong finale and *caveat* to the reader. There are two choices. First, one could bury one's head cosily in the sand and pretend that the study of Independency has nothing to do with politics, national aspirations and personal ambitions as part of a group of people or else stare reality starkly in the face and say it as it is, knowing that we are dealing with people with dreams, aspirations, deep-seated national goals and certain objectives in life. This is not politics or political, otherwise the researcher would not be true to his research, which encompasses the whole person in all his totality. An honest study of Independency will always reveal the underlying current running very deep below the surface. Whenever the reader reads what

might appear to be political undertones, he should delve deeper below the surface and find that current that will make Independency even more comprehensible, alive and challenging. No story of Independency or splits in the churches can be told without confronting the truth.

The truth of the matter is that this research is about five churches in Botswana. This is, therefore, the primary focus and everything else always comes back to this, although examples might be given to show that Independency in Botswana is not an isolated phenomenon.

When talking of what the researcher would like to call the transformation of the faith, there is a sensitive issue that cannot be skirted around. This is the issue of indigenisation and Africanisation of leadership by the African Independent Churches. They make no apologies about it and put it out raw. They believe that this is a God-given right from the Father of creation. Quite clearly, they believe that African leadership has a place under the sun. No group of people can merely “break away” for the sake of breaking away. Is there no possibility that in this age and era God is calling the church of the West to order, to recognise and accept the phenomenon of change and radical transformation pertaining to leadership, control and power over other people? This is a reality staring the church of the West in the face and it cannot be wished away. The issue has to be addressed. Has Africa not come of age, to move forward in order to give Christianity an African face?

When the author was researching *The African Catholic Church* about ten years ago, the leadership and the ordinary members held a very strong view that leadership had to be in the hands of African people.

The African Israel Church Nineveh holds firmly that God loves the members of the church, including “all who believe in him” (Welbourn, 1966:95), namely, those who are not members of the church but believe in God. But in both The Church of Christ in Africa and The African Israel Church Nineveh the question of Africanisation and

indigenisation runs very deep due to the rivalry of European missionaries in western Kenya between whom there did not seem to be much communication, to a point where it was “not surprising if African X and African Y, looking for some means of religious expression more satisfactory than that offered by the missionaries, have felt themselves theologically free to form independent families of the same character” (Ogot, 1966:5).

Individually, Nineveh had a more powerful message emanating from their leader and founder Kivuli:

“This Church was founded by black people. We wanted our children, grandchildren and posterity to know that the church was founded by Africans. Europeans, Asians or Arabs can become members provided they accept this fact. They join it not to take over its leadership but to support God’s work. The High Priest and his lieutenants must be Africans; and the non-Africans who join must accept this fact that they are joining an African, not a European body. If they are truly men of God they will, I am sure, recognize that I had a particular purpose in founding this church. They can advise and support the Church financially; *but the running of this church must be in the hands of Africans*” (Welbourn, 1966:83).

This passage has everything to do with God the Father because it shows the underlying mentality that indeed African leadership in the church is sanctioned by God the Creator and Father himself.

Without shouting from the rooftops, the African Indigenous Churches believe that God the Father has called them to a unique position of leadership as African people and in so doing leading them to give the Christian faith an African face. We are here talking of the yoke of hundreds of years of slavery and the accompanying twin suppression and denigration of African culture and customs by missionaries from the West. What the AICs are currently doing is “removing the plastic and getting to

the Gospel itself” which will henceforth be understood and be interpreted in the idiom and culture of African people, just like God in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New Testament talked to the Jews in their own idiom and culture. Of necessity this will entail harnessing the tools of culture like visions, dreams, purification rites, ancestors, healing and prophecy to help make Christianity assume a decisively African face. As Ogot (Westbourn & Ogot, 1966) put it when talking about the emerging African churches in Kenya:

“They were keen, sincere and loyal members of the Church who genuinely believed that, for their church to survive, she had first to redress certain glaring abuses and, secondly, to implement Venn’s policy of establishing ‘self-supporting self-governing, and self-propagating churches’” (Westbourn & Ogot, 1966:40).

One has simply to cast one’s eye on the African continent for myriads of examples that personified and embodied irrevocable indigenisation, transformation and Africanisation, such as Kimpa Vita in the former Portuguese Congo, Simon Kimbangu in the former Belgian Congo, Alice Lenshina in Zambia and Shembe, Mjijima, Lekganyane and Ma Nku in South Africa. Here we see leadership totally and exclusively in the hands of African people. Travelling by train from Johannesburg to East London and *vice versa*, we used to have to change engines from a diesel locomotive to an electric engine; it was then that the speed was totally transformed and the train moved with increased and sustained alacrity. African leaders in the AICs are the new engines of the millennium which are destined to give Christianity an African face. As Bishop Dwane says, “there are new treasures” at the disposal of the Church of God. We can and have to learn.

This may sound harsh, but it is consonant with the indigenisation of the faith because the two, namely faith and culture, are intertwined.

The church is indeed *one*, for unity is an essential mark of the Kingdom founded by Christ. The Church, however, is also diversified, as diversified as mankind itself.

This diversity is sacred and must be preserved no less than the unity; and it is here that Anthropology, the Science of Man, can, in the light of Theology, make a major contribution. Anthropology is indeed 'a mirror for man', as Kluckhohn so aptly put it, but Anthropology is also 'a mirror for the Church', enabling the Church to see herself as she really is, in her infinite variety (Luzbetak, 1962:46).

On leadership he says:

"Native leadership has the great advantage of being culturally conditioned for the environment in which it operates; properly formed native leadership understands its people, speaks the local tongue, masters and shares the local life-way. Properly formed leadership is blessed with an inborn empathy. The culture jolts are non-existent. The problems of effective communication, of using the premises and motivations that have a genuine meaning and force with the local people, practically disappear from mission work as soon as there is formed a sufficient and capable leadership. It is then that Christianity can be presented to the people in the true terms of their daily lives" (Luzbetak, 1962:105).

When he visited Uganda in 1966, Pope Paul VI acknowledged this by saying:

"Africa has now come of age; she must now begin to worship God in her own culture and idiom" (Monyai, 1972)."

The author does not see how this could ever be achieved without any reference to ancestors (the saints of Africa), ritual, and healing or purification rites.

Nolan (1988) talks strongly about the message of Jesus Christ, whose main focus is indeed to change the very foundations of the world. He is the message that transforms the world.

“The good news is about the practice of Jesus, the wonderful work of God that was manifested in the practice of Jesus. And today? The good news about Jesus today is the good news about what Jesus as the risen Christ is doing in South Africa today or what God is now doing in and through the risen Christ. The importance of the resurrection is that we are able to treat Jesus as still alive, as our contemporary who is playing a role in our South African crisis and conflict. The good news about Jesus Christ today is the good news about the practice of Jesus in our country” (Nolan, 1988:17-18).

The following is a personal reminiscence of the author:

“This reminds me of the old African man whom I had tried to talk into Christianity through baptism after a long insistence by the *manyano* women in a big village, as described above. When he eventually answered me, his eyes were blazing. ‘You want me to be a Christian? You, can you go through the front door of a white man in town (Pretoria)?’ It was in the 1960s and it was generally unheard of. I readily said, ‘No’. ‘There you are’, he had said triumphantly. ‘These people have no love. They preach love, they say they came to teach us love but they have no love. No, thanks, I was baptised the day I was born when the women washed me with water.’ That was the end of the story; the old man wanted to see love in action” (Monyai, 1980)

The failure in love then is more prevalent than previously thought. Indeed, Barrett’s statement about a failure in love should be viewed in its proper prophetic perspective. Quite often this may mean a rediscovery of a new self, a new look at one’s circumstances in life, a new expression and understanding of one’s true humanity. This is painfully apparent in the case of an understanding of negritude in the South African context.

Commenting on Cone’s strong belief regarding the role of black power, Barney Pityana (1994) sums the matter up in a scholarly manner:

“Black Power was part of the re-humanisation of Black people. They were exercising their right to say no to racism and asserting their right to human dignity. So essential was this exercise of right in Cone’s theology that he believed that this power was derived from Christ. To call Christ the Black Messiah was not to claim any exclusive identification with the person and redemptive activity of Christ. It was to state that in Christ there is a full, total identification with the sufferings and struggles of the oppressed” (Pityana, 1994:175).

When one takes into account these narrations, one thing emerges clearly, namely, that there is a paradigm shift on the understanding of the message of the Gospel. It emerges quite clearly that faith is regarded as something radical, which has to radicalise the whole of Christian living. And, as we have seen above, in the AICs it is a “lived theology”. There are not many terms used like black theology and black power, but quite clearly, in their application for Christianity with an African face, the AICs are on top of their game in every respect in that their theology is unique.

Indeed, Christianity needs to take some very bold steps if at all this religion, which should really not be bound by any culture, tradition and local practices, were to embed itself in Africa in a way that will give it an African face. No one culture needs to be uprooted and then planted over into a different culture in the attempt to spread Christianity. That is a recipe for disaster and complete misunderstanding.

Shembe tried hard to give Christianity an African face. He openly allowed the traditional male Zulu gear and the female Zulu gear, both made from the skins of animals, to be used in the service. This is what the church of Shembe had to say:

“At that time when people wished to become Christians, they had to put on clothes. But Shembe read about Adam and Eve in the Bible. Until that time the pastors had taught that in order to become Christians, people must shed their *ibeshu* and *isidwaba* and put on clothes. But many of our people refused to

accept this, and refused to let their women throw away their *izidwaba*. I do not know from where the pastors and missionaries took their teaching. What I know, I know according to the Bible. When God created our first parents, he made coats of skin and made them put these on. And Shembe said. 'Let anybody who so wishes come in *ibeshu* or *isidwaba*' (Sundkler, 1976:169).

It is important to remember that in Africa it is through ritual and symbolism that contact with the unseen world is established. What is considered peripheral, like the case of *ibeshu*, *isidwaba* or clothes, does not impact on the life of the believer or his relationship with God or neighbour. It is the heart which counts. Unfortunately, this has everything to do with Christianity. One cannot force people to wear a certain type of clothing, East or West, north or south, before they can become children of God, thus jettisoning their own culture first. One of the reasons most missionaries and their home countries regarded African people as "savages" was precisely that, according to Western standards, they were perceived to be "roaming" about naked, not taking into account the weather conditions which dictated minimal attire to cover only the essentially private parts. Indeed, in one of his books, *Gallic wars*, once he reached the shores of Britain in 55 BC, Julius Caesar referred to the Britons as barbarians because he described how they wore hardly anything and painted their bodies with blue and white paint. In his eyes they were "savages" because they had not yet attained the sophistication of wearing the same attire as the Romans.

Thus, the five churches have their own unique way of indigenising the Christian faith. Primarily, it has to be remembered that they do not and never had a serious problem of racial adjustment because of the nature and tradition of Botswana society, even under British colonial rule. It was very much the opposite of South African society. Secondly, the five churches seem to be doing it the practical way. In Chapter 2 we saw how Khama III tried to impose Western habits and standards on the Batswana in his attempt to promote Christianity and ended up antagonising a lot of Batswana. Based on the results of the research, it could be safely argued that the five churches are trying as much as possible to help the cause of

Christianity by respecting the local culture, except in cases where there is direct conflict with the Gospel.

4.6 HEALING

Finally, there is simply no way in which we can talk about the faith of the five churches without giving healing the centrality it deserves. We must see a person in his/her entirety in African faith and philosophy, namely, his world-view based on corporate personality. At the same time, we are talking about far-fetched theories, which allege that healing has usurped everything to do with the faith in AICs. Some researchers might conclude that healing in AICs has usurped everything. That is why we need to contextualise healing and put it in its proper and deserved perspective. Indeed, Sundkler does this in his classic *Bantu prophets in South Africa* (1961:180 ff), making sure that healing is not divorced from worship and the life of the church.

Robert Mitchell rightly states that “every church in Africa is concerned with Christian healing” (Mitchell, 1963:47). Indeed he goes on to show how heavily tilted to healing the mainline churches have been in their ministries. This is evidenced by the hundreds of clinics and hospitals across the globe where mission churches were in action.

We have seen how the five churches have always been connected with healing. So strong was this ministry in Forward in Faith, that Handinawangu Ezekiel Guti, the founder, was considered to be a “miracle man” with all the healings he is reputed to have performed (Erwin, 1985:76).

West (1975:91) correctly states that healing has always been a central theme and practice in Christianity. This healing takes place through the power of the Holy Spirit, *Moya*. Some healings, such as we have seen in GCZ, take place via immersion in the River Jordan during or along with purification rites.

The number one attraction factor in the five churches is healing. That is why this cannot be ignored in dealing with their faith. Most of the members ended up in their respective churches because of having been healed in that particular church. Quite often this involves *go tlhatlhabiwa* (being examined) and very often being given special baths and *sepeiti* (anaemia) and being induced to *phalatsa* (vomit) all impurities and unclean particles from the body (Lebotse, 1979 II 5-6). This in no way implies that, therefore, healing is everything in a person's faith or belief in their church.

Through healing one is given the necessary protection against all evil and powers of darkness. This is crucial and sacrosanct to the African mind. Quite clearly, the established churches failed in this regard and the AICs are succeeding (Lagerwerf, 1984:61). That is why the faith of the five churches and the reality of healing cannot be dichotomised. This is so because they are walking in the footsteps of culture and tradition.

The African world-view on the Christian faith is dynamic and understood according to native culture and tradition. This is one area where the African native is untouchable and where he would rather seek greener pastures elsewhere to make his life meaningful.

Bengt Sundkler (1958) put this faith of the AICs succinctly way back in 1958. Citing the experience from which the Independents drew their strength, Sundkler makes a reference to some vibrant American church groups, which made an evolution through several processes and eventually "professed democratic ideals as opposed to the supposed autocracy of an Episcopal system" (Sundkler 1958:8). He says:

"The slogan among their followers was, as it is today, '*Christianity, not churchnianity*' [italics mine] (:8) and also. We are now on certain ground when we state that the western individualistic concept of Christianity is replaced by a communalistic concept of Christianity" (Sundkler, 1958:10).

Martin makes a penetrating insight into what the faith of African people in African Independent Churches is all about. She says:

“Christ’s presence must become as real to the believer as the presence of ancestors was to his forefathers” (Martin, 1964:167).

This is almost a perfect statement. If only she had substituted the verb “was” with “is”, because African people have not changed their esteem for and connection with ancestors even today.

The issue of sin is also reflected in the answers to the questionnaire although this topic will be treated more fully in Chapter 5.

Legalism is very pronounced in the constitutions but in the actual lives of the church is not a dominant feature, as gathered in Chapter 3.

4.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The next chapter, Chapter 5, will look at specific and salient features pertaining to soteriology, such as the scandal of the cross, the notion of sin in the African thought-world, forgiveness and holiness and the Word of God.

We shall also look at how African traditional religion approaches the question of ancestors, which, as we have seen, is an issue which features prominently in the lives of the members of the five churches although some of them are diplomatically tacit on the matter. *Botho/ubuntu* and witchcraft will also be discussed.

This is the setting for Chapter 5, when we look at other major doctrines and morality.

CHAPTER 5

OTHER MAJOR DOCTRINES AND MORAL ISSUES

5.1 MARRIAGE

In this treatment of marriage the main focus is to look at how the five churches regard marriage within the context of their own faith and the broader African tradition.

In Africa, marriage has always been regarded as the corner-stone of the community and society. The elaborate and lavish feasting surrounding a marriage ceremony testifies to its importance among African people.

In African traditional religion, marriage is a weighty matter, with a specific African character. Here the emphasis is not on two individuals getting married and starting a nuclear family in isolation, so to speak, but on the fusion of two families, whose responsibilities include the success of the young people's marriage. The hallmark of African traditional religion is where all the necessary machinery is infused into the marriage negotiations precisely to establish a *raison d'être*, which will be the counselling unit of the future marriage. This sacred and salient feature of African traditional religion needs to be recaptured before it vanishes forever.

In their composite work, three sociologists and anthropologists from the University of Nairobi in Nigeria describe marriage as "a matter of life and death for most Africans". They base this on the fact that marriage brings not only honour and prestige but also a realisation of the wishes and aspirations of one's parents, the kin groups and the clan. Remaining single when one is of marrying or marriageable age is against the mores and customs of the whole ethos of African life. Even impotent men marry to save face for themselves and their immediate families by acquiring a family through the kinship system of Africa (Odetola, Oloruntimehin & Aweda 1983:31).

The most common type of marriage is the arranged marriage, the parents of the boy ask for the hand of the girl in marriage via intermediaries with or without his knowledge. Kayongo-Male and Onyango, two sociologists from the University of Nairobi, emphasise the importance of this process because through it parents were able to scrutinise their son's prospective in-laws and helped him to marry into a decent family devoid of witchcraft. All the values, expectations and life styles were taken into consideration (Kayongo-Male & Onyango 1984:56). This is by far the most universally practised type of marriage in Africa, where both families of the bride and groom are involved. There is, however, another less common but still in practice another form of marriage. This second type of marriage occurs when the young man "elopes" with the girl to his parents' home or village. In this case, word is then sent to the girl's family and marriage negotiations follow afterwards. This form of marriage still exists in pockets among some Sotho and Nguni tribes in Southern Africa but seems to be on the decline with the introduction of new laws and concepts of civil liberties under new national constitutions.

In the constitutions of the churches under study, marriage is an important frame of reference, both for behaviour and hence, for someone's ability to hold office. It is both a general rule and a general expectation of the five churches that a church leader or minister should be married. The idea here is that someone who becomes a minister of religion or an office bearer in the church should be a stable person, and marriage is seen as the most stabilising factor in someone's life, which means that, as a minister or office-bearer, that person can be trusted by the church and the community. Such a person is considered "safe", unlike someone who is unmarried and regarded as a likely flirt or, as the expression says, "someone who has many eyes (to have many eyes) - *go nna le matlho a le mantsi*. Office-bearers are therefore expected to marry. For example, St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana maintains: "To qualify for the position of archbishop a member must be married" (Annexure A [1]).

African Initiated Churches in Botswana do not conceive of life as complete except within the context of the family, which is held together by marriage. The marriage ritual is considered so important that, in some of the churches studied, a girl or woman who gives birth outside wedlock has to undergo certain purification rites before she can be accepted back into the assembly of believers. However, the point should be made that it is considered almost an obligation on the part of the church to accept the "erring" child back, given the nature of God as a loving, merciful and understanding parent. Marriage is considered very important because it enables people to help each other and, of course, it is in the context of marriage that children are born. Marriage is instituted by God Himself and, through marriage each person has a legal partner, which enhances discipline in the community. Furthermore, a good marriage will help establish co-operation and peace in the home, leading to both material and spiritual prosperity. Marriage is essential for anybody who wants to be a good church leader.

A bad marriage on the other hand, is one from which parents on both sides are excluded from deliberations either before, during or even after marriage. This in African tradition is considered not only an unlawful marriage but an irreligious act among all, especially those who profess to be Christian, because the law of honouring mother and father is one of the Ten Commandments, a code of conduct accepted by all the five churches as believers. Nor will there be peace, prosperity and love in a bad marriage; the same is regarded as being true of a marriage which is considered irreligious and unlawful.

All the churches are unanimous in forbidding sexual intercourse outside of marriage. Sexual intercourse outside marriage is considered to be against the law of God and the norms of the church and therefore sinful. Divorce is also forbidden, although there are situations which may make divorce inevitable, such as a serious breach of trust, marital infidelity or even simply incompatibility. No matter what the circumstances of the divorce, divorcees are not permitted to remarry in church. Some churches forbid divorcees remarrying altogether.

According to answers from the questionnaire, the majority of believers interviewed, and all churches, espouse monogamy as a Christian way of life. This is based on the fact that the Bible allows a man to marry only one wife (Gen 1) and because this prevents the possibility of quarrelling between wives, which may well be a feature of a polygamous marriage; also from a practical point of view, one wife is financially less difficult to maintain.

Some examples from sermons on the position of the five churches regarding the sacredness and indissolubility of marriage are now provided. The two are linked uncompromisingly to monogamy.

- "When you look at polygamy, you must not only look at it from one side. You must ask yourself what will happen if the women will marry more than one husband. Christianity believes in monogamy. This is not a law of the church but this is from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. You cannot change this because this is not from the church."
- "Matthew 19:1-6: Monogamy is central to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In all things we have to hold unto the truth. Christ said one wife and one husband and He knew why He did that. Christ knew that within a family of one wife and one husband divine love can be developed."
- "We do not debate about monogamy. This is central to Christianity. We as Christians have to follow the way of Jesus Christ."

5.2 PROPHECY

Prophecy plays a central role in all of the churches under study. In the pages that follow, an attempt will be made to demonstrate how prophecy and healing appear to be rooted in African tradition, where the doctor is both a healer and a man or woman endowed with special insight and extraordinary perceptive powers.

For the African mind, Christian prophecy and healing can be best understood against the background of the divinatory practices of *dingakaa*, seers or diviners in African traditional religion. A clear distinction, however, is made between good and bad doctors. A good *ngaka* is one committed to the preservation of life and improving the health situation of the patients, while a bad *ngaka* is one linked to witchcraft and the destruction of human life. Good doctors are a category of men and women endowed with powers of unusual insight into the affairs of humanity; these powers are *not only* the power to discern witchcraft as is commonly assumed, but also the power to reveal the unknown, either in the present or in the future. But this does not in any way detract from the firm belief of African Initiated Churches regarding the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the eschatological community to which they belong and which they treasure.

When dealing with African Independency, it is important to remember that the divide between healing and prophecy is very thin indeed. One may even ask whether there indeed is such a divide. Diagnostic prophecy is an integral part of most Zionist and Apostolic healing activities that this author has observed. Below follows a description of a typical form of prophecy in an African traditional setting, not connected with any one of the churches. In this case, the healer or prophetess is only a nominal Christian in one of the mainline churches. She maintains that her mission or calling is a direct mandate from the ancestors and she possesses extraordinary insight into the personalities and lives of the people who go to her. She has, on occasion even told clients of the dreams they have had even before they came to see her. Her only article of "divination" is a glass of water fetched by the client personally from the tap. From this point onwards, in the seclusion of her consulting room, she addresses the ancestors and asks them to reveal to her *masaitsiweng* - the hidden truths or mysteries - so that she can help the client or the patient as directed by the ancestors she sees in the water. According to this prophetess, the ancestors even show her what herbs or roots to use, where to locate these and how to go about healing or helping a particular person. She

actually sees the riverbed, mountain, valley or plain where she is supposed to go and dig (Prophetess Sekati, 1990).

During fieldwork the first question posed on the subject to correspondents was: "What is prophecy?" Some 32, 5% of the total sample held that prophecy is the ability to foretell the future and answers given and shown in the table indicate that the majority of adherents of the five churches regard prophecy as part of life. Finally, adherents of these churches believe that all Christians may be used to deliver a prophecy - not just priests and the spiritually gifted.

The surprise came in the answers given by elderly people; those who did not hold a position of authority in the church. Many (40%), understood prophecy as being the ability to foretell the future, while those holding positions in the various churches represented only 10%.

The interesting parallel lies in the distribution of this particular answer among the churches. STG is very strong on prophecy with 12, 5%, followed by GCZ with 5%, FF and STP with 5% each, and finally BCCCZ with 2, 5%.

That prophecy is given the greatest prominence among STG Christians is not surprising. A prophecy given to the bishop of this church is said to have probably saved a little girl from a *muti* killing. According to reports, the little girl had already been snatched and was going to be ritually slaughtered when the bishop was shown in a vision what was about to happen. Men were dispatched to the locality and the little girl's life was saved. As was to be expected, this enhanced the members' perception of their bishop as someone endowed with special gifts and powers to lead the church.

Apart from an ability to predict the future, prophecy also includes the notion of being able to "proclaim" or "tell" things occurring in the present, as will be seen below.

In BCCCZ, prophecy is considered part and parcel of worship. There is a special time during the service for prophecy. If God reveals a message to any one of the congregation while the singing, clapping and dancing are in progress, it is incumbent on the person receiving the revelation to declare the prophecy, even if this "interrupts" the worship service.

Answers to question 41 indicate that 30% of respondents believe that prophecy has always featured in the lives of African people. An example would be a practice such as *go dupa*, in which people were given the power to "smell out" or find out secrets in the affairs of the community, and use this knowledge either for good or ill.

Quite clearly, then, these churches hold prophecy in high esteem, although their conception of what prophecy actually is may be somewhat hazy. Indeed, prophecy seems to be such a powerful force that one wonders how far it stretches back in African history. As said elsewhere, African Initiated Churches have retained and incorporated a lot of African tradition and customs into their liturgy, rituals, ceremonies and doctrine.

Contrary to popular belief, prophecy can heal without diagnosing the malady in question. Although diagnostic prophecy is an integral part of all Zionist and apostolic healing, there are cases where healing or prophecy occurs without a concomitant diagnosis. For example, a person may be given a prophecy about his/her future well-being without the complexities of his or her present maladies being referred to at all. Accepting such a prophecy simply means accepting the all-pervasive power of the Holy Spirit to heal people.

Prophecy has the power of the Holy Spirit to heal and is thus a gift of God. The role of prophecy in revealing to the believer his or her real problems and source of suffering helps to establish peace and tranquillity in these churches.

The majority of the respondents maintain that prophecy was present in African traditional religion and some respondents believe that it should be practised in all churches. Some 60% of the respondents believe that prophecy is still alive in African society, particularly among traditionalists.

Practically all respondents (60%) believe that prophecy is the ability to "see inside" someone. A good number of people simply and categorically stated that "prophecy is the Holy Spirit". Remarkably, however, most of these churches' constitutions are silent on the subject of prophecy. This author has been asked to help in the drawing up of some constitutions of some AICs while in Botswana. In helping the churches, he enlisted university law colleagues to help with the wording. What can be attested to is that the bare minimum requirements were expected to be placed in black and white pertaining to the running of any particular church and not matters of a spiritual nature, which could not be dealt with by the requirements of the law. As mentioned under 2.6.1, Home Affairs never interferes with the churches' ministry of healing, for example, but always ensures that no harmful substances are used. As explained in detail with examples previously, the idea is to regulate both the safety of the members and the rights of other citizens.

The only church that mentions prophecy explicitly in its constitution is BCCCZ. For example, only prophets may authorise a healer to perform healing ceremonies and rites. These prophets are the official men and women who have the power of *go bona* - to see through - and hold certificates issued by the church to that effect. The constitution specifically denounces anyone who sets himself up as prophet without the official sanction of the church (art 16). The prophets are also the only ones who may dwell in *diagelo* to heal pilgrims of their sicknesses. In BCCCZ, the prophet is elected by the conference because of his or her ability to diagnose - to see - diseases via the gift of prophecy and he or she in turn appoints one prophet in each branch (art 16). Special periodical meetings for prophets at which the elected prophet presides are arranged through the secretariat of the church during which new directives may be given to the assistant prophets (art 16).

It is important to note that prophecy is not considered apart from the work of the Holy Spirit and healing; the two are an integral part of the concept of prophecy. By its very nature, prophecy is considered to be a "seeing inside" someone, as well as the ability to see into the future. There is no limit to prophecy. All those who believe and have faith can utilise the gift of the Holy Spirit and achieve what God expects of them.

As previously indicated, prophecy as practised in African traditional religion is of uncertain origin. However, one thing is certain: prophecy is associated with what in Setswana is called *bodupe*, namely the ability to smell out whatever is good or harmful. Today, prophecy exists in Africa in so far as it is practised among the African Initiated Churches. One can, therefore, safely conclude that prophecy as practised in the five churches may have had its origins in *bodupe*, but that through their faith, prophecy becomes a special gift ordained by the Holy Spirit, a gift of seeing and discernment as referred to in the Bible. The legacy of prophecy now resides with these churches.

5.3 HOLINESS AND THE WORD OF GOD

Question 84 of the questionnaire was about holiness. African Initiated Churches have built strongly on this concept, which derives primarily from the Old Testament: "Be holy, for I, Yahweh your God, am holy" (Leviticus 19:2b).

The concept of holiness has always existed among African people. Every man, woman and child was expected to lead a good life. Leading a good life was enshrined in the customs, traditions and practices of all African communities. A few quotations will illustrate this point.

The first statement is from Mbiti (1982).

“As in all societies of the world, social order and peace are recognised by African people as essentials and sacred. Where the sense of corporate life is so deep, it is inevitable that the solidarity of the community must be maintained, otherwise there is disintegration and destruction. This order is conceived primarily in terms of kinship relationship, which simultaneously produces many situations of tensions, since everybody is related to everybody else and deepens the sense of damage caused by the strain of such tension. If a person steals a sheep, personal relations are at once involved because the sheep belongs to a member of the corporate body, perhaps to someone who is a father, or brother, or sister, or cousin to the thief. As such it is an offence against the community, and its consequence affects not only the thief but also the whole body of his relatives. There exist, therefore, many laws, customs, set forms of behaviour regulations, rules, observances and taboos, constituting the moral code and ethics of a given community or society. Some of these are held sacred, and are believed to have been instituted by God or national leaders. They originate in the Zamani where the forefathers are. This gives sanctity to the customs and regulations of the community. Any breach of this code of behaviour is considered evil, wrong, or bad, for it is an injury or destruction to the accepted social order and peace. It must be punished by the corporate community of both the living and the departed, and God may also inflict punishment and bring about justice” (Mbiti, 1982:205).

The second quotation from African writers on holiness:

“Conscience is denoted as “the witness of the heart” (*eriokan*). The man who tells a lie is reminded that this heart is witnessing against him. A prick of the conscience is spoken of as a prick of the heart. In the casting of lots, ordeal ceremonies or oath-taking, no one dares to take the diviner's portion whose heart does not assure him that he is in the right; he must be one who can stand face to face with his heart. Other moral references to the heart

which may be quoted in brief are the following: a black heart used to stand for wickedness, a white heart for peacefulness, a clean heart is of one who owes no grudges, a hard heart is self-willed, a soft heart is amenable to reproof and correction, a high heart is ambitious, a light heart carries no burden of animosity" (Dickson & Ellingworth, 19:128).

From the above quotations we see that holiness has to do with a clear and peaceful conscience and a heart that carries no grudge.

What follows below is a summary of what the five churches believe based on the answers to the questionnaire.

Thus, the role of the church in helping its members to attain holiness is regarded as very important. The church prohibits certain activities and reminds its members that they have a duty to follow certain rules and regulations. Holiness is also achieved through listening to sermons and praying, and through accepting the teaching of the Word of God.

From the responses to the questionnaire, it is clear that the adherents of the five churches value every good act or action as being a sign that the believer is treading the way of holiness. It is in fulfilling the daily duties of life that believers become good people and enter into friendship with God. It is against this background that the injunctions of the constitutions of the five churches should be understood.

The Word of God teaches people about God and Jesus, and helps people to follow the right course. It also helps people to have a better perception of this world. The Word of God also helps to spread the kingdom of God, helps people to understand the Bible and encourages prayer. The church helps to unite the believers by preaching the same idea or message to all the church members and stressing the importance of unity, which is achieved through obedience and listening to God's Word.

The Word of God has to be preached so that people may hear it and repent in order to attain eternal life. As far as this life is concerned, preaching the Word of God minimises crime and violence and helps to establish a peaceful and orderly society. All believers want to see their church growing so that other people may have access to the Word of God and repent.

Young children should be given religious instruction so that, as future leaders, they may be aware of the work of the church, lead holy lives, be familiar with the Word of God, learn about religion, be able to differentiate between good and bad and finally because they are as entitled to know since God does not discriminate. Also, children under religious instruction are better behaved than those who receive no such instruction. Children in the church should, however, be placed under religious instruction only if they themselves agree to it. This view came from some youth interviewees and would seem to indicate a certain degree of the changing times or what was popularly known then as “permissiveness”.

Believers help the church to grow through carrying out general church duties and by preaching in order to spread the Word of God. Donating money and candles to the church, sweeping, decorating and plastering - *go dila* - the church building, buying presents to be used during church gatherings and sewing and mending church garments and uniforms are all regarded as acts of holiness. Total honesty, reliability and allegiance to one's particular church are regarded as among the highest of virtues, for they help the church to grow.

There is a definite call for holiness in the constitutions of the churches under study. Believers are given the means necessary for making them better and holier Christians and a considerable number of do's and don'ts guide them on the way to sanctity and salvation.

The faithful are schooled in matters of doctrine and discipline, thereby helping them to adhere strictly to the tenets of the church (See art. 2 (g), BCCCZ; arts 2-6, GCZ. art (3) STG; art (10), STG).

Everything necessary for the welfare of the church should be performed by all believers wherever the opportunity lends itself.

Fellowship is cultivated seriously through sharing the Gospel and Christian faith is disseminated through good works, while all works of charity have to be supported as much as possible (art. FF., art 2(n), BCCCZ, art (9) (iv), GCZ). Those in authority, and particularly the government of the day, have to be obeyed without fail (art. (i), FF.; art 13, BCCCZ, art 8, GCZ, Annexure A, Church Rule; 4, STG

The executive of each church manifests its faithfulness and loyalty by observing all the regulations laid down in the constitution (see for example, art 7, FF. art. 5, BCCCZ. arts 10, and 13, GCZ; art 6. STP; art 5-9, STG).

Both deposit of faith handed down by tradition and the teachings of the church have to be guarded jealously (art 2, GCZ.).

Tangible evidence of mercy is expected of all members, namely, "to assist the old, the sick, the orphaned and the disabled" (art. 3 cc) STG).

The precepts of the five churches, as spelt out in their constitutions, are described below.

It is through such good works, the living deeds, that the members of the five churches are enabled to become good persons, people who share in the holiness of the children of God.

5.3.1 Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion

No members holding office shall resign without following the proper procedure (art. 13(i); drug abuse, alcohol and smoking tobacco are all forbidden (art 13 (x)) no male prophet may pray for or attend to a sick female person without the presence of a third party (art 16).

5.3.2 Forward in Faith

No business transaction may take place except through the quorum of a General Assembly (art 15 (a)).

5.3.3 Galatia Church in Zion

No preacher, minister, or deacon may hold a service or work anywhere unless permission of the Executive Committee has been granted beforehand; no minister holding church office may change districts or visit an area, or hold services, without the written permission of the executive or the board of trustees (art 19).

5.3.4 St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana

The don'ts of this church are given verbatim with the number of the relevant article.

- (5) No money should be paid to any member upon performing services of baptism, prayer and healing.
- (6) No women member shall go bare-headed in public.
- (7) All members are prohibited from eating cloven-hoofed animals.
- (8) All members are prohibited to drink beer.
- (9) All members are prohibited to smoke.
- (10) Each member shall contribute annually the sum of 15 thebe to the church funds.

By fulfilling the good works and ordinances listed in the constitutions, members of the five churches believe that they do attain holiness in life. Notably among these are the preaching of the Word, prayer and baptism. Because these lead to an inner repentance and cleansing, this brings them closer to God.

5.3.5 St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church

No member shall engage in public church activities without the knowledge and consent of the Diocese Executive Committee (art 6).

In all these, churches, preaching the Gospel are directed to the conversion of unbelievers. The proclaiming of the Gospel is also done to help people repent and inform them about the Word of God. There was a feeling however, that preaching the Gospel to convert people was unnecessary, as there was only one church of Jesus Christ and so the Gospel should be preached because Jesus saved the world. This is the ideal position held by the five churches, although in practice, there is a notable drive to gain more converts from whatever fold to swell the numbers.

As stated previously, preaching the Word of God is regarded as extremely important by all the five churches. In this regard, African Initiated Churches are closer to Reformed Theology than to any other "mainline" church. Indeed, proclaiming the Gospel is considered the most important calling of the church. This view is summed up particularly well in the constitution of GCZ: "The church receives the word which is contained in the Scripture of the Old and New Testament as its supreme rule of faith and life and espouses the fundamental precepts and teachings in the Holy Bible" (article 2).

5.4 THE CHURCH'S FAITH

The church receives the Word, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as its supreme rule of faith and life and the fundamental precepts and teaching in the "Holy Bible" (GCZ, art. (2)).

The opening sentence of the constitutional aims and objectives of BCCCZ contains the phrase "To preach the Gospel of the Almighty God" (Art. 2(a)), while STG opens its "objectives of the church" with the statement: "To spread the teaching of Jesus Christ throughout the world" (art 3(a)). STP emphasises the importance of the proclaiming of the Word of God by the meticulous way it details the preaching responsibilities assigned to ministers, evangelists and deacons (arts 3-5).

By and large, though, the five churches accept unequivocally the authority of the Bible as their rule of faith and guide in life and do not compromise their faith in God. This is evidenced in their preaching during the Sunday sermons, examples of which we have seen in chapters 3 and 4.

5.4.1 Children in the church

(See Appendix IV, questions 90-91).

In African society, children are referred to as *Khumo ya setshaba* (the wealth of the nation). They enjoy a privileged position in the community and, consequently it is the duty for every adult not only to reprimand a child when he or she is doing wrong, but also to protect and help the child under all circumstances. Here the researcher is referring to the expectations of the five churches that all children have to be parented and looked after as is the custom in African culture. With regard to religious instruction, this rests with each church as and when appropriate.

In all the five churches under study, children receive special treatment. They are guarded jealously by elders in their "spiritual" life, who ensure that "their" children

receive all the necessary religious instruction and are blessed as prescribed by the church. It was against this background therefore, that the next issue was raised.

The blessing of children in church is considered essential in order to help them love God, lead holy lives, and become inculcated with a love of their church. The blessing of children is regarded as recognition of God's blessings. Furthermore, it is regarded as totally justified because the Bible states that they have no sin. The youth in particular see blessing as necessary in enabling children to lead holy lives later on, and even to prevent them from turning to crime and delinquency.

All the five churches do not believe in infant baptism and regard being baptised as an act of faith by adults. The children are merely blessed.

The constitutions of the churches under study are very specific as far as children are concerned. Children are regarded as the church's most prized possession; it is they who ensure the continued existence, and continuity of the church.

As the description of church services referred to in Chapter 3 shows, children receive special attention and care throughout their childhood and teenage years. GCZ states that the duty of the Bishop includes "to dedicate children" to God (art.24). Schools are supposed to be established "for purpose of the religious instructions of the young and for the purpose of general education" (art. 9(iv)). In BCCCZ the church specifically mentions that it is the duty of the church "to consecrate children" (art. 2c).

5.4.2 Ancestors

Ancestors play a pivotal role in African life and this is an area that is almost non-negotiable.

Question 101 touched on a very sensitive issue and one that is not easily discussed openly or for long periods of time. This is the issue of *go tlhabela badimo* - to offer ancestral sacrifice. It literally means to slaughter an animal for food. *Go tlhabela* means to slaughter for, in so and so's name, just like a parent "slaughtering for" a child's party.

Go tlhabela badimo literally means "making sacrifices in honour of ancestors". These sacrifices may be slaughtering a sheep, a goat, a cow or even a fowl. It is normally the slaughter of a culturally edible, domesticated beast. The blood is poured into the ground as "petition food" to the ancestors, either in memory of them, to thank them or in order to request some favour. The ancestors are regarded as the intermediaries whose help is sometimes sought in the hope that their intercession with the Great or Mighty God may help to obtain assistance for those who dwell on earth.

There is a very deep belief in ancestors as the living dead in Africa. The living dead are the spirits that normally matter most on the family level. They are considered to be still part of their families. They are believed to live close to their homes where they lived when they were human beings (Mbiti, 1975:72). In effect this means that those departed do not desert those who live in the world but become instead their guardians and protectors through crossing the threshold of death. Their health is catered for, their fortunes guarded and they are guided in life (Sundkler, 1951:21). This is a very common position of the role of ancestors throughout all the tribes of Southern Africa. They are the *badimo* - the ancestors - the ones who take care of the community. They are not divorced from the community. In fact, "they like company" and are considered to rejoice at rituals aimed at honouring them (Setiloane, 1976:66).

As mentioned earlier, most of the five churches hold a tacit view of the ancestors and only come out when questioned in depth face to face. Only GCZ comes out clearly and unequivocally regarding the role and acceptance of ancestors.

5.4.3 *Botho/ubuntu*

The principle of *ubuntu/botho* is given a lot of prominence in South Africa today. It is important, however, to realise that this philosophy has always formed the background of African living. The pages of the thesis have highlighted this philosophy very strongly. Examples from excerpts of the sermons of the five churches make this abundantly clear.

- "Jesus Christ spoke to the disciples at the time they were asking concerning money. He said to them, '...give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God'". This simply means that Christians ought to carry out both their spiritual and national or civic duties as expected by the state. In so doing they are fulfilling their duty of having *ubuntu/botho* in their dealings in life. They are thus carrying out both their spiritual and civic duties, a responsibility expected of a good Christian."

According to the Lord's injunction about love, the five churches believe that *ubuntu/botho* is achieved through that same love advocated by Jesus Christ - loving one another. Love is the basis of all. Some excerpts from sermons follow:

- "God wants us to have love. There is the Love of God that is the power in our heart (Rom 5). He came and died on the Cross. He did everything because of love. He carried the Cross because of love."
- "If we wear Church uniform without love, it means nothing. Everyone that wears the Church uniform must have love. God says that we must love one another as we love ourselves. We need to search ourselves: do we look like Christians on the outside, and inside there is no love?"

- "We need to be concerned with the blind, the cripple and the sick. They need us to come and help them by the Love of God."
- "The story of the crippled man who could not enter the water when the water was stirred, speaks to us. Today we are the ones that are sick. Jesus Christ is the one who can take us out of the troubles that we have."

"The Great Commission. The disciples are sent to go and preach the Gospel. In John 10 Jesus Christ says that He is the Good Shepherd. He sent them to be shepherds as He was the Shepherd. The disciples of Jesus Christ should shepherd His people on earth. The Church should carry out the Commission of Jesus Christ. This is done through love. Jesus Christ said, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' The primary role of the Church is to love. The Church is to love. It must be grounded and rooted in love."

- "The person must be looked at in his totality. The material conditions of the person cannot be separated from the person."
- "We are not of ourselves. We belong to God. As we go forth on the earth, we must not forget that we belong to God. He will be directing us while we are here on earth."

Among all the five churches the most distinguishing hallmark is the spirit of sharing and co-operation among the members. Whenever there is a family feast, like marriage or baptism, everybody contributes their resources (such as *dikika* and *metshé* – hewn stems of huge trees to beat maize into samp and the big thrashing sticks, grain, grinding stones, knives, implements), time and money to make the day a success, with plenty to eat during the festivities after worship.

5.4.4 Sin and forgiveness

For purposes of analysis in this chapter, sin and forgiveness are taken together, as the two are closely tied together, especially when examining the hymnologies of the five churches.

Questions 128 to 137 dealt with sin and witchcraft. The former implies any act that is considered bad or evil. Witchcraft is considered *the* sin in African traditional religion. This is so because in African culture, society is corporate and anything that militates against the equilibrium of the tribe or nation is considered particularly heinous.

The notion of sin or wrongdoing has always been present in African society. From days of old the following category of persons was rooted out of the community: rapists, thieves, murderers and witches, whether male or female. These people were considered to be dangerous in the community and were usually stoned to death once isolated. In this way, the equilibrium of the family, community and tribe remained stable. Deliberate wrongdoers - as compared to the insane, who are not held responsible for their actions - were considered a curse in society and had therefore to be rooted out. Such people were considered to be evil because they assailed the equilibrium of the community by destroying life in one way or another. Acts that were detrimental to the wellbeing of an individual or society were particularly bad. In this connection murder and witchcraft took the lead. African traditional religion holds firmly that evildoers, or sinners in Christianity, are cut off from the land of the living both in this life and in the land of the ancestors, paradise in Christianity and world religions. This is so because sin is evil and the perpetrator cuts himself or herself off from the community of the living. Once they die these people become wandering spirits without rest, spirits whose business is to wreak havoc, revenge and vengeance on society by harassing people on earth. Quite clearly, the concept of wrongdoing, evil or sin was always known in Africa. In fact, sin was always punished one way or another. In fact, while other categories of sins could be commuted by the king into another form of severe punishment, witchcraft always elicited the highest retribution, death.

Cases from African traditional religion, cases which will help to bring out the notion of sin or evildoing and witchcraft very strongly, now follow.

5.4.4.1 Case study: Wrongdoing or sin

The true story is told by very old people of a middle-aged man who was an expert in procuring abortions. He went down the length and breadth of Southern Africa with a team of women who were his aides in the matter. After a very long time of successful abortions, the women assistants died. Then it was the turn of the man to be visited with sickness. He lay very ill at home in the then Northern Transvaal. He was so seriously ill that everybody had given up hope on him. It was around this time that he fell into a kind of "spiritual coma" and had a vision. He dreamed that he was leaving his earthly habitat and was crossing over to the land of the forefathers and foremothers. (The term *badimo* in Setswana encompasses both men and women.) On his way he had to pass through a very green valley through which flowed a very long river with plenty of willow trees. As he went along he met the fossilised figure of a woman, all covered in algae dripping all over her motionless, naked body. The eyes just stared at nothing and they were very blank, without any sign of life. The slimy algae had a sense of awe about it, which was frightening as it covered the woman in tentacles, which resembled huge clutching claws or very ugly fingers. They seemed to have choked her because of the algae protruding from her mouth and dripping to the ground. The man took fright and hurried on, only to be met by another woman in the same position and predicament. He met one more such figure until he had seen all the four women he had worked with in procuring abortions. In a flash he recognised that they had been denied entry into the land of the ancestors. The man screamed and jumped from his sick-mat. Sitting and dripping wet he came out of his coma and started narrating his startling

experience. This marked the turning point in the man's life. He was completely cured almost overnight and felt an inner, deep compulsion to go out and proclaim his vision to all the people among whom he had procured abortions. In each village he narrated his story and emphatically stated that it was wrong to destroy unborn babies. This he did as a sign of remorse and repentance as he had been shown, he believed, by the ancestors (Reminiscences of an 84 year-old unrelated woman in the village of Makapaanstad, north of Pretoria).

5.4.4.2 Case study: witchcraft

There are very few issues that bother the African mind as much as witchcraft. In African traditional religion, witchcraft is the most despicable crime and wrongdoing. It is an evil deed for which the perpetrator pays dearly with his or her life and property. Even today, in spite of the different laws that protect witches as persons, penalties imposed on perceived culprits can be very severe. A typical case study of witchcraft and the community's response to it is described next.

About thirty-eight years ago, in a very big Tswana village of about 50,000 people, 50 km north of Pretoria, the rains had ceased to fall. The fields were dry and the sun scorched the parched earth relentlessly. Beasts were dying out in the grazing lands as water was very scarce to come by. The drought was very severe. Prayers were offered for rain to the ancestors and God in procession regularly through the village, starting from the *kgotla* at the king's kraal to a *sefikantswe*, a human-made holy mound about two kilometres away and back to the *kgotla*. Around this time, a story started to go round. A woman, who was a fairly recent arrival in the village, was rumoured to possess miniature bearded men and every morning she used to send her two young daughters, both under fourteen, to go to some plain at an open space of the village to give the creatures food. This consisted of slices of white bread. The first thing the children did when they got to the plain where holes were leading deep into the earth was to sing a special song and clap. Sure enough, the creatures would surface every time for their meal. The song that the children sang

was a repeated chorus in Setswana, which went *Tshuba lebone, Sesi. Tshuba lebone, Sesi* - "Light the lamp, Sister. Light the lamp". Soon, other children - playmates of the two girls - got in on the act and started chanting and clapping too. They were rewarded with a firsthand vision of the creatures. Soon word got around through the whole village and more children saw this strange phenomenon. Sometimes adults took a chance but whenever an adult or adults were around, the creatures stayed in their tunnels. Eventually, the matter was reported officially and the *kgotla* organised for the men of the village to stage a surprise night raid as a body. They went to the plain, saw the holes and started digging, to no avail. The woman was arrested by the tribal police with all her paraphernalia but remained mute to the testimony proffered against her. She was duly found guilty and the elders decided once and for all to be rid of her. She was partly blamed for the drought in the village, was bundled onto a truck with all her possessions and dumped outside, away from the village, and told never to set foot there again (Evidence collected by researcher in the said village and from affected children in the neighbourhood, late 1970s).

The verdict was that she was a witch alright and that she had to be removed from the confines of the tribe. What saved her from certain death was that the tribal authority did not have any right to put anybody to death under the then South African Native Law. All cases carrying a possible sentence of capital punishment had to be referred to Pretoria, and the tribe, with many educated persons and graduates among them, including the then King Thipe Makapan, must have realised that they had no material evidence in their hands to convict successfully, save the testimony of a few frightened, guilt-ridden little girls who found it very difficult in the presence of adults to narrate freely what they had witnessed. The closest most severe punishment was to ban the woman and her family for life from the village of Kwa Moseitlha, Makapanstad, to protect the tribe.

African society has ample provisions for forgiving an offender. The ability to pardon a wrong or deep hurt is considered magnanimous on the part of one who forgives.

That is why the word *go itshwarela* (to forgive; Nguni - *ukuthethelela/ukuxolela*) is so commonly known and used. It is the equivalent of "sorry" in English and "pardon" in French. A person may stand in need of forgiveness when his cattle have strayed into a neighbour's field, even when he or she has committed adultery with his wife or her husband. However, African traditional society imposes a little "punishment" based on equity. For example, a person whose cattle have strayed into a neighbour's field may have to compensate them by giving them something in kind, whether grain or milk, for example. Sometimes, the equity payment is given to the king, for example, in the case of young men who fought with dangerous weapons and almost killed each other; their guardians may have to give a cow or two to the king. In this instance, the implication is that the parents should have taken steps to avoid the confrontation. Below are two cases of forgiveness in African traditional religion.

According to African traditional religion, if a person committed a crime and was due for punishment, usually very severe punishment at the *kgotla*, there was one other option to avoid the disaster. If one ran and succeeded in reaching the kraal of the king before being grabbed by the *kgotla* police - he or she became immune and the forgiveness was automatic. It is much like the cities of refuge in the Old Testament, particularly refuge at the temple altar.

Just like the "goat of sin" in Israel, Africa has its own version in the form of a "beast of reconciliation". When a person has committed some evil against his or her neighbour, such as adultery with his wife or her husband or destruction of his or her property he or she would be fined heavily in terms of cattle. Over and above this if he or she was genuinely sorry he or she would be expected to slaughter a beast at which the offended party would also be invited specially so that they might share a meal together and be reconciled. Sometimes the "beer of reconciliation" replaced the beast.

The following is a personal recollection of the author when he was a child:

"When I was a small boy of about twelve years old, I witnessed an unusually strange incident in the then old location of Willem Klopperville, Potchefstroom, in the then Transvaal. My father, who was a Motswana, had a very close friend, a Xhosa man. A third man, also a Xhosa, quarrelled seriously with my father and a fight developed. The third man was younger than my father, the same age group as my father's friend. Since my father was older his friend felt insulted on his behalf, intervened and challenged the third man to a stick fight. At this point it started to rain and all the neighbours watched from their windows as the two men were battling it out for a long time with sticks. It was like watching the movies. Suddenly, my father's friend slammed one of his sticks on the opponent's left thumb and the latter promptly dropped both sticks. He ran away some fifty metres and shouted aloud for peace, acknowledging defeat. My father's friend obliged; the fight was over. The rain had stopped now and the third man said aloud: 'Let us show the people of the location how we as Xhosas make peace after a fight'. He promptly bought a big tin of African home-brewed beer and the next thing the two men, my father included, were both sharing and drinking from the same tin laughing, joking and talking as though they had never fought. They called the beer 'the beer of peace.'"

This short story is an attempt to indicate what the spirit of forgiveness in the five churches would really mean, in that when someone has indeed repented, the past is forgotten and buried, relationships are patched up again and life continues in love like before. That is the kind of a forgiving God they believe in. The example above indicates the deep conception of forgiveness in African society. The ability to run to the king's kraal and thereby become immune resembles exactly the role of an embassy or consulate during present times. Just like no authority had the right or power to wrench the fugitive away from the king, so also in modern day embassies and consulates. This serves to prove that rulers of Africa were not just blood-thirsty vampires as depicted on screen and in some books but rather that as kings it was

their duty to restore peace and equilibrium among their subjects through forgiveness.

As we are about to find out when we read further down, the main difference between the five churches and African traditional religion is that sin is directly opposed to God and that repentance is required in life to have a healthy nation. Secondly, at least from the perspective of the leadership and the majority of the adults of the five churches, forgiveness has no limit and a follower of Jesus Christ has to forgive all the time.

Perhaps the stories cited above under African traditional religion give us a good indication of why the five churches want their members to lead clean God-oriented lives so that they should avoid bad luck or disasters such as befell the abortionists and the woman witch.

5.4.5 The position of the five churches

However, in the five churches the notion of sin is understood according to the Bible in so far as it militates against the commandments of God first and foremost. Their whole drive is repentance according to the will of God as preached by Jesus Christ. Whatever notions they might have at the back of their minds the five churches conceive of sin as a transgression against God. The rest flows from there: equilibrium in the society, togetherness in mutual respect and oneness of the nation.

5.4.5.1 Concepts of sin and forgiveness

A summary on the concepts of sin and forgiveness in the five churches follows that highlights of some of the detailed answers in response to the questionnaire.

According to the members of the five churches, sin is perceived as something wrong or bad deeds, something against the wish of God. A person sins by doing

something wrong and by doing anything that is against the Ten Commandments. Evil deeds are stated as including killing, stealing and telling lies. The believers maintain that the teachings of the church demand that both adults and children should equally refrain from sin.

Killing, even in self-defence, is considered by some to be a sin because no one should kill. However, others believe that it is one case where killing is permissible. Many remain undecided.

Sin can be avoided by abstaining from unacceptable behaviour such as drinking of alcohol, bad habits, and bad company. A great help is to pray to God, and following in Jesus' footsteps. The members believe that by observing all these precepts they remain close to God.

Regarding sin, an important feature in these five African Initiated Churches is that the people are all called to confess their sinfulness before God and the congregation in prayer thereby asking for pardon and cleansing from the stain of sin. Church leaders always pray for this cleansing of the person. That is why in BCCCZ the ministers, evangelists and church elders always kneel in silence and pray before going to the chapel or house of prayer.

In GCZ an important feature is that during the prayer dance the Bishops, Ministers and elders, along with the congregation, from time to time dance holding their right jaws in the palm of their right hands. This tiny detail struck the researcher each time the congregation danced, especially the bishop and priests. At first he thought that the bishop was suffering from toothache but he (the researcher) became puzzled when all the priests followed suit, holding their jaws in the palms of their right hands. On enquiring he was told that this was a sign that the Christians were sorry for all their sins, faults and transgressions in life. This is a special African ritual incorporated into the service. Indeed, holding one's jaw is a sign of bereavement in African traditional religion and one is therefore never allowed to hold one's jaw in that way except during death or a very serious catastrophe. Perhaps the researcher

had not been very wrong in his initial reaction after all, because the toothache of sin is about the worst malady that can befall a person who believes.

In the constitutions, sin is dealt with as transgressions that arise out of human frailty but that are punishable nonetheless by the church. Any grave misdemeanour that is considered to bring disgrace and shame on the church, is punishable under the constitutions and may even lead to suspension and expulsion (4 STP, art 12; GCZ, art. 10(b), art 21, art 6, art. 10 (a) (b) (c) (d); FF, art 7 (c); BCCCZ, art 2 (g), 13 (iii), (v), (vi), (x).

However, suspensions and expulsions are not applied loosely. There are elaborate steps geared towards protecting the individual from harsh application of the law or rules of the church. For example, in GCZ art 21: "Any member of the confirmed church who has disobeyed the constitutions of the church shall be dealt with by the District Minister within whose jurisdiction control he falls, which minister shall report the punishment he intends imposing to his Bishops, who shall approve or disapprove of such punishment before its imposition."

Quite clearly then, the element of forgiveness underlines any suspension or expulsion in the five churches. Even the hierarchy members of the churches are governed by the same rules of suspension and expulsion. For example, the Constitution of STG clearly states that "all are subject to disciplinary action, including the Archbishop himself upon breaking the rule" (Annexure A (2)).

A believer gives himself totally and prays to God to forgive and forget his or her sins and anything that might be wrong. One should practise forgiving others whenever one prays for forgiveness. Jesus is the main person to forgive sin.

Forgiveness is regarded as important and believers are urged to forgive in order to maintain good relations. We all have to pray for it. Any person who commits sin can be forgiven and should hope for forgiveness from God. When the wrong-doer asks

for forgiveness he or she should be forgiven and be shown his or her mistakes and told "I forgive you". Others believe it depends on circumstances. Elders prefer unconditional and unrestricted pardon and forgiveness while the youth qualify it. For the elders, forgiving a person seventy seven times seven times means being patient and forgiving others as many times as possible. The youth see it differently. This can be gathered from some of the responses in the sample. For example, take a few of the responses of the youth from all five churches regarding the issue of forgiveness. The answers are given verbatim as recorded in the answer sheets during fieldwork:

One is forgiven if the action had not been deliberate; forgiveness should be carried out if the sinner sees and asks forgiveness for his sins; if you believe in Christ you will be forgiven; we should forgive others at least three times; one should tell his sins for forgiveness; church does not forgive a person; sin is forgiven through prayer (Responses to Questionnaire).

On the question of whether witches can be forgiven, the youth, again verbatim, had the following to say:

No; no, they will be sent to hell; maybe they can be forgiven if they pray; they cannot be forgiven, they will be sent to hell; yes, if they repent and go back to God; yes, some of them; yes, if they receive Jesus Christ; yes, if they repent (Responses to Questionnaire).

God always forgives when one asks for forgiveness. However there is a distinction made between "sinning" and "sinning deliberately". In the latter case God withdraws forgiveness until true repentance.

All the churches teach that both adults and children should equally refrain from sin. In other words, it does not matter whether one is old or young, the law of God applies and his commandments have to be kept.

This chapter is closed with a few excerpts from the sermons of the five churches regarding holiness and how this can be achieved. Interspersed with these are some excerpts from the selected hymns of the sample on the same topic of holiness, sin, renewal and forgiveness.

- "God is the one that knows a Christian. Through the Revelation of the Holy Spirit, I know that my sins are forgiven. I was going to go to Hell for my sins if God had not saved me. I have left all the pleasurable things of this world and followed God. When I look back, I realise that I was in great danger."
- "You must not fear anything because God is with you. God is always looking after you at all times. You must call upon Him when fear comes upon you. Do not fear anyone of this world, even when they try to give you poison, do not fear because God is with you."
- "Christians always think that God has forsaken them when they face challenges. They do not have faith in God. They even decide to go back to sin because they are afraid of facing challenges."

Hymn 29 sings the praises of the death of Jesus who was burdened and carried the transgressions of the people who deserved punishment (Stanza 1) and of how Jesus, who is innocent, was crucified for the people who sinned (Stanza 2). It is through the supreme sacrifice of Jesus (Stanza 4) that sinners were redeemed by the Son of God and forgiveness achieved for the people who have transgressed (Stanzas 2 and 3). The Lamb of God was slain and His blood washes clean all of humanity because through His wonderful love He died for the sins of the world (Hymn 31, stanzas 3 and 4). These same sentiments are echoed in Hymn 32, stanzas 1-3). All the sinners who come to Him and hide nothing have nothing to fear because they shall be washed clean, says Jesus (Hymn 72, stanzas 1-6) because he is their Saviour and has been waiting to grant forgiveness; Jesus is

raring to forgive. Wipe off your tears and hasten to come to Jesus. Even if your sins are one hundred they will not hinder Jesus; He is merciful, He knows your sins even if they are one hundred (Hymn 73, Stanzas 1 and 2). There is a well of blood at the altar of reconciliation where those who are steeped in sin are given mercy and forgiveness and are purified and washed to join shining those who enter into glory redeemed (Hymn 89, stanzas 1-4). Jesus saves from the depths those who call upon him, even when it seems that they are about to get lost. He himself is the Healer, not the many tears that may be shed. He is the doctor who heals and who should not be forgotten (Hymn 99). He gave himself up as an immolation to save and give life and it is He who is a rock of forgiveness through his death (Hymn 100).

The mercy of God endures with the believer forever. He or she is satisfied at all times (Hymn 108, Stanza 5). Through his love the Saviour saves and prevents the believer from dying in his or her sins (Hymn 116, stanza 2). It is through the cross that the believer is drawn ever closer to God (Hymn 138). The Saviour, who wipes away all sin and through whom the believer is saved (Hymn 195, stanza 44). Humanity, which has been steeped in sin because of Adam, finds salvation in the well of the love and mercy of Jesus who touches him or her (Hymn 196, stanza 2). Stanza 4 of Hymn 222 implores the Lord: "Come not in fury, come with kindness and comfort; wipe away my sins which cause me tears; help of those who falter, abide with me." Spurred on by the desire to be in heaven the believer has no desire for the pleasures of sin (Hymn 255, stanza 1b). It is the blood and the water which flow from the side of Jesus the Saviour on the cross which wash clean and justify the believer (Hymn 268, stanza 1). It is from the cross that there issue forth forgiveness and hope for the one who believes and receives redemption (Hymn 309, stanza 1b). Even the forlorn sinner is recognised by the Saviour among all the other sinners and shown the mercy of God. It is a miracle that the "insignificant" sinner among many is loved with such great love by the Lord (Hymn 315, stanza 1). Through the raging storms of life the believer shouts out to Jesus to prevent the ship sinking in the turbulence of life because *He* is the Saviour (Hymnal - *Lifela tsa Sione*).

It is against the background of these sermons, hymns and responses that the faith of the five churches has to be understood.

The most heinous sins in African traditional religion are murder, rape and witchcraft. Yet, what has emerged in the study of the five churches are the ability and the preparedness to forgive, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The sermons do allude to this situation in many different ways. Sin comes in many different forms.

- "Backsliding starts with small things. These small things that we do, the devil uses them to draw us to himself. Later, one will do the sins that are regarded as serious."
- "Moses was leading the children of Israel. He went to God to collect the Ten Commandments. The children of Israel then told Aaron to make for them a god, because they did not know what had become of Moses. They were all of one mind, and did not realise what they were doing."
- "When Jesus sent His disciples to release the donkey, this signifies that Christ is able to release one from one's hardships." The meaning of the sermon here is that Jesus Christ liberates from the chains of sin. Along with this has to be understood the accompanying mercy and forgiveness of God."

CHAPTER 6

THEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS: AN AFRICAN FACE OF CHRISTIANITY

6.1 LESSONS FOR THE MAINLINE CHURCHES

6.1.1 Word of God

Some mainline churches, particularly those of the Orthodox-Anglo-Roman traditions, have a great deal to learn from the African Initiated Churches as far as the importance and centrality of the Word of God is concerned. Although Vatican II reaffirmed the importance of Biblical Christianity, the preaching of the Word of God still takes second place in the services of some of the mainline churches, and in rectifying this state of affairs the author believe they could do no better than to initiate the example set by the five AICs discussed in these pages.

6.1.2 Symbolism

One of the most significant issues that this study has focused on is the importance of symbolism in African religion. For example, as indicated in Chapter 4, in their services of worship, the members of the churches use their whole bodies (including hands, arms, feet and legs) extensively in their worship of God. These various signs denote supplication, receiving and gifts of God and, of course, praising God. The mainline churches could well rejuvenate and revitalise their own worship sessions through a more liberal use of symbolic gestures on the part of the laity.

6.1.3 Indigenisation

Another important issue that the mainline churches in African need to confront is the necessity of their becoming indigenised and shedding the "robe" of Western

culture in their services of worship, their doctrinal teaching and their ethics. Failure to do this will mean that the African mainline churches are likely to disappear for good, like the Latin Church will disappear in North Africa (Oosthuizen, 1972:2). In short, the mainline churches have to undo the enormous harm done to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by Western culture. Following the example of the African Initiated Churches, the mainline churches need to strip their Gospel of all its Western trappings and re-proclaim it to the people of Africa in a form they can understand and identify with. Unless this is done, the mainline churches will forever remain foreign to the African people, "without roots" (Oosthuizen, 1972:4).

6.1.4 Development of theology

Anyone who has ever been closely linked with African Initiated Churches knows that writing on the origins of these churches is a nightmare. Even more so is trying to piece together their theology. One of the tasks that the mainline churches could undertake in future is to help the African Initiated Churches to develop their theology - both for the clergy and the laity, a task that really would be a service to the larger body of Christ.

6.1.5 The African experience

Oosthuizen clearly states that the indigenisation of the church in Africa is of paramount importance, although this is likely to prove is an arduous task (Oosthuizen: p. xiv). Luzbetak, who is adamant on this matter; views indigenisation of the Gospel as absolutely essential if the church were to continue in her work of evangelisation.

From everything that has been said so far, it is clear that the black consciousness movement is here to stay and nowhere is this truer than in Africa. African people have to be accepted for what they are, and not as the West thinks they should be, if

they are to discover their authentic humanity and if the black African is to experience a liberated personhood.

6.1.6 African nationalism

The church as a whole needs to learn to share in what might be termed the "Africa experience". The fellowship and philosophy of sharing, both of which are intrinsic to African Initiated Churches, are manifestations of the African culture and should be seen as part of Africa's culture of communalism, a culture which is marked by different from the individualistic approach of the West.

6.1.7 Eucemenism

The very fact of the existence of African Initiated Churches also shows that African nationalism is by no means a passing phase and that this phenomenon too needs to be blended with Christianity, rather than set up against it. As part of the church of Jesus Christ, the Western church has to let go and let Africa develop here own brand of nationalised Christianity. Otherwise, the mainline churches will never be accepted in Africa, but will always be kept at bay by black militia movements and the black intelligentsia, both of whom deeply cherish the ideals of African nationalism.

6.1.8 *Lebone/lesedi* – Lamp/light

Another point never really appreciated by the Western churches is the fact that ecumenism flourishes among African Initiated Churches in a way that has never been the case in either the Latin or the Orthodox traditions. African ecumenism is a particularly relevant feature in view of the fact that the ecumenical movement is becoming of increasing importance for the Christian faith and, indeed, for any inter-church or interreligious dialogue. The acceptance of all Christians is most warmly expressed in the five churches, who truly welcome all those "who call upon the

name of the Lord". In this area, the mainline churches really do lag behind the mainline churches that are separated from each other both theologically and doctrinally. As the Christian faith enters the 21st century, all churches will have to direct their efforts to effecting real change in their structures and expressions of worship.

6.1.9 Dreams and visions

In traditional Tswana culture a candle is *lebone* - a lamp made from tin and a cloth wicket using liquid oil as fuel. The metaphorical significance of light or fire goes back also to the Old Testament, a collection of books whose theological insights are fully accepted in African Initiated Churches. The deep significance of light in African traditional religion indicates the vibrancy of African religious life - a vibrancy that has been carried over into African Christianity. The African Christian looks to a God whose power is reflected in light or fire, a fact that was well amplified in the five churches under study. Once again, this is an example of the African churches full appreciation of theological symbolism, and in this they are far more "Biblical" than their Western counterparts.

6.1.10 The living dead

The remarks in earlier chapters indicate the importance of dreams and visions in the lives of African people; indeed, the very equilibrium of the tribe seems to depend on such dreams and visions. Westerners can only dimly comprehend the tremendous influence of dreams and vision on African people, an influence that cuts across social status, education, profession and ethnic group. African Initiated Churches have built solidly on this piece of African heritage. Dreams and visions are a powerful vehicle of communication in Africa, and no truly African church can ever ignore or discard them. It is not surprising, therefore, that visions and dreams form the core of the histories and calling of most of the leaders of the five churches under study.

It is a known fact in African society that the ancestors, who Mbiti rightly calls the "living dead" (Mbiti, 1969:24-26), exercise considerable control over their charges that are still in this world. They will appear to them in dreams or visions admonishing, warning, reprimanding or praising them. Quite often there is a certain message contained in the dream, a specific request made for something to be accomplished. Being of her or his corporeal existence these "living dead" depend on those who are still in the flesh to help them to be present and active in life.

6.1.11 Spirit possession

Mainline churches also need to know and to accept the phenomenon of Spirit possession as being very much intrinsic to African Christians, rather than regarding it with scorn. This attitude was only too well illustrated in a recent worship service which the researcher personally attended. The service, a thanksgiving for rain, was attended by ministers of religion and the congregations of all Botswana churches. The president and his wife and members of Parliament were also present. The churches each took it in turns to sing hymns. When it was the turn of St. Paul's Apostolic Church to lead the hymn with their brass band, a woman from one of the African Initiated Churches went into a trance, as the band started up. She then started jumping up and down and uttering the familiar cries of possession. This, unfortunately, provoked laughter among some of the attendees of the mainline churches, until the researcher's wife reprimanded them. Like much else in African Initiated Churches, Spirit possession is very much Biblically based and the mainline churches would do well to recognise this. But whether they do or not is irrelevant; it will always be part of Africa religious life, and specifically African Christian religious life.

6.1.12 Drums

Drums have always featured significantly in African life, particularly in rural areas. They were, and in some areas still are both a means of celebration - marshalling

the dancers into the right rhythm - and were also used for long-distance communication. Although the use of drums has waned with industrialisation and urbanisation, they are still very often used during different festivals and in the healing ceremonies performed by *sangomas* - African traditional doctors - mostly women, who perform their rites of healing while dancing vigorously to the tune of the drums. With this in mind, it is worth making the point that if, for example, drums were withdrawn from Galatia Church in Zion, it is likely that its membership would fall drastically. For these believers, the drums used in the church have come to mean a vehicle between themselves and God.

6.1.13 The concept of holiness

Far from being steeped in immorality, as some missionaries maintained, African people have always regarded the concept of holiness as extremely important. Every man, woman and child was expected to lead a good life, and the importance of so doing was enshrined in the customs, traditions and practices of African communities. Here, again, the mainline churches could learn from African Christianity and rediscover the need for personal and communal sanctity.

6.1.14 Trinity

The notion of Trinity is not easy to grasp, and present difficulties to even professional theologians, but this has not prevented the five study churches in fully accepting the Trinity as an article of faith, as is evidenced in their interpretation of the role of the works of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

6.1.15 The Holy Spirit

The preceding pages have made it abundantly clear that the theology of the work of the Holy Spirit leaves much to be desired in the practical theology of the mainline churches.

The African Initiated Churches in contrast, have a vibrant and living doctrinal awareness of the work of the Holy Spirit, a doctrine that permeates not only church worship and ritual, but also the very fibre of everyday Christian life. The mainline churches need to make the Holy Spirit "come alive" in their own congregations in the same way, and re-enthroned as the Third Person of the Trinity. The study shows overwhelmingly that the Holy Spirit is experienced as a living reality in the African Initiated Churches and mainline churches would do well to take cognisance of this. Once again, the AICs experience has Biblical roots. It is simply a return to Pentecost, and a recognition of the role of the Paraclete in the life of the Christian (Jn 27: 22).

Finally, before leaving this subject, the five churches have also made it clear that they believe that it is the Holy Spirit who heals people. African Initiated Churches can never conceive of healing without the active intervention of the Holy Spirit.

6.1.16 Christology

As far as the Person and Work of Jesus Christ is concerned, the responses to the questionnaire have put paid to the theory that African Independent Churches have no Christology of their own. Jesus Christ is fully accepted as the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, and the Saviour of the human race. Only 2, 5% of the total sample did not know who Jesus was; a much lower percentage than what the researcher had anticipated.

Jesus Christ is believed to be the Son of the true God who is set apart from other Jewish prophets by his words, power and knowledge. In spite of his human birth Jesus remains God, the Saviour who died for the sins of humanity and who shows us the way to God. All the members, young and old, of the five churches under study acclaimed him as Saviour. The adherents of the five churches also believe that Jesus reveals himself to each believer individually, a crucial concept in the doctrine of justification through faith. Perhaps it is in their Christology, more in than

any aspect, that the African Initiated Churches show themselves as equals to the mainline churches.

6.1.17 Ecclesiology

The ecclesiology of the five churches is very articulate and this is made manifest in what the churches teach about the birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension and the second coming of Jesus. He is considered the Son of God born of the Holy Spirit. Against this background, mainline churches need to accept African Initiated Churches as authentic witnesses of the Word of God.

Another lesson to the historic churches is that of discarding archaic ideas regarding the ecclesiology of African Initiated Churches. For years now, these bodies have been regarded as devoid of any solid ecclesiology. Their ecclesiastical validity has always been regarded as suspect to a point where even the baptism of most of these bodies is still not accepted to this day. Nothing could be further from the truth.

From an African point of view, the liturgical life of some of the mainline churches is dead. This is because most of the Western liturgy is simply meaningless to African Christians. As it stands, the liturgy of the "established" churches is simply the imposition of Western cultural values on to the worship services of African Christians. Given that the African is, for the most part, the passive "recipient" of the liturgy, this liturgy has to become indigenised. This means that Christian rituals and ceremonies will have to put on an open "appearance" of negritude if they were to be meaningful to the black masses.

Mainline sacramental theology is dry, abstract and generally far removed from the spirit and mind of Africa. In contrast, the lives of the five churches under study, the sacraments have been married to life, for example river baptism, which represents and symbolises the total cleansing of the whole person.

6.1.18 Baptism

6.1.18.1 Recognition

Most mainline churches have refused to recognise the baptism of African Initiated Churches on the basis that it is not taught in these churches as removing the stain of "original sin". Nothing could be further from the truth. Among the African Initiated Churches as manifested in the statements of faith of the five churches, baptism is held to "cleanse sin", "cleanse sins and diseases", "cleanse the heart", and "prepare and purify one for the Word of God". The credo of the five churches needs no embellishment; the authenticity of their baptism speaks for itself.

6.1.18.2 Ritual of baptism

Given the understanding of "Jordan", as shown in the study, mainline churches need to look anew at the ritual of baptism as practised in their own churches. In view of the importance of ritual purification and the cleansing of the whole person, the mainline churches need to ask themselves, once again, if the time has not yet come to reintroduce baptism by total immersion as African Christians do.

6.1.19 Meaningful rituals

Brought up in Western-style churches, the researcher can well remember some of the ritualism of these churches, and particularly those rituals involving the use of water. He was always impressed by the *Asperges me* ritual, during which the celebrant washed down the aisles, sprinkling "holy water" on all the worshippers. For some strange reason, this practice was discontinued, and when it did he felt that the universal church had lost one of its more powerful ritual symbols. This ritual took place before the Communion service and it meant a lot to this author and, probably, to most of his fellow African worshippers. As the celebrant sprinkled the water on the congregation, the congregation sang the whole of Psalm 26: "Judge

me". He felt this was a unique and fitting way to come into the presence of the Holy of Holies.

In short, Western churches are relinquishing rituals that are of priceless value to Africans and substituting them with meaningless gestures, such as, for example, receiving Communion standing up instead of kneeling down.

Rather than reduce ritual practices, in Africa the mainline churches would do well to revive them, particularly the rites of purification. There are today African churches that have baptismal pools inside the church building itself. Why can this ancient and rich custom of the early church not be followed? As have made clear in the preceding pages, ritual is sacred to the peoples of Africa. A case in point is kneeling. For example, kneeling is seen in Sundkler, Daneel and many other writers on African rituals as concomitant with the Zulu notion of respect. Just after Vatican II, in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Umzimkhulu, a decision had to be reached by the bishop and the clergy of the diocese as to whether the congregation should receive Communion standing, with their hands outstretched, a practice recommended by Vatican II. The decision took less than a minute and was unanimous. The clergy, along with the black bishop, simply said that "we stick to our tradition of kneeling because it is our custom". This was a decision of black clergy on an issue that touched the validity of negritude. Mainline churches would do well to take cognisance of the fact that, given the opportunity, black people will always indigenise Christian ritual.

6.1.20 Ministry of healing

Jesus' whole ministry revolved around healing; this mission throughout the whole of Judea, Galilee and Samaria centred around healing people broken with physical and spiritual maladies: the lame, the blind, the paralysed, the possessed, the insane. Yet this is the one area of Jesus' ministry most neglected by the mainline

churches. The author believes that African Christians, and in particular African Initiated Churches, have a lot to teach Western churches.

6.1.21 Prophecy

Prophecy, too, has not received any real attention in Western Christianity, although the Apostle Paul specifically mentions prophecy as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the whole concept of prophecy is an area of religious experience almost wholly untapped by Western theology. An analysis on and of the implications of the experience of the African Initiated Churches could serve to enrich the universal church.

6.1.22 Africanisation

Of particular significance is that the indigenous black leadership in African Initiated Churches remains the core of Africanisation. As Oosthuizen puts it, "Religion was the only field within which emancipation was possible" (Oosthuizen, 1972: 7). If they were ever to be African churches, the mainline churches will have to follow suit and allow black leaders to come to the fore in the life of these churches.

More immediately, perhaps, is the fact that the many seminaries referred to by Oosthuizen may need to be closed in order to stop these churches churning out scores of clerics who have been steeped in Western culture, civilisation and the West's version of "Christianity".

In the United States of America, Pentecostalism was ignored for a very long time by government policy-makers. It was only in the latter half of 1986 that Pentecostal leaders were taken seriously. The reason was simple. By 1986, the adherents of these movements numbered a staggering sixty million people, a number which represented 30% of the total population of the United States of America and which, therefore, was a potentially extremely powerful lobbying force. In, Africa, the

situation is, in some ways, similar - the "less respectable" churches have a large and growing membership and ignoring them is simply not a viable option. As Oosthuizen so aptly sums it up: "These movements need to be studied and are the concern of both Protestants and the Roman Catholics" (Oosthuizen, 1967).

This in itself calls for the development of an African indigenous theology. As Oosthuizen says: "An indigenous ministry calls for an indigenous theology and in particular indigenous confessions of faith" (Oosthuizen, 1967).

Unfortunately, Western systematic theology has totally neglected the whole issue of Christianity. Not only are theological matters relevant to African life not touched upon, but seminaries still tend to treat African culture and experience with scant regard. African evolution of theology and customs has never been taken seriously in our theological institutions and contemporary issues such as liberation, nationalism and negritude are simply not addressed.

6.1.23 Open Communion

The five churches have made it clear that for them, open Communion is not an issue of debate, but a way of life. And here the mainline churches really can learn a lesson from their African counterparts. The practice of sharing the altar should be emulated instead of debated in an endless series of articles and writings in theological journals. The day is long since passed that Christians could afford to be "niggardly" in their attitude to unity.

6.1.24 Scripture

Illiterate or unlettered as the bulk of the membership of the five churches may appear to be, one thing is clear from the study. The scriptural basis of the doctrines proclaimed in African Initiated Churches is very solid. This shows that the members of the five churches have a Biblical understanding of their churches' doctrines,

which is far from being the case in the majority of mainline churches, where members' knowledge of the Bible is often very shallow indeed.

6.1.25 Confession of sin

This study also indicates the importance attached to the confession of sin in the five churches under study, a practice which, as we have seen in the example of Galatia Church in Zion, is very much linked to the African concept of holiness.

6.1.26 Catechesis

The preceding pages have shown the great emphasis that is placed by the five churches on catechesis, particularly as far as teaching the young is concerned. Mainline churches need to take the whole issue of catechism seriously, particularly in view of the social pressures confronting the young, who have to survive in an age of suspect philosophies, the availability of illicit drugs and dubious entertainment. Related to this is the whole business of caring for children generally. The Old Testament was strong on God's command to care for orphans. The study has shown that the five churches take this command seriously, rather than leaving children to the care of institutions. This indicates the fact that African Initiated Churches regard life as a confessing community to include the care of peoples' temporal needs as well as their spiritual needs.

6.1.27 Lending a helping hand to AICs

Over the years, at different venues, at different conferences and in different ways, the African Independent Churches have made many passionate pleas to mainline churches, asking them to fill the gaps of ignorance in AIC church life and teaching (Mayatula, 1975). Realising their organisational and structural inadequacies and deficiencies, the black churches have looked towards mainline churches for help. So far the response has been both dilatory and limited. But it is incumbent on the

established church to offer some form of assistance to these black churches if the latter were to improve their clerical training and standard of teaching generally.

6.1.28 Grassroots theology

The mainline churches have to ask themselves: "Has the time not perhaps come for an African theology." If the answer is "yes", then perhaps exposition of theology like the classic *Summa Theologica* or the works of Paul Tillich should be replaced by a more intelligible, practical and African outlook on life. It is, in other words, a practical, rather than an abstract theology.

In Western-style churches, the whole theme of negritude is treated with a great deal of circumspection. The validity of a Black theology has been completely ignored. To redress the situation mainline churches need to accommodate black theology, African theology, Liberation theology in all areas of church life. This means, in effect, the effective involvement of black people in all the affairs of the church, but especially her ecclesiastical structures.

6.1.29 Autonomy and self-sufficiency

Finally, there is another sensitive area that needs a lot of serious attention, namely the question of self-sufficiency and autonomy.

Some mainline churches still tend to encourage dependency when dealing with African Christians, often in the guise of financial assistance. Today, there are still a few "missionary" organisations or churches that have made the "development" of African Initiated Churches their field of activity. What happens in practice, however, is that these "missionaries" use their financial power to erect all sorts of massive structures for African Initiated Churches, which includes making available all kinds of material aids and even building Bible schools and initiating Bible courses. Unfortunately, this "aid" comes at a high price, simply because these "missionaries"

insist that the AICs "develop" according to the missionaries' agenda, their ideas, their culture and, indeed their mentality. It has to be borne in mind that all of these "missionaries", no matter how well intentioned foreigners are towards the soil of Africa in every sense, they subconsciously or deliberately impose on the peoples of Africa concepts and ideas that are alien to them.

African Initiated Churches at the receiving end of this sort of missionary activity cease to be independent. Instead, they become inhibited in their church life, are afraid to hurt their beneficiaries and, in the end, meekly subscribe to philosophies they would otherwise never have embraced. This state of affairs that is often propagated and sponsored by the mainline churches has to be brought to a halt once and for all. The "historic" churches have to face up the fact that every indigenous church has to develop its own unique character according to the lights and dictates of the Holy Spirit within that church's culture.

6.1.30 Optional celibacy in the Catholic Church

There are today in the Catholic Church strong calls for the reintroduction of optional celibacy when one studies for the priesthood. This is not surprising. Even the great Pope John XXIII, who called the modern Vatican II Council, agonised over what he described as many young men who were martyrs because of having to conform with the requirement and he lamented and said: "And to think that this law can be changed at the stroke of a pen."

This on its own is a major project for the Catholic Church, which definitely needs further research. For the time-being, however, the five churches do have a contribution to make in that they uphold very strongly that their personnel has to be married to order their lives properly and be effective.

The five churches have made it abundantly clear that they assign responsibilities in terms of African culture. Marriage is considered crucial for the bestowing of

office and therefore a priest is expected to marry and nobody can be elevated to the status of bishop or archbishop without being married.

6.1.31 Women priests in the Catholic Church

Since Vatican II there have been many “disturbing” occurrences or features of the once mighty, patriarchal, rigid and conservative Roman Catholic Church. Nuns, women and girls enter and move freely within the sanctuary of the altar. More than that, women and girls are altar servers and many women are ministers of the Eucharist, something unthinkable in days gone by. Women give out Communion under the two species of sacred bread and sacred wine and they are right in the heart of the Holy Sanctuary. During the celebration of Holy Mass they are in and out of the altar precincts performing sacred chores. In other words, there has been a slowly rising acceptance within the Catholic Church that women are no different from men and that they are as human.

The Vatican II of John XXIII threw everything into the melting pot: The reverberations of this bold action of this broadminded pontiff are going to be felt until the end of the world. The Roman Catholic Church will never stop changing because this is a process of growth and self-actualisation.

The lesson here for the Roman Catholic Church is that the church should accept the whole of change to its logical conclusion and not pick and choose. One cannot pick women to be ministers of the Eucharist and *expertae* in theology in the houses of training and then deny them ordination.

The author of this thesis personally believes that the time has dawned for the Roman Catholic Church to accept and ordain women to the priesthood. This is in accordance with the Gospel and the teachings of Jesus Christ, which never discriminated against any human being, irrespective of gender.

6.2 LESSON FOR AFRICAN/BLACK/LIBERATION THEOLOGY

6.2.1 Relationship between Western and African missionaries

An introductory note to this chapter on the relationship or interaction between the theology of the five churches *vis-à-vis* African/black/liberation theology can best be summed up in Barrett's words.

This study describes one of the most remarkable achievements of the African religious genius. Out of a bewilderingly disparate patchwork of Christian foreign missionary endeavour, a countless response is emerging, which indicates how creatively Africa can respond to the Christian faith when foreign assistance and, as some would add, foreign interference were withdrawn. The history of this study is a lesson in the perils of ignorance. In 1957, a massive secession involving 16,000 members took place from the Anglican Church in Western Kenya. The African bishop there had at that time serving under him some thirty African clergy, and a handful of missionary clergy from the Church Missionary Society, including this researcher. We all imagined that the disturbance was a new and unique kind of phenomenon caused by purely local factors and personalities, and the whole affair was handled from the start on this assumption. Some five years later, the researcher was investigating the subject in the Missionary Research Library, New York. He was started to discover that this phenomenon, far from being local and exclusive to Western Kenya, was a universal one in Africa with a history of over one hundred years. What this demonstrates is the alarming fact that decisions of the outmost importance can be made in good faith yet in virtual ignorance of strikingly similar parallels elsewhere. Hence the underlying realities of the crisis and the dilemma that it poses. Had the principals in our local drama been in possession of the evidence set forth in this present study, the outcome might well have been entirely different (Barrett, 1975:10).

6.2.2 Authentic African theology

It is only by becoming fully authentic that a black African theology can begin to evolve. By taking the theology of African churches and examining it from a socio-economic, political and cultural point of view, the theologian who has the welfare of Africa at heart will begin here in his or her attempt at indigenising Christian doctrine. There are certain salient historical, socio-political and economic features in the five churches that align them to black African theology, quasimaterial or spiritual features that set them apart.

In this context, perhaps the researcher should begin by saying that the faith of African Initiated Churches is based on a firm belief in the supernatural; it is not just a ritualised and superficial social entity. Jesus is believed to be truly present in the daily lives of the believers, a Saviour who cares about their material well-being. Jesus is believed to be able to save people from hunger and poverty. He is believed to be present throughout a believer's life, to aid him or her and to encourage the believer in his walk with Christ. In other words, the Christ of the five churches is the Liberator, the "Fighter", the Saviour who changes believers' material and physical conditions. Liberation theologians have to recognise the Gospel of the African Initiated Churches is by no means purely a spiritual one - it has a definite "materialistic" message.

6.2.3 The unseen world

Black and liberation theologians also need to realise that African Christians believe in the life hereafter with unequivocal conviction, as did their forebears. There should definitely be a shift of emphasis in liberation theology if it wants to be true to the religious experience of Africa. Emphasis on changing the living conditions of the oppressed does not negate belief in another life. Africa churches have expression their negritude without letting their belief in the spiritual and eternal life of the believer. There is a tendency among some black and liberation theologians to shun

any word that denotes the other, or unseen world. One such word is the *moya* or *mowa* - the soul, the spirit. Initially, resistance to "other-world" doctrines was necessary in the beginning of the drive for African selfhood, self-identity and liberation. It is now perhaps time that spiritual concepts and values, as found in African Initiated Churches, be fully appreciated, enhanced and developed, rather than being viewed as theological anachronisms.

6.2.4 Bread and butter issues

Another lesson to African/black/liberation theology is a realisation that the black churches are down to earth. For example, many members are concerned with the role of the *badimo* in their everyday lives to a point where they, *badimo*, take precedence over ideological philosophies. Thus African/black/liberation theology should take into cognisance the fact that these black churches are concerned with bread and butter issues, things which make their material life bearable.

6.2.5 Tolerance

A very significant point that comes through from this study is the tolerance of the five churches towards Christians from other traditions. The responses to question 94 made this particularly clear – 100% of the leaders and members of the five churches maintained that their churches are open to all, without distinction. This, perhaps, suggests that the mainline churches should be more tolerant and more inclusive also.

6.3 SUGGESTIONS TO THE FIVE CHURCHES

6.3.1 The Holy Spirit

To start with, the five churches need to realise that the Holy Spirit is present in the lives of all believers, irrespective of their church allegiance. Although the theology of

the work of the Holy Spirit is not as developed in the mainline churches as it is in African Initiated Churches, nevertheless they, the mainline church, as worshipping Christian communities, and the five churches need to recognise this if they wish to enter into a meaningful dialogue.

6.3.2 Communion

Apart from Forward in Faith, which holds fairly regular Communion services, Communion is a very much neglected service in the five churches under study. This, unfortunately, gives credence to the theory that African Initiated Churches are frightened of taking Communion, that it is a meal so sacred and awe-inspiring that the leadership shelves it perpetually! Indeed, as described in the paragraph on ritual features, even senior members of the five churches put off Communion as long as possible; even bishops approach the Communion table with something like dread. The five churches need to understand that Communion is part and parcel of the Christian experience: "Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death" (I Cor 11: 27). Failure to appreciate this will mean that the five churches unwittingly give credence to Western writers who wrongly conclude that African Initiated Churches' taking of Holy Communion is rooted in superstition.

6.3.3 Doctrinal issues

The five churches also need to take doctrinal issues more seriously. People need to be given more instruction on their faith. Some of the responses to the questions about Jesus definitely indicated a lack of clarity in respondents' understanding of the Person and Work of Christ, e.g., Question 88. This "instructional gap" is nowhere more apparent than among the youth, evidenced by the fact that a number of young people have no clear idea why, for example, they believe in Jesus Christ.

6.3.4 Politicisation

With regard to the whole issue of politicisation, the tendency among African Initiated Churches is, in fact, to adopt a very submissive attitude to the government. This tendency is not only common to Botswana churches, but to the whole of Southern Africa. These churches are wise to adopt a stance that is positive and constructive rather than the sometimes futile path of confrontation urged by some groups. The church of Mme. Alice Lenshina in Zambia is a classic example. However, the five churches should not lose sight of their prophetic mission and should face up to the fact that sometimes they may have to differ with the government on a particular issue. In Botswana, the government is always open to suggestions and advice as long as democratic principles are not violated. By the same token, the churches have to be prepared to accept guidance from the government on issues such as the church's control over money and property and the *modus operandi* of some churches. Some churches that use drums in their worship services have been criticised by local *dikgosi* – kings - who have voiced their concern over the disturbance caused to the sick and the villagers whose sleep has been interrupted by the noise of beating drums.

6.3.5 More care for the sick

Reading the answers to question 97, it becomes apparent that the sick are not really cared for as much as it is given out by the leadership. This situation obviously requires rectification, and a concerted effort on the part of the leaders of the five study churches.

6.3.6 Fees for spiritual services

Questions 103 and a few others bring to mind the abuses of the pre-Reformation church. In cases where fees are demanded for spiritual services, spiritual gifts and material gain are likely to be confused, to the serious detriment of the Christian

faith. The leadership of the five churches has to divorce financial donations from spiritual blessings if these churches were to maintain their credibility.

6.3.7 Women in the church

The leaders of the five churches also need to be aware and address the fact that the women of the five churches still consider themselves very much the inferior sex, owing to their cultural system, a system that assigns to women a very minor role in society, particularly in Botswana. As a result of this, women Christians in these five churches consider themselves unable to take a very active role in the affairs of the church. This is why, of all the respondents who answered the question concerning personal ministry, it was only the women who answered that they had no evangelistic role to play in the life of the church. This represents a serious failure on the part of the leaders of the five churches to address the issue of sexism.

6.3.8 *Go tlabela badimo*

Go tlabela badimo is a topic which, to the researcher's judgement, the leadership is ignoring at its peril. It causes discomfort to believers themselves, who have to profess one thing with their mouth, but who are, in fact, culturally bound to behave differently. Most respondents are involved with the *badimo*, in spite of the ecclesiastical ban on "ancestor worship" imposed by four of the churches, Galatia Church in Zion being the exception. The four churches need to find a way of "legalising" the *badimo* so that believers are not torn between two belief structures. Christianity and the cult of the ancestors are not mutually exclusive; a parallel can be drawn between the roles of the ancestors in African Christianity with that of the saints in the lives of practising Roman Catholics. Some of the churches under study are adamant in their condemnation of the ancestral cult, an attitude which is pointless given that their members continue to follow inherited cultural customs.

It is significant that there were many thorny questions that only the young people dared to answer. This is perhaps an indicator that the youth are considerably more liberated than their parents and more inclined and prepared to adopt a controversial stance on certain issues. The leadership would be well-advised to recognise this and encourage more open expression among church members generally. Another significant point here is the fact that men were far more outspoken in their answers than women, who tended to shy away from controversial cultural issues.

To reiterate: the five churches would be well-advised to try to counter the passivity and lack of interest in their female members if they wish to be truthful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

6.3.9 Involvement of the youth

Young people, too, need to become more involved in church affairs. As stated in the introduction, by and large young people are excluded from the decision-making machinery of the five churches. This is particularly undesirable in view of the fact that it is young people who are interested in the life of the church and it is they, above all, who need encouragement in Christian life. As it is, the five churches do not take these issues with anything like the seriousness it deserves. The leadership of the five churches would be well-advised to restructure their hierarchies so that the youth are given a greater say in the daily running of church affairs. In short, this means that young people must be allowed to hold responsible offices in the churches.

6.3.10 Forgiveness

The five churches are to be commended in that they take seriously Christ's command to forgive the sinner; even those who have practised witchcraft are not "cast out". Perhaps the churches should be encouraged to instil this notion of

forgiveness into the lives of all their members, so that the Gospel of the mercy of Jesus Christ really does become a living reality.

6.3.11 Mutual support

One of the most striking features about Forward in Faith is the degree of unity reflected in respondents' answers, which seems to indicate a uniformity of understanding and purpose among the members of this church. The other four churches would do well to examine their own structures and try to work for some form of cohesive understanding of that Gospel among their members.

6.3.12 Church and uniform

On the other hand, the leadership of Forward in Faith needs to realise that, although the church has no uniform, its members have very definite ideas about what the different colours represent, which suggests, perhaps, that the leadership's decision to adopt no uniform may not reflect the views of the members, particularly the lay people.

6.3.13 World religions

The five churches, in spite of their ecumenical stance, still lack a basic, meaningful approach to other world religions. From all one can gather, as far as the five churches are concerned, other religions simply do not exist - not even in Botswana. This is not a matter of dogmatism, but simply that in their preoccupation with evangelisation, the five churches seem to have forgotten the fact that, in Botswana, Muslims, Hindu's and members of other world religions rub shoulders with Christians daily and are very much part of Botswana society. However, one should bear in mind that even "sophisticated" mainline churches find it very difficult to enter into meaningful dialogue with other world religions. This is evidenced by a certain timidity and fear on the part of established churches towards ecumenical

organisations or associations directed to the co-operative executive of inter-religious programmes for the whole community. Mainline churches nearly always develop "cold feet" after making an initial contact with people of other religions. A clear case in Botswana itself is that of the all-Botswana theological society, which embraces practically all the religions in Botswana; Most of the Christian ministers and theologians simply do not seem to realise the importance of this association.

6.3.14 Evangelisation

Relevant to the above comments is the somewhat disturbing emphasis on evangelisation, which is present in all the five churches. From the questionnaire it is clear that "spreading the Gospel" means almost indiscriminate preaching in order to make as many converts as possible for the purposes of "church growth". From an ecumenical point of view, this manifests a certain insensitivity. Michael Hurley (1969) puts this very clearly:

"The fourth principle of ecumenism is that the main road to full Christian unity according to God's will is not the way of individual conversions; that we Christians must not preach Christ "from envy and rivalry...out of partisanship" (Phil 1: 15) but must remember that, because of our common baptism, "we though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one of another" (Rom 12:5); that "as he is Christ's, so are we" (2 Cor 10:7). Though negative in character and following almost as a corollary from the previous principle about the nature of Church membership, this fourth principle deserves special consideration because it expresses the most original and disturbing feature of ecumenism, because it represents the Churches' most obvious departure from their traditional attitudes and principles and practices; because our understanding and acceptance of it is the great test of the sincerity of our ecumenical

sentiments and of the clarity of our ecumenical thinking” (Hurley, 1969:45).

This approach highlights the serious need to respect individual conscience and so eradicate methods that are contradictory to the spirit of ecumenism.

The thesis has by no means exhausted or given all the answers regarding independency, whether in Botswana or anywhere else. The researcher would, therefore, like to put down a few points or issues he believes warrant further study and investigation. These follow below in no specific order and are highlighted for emphasis:

Obligatory and Optional Celibacy in the Catholic Church,

Women Priests in the Catholic Church,

The Role of Ancestors in African Christianity,

The Place of Culture in Religion,

Politics and Religion in the Church,

The Challenge of Communism and Socialism for the Present Day Church.

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APPENDIX I

CONSTITUTIONS OF THE FIVE CHURCHES

1 Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion

Article 1 - Name

The name of the Church shall be "Bethlehem City of Christ Church in Zion" hereinafter called church.

Article 2 - Aims and Objectives

- (a) To preach the Gospel of the Almighty God.
- (b) To baptise the believers of Jesus Christ.
- (c) To consecrate children.
- (d) To bury the dead.
- (e) To lay hands on and pray for the sick.
- (f) To establish church branches throughout the country.
- (g) To advise church members in matters of discipline, doctrine, policy, and other matters affecting the welfare of the church.
- (h) To build schools and hospitals.
- (i) To do such other lawful things as may be necessary for the fulfilment of such objects.

Article 3 - Administration

The Executive Committee shall form the main administrative body with the Bishop and his deputy presiding over it and the Bishop shall have the executive authority to run the affairs of the church.

Article 4 – Membership

Is open to anybody who voluntarily joins the church.

- (a) All members of the church.
- (b) Ordained ministers in charge of the church branches.
- (c) Any child who by consent of the parents joins the church.

Article 5 - Committee shall consist of:

- (a) Chairman
- (b) Vice-chairman
- (c) Secretary
- (d) Vice-secretary
- (e) Treasurer and four elected members

The secretary and the chairman are responsible for planning the programmes of the meeting. The Bishop and his deputy are not bound to attend these meeting though they may call him.

Article 6 - Duties of Executive Committee

- (a) To hold meetings.
- (b) To interpret the Constitution.
- (c) To make decisions.
- (d) To give reports to the Annual General Meetings.
- (e) To look into the books of the secretary and the treasurer.

- (f) To keep minutes of the church meetings.
- (g) Two-thirds of members, including the secretary and the chairman, shall form form a quorum.

Duties of the Treasurer

- a) Receive and bank all monies of the church.
- (b) Keep detailed financial records.
- (c) Sign cheques for the church.
- (d) Give a statement to the Annual General Meeting.

Article 7 - Powers

The Conference shall have power to:

- (a) Appoint special and standing committees.
- (b) Remove somebody's membership.
- (c) Recommend a candidate for ordination.
- (d) Make bye-laws.

Article 8 - Amendment to the Constitution

Amendment to the church constitution shall be adopted by 2/3 of vote members at the Annual General Meetings.

Article 9 - Meeting

There shall be an Annual General Meeting in March/April, a conference held in October annually and special meetings of the Executive Committee shall be called in July all of which shall be preside over the meetings.

Article 10 - Elections

The Executive Committee is elected yearly at special meetings and the vote shall be done by show of hands.

Article 11 - Headquarters

They are at Tonota Village.

Article 12 - Subscriptions and Donations

- i) All members shall pay 20 Thebe to their congregations.
- ii) Every member of the church shall pay 10 Thebe monthly.
- iii) Superintendents shall administer Communion to all members.
- iv) All monies from the church branches shall be sent to the General Treasurer.
- v) At the Annual conference held in March/April the Holy Communion shall be be served to all members and they shall pay 10 Thebe for it.
- vi) Any minister shall suspend any member after getting in touch with the Branch Committee.
- vii) All church documents shall be made and distributed by the headquarters of the church only.
- viii) Every minister shall subscribe P6.00 at the Annual Conference.
- ix) Every minister shall present to the conference those who are to be ordained.
- x) The use of drugs, alcohol and the smoking of tobacco is strictly prohibited.
- xi) Every minister shall attend all conferences.
- xii) Evangelists shall conduct baptism in any pool of water. Baptism shall be conducted by immersing the whole body of a person in such of a person in such a pool of water.

- xiii) Special prayer meetings for women shall be held weekly whereby all women shall be addressed in their full church uniform.

Article 13 - Certificates

All church certificates shall be made and distributed by the headquarters of the church only and they shall be surrendered to church authorities following resignations.

Article 14 - Church property

The executive committee shall to all intents and purposes be legal custodian of the church property and shall deal with the same for the benefit of the church.

Article 15 - Praying for the sick (sic)

- The conference shall elect one minister as the prophet and such a minister shall be a person with the gift of prophecy shall appoint one person in each branch as his assistant.
- The prophet and his assistants shall be responsible for praying and healing the sick using all spiritual methods.
- The sick may be required by the prophets to pay a reasonable amount of money in order to enable the prophet to cover their expenses, since they will be required to go all over the country praying for the sick.
- The prophet shall arrange through the secretariat of the church a special meeting to be attended by all prophets during which new directives may be given to the assistant prophets.
- No member of church shall have the right to charge any amount from a sick person as a pretext that he/she has healed a sick person unless he/she has been appointed by the prophet to do so. All prophets shall be given special certificates for such a profession.
- Anyone who will appoint himself a prophet and go about stealing money from people claiming to have healed them shall be expelled from the church.
- During the church services there shall be time to pray for the sick and such praying shall be done free, as it will not be done at a special place during special times.
- There shall be a special place where praying for the sick takes place and such shall be called *diagelo*. The prophet shall be present at *diagelo* to pray for the sick daily.
- No male prophet shall be allowed to pray for a female person in a secret place unless he has been required to do so by the individual but there should be a kind person to witness such praying.

2 Constitution and Rules of the Forward in Faith

- 1 **Name:** Forward in Faith is associated with F.I.J. in Rhodesia.
Address:

2 Objectives

- a) Religious ministry according to the faith in Forward in Faith.
- b) To appoint and train suitable men to act as Evangelists, Religious Leaders and Pastors.
- c) To evangelise and accept into church membership of those who are recognised believers.
- d) To promote true fellowship among various groups that seek to work together with us.

- e) To spread education according to the Christian faith and the principles of the F.I.F. among those in Botswana.
- f) To provide industrial, agricultural and technical training of all kinds.
- g) To establish, encourage and support charities of every description in accordance with the Association, whether under the direct management and control of the F.I.F. or in conjunction with other bodies having similar objects.
- h) To contend earnestly for the faith which was once believed unto the Saints recognising the fundamental truths which form the basis of our belief;
 - i) The Trinity of God the Head, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost.
 - ii) The vicarious work of Christ in man; His death, Resurrection, Ascension and the promised return.
 - iii) The necessity of the new birth through the Holy Spirit and consequent embusment of power to witness for God.
 - iv) The New Testament ministry of prayer for the sick and the operation of Divine Gifts as in 1 Corinthians: 12.
- i) In accordance with our beliefs to obey those in authority over us that is to say, the government of our country, Magistrates and others who are appointed by the government to maintain law and order.
- j) To appoint trustees whether original or substitute as hereafter provided.
- k) To apply or transfer to the Trustees property of whatsoever nature belonging to or hereinafter acquired or agreed to be acquired by F.I.F.
- l) To purchase, to take or lease or otherwise acquire and to sell and mortgage, let, dispose of or otherwise deal with lands and buildings and construct and use the same for all or any of the purposes of the F.I.F.
- m) To collect and receive subscriptions, fees, funds, grants and donations in cash or kind for any of the above purposes.
- n) To invest and deal with monies of the F.I.F. not immediately required upon such securities and in such a manner as may from time to time be determined.
- o) To pay all costs and expenses incurred in the conduct of F.I.F.'s affairs, including the cost and expenses of registration under the Trustees incorporation Ordinance.
- p) To employ all necessary staff for the proper conduct of the affairs of the F.I.F. and to remunerate them for their services.
- q) To charge fees for attendance at any school or other institution conducted or managed by the F.I.F.
- r) To borrow money and to operate upon and close such accounts, including savings and fixed deposits, with any bank, building society or other financial institutions.
- s) To draw, make, accept endorse, discount execute and issue cheques, bills of exchange, promissory notes, debentures and other negotiable or transferable instruments.

3 The income and property of the F.I.F.:

When deriving shall be applied safely towards the promotion of the objects of the F.I.F. as herein before set forth.

4 Accounts:

- a) Church accounts shall be kept, money spent and coming in the church and inspected once in six months by an appointed member at the Annual General Meeting.
- b) Books bearing above records shall be kept by the secretary.

5 Members and Management

- a) Membership composes of recognised church members. Following the church teachings qualifies you to be a member.
- b) Trustees control fully the management of the church property, effects and all funds.
- c) Trustees consist of a General Chairman, who shall be the Missions Director for so long as he holds office as Executive General Chairman of the F.I.F. and in addition three other members appointed by the Executive Committee, herein after of any Trustee.
- d) The Executive comprises seven members who are:
 - 1. Executive Chairman
 - 2. Vice Chairman
 - 3. Secretary and three other members and Advisor.The above members are elected through a ballot system at the Annual General Meeting. However, the Mission Director stays in his office until he dies or retires, i.e., no election is held for this post

6 Trustees/Executive Committee

- a) Trustees meet at least twice a year and three members form a quorum, to discuss current business.
- b) Executive Committee meets about four times annually, to discuss current business and four members form a quorum.
Trustees have full authority over the following:
 - i) To make, give receipts and other discharges for monies payable to the F.I.F.
 - ii) To determine who signs all documents of all nature on behalf of the church.
 - iii) To employ, suspend, dismiss and pay salaries to people on behalf of the church.

7 The trustees shall have also full powers for the following purposes:

- a) To make and give receipts and other discharges for monies payable to the F.I.F.
- b) To determine who shall be entitled to sign bills, notes, receipts, acceptances, endorsements, cheques, contracts and other documents of whatever nature on behalf of the F.I.F.
- c) To employ a person and to suspend or dismiss them to pay them salaries and wages.

8 The membership of the Trustees shall not be reduced to less than three.

9 The Honorary Secretary is directed by the Trustees to take care of all correspondence, attend meetings, and keep records in the minute books.

11 The Honorary Secretary through the direction of the trustees to take care of all correspondence, attend meetings, and keep records in the minute books.

12 The trustees hold all donations, subscriptions, devises, and bequests and other monies or the General Fund upon the following trustees;

- i) Invest monies at any time as suitable and include them in the General Fund.

- ii) Trustees have the authority to invest money as they think fit to be used in building, altering, improving and repairs of the church from the General Fund.
- 13 **Trustees** shall have all administrative powers as may be necessary for properly carrying out the object of the F.I.F. and giving effect to these regulations.
 - 14 **The Annual General Meeting** of the church is held on or before the 31st of January on the following business;
 - a) Receive from the Trustees report and statement of accounts and general concerns of the church for the previous year.
 - b) Appoint auditors for the ensuing year, who shall be members of the Trustees.
 - c) To look into the businesses of the Trustees as may be necessary or desirable brought before them.
 - 15 **Quorum**
 - a) No business shall be transacted at any General Meeting unless a quorum of about 10 members who have the right of vote is present.
 - b) If the quorum is not present within an hour of the time notified the meeting will be called again within three weeks and 5 shall form a quorum.
 - 16 **The Common Seal** of the association shall be returned in the custody of the Trustees to be kept by the secretary on their behalf.
 - 17 **Matters Affecting Marriage** the Executive Board examines the applications for Marriage Officers and ascertains that the applicants qualify for the office.
 - 18 **Amendments of the Constitution** to be made by two thirds of members present at Executive must be rectified by the Missions Director.
- 3 **The Constitution of the Galatia Church in Zion**
- 1 **Name:** Galatia Church in Zion (hereinafter referred to as the Church).
 - 2 **Church's Faith:**
The church receives the word which is contained in the Scripture of the Old and New Testament as its supreme rule of faith and life and espouses the fundamental precepts and teachings in the Holy Bible. The Church's faith is the exchanging Gospel of God's Love made manifest in Jesus Christ as declared in the Scriptures by the Prophets and Apostles and as God's revelation of this nature it is its own evidence and authority and its birth is known to Christians, through the testimony of the Holy Ghost.
 - 3 **The Church has the interest, right and authority** for the conduct of its Christian doctrine, to modify or adopt, or even frame church doctrines but always in accordance to the Word of God.
 - 4 **The Church has the right to modify or add something to the Constitution.**
 - 5 **The Church shall have authority** to organise forms of worship under the leadership of the church Minister and stop any worship against the word of God.

6 **The Vocation of the Church** is to bear witness to its Lord to worship God in His name, to build its members in Faith and righteousness and the spirit of Unity and to proclaim the Gospel of God to all the corners of the earth.

7 **The property of the Church** shall be kept by the body of Trustees, which is appointed at the Annual General Meeting of the Church.

8 **The Church shall be subject to the laws and the Constitution of the country,** i.e., Republic of Botswana.

9 **The Objectives**

- i) To maintain and extend the church for the purpose of worship in accordance with the Christian Faith.
- ii) To establish and maintain churches in other parts of the country.
- iii) To acquire by purchase or lease immovable or movable property or to dispose of property, whether movable or immovable for the church.
- iv) To establish schools for the purpose of the religious instruction of the young and for the purpose of general education.
- v) To undertake charitable works and to do anything which will encourage and foster the spiritual development and material welfare of members of the church as well as of the community in general.
- vi) To do anything which may be necessary or conducive to attainment of the above objects.

10 **Membership is open to all people of Christian faith.**

- a) Applications for membership are handled by the Secretary.
- b) The Secretary hands over the application for membership to the executive committee, who shall give or withhold its consent.
- c) The Executive shall expel any member whose actions are a disgrace to the Christian religion.
- d) The joining fee shall be P3.00 annually.
- e) Children of the members are to attend without paying the fee.
- f) A special approval for attending services may be made for non-members and their children by the executive.
- g) The Executive may withdraw a membership of someone if he stays for more than a year without giving subscription fee. They may also have the right to restore someone's membership.
- h) The Executive waive payment of membership subscription under extreme circumstances such as death and poverty.

11 **All believers in Jesus Christ shall undergo water baptism.**

12 **Divine Healing**

The church believes in the divine healing of the sick by prayer and water and also by the help of medical treatment at the Hospital.

13 **The Executive Committee**

- a) Is responsible for the management of church affairs and it consists of:
 - i) The President
 - ii) The Vice-president
 - iii) The Secretary
 - iv) Assistant Secretary

- v) The Treasurer
- vi) Two additional members
- b) i) The President: shall preside over meetings of the Executive and lead the congregation according to the church Constitution and church rules.
- ii) Vice-president: shall represent the president in absence.
- iii) Secretary: shall attend all meetings take minutes carry out correspondence of the church and publish notices of the church. The Vice-secretary shall assist him and do all the above duties in the absence of the Secretary.
- iv) The Treasurer: shall deposit all monies in a Bank Account approved by the Executive and keep good records of money used and submitted and give a report at the Annual General Meeting.
- c) The election of Executive shall take place at the Annual General Meeting.
- d) One qualifies to be a member of the executive after six months of membership in the church.
- e) The executive shall have power to appoint any sub-committee for the purpose purpose of performing any special duties in the church.

14 Trustees shall be elected by show of hand.

Only the heads of branches are to do the job, and consist of three members.

- a) Shall hold all the property of the church.
- b) The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board are authorised to sign, executives and complete any documents on behalf of the church.
- c) The Board shall be custodian of all deeds and documents pertaining property of the church but they are subject to the church Constitution.
- d) The Board shall secure delivery to it of all deeds of title, records permission to occupy land and any other deeds or evidence of title, which may entitle the church to own, or occupy property.
- e) All other property that may be acquired for the church shall be in their administration.

15 Meeting and Voting

- a) The Annual General Meeting shall be held in January yearly where a report of the executive and church accounts are given.
- b) Besides there are other General Meetings of members of all matters pertaining to the church.
- c) If at least 15 members sign a request to have a special General Meeting the secretary will organise it within 14 days.
- d) If 3 members of the executive sign a request to have a meeting the secretary will organise it within seven days.
- e) The president or the secretary has the right to call a meeting at any time on requested notice.
- f) The secretary shall sign all notices convening meetings.

16 Ministers

No preacher, Minister, or Deacons shall hold services or work in any district unless he or she has permission and certificate from the Executive Committee.

17 All Bishops, Ministers, preachers, preacher deacons must attend the Annual Conference.

- 18 No Minister holding church office shall leave his district or visit another district without the written permission from the executive or the board of Trustees.
- 19 Any member or preacher moving from one district to another shall automatically come under the control of the Minister of the district to which he has moved. The minister or preacher of each district shall be the congregation.
- 20 Any member of the Church who has disobeyed the Constitution of the church shall be dealt with by the District Minister within whose control he falls, which the minister shall report the punishment he intends imposing to his bishop, who shall approve or disapprove of such punishment before its imposition.
- g) Members of the Executive shall be given a 2 day notice in respect of any emergency meeting called.
- h) Members of the church shall be given at least five days notice in respect of any General Meeting called.
- i) A Quorum for a General Meeting is formed by twenty members.
- j) A Quorum for the Executive Meeting is formed by five members of the committee.
- k) The vote of the majority shall be binding upon the minority at all meetings.
- l) Every member is entitled to have one vote.
- m) A member shall not be allowed to vote if they have not been paying their membership fees and have not been members for more than six months.
- n) A list of members entitled to vote shall be compiled by the secretary and be made available at all meetings.
- o) All voting shall be by show of hands.
- p) Save where otherwise herein provided for, each meeting shall be entitled to elect its own chairman.
- 22 **The District Minister, or Preacher**, will preach the Gospel, pray for the sick and be responsible for the burial of the dead. The District Minister shall also baptise children and believers, administer Holy Communion and be entitled to solemnise marriages.
- 23 **The Deaconess** shall assist the church especially amongst women and children.
- 24 **The Bishop of each area** shall preach the Gospel, pray for the sick, lay to rest the dead, baptise believers, dedicate children, administer Holy Communion and be entitled to solemnise marriages. He shall visit all districts under his charge and supervise the duties of the Ministers and attend to the execution of the objects of the church.
- 25 **General**
This Constitution shall come into force or to be passed by a simple majority or members of the church present at a meeting. This Constitution shall only be altered or amended by a majority of 2/3 of members entitled to vote at a special meeting covered for this purpose.

4 Saint Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana

Constitution and Rules

1 Name:

2 Registered Office of the Church is at Gaborone and shall be changed only by the resolution of the Executive Committee.

3 Objectives of the Church

- a) To spread the teachings of Jesus Christ throughout the world.
- b) To baptise believers in the name of Jesus Christ.
- c) To assist the old, orphaned and disabled through prayer and material assistance.
- d) To receive donations for the furthering of the objects of the church, and to raise money by subscriptions or otherwise for these objects.

4 Membership of the Church is open to all.

5 Officers of the Church in order of seniority as follows:

- i) The Archbishop
- ii) Bishops
- iii) Ministers (Baruti)
- iv) Deacons (Batiakone)
- v) Evangelists
- vi) Preachers

The Executive Committee is responsible for the church promotions.

A member qualifies for promotion after five years in a particular rank except if the Executive Committee gives special credit.

Promotion takes place only after the Executive Committee received an order from the church leaders.

6 Executive Committee is elected annually and it is responsible for controlling church affairs, discipline, administration and finances. Such a committee shall comprise of:

- i) The Archbishop
- ii) The Chairman
- iii) The Vice Chairman
- iv) The Secretary who does all secretarial jobs for the church.
- v) The Vice-Secretary
- vi) The Treasurer - keeps the church accounts.
- vii) and two additional members.

7 Proceedings of Executive Committee

- a) Their meetings may be called by the Archbishop or Chairman.
- b) Each agenda to contain the items "other business" under which any other matter of concern may be raised
- c) The election of the Committee done through raising hands.
- d) The quorum of the Executive Committee is formed by four members.

8 Annual Conference

- a) Annual Conference Held at Easter and presided over by the Archbishop.
- b) Its Agenda

- i) Archbishop Annual Report
- ii) Treasurer's Financial Report
- iii) Election of Archbishop and members of Executive Committee.
- c) Motions from members to be included in the agenda are to be submitted to the Secretary about 30 days before the conference.
- d) The Agenda is made available to all members.
- e) Voting is done by secret ballot system and sometimes by raising of hands in various cases.
- f) At this conference a quorum is formed by forty members

9 Financial Administration

- a) The treasurer keeps records of all accounts of the church.
- b) Church funds to be kept in a Bank current account and withdrawals requires two signatures.
- c) Church financial year end on the 30th of April each year.
- d) Church officers receive no payment for holding any office.
- e) Members to be repaid in all expenditures incurred while on church business.

10 Discipline

- a) All members to abide by this constitution and rules made hereunder, under pain of disciplinary proceedings under this clause.
- b) Disciplinary powers in each area of the church are the responsibility of the church pastor who may even fine a member.
- c) Further repetition of the transgression the matter shall be referred to the Executive Committee which may expel the member concerned.
- d) An expelled transgressor may appeal to the three senior church members

11 Alterations of the Constitution or Rules

- a) Can be done by the approval of 2/3 of majority.
- b) The Registrar shall be informed if the above take place.

12 Dissolution

- a) Two-thirds of the majority at the Annual Conference can dissolve a church.

Annexure A: Church Rules

The Rules of the church which each member agrees to obey upon joining are:

1. To qualify for the position of Archbishop a member must be married.
2. All are subject to discipline, including the Archbishop himself, upon breaking the rules.
3. An expelled member and a member who resigned are not to use the name of the church.
4. All members shall obey the laws of Botswana.
5. No money should be paid to any member upon performing services of baptism, prayer and healing.
6. No woman member shall go bare-headed in public.
7. All members are prohibited from eating clove-hoofed animals.
8. All members are prohibited from drinking beer.
9. All members are prohibited from smoking.
10. Each member shall contribute annually the sum of 15 thebe to the church funds.

5 St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Healing Church (Apostolic Faith Mission)

Foundation: Founded by Mrs Talita Mmantshe in 1930, who eventually became head of the church in A.A. in Botswana. Mrs Gaseone introduced the 1st Branch in Mahalapye in 1959. Ever since then, many other branches have been introduced.

Constitution

1 Membership is open to all interested and if such a person consents to the constitution she becomes a baptised member characterised by a membership card for which an annual subscription of P1.00 is paid.

2 Preacher

As the member progresses in the church he/she then qualifies into another category known as a "Preacher". In order to become preacher one is taught the Bible for a period of three years. This course is taught to the member step by step, beginning from the book of Genesis until he/she attains his/her qualification. The duties of a preacher are also to be given an opportunity to preach during service. At the end of this three year course the successful the Preacher is then awarded a certificate (Preacher Certificate), which costs P1.00

3 Evangelist

The next category from Preacher is Evangelist, for which it takes two years to complete and qualify. The Evangelist is responsible for conducting and preaching in weekly services. During this two year course one is still taught the Bible. Their main duty is to establish branches in outside districts. After two years the successful candidate is awarded a certificate. The fee for this certificate is P1.50

4 Deacon

A deacon is a person given the right to baptise. Here a high degree of responsibility is shouldered. The evangelist who intends to be a deacon has to be good in interpretation of the Bible and also he/she has to be exceptionally reliable. The fee for the Deacon Certificate is P2.00.

5 Minister

To become a Minister, a Deacon has to complete a course of four years. The Minister is responsible for the administration of the church in his/her branch. He is also responsible for any responsibility directed at his branch and conducting "High Services". The fee for the award of a Minister Certificate is P10.00.

6 Bishop

The Bishop for the Diocese of the Botswana St. Peters Faith Healing Church is appointed by the Head of the Church, Mrs Talita Mmantshe.

The Diocese Executive Committee

This body is composed of twelve (12) members who are entirely responsible for the administration and financial status of the whole Diocese. The portfolios of the body are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| a) Chairman | b) Vice-chairman |
| c) Secretary | d) Vice-secretary |
| e) Treasurer | f) Vice-treasurer |
| g) Six more additional members. | |

This committee is subject to annual re-election held by the members of the church.

Important

All members of the church are strictly warned against any activities without the knowledge and the consent of the Diocese Executive Committee. Anybody who does so shall be liable to be brought before the 5105 Law for defamation of character by the above body. Any property involved in this matter shall be confiscated.

This Constitution was drawn up in 1963 by the church Committee.

APPENDIX II
HYMNOLOGY OF THE FIVE CHURCHES

29

1. Ke soabisitsoe, Modimo
Ke lefu la Jesu,
Ea imetsoeng ke likotlo
Tse loketseng batho.
2. Jesu ea se nang molato
O thakhiselitsoe'ng?
Na hase bakeng sa batho,
Batho ba sitiloeng?
3. U mokaakang ka mohau
Ho baetsalibe,
Ha u neile Mor'a hao,
Ho shoela ba babe!
4. U bokoe, Ntate, ke bohle,
Ho rorisoe Jesu!
Topollo e phethehile,
Re hloletsoe lefu!

31

1. Lefu la hao la mahlomola
Le ntsoabisitse, Morena;
U lahlehetsoe ke ho phela
Bakang sa libe tsa rona.
2. Lefatse la na la makala,
Ha le bona u timela;
Letsatsi la na la fifala,
Bakhethuoa ba hao ba lla.
3. Uena ea neng a re hlabetsoe,
Jesu, Konyan'a Molimo,
Mali a hao a ke a ntlhatsoe,
A mpulele leholimo!
4. Lerato la hao le makatse,
Le hlomole pelo ea ka;
U shoetse libe tsa lefatse,
Ak'u be 'Moloki oa ka!

32

1. Bonang lerato la Jesu,
Kamoo a re shoetseng lefu;
O shoetse batho ba sentseng,
Ba timetseng.
2. O tlohetse leholimo

Ke eena Mor'a Molimo;
Ke Konyana e hlabiloeng,
A re 'mokeng!

3. Seo Jesu a se batlang
Ke pelo tse mo mamelang
O li hlekela bophelo
Bo sa feleng

4. Re rateng bohle 'Moloki
Ea re biletsang ho hloeka;
Mohla a tiang, re tla bina
Alleluya!

72

1. Moetsalibe, tlo koano,
hlo u tle le libe tsa hao,
U se ke ua pata letho;
U tle, ho cho Jesu.

2. Moetsalibe, tlo feela,
U se hane lentsoe la ka,

Ke tla u pholosa feela;
U tle, ho cho Jesu.

3. Moetsalibe, tlo joale,
Se re u iteka pele;
Ke 'na ke u hlatsoang libe;
U tle, ho cho Jesu.

4. Moetsalibe, tlo koano;
Mopholosi e mong h'a eo.
Ke 'na feela mohaeno;
U tle, ho cho Jesu.

5. Moetsalibe, tlo feela:
Oho, se inkele letho,
Ke tla u fa tsohle feela;
U tle, ho cho Jesu.

6. Moetsalibe, tlo joale;
Ke neneng ke u emetse!
Hi'u akofe, se hehe,
U tle, ho cho Jesu.

73

1. Ngoana ea letsoalo,
Tiisa pelo;
U hlakole lillo.

Tlo ho Jesu.
U phakise,
Tlo kapele;
Ngoana ea letsoalo,
Tiisa pelo!

2. Leha li le kholo
Libe tsa hao,
Ha li site Jesu
Ea mohau.
O li tseba
Ka ho tlala;
Leha li le kholo
Libe tsa hao.
U bitsoa ke eena
Ka sebele;
U se ke ua hana,
Tlo kapele.
O bonolo,
O lerato;
U bitsoa ke eena
Ka sebele.
4. Na u liehela'ng?
U akofe;
Se ka u thibelang
Na ke sefe?
Tlo phomolong,
Tlo bophelong;
Na u liehela'ng?
U akofe.
5. U se re, u tla tla
Ka mohlomong.
Lefu le hlahela
Motho ka mong.
Ua ithetsa,
U ka rakoa;
U se re, u tla tla
Ka mohlomong.
6. U se qenehele
Letho le leng;
U tla fua tsohle
Tse lokileng.
O, ngoan'eso,
Tlo ho Jesu;
U se qenehele
Letho le leng.

89

1. Se teng seliba sa mali
Aletareng ea tefelo,
Liba see e leng setlhare;
Matl'a sona ke bophelo.
2. Baetsalibe ba batso
Ba se kenang ka tumelo,
Ba tloha teng ka bosoeu,
Ka thabo le ka tsoarelo.
3. Esale ke itlhatsoa teng,
Ke ntse ke bina topollo;
Ke be ke kene Moreneng,
Bolulong ba linyakallo.
4. Mohlang oo, ke tla kopana
Khanyeng le bohle ba hlotseng,
Ba binang pel'a Konyana
Rato le ba lopolotseng.
5. Ba re: Amen! Alleluya
Ho Boraro bo teroneng;
Ntate, le Mora, le Moea
Ba binoe ka ho sa feleng!

99

1. Bolibeng joa mahlomola,
Moo ke neng ke tebile,
Ha ke se ke ea timela,
Jesu, u n'u nkhopole:
Ua hlaha, ua ntutubolla,
Ka tsota lintle tsa hao,
Ka tseba le ho nyakalla,
Hoba ke bone mohau.
2. Empa ke sa ntse ke khasa;
Che, esita le joale
Matsoalo a sa ntlhokisa
Tumelo ea sebele.
Ke hopola libe tsa ka,
Ke ntse ke itelela,
Ke mpa ke lebala ngaka
E reng, e ka mphekola.
3. Jesu, u itse ho rona:
Tlong ho 'na, le se tsabe!
Hase meokho ea lona
E ka le hlatsoang libe:
Ke 'na ke le fang tsoarelo,
Ke 'na ea le folisang!

Morena, ha u rialo,
Re ka belaela joang?

100

1. Ke lumetse ho Morena,
Ke mo neile pelo ea ka;
O ineetse ho mpoloka,
Ke mo rata bakeng lena.

Lefu la hae lea mphelisa,
Rato la hae lea nthabisa.

2. Ke telile tsa lefatse,
Ke hlobohane le tsona;
gwo Jesu, u ahe ho 'na
Ka letsatsi le letsatsi.
Lefu la hao lea mphelisa,
Rato la hao lea ntselisa.

3. Ke khomaretse Morena;
Ke lehlohonolo la ka,
Ke tsabelo, ke lefika,
Ke na le tsohle ka eena.
Lefu la hae lea mphelisa,
Rato la hae lea ntsepisa.

4. Taba ea ka fatseng lena
Ke hore ke rate Jesu,
Le ho tsebisa baheso
Thabo e bonoang ho eena.
Lefu la hae lea mphelisa,
Rato la hae lea nkholisa.

108

1. Ha le mpotsa tsepo ea ka,
Ke tla re, ke Jesu;
Ke lapetse ho mo aka;
Ha hae ke ha eso.
2. Le re, ke bone'ng ho eena?
Ke bone phomolo;
Thabo e leng ho Morena
Ha e na phetolo.
3. Ka na ka nyoreloa botle,
Ka tsoatsoa ke batla,
Ka tsieloa ke ntho tsohle,
Ka felloa ke matla.
4. Athe Jesu o n'a mpona
Ha ke lela joalo;

A mpitsa a re: Tlo ho 'na,
U fole matsoalo.

5. Joale ke khotse ka mehla
Mohau oa Molimo;

Ke qalile ho iketla
Tsepong ea holimo.

116

1. Ha le lakatsa ho tseba
Kamoo ke pholositsoeng,
Mamelang, ha ke le joela,
Ke le supisa tsela.
Jesu ke 'Moloki oa ka,
O nkhetsetse bolulo;
Kea mo rata, hob'a nthata,
A 'neile bophelo.

2. Ke ne ke shoele melatong,
Ke ne ke hloka tsepo,
Ke ne ke mathela lefung,
Ke sa tsabe Molimo.
Jesu ke 'Moloki oa ka.

3. Teng ka utloa Evangeli
E re, Jesu o nchoetse;
Ea eba sona setlhare
Se thusang Moea oa me.
gwesu ke 'Moloki oa ka

4. E, kajeno ke folile,
Ke ngoana oa Molimo;
Ke lumetse, ke thabile;
Ha ke na pelaelo.
Jesu ke 'Moloki oa ka

5. Leha ke le matsoenyehong,
Ke loana ntoa e kholo,
Nke ke ka sutha bophelong,
Ke bolokoa ke Jesu.
Jesu ke 'Moloki oa ka.

6. Monghali, kea rapela,
U nthuse ka tiisetso,
Ke e'o tseba ho finyella
Motseng oa linyakallo.
Jesu ke 'Moloki oa ka.

138

1. Haufi le Morena - Haufinyana
Leha sefapano - Se ka ntlisa;

Ke ntse ke pheella
Ho ba haufinyana
Le Morena

2. Mosepeli eloa - Hola ke 'na
Ea samileng lejoe - A robala;
Bosiu a lora
A le haufinyana
Le Morena
3. Tsela ka e bona - E nyolohang
E kenang holimo - Moo ho khanyang;
Manyeloi a matle
A hoehle a nkise
Ho Morena
4. Mohla ke phaphamang - Ke thabile,
Ke haha altare - Ea Bethele;
Se beng se le thata,
Se tla nkatametsa
Ho Morena
5. Mohla me phaphamang - Ha r'a maru,
Ke sieang lefatse - La mahloko,
Ke tla 'ne ke bine,
Ke be ke finyelle
Ho Morena

195

1. E, joale ke tla oroha
Ka la Simeone;
Ke tsepile ho pholoha
Motseng oa Sione.
2. O ne a kene tempeleng:
A fihlela Jesu
Ea baletsoeng batho mehleng,
Ke Molim'oa rona.
3. Jesu ka sebele-bele,
Seli la lichaba,
Tlotlo la Iseraele,
Hloho ea litaba.
4. Le 'na ke 'mone 'Moloki
Ea ntefetseng libe;
Ke se ke le mopholohi,
Ngoana oa Sione.

196

1. Moruo oa leholimo
O beetsoe bana

Ba hlahisoang ho Molimo,
Ba tsoaeloa oona.

2. Ngoana enoa oa Adama
O tsoaletsoe libeng;
Jesu, u tle ho mo ama,
Mo hlatsoe selibeng.
3. Seliba ke mali a hao,
A lefang melato
Ea bohle ba tlotseng melao
Ea 'mopi oa batho.
4. Nea ngoana eo matsatso
Le lehlohonolo;
Mo hlekele mona fatse
Tsela e bonolo.
5. Nea ngoana eo temoho,
Etlere h'a hotse,
A lumele ka teboho
Hoba u mo thotse.
6. U ngole lebitso la hae
Bukeng ea bophelo;
Mohla a shoang, a kene hae,
A pheme timelo.

222

1. Lala ho 'na shoalane e oele,
Meriti ea bosiu ke ena;
Ba neng ba nthusa ba tsamaile;
Uena, Morena, tlo, lala ho 'na!
2. Tsiu tsa ka li feta kapele;
Thabo le khanya ea fatse lena,
Tsohle lia senyeha, li timele;
Uena ea sa feteng, lala ho 'na!
3. Ha ke batle chalimo ea mahlo,
Ke lakatsa ho ba moratua,
Ke tloaelane le rato la hao;
Se faphohele, tlo, lala ho 'na!
4. Se tle ka botsabeha, Morena,
Tlo ka mosa, tlo ka matseliso;
Tlosa libe tsee ke llang ka tsona;
Thuso ea ba sitoang, lala ho 'na!
5. Ke u lakatsa ka nako tsohle;
Matla a hao a fenya Satane;
Ha ho motho ea joale ka uena;

Thabong le bohlokong, lala ho 'na!

6. Ha u le teng, ke tleloa ke matla,
Le mahlomola ha a sa baba,
Ha ke tsohe lefu le lebitla;
Ke li holtse, ha u lala ho 'na!
7. Mohla ke orohang, u nkhothatse;
Khanya leffing, u mpontse tsela;
Botso bo se, seli le nchabele;
Leholimong, u ntse u na le 'na!

255

1. Naha e teng e ratehang,
E kenoang ke balopolloa;
Ke rata ho ea kena teng,
Ntjoetse, na ke tla lumelloa?

Menate eohle ea libe,
Ruri ha ke e lakatse;
Ke lakatsa ho hong feela,
Ho hong feela: leholimo!

2. Tsoalo la ka le ntsabisa
Le re, be tsa ka li ngata,
Li ntso, li mpe, li ka sita
Mali a Jesu a matle.

Menate eohle ea libe.

3. Sera se ntse se ntsietsa,
Hase le ho mpelaetsa!
Se re, ha ke na ho kena,
Ke ntse ke soabisa Moea.

Menate eohle ea libe.

4. Ke mpa ke ntse ke itiisa,
Ke talima Jesu feela.
Ha a re ho 'na: U ntsepe,
See nka se tsohang ke sefe?
Menate eohle ea libe.

5. Moren'a ka, ke leboha
Ha u itse: Le tle ho 'na,
Lona bohle, ba khathetseng,
Ba imeloang! Ke 'na e mong.

Menate eohle ea libe.

268

1. Sefapanong ke boha
Uena, 'Moloki oa ka;
Mali a tsoang mapebeng,
Le metsi lehlakoreng,
Ka 'ona, ke re ntlhatsoe,
Ke be motle, ke loke.

2. Nka sebetsa joang le joang,
Ha ho letho le nthusang;
Kapa e leng likhapha,
Mahloko, mahlomola;

Be se ke ke sa tlosoa,
Ha e se k'uena feela.

3. Leha nka tlisa gauda
Tsa lefatse kaofela,
Ha li na ho talingoa,
Ha li na ho ntopolla.
Ke tla ke tsepa uena,
Ke se ke ka timela.

4. Ke se ke tla tsamaea
Eto la ho qetella;
Pel'a hao ha ke fihla,
U se ke ua nteleka!
Uena, lefika la ka,
Ke tsabetse ho uena.

309

1. Ho felile, ke lehlohonolo:
Jesu o nchoetse, tsoarelo e teng;
Lithohako tse nkhametsang
Li khutsisitoe ke Jesu.

O ngoan'eso, hlo u lumele,
Topollo u e amohele;
Sefapanong tsoarelo e teng
Le bophelo bo sa feleng.

2. Ho felile, ke lehlohonolo:
Ke tsoa lintsing tsa lihele tse ntso,
Ke hloibitsoe teneng tsa lefu
Ke Jesu, Mong'a topollo.

O ngoan'eso, hlo u lumele.

3. Ho felile, ke lehlohonolo:
Ana ke mang ea ka nkisang khotla?
Ka tsekisoe'ne Jes'o nkemetse;

Ho 'na ha ho sa le tsuo

O ngoan'eso, hlo u lumele.

4. Ho felile, ke lehlohonolo:
Ha ke le moratuo oa Jesu,
Ke sa batla'ng? Ke khotsoe pelo,
Ke le fumane lerato.

O ngoan'eso, hlo u lumele.

5. Ho felile, ke lehlohonolo:
Leha ke phalleloa ke lefatse
Ke meleko, ka litsietsi,
Ke fumane setsabelo.

O ngoan'eso, hlo u lumele.

6. Ho felile, ke lehlohonolo:
Leholimong le 'na ke tla fihla.
Ha nka ba le Jesu ka mehla,
Ha ho tlotlo le lekalo.

O ngoana'eso, hlo u lumele.

315

1. Ha ke le tjee, ke le mobe,
Ke le ea khesehang,
Na har'a baetsalibe
Na ke bonoe joang?

Jo, ke mohlolo - hlolo

Ha ke ratoa le 'na
Ka rato le lekalo,
Le ke Morena.

2. O nkentse joang moratuo,
Ntho e hlokolotsi,
Le daemane ea bohlokoa,
'Na molefatse?
Jo, ke mohlolo-hlolo...

3. Oa mpatla, oa mpatlisisa
Ka lilemo - lemo;
Oa mphumana, oa mphelisa,
Oona Molimo.

Jo, ke mohlolo - hlolo...

4. Ke phela ka boiketlo

Atleng tsa Morena;
Ke ka thaka ea leihlo
Le 'na ho eena.

Jo, ke mohlolo - hlolo.

APPENDIX III

DISTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCHES IN BOTSWANA

List at the offices of Home Affairs in Botswana 1983

Central District

1. African Born Full Gospel Church
2. African Evangelical Church
3. African Gospel Church
4. Bethania Church
5. Bethlehem Faith Mission
6. Botswana Holiness Church of Christ
7. Citizen Apostolic Prophet Church
8. Christian Faith Mission
9. Christian Salvation Mission of Botswana
10. Church of God Mission
11. Church of the living Apostolic
12. Eleven Apostles Healing Church
13. Galatia Church in Zion
14. Five Apostles Church
15. Great Christian Church of Botswana, The
16. Guta Ra Jehova Church
17. Head Mountain
18. Holiness Union Church in Botswana
19. Holy Banner Mission Church of Africa
20. Holy Bontle Apostolic Church in Zion
21. Holy Christian Church, The
22. Jehova's Witness
23. Jerico Church
24. Morians Episcopal Church
25. New Apostolic Prophets Church
26. New Convent Church of Christ in Mission
27. New Jerusalem Apostolic Healing Church
28. No.1 General Mission Church of Christ All over Africa
29. Pentecostal Holiness Church of Botswana
30. Revelation Blessed Peace Church of Botswana
31. Seventh Day Adventist Church
32. Spiritual Healing Church
33. St. David Apostolic Healing Church
34. St. Engenas Zion Christian Church
35. St. Faith Holy Church
36. St. John Apostolic Faith Mission
37. St. Matthew Apostolic Faith Mission
38. St. Paul Apostolic Faith Mission in Botswana
39. St. Phillips Faith Healing Mission
40. United Apostolic Faith Mission
41. Zion Christian Church of Botswana

Chobe and Ngamiland Districts

1. Church of God Mission
2. Eleven Apostles Healing Church
3. Head Mountain Apostolic Healing Church
4. New Jerusalem Apostolic Healing Church
5. Spiritual Healing Church
6. St. Engenas Zion Christian Church
7. St. Faith Holy Church
8. St. John Apostolic Faith Mission
9. St. Phillips Faith Healing Church
10. Zion Christian Church of Botswana

Ghanzi and Kgalagadi Districts

1. African Methodist Episcopal Church, The
2. Botswana Independence Church
3. Eleven Apostles Healing Church
4. Evangelical Religious Protestant Unity Church
5. Holy Bontle Apostolic Church in Botswana
6. Holy Bontle Apostolic Church in Zion
7. Morians Episcopal Church
8. Spiritual Healing Church
9. St. John Apostolic Faith Mission

Kgatleng District

1. Apostolic Jerusalem Church
2. Christian Holy Church in Zion of South Africa
3. Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion
4. International Pentecostal Church
5. Spiritual Healing Church
6. St. Engenas Zion Christian Church
7. St. John Apostolic Faith Mission
8. St. Luka Faith Mission Church
9. St. Matthews Apostolic Faith Mission Church
10. St. Paul Apostolic Faith Mission Church in South Africa
11. Zion Christian Church of Botswana

Kweneng District

1. Baptist Union of Botswana
2. Christian Faith Mission in Botswana
3. Church of Christ, The
4. First Apostolic Church of St. John in South Africa, The
5. Holy Bontle Apostolic Church in Zion
6. Holy Sarada
7. New Convent Church of Christ Mission
8. Noah's Church
9. Revelation Blessed Peace Church of Botswana
10. Spiritual Healing Church

11. St. John Apostolic Faith Mission
12. St. Matthews Apostolic Faith Mission Church
13. St. Paul Apostolic Faith Mission
14. United Evangelical Church of Christ in Africa
15. United Pentecostal Church
16. United Pentecostal of Botswana

North-East District

1. African Gospel Church
2. Apostolic Church in Zion
3. Baptist Mission of Botswana
4. Botswana Crusaders Church
5. Botswana Festival Church in Zion
6. Botswana Orthodox Church
7. Christian Salvation Mission of Botswana
8. Church of God in Christ
9. Church of God of Prophecy
10. Eleven Apostles Spirit Healing Church
11. Full Church of Africa, The
12. Full Gospel Church of God, The
13. God in Christ Church
14. Gospel of God Church
15. Gospel's Messengers, The
16. Guta Ra Mwari (City of God)
17. Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion
18. Holy Apostolic Church in Zion, The
19. Holy Free Corner Stone Apostolic Church
20. Holy Galilee Church
21. New Convent Church of Christ Mission
22. New Jerusalem
23. Seven "Stars" Church in Botswana
24. Spiritual Healing Church
25. Spiritual Healing Church
26. St. Engenas Zion Christian Church
27. St. Faith Holy Church
28. St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission
29. St. John's Faith Healing Church
30. St. Matthews Apostolic Faith Mission Church
31. St. Paul Apostolic Faith Mission Church
32. St. Peter's Apostolic Faith Mission Church
33. Tribal Christian Keep Sabbath Holy Church
34. Twelve Prophecy Church, The
35. Zion Christian Church of Botswana

South-East District

1. African Evangelical United Church of Christ, The
2. African Gospel Church
3. African Methodist Episcopal Church, The
4. African Mission Society
5. Africana United Baptist Church
6. Ascension Church, The
7. Betheela Christian Church
8. Bethlehem City of Christ Church
9. Botswana Holiness Church of Christ
10. Christ the Word of God

11. Christian Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa
12. Christian Faith Mission in Botswana
13. Christian Salvation Mission of Botswana
14. Church of God Prophecy, The
15. Church of Prophecy, The
16. Ditiro Church of Botswana
17. Eleven Apostles Healing Church
18. Elotha Apostolic Prophet Church in Africa
19. Evangelical Fellowship of Botswana
20. Forward in Faith
21. General Apostolic Church of Botswana
22. Gospel of God Church
23. Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion
24. Holy Christian Church
25. Light of Life Church in Botswana, The
26. Local Church of Botswana
27. Memorial Apostolic Church
28. Messiah Church of Ten Commandments, The
29. Modern Evangelisation Media in Botswana
30. Morians Episcopal Church
31. Nazarete Church of Botswana
32. New Convent Church of Christ Mission
33. No.1 General Mission Church of Christ all over Africa
34. Old Apostolic Church of Africa, The
35. Pentecostal Holiness Church of Botswana
36. Phillips Faith Healijg Church
37. Phuthego ya ga Keresete
38. Revelation Blessed Peace Church of Botswana
39. Spiritual Healing Church
40. St. Andrews Society of Botswana
41. St. Emmanuel Apostolic Church of South Africa
42. St. Engenas Zion Christian Church
43. St. Faith Holy Church
44. St. Gallery's Church
45. St. Gethsemane Church of Christ in Botswana
46. St. John's Apostolic Faith Healing Church
47. St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission
48. St. Luke's Gospel Church of Botswana
49. St. Mark's Service Church
50. St. Matthews Apostolic Faith Mission
51. St. Palmos Faith Mission Church in Christ
52. St. Paul's Apostolic Faith Mission Church of South Africa
53. Tlolaganyo Healing Church
54. Twelve Apostle's Healing Church of Africa, The
55. United Pentecostal Church in Botswana
56. Universal Sabbath Church
57. Zion Christian Church of Botswana

Southern District

1. Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion of Botswana
2. Emmanuel Holy Apostolic Church of Botswana
3. Holy Suda Apostolic Christian Church of South Africa
4. Jacob's Ladder Church
5. Pentecostal Holiness Church of Botswana
6. Revelation Blessed Peace Church of Botswana

7. Spiritual Healing Church
8. St. John Apostolic Faith Mission
9. United Pentecostal Church

APPENDIX IV
QUESTIONNAIRE

Jesus Christ

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
(Ene Jesu ke mang?)
2. How is Jesus different from other Jewish prophets?
(Jesu o farologana jang le baporofeta ba Bajuta?)
3. How is Moses different from Jesus?
(Moshe o farologana jang le Jesu?)
4. Is Jesus the Saviour?
(A Jesu ke mopholosi wa batho botlhe?)
5. How did he save the world?
(O pholositse jang lefatshe?)
6. Does Jesus save from sin?
(A Jesu o pholosa batho mo dibeng?)
7. Does Jesus save from hunger and poverty?
(A Jesu o pholosa batho mo bohumaneging, tlaleng le bolwetseng)
8. How is Jesus helping you in life?
(Jesu o go thusa jang mo botshelong?)
9. Why do you believe in Jesus?
(Ke eng fa o le mokeresete, o dumela eng mo go Jesu?)
10. What are the teachings about Jesus Christ?
(Kereke e ruta eng ka ga Jesu?)
11. Do you believe what the church teaches about Jesus Christ?
(A o dumela mo go Jesu ka ntata ya dithuto tsa kereke kgotsa o dumela ka ntata ya maitemogelo a gago?)
12. Do you have hidden questions about Jesus?
(A wena o le nosi o na le dipotso dingwe tse di iphitlhileng ka ga Jesu?)
13. Taking life as it is now and what it is said to have been during the earthly life of Jesus, do you think Jesus came at the right time or do you think it is now that we need him most?
(Fa o tsaya botshelo ka fa bo ntseng ka teng gompieno, le jaaka bo neng bo ntse ka teng ka nako ya botshelo jwa ga Jesu mo lefatsheng, a o akanya gore Jesu o tsile ka nako e e siameng kana o akanya gore ke gone re motlhokang thata jaanong?)
14. Does Jesus bless you?
(A Jesu o a go segofatsa mo botshelong?)
15. How does he bless you?
(O go segofatsa jang?)
16. What do you believe about the second coming of Jesus?
(O dumela eng ka go tla ga ga Jesu labobedi?)

Holy Spirit

17. Who is the Holy Spirit?
(Mowa oo Boitshepo ke mang?)
18. What is the role of the Holy Spirit?

- (Tiro ya Mowa oo Boitshepo ke eng mo kerekeng?)
19. Where does the Holy Spirit fit in the relationship between God the Father and his son Jesus?
(Mowa oo Boitshepo o tsena fa kae mo gare ga Modimo le Jesu Morwa?)
 20. What does the church teach about the Holy Spirit?
(Boitseanape ja kereke ke eng ka ga Mowa oo Boitshepo?)
 21. Did you ever experience being possessed by the Spirit?
(A wena o kile wa tshwarwa ke mowa?)
 22. Is Christianity incomplete without the Holy Spirit?
(A go ka twe bokeresete bo heletse kwa ntle ga Mowa oo Boitshepo?)
 23. Are there people possessed by the Holy Spirit in your church?
(A go na le batho ba ba tshwarwang ke Mowa mo kerekeng ya lona?)
 24. How do you view them?
(Lo akanya eng fela ka ga bone?)
 25. Why would they be possessed?
(Ke eng fa ba tshwarwa ke Mowa?)
 26. What do you do if one is possessed?
(Lo dira eng fa motho a tshwerwe ke Mowa?)
 27. In your church, who are possessed more often, men or women?
(Fa ele banna le basadi mo kerekeng ya lona ba ba tshwarwang hata ke Mowa ke bafe?)
 28. Do all people have the Holy Spirit?
(A batho botlhe ba na le Mowa oo Boitshepo?)
 29. Who (among the congregation) have special gifts of the Holy Spirit?
(Ke bafe mo phuthengong ya bakeresete ba ba nang le mpho ee kgetlhegileng ya Mowa oo Boitshepo?)

God the Father

30. How does God love the world?
(Modimo Rara o rata lefatshe jang?)
31. Does God care for your life?
(A Modimo Rara o a go tlhokomela mo botshelong?)
32. How does God take care of you in life?
(Modimo Rara o go tlhokomela jang mo botshelong?)
33. What do you understand by the Trinity of God?
(O tlhologanya eng ka boraro mo bongweng jwa Modimo, ebong Rara, le Morwa, le Mowa?)

Prophecy

34. What is prophecy?
(Boporofeta ke eng?)
35. What does prophecy do for you?
(Boporofeta bo go direla eng?)
36. Who works through prophecy?
(Ke mang yo o dirisang boporofiti?)
37. Why is prophecy important?
(Ke ka ntlha ya eng boporofiti bo na le mosola?)
38. Should prophecy be practised by all churches?
(A dikereke tsotlhe di tshwanetse go dirisa boporofiti?)
39. Was the prophecy among African people of old?

- (A go kile ga bo go na le boporofiti mo bathong ba maAfirika ba bogologolo?)
40. Is there still prophecy in African society?
(A boporofiti bo sale teng mo merafeng ya MaAfirika gompieno?)
41. Does prophecy see inside?
(A boporofiti bo kgona go bona boteng jwa motho?)

Healing

42. Why is healing important?
(Ke eng fa ditshebeletso di na le mosola?)
43. Who is actually present in any healing?
(Ke mang yo eleng gore o teng tota mo ditirong tsa ditshebeletso?)
44. Whose power is used in healing?
(Go dirisiwa thata ya ga mang mo ditshebeletsong?)
45. How does the healer act?
(Mosebeletsi o dira jang?)
46. Do you want to be a healer?
(A o batla bosebeletsi?)
47. Do you believe in the healing of the body?
(A o dumela mo go fodiseng mmele?)
48. Do you believe in the healing of the soul?
(A o dumela mo go fodiseng mowa?)
49. How does healing take place?
(Go fodisa go diragala jang? mo bathong?)
50. Is Jesus connected with healing?
(A Jesu o amana le go fodisa?)
51. How is he (Jesus) connected with healing?
(Jesu o amana le go fodisa jang?)
52. Is the Holy Spirit connected with healing?
(A Mowa oo Boitshepo o amana le go fodisa?)
53. How is he (the Holy Spirit) connected with healing?
(Mowa oo Boitshepo o amana le go fodisa jang?)
54. Should healing be practised by all churches?
(A go fodisa go tshwanetse ga dirwa ke dikereke tsotlhe fela?)
55. Is God the Father connected with healing?
(A Modimo Rara o amana le go fodisa?)
56. Should all people experience healing?
(A batho botlhe ba tshwanetse go fodisiwa?)
57. Why is water used in healing?
(Ke eng go dirisiwa metsi mo ditshebeletsong?)
58. Why is "sewasho" used?
(Ke eng fa sewasho se dirisiwa?)
59. Is there any power in "sewasho"?
(A sewasho se na le nonofo nngwe?)
60. Are ancestors involved in healing?
(A badimo ba na le seabe mo ditshebeletsong?)
61. What is the significance of "go kapa" - how does it cleanse the body/person?
(Go kapa go supa eng, go ka tlhatswa mmele/motho jang?)
62. Are "diagelo" important for healing?
(A diagelo di na le mosola mo ditshebeletsong?)

BAPTISM

63. What is baptism?
(Kolobetso ke eng?)
64. What does baptism do for you?
(Kolobetso e go direla eng?)
65. What does baptism cleanse?
(Kolobetso e tlhapisa eng?)
66. Is baptism necessary for all people?
(A yone ea tlhokafala mo bathong botlhe?)
67. Why is baptism necessary for all people?

COMMUNION

68. What is Communion?
(Selalelo ke eng?)
69. Why do you receive Communion?
(Ke eng fa o se amogela?)
70. What does Communion do for you?
(Selalelo se go direla eng?)
71. Is Communion necessary for salvation?
(A selalelo se a tlhokafala gore motho a pholosiwe?)
72. How does Communion help you in life?
(Se go thusa jang mo botshelong?)

WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN LIFE

73. Why do you wear church uniforms?
(Ke eng lo na le seaparo sa kereke?)
74. What do colours mean in your church?
(Mebala e emetse/supang mo kerekeng ya lona?)
75. Do you use drums in your church?
(A lo dirisa meropa mo kerekeng ya lona?)
76. Do you take off your shoes when you enter church?
(A le rola ditlhako fa go tsenwa mo kerekeng?)
77. Do you close your eyes when praying?
(A lo tswala matlho fa lo rapela?)
78. Do you raise your arms when praying?
(A lo tsholetsa mabogo fa le rapela?)
79. How do you help your church?
(O thusa kereke ya gago jang?)
80. Why should the Gospel be preached?
(Ke eng go tshwanetse go rerwa lefoko la Modimo?)
81. Why should children be blessed in church?
(Ke eng fa bana ba tshwanetse go segofadiwa mo kerekeng?)
82. Why should people be trained as evangelists?
(Ke eng fa batho ba rutwa gonna baefangedi?)
83. Why is it important to promote fellowship among other people?
(Ke eng fa go tlhokafala gore go godisiwe boloko ja tumelo mo bathong ba bangwe?)
84. How does the church help you to lead a holy life?
(Kereke e go thusa jang go tshela botshelo jo bo boitshepo?)
85. Does the word of God preached help you?
(A lefoko la Modimo le le rerwang le a go thusa?)
86. Does the church help to unite you?

- (A kereke e thusa go le kopanya le le badumedi?)
87. What is your role in spreading the word of God?
(Seabe sa gago ke eng mo go gaseng lefoko la Modimo?)
88. Do you want your church to grow bigger?
(A o batla kereke ya gago e gola e nna tona?)
89. Why do you want your church to grow bigger?
(Ke eng o batla kereke ya gago e gola e nna tona e bo e anama)
90. Should the young be given religious instruction?
(A go tshwanetse gore bana ba rutwe ditsamaiso tsa tumedi?)
91. Why should the young be given/not given religious instruction
(Ke eng go tshwanela gore ba fiwe/kgotsa ba seka ba fiwa ditsamaiso tsa tumedi?)
92. What do you do to help others?
(O dira jang go thusa batho ba bangwe?)
93. Is your church open to everybody?
(A kereke ya gago e letlelela go tsenwa ke mongwe le mongwe go nna molatedi wa yone?)
94. Why is your church open to everybody?
(Ke eng kereke ya gago e letlelela mongwe le mongwe go nna molatedi wa yone?)
95. How do you assist the old?
(Lo thusa jang bagodi?)
96. How do you assist the sick?
(Lo thusa jang balwetse?)
97. How do you assist the orphans and the disabled?
(Lo thusa jang masiela le digole?)
98. How does the church help you to maintain discipline in your life?
(Kereke e go thusa jang go diragatsa boitshwaro?)
99. How does the church help you to become a good person?
(Kereke e go thusa jang gore o nne motho yo o botoka?)
100. What do you understand by "go tlhabela badimo?"
(O tlhaloganya eng ka go tlhabela badimo?)
101. Do you practise "go tlhabela badimo?"
(A o dirisa go tlhabela badimo?)
102. Why do you practise "badimo?"
(Ke eng o dirisa go tlhabela badimo?)
103. What are sacred ropes?
(Meitlamo ke eng?)
104. What do they mean?
(E raya eng?)
105. What do they do?
(E dira eng?)
106. What does the colour red signify?
(Mmala o moshibidu o raya eng?)
107. What does the colour blue signify?
(Mmala o botala jwa lewapi o raya eng?)
108. What does the colour white signify?
(Mmala o mosweu o raya eng?)
109. What does the colour green signify?
(Mmala oo botala jwa bojang o raya eng?)
110. What does the colour yellow signify?
(Mmala o o lephutshe o supa eng?)
111. What are the sacred rods?

- (Ditsamma ke eng?)
 112. What do they signify?
 (Tsone di supa eng?)

MARRIAGE

113. Is marriage important?
 (A nyalo e botlhokwa?)
 114. Why is marriage important?
 (Ke eng e le botlhokwa?)
 115. What is expected of a marriage?
 (Go solofelwa eng mo nyalong?)
 116. What kind of marriage is a bad marriage?
 (Nyalo e e sa siamang ke ee ntseng jang?)
 117. Which kind of marriage is a good marriage?
 (Nyalo e e siameng ke e e ntseng jang?)
 118. Is sexual intercourse allowed outside marriage?
 (A kopanelo dikobo (thobalo) e a letlelelwa ko ntle ga nyalo
 119. Why?
 (Ka go reng?)
 120. Is divorce permitted?
 (A tlhalo e a letlelesega?)
 121. When is divorce permitted?
 (Tlhalano e letlelelwa fa go rileng/fela?)
 122. Can a person divorce and marry another?
 (A motho a ka tlhala a bo a nyala gape?)
 123. Why does a pregnant girl get suspended from church?
 (Ke eng fa ngwanyana yo o ithweleng a kgaolwa mo kerekeng?)
 124. In your church is polygamy allowed?
 (A mo kerekeng ya lona go pataganya basadi go a letlelelwa?)
 125. Why?
 (Ka go reng?)
 126. In your church is monogamy preferred?
 (A mo kerekeng ya lona go nyala mosadi a le mongwe go a ratega?)
 127. Why?
 (Ka go reng?)

SIN AND WITCHCRAFT

128. What is sin?
 (Sebe ke eng?)
 129. How does a person sin?
 (Motho o leofa jang?)
 130. What are the teachings of your church about sin?
 (Kereke ya gago e ruta eng ka ga sebe?)
 131. The Fifth Commandment says "Thou shall not kill." If a person kills in the process of self-defence, is that sin?
 (Molao wa botlhano ware "Ope a seka a bolaya." Ha motho a ka bolaya a ne a leka go iphemela a ke sebe?)
 132. How can people avoid sinning?
 (Batho ba ka iphapha jang mo dibeng?)
 133. What is witchcraft?
 (Boloji ke eng?)

134. Who gives witchcraft power?
(Thata ya boloi e tswa mo go mang?)
135. Who protects people against witchcraft?
(Ke mang yo o sireletsang batho mo boloi?)
136. What will happen to witches at Jesus' second coming?
(Baloi ba tla diragalelwa ke eng fa Jesu a tla labobedi?)
137. Should society accept back repentant witches?
(A sechaba se tshwanetse go amogela baloi ba ba ikwatlhayang)

FORGIVENESS

138. What does your church teach about forgiveness?
(Kereke ya lona e ruta eng ka go itshwarela?)
139. What do you think about forgiveness yourself?
(O akanya eng ka go itshwarela wena?)
140. If a person commits sin, can the person hope to be forgiven?
(A fa motho a dira sebe a o ka solofela go ka itshwarelwa?)
141. How is forgiveness made possible?
(Go dirwa jang gore itshwarelo e kgonege?)
142. The Bible says: "Forgive seventy seven times seventy times." What is the implication of this statement?
(Baebele ya re "O itshwarele mongwe ka wena go lekana le masome a a supa ga bo supa." Polelo e e kaya eng?)
143. If the above statement implies forgiving as many times as possible, what do you think of prisons, are they defeating the purpose of forgiveness?
(Ha polelo e e raya gore go itshwarelwe gantsintsi fela ka fa o ka kgonang ka teng, o akanyang ka ditronko, a di ganana le motheo wa go itshwarela?)
144. Does God always forgive when one asks for forgiveness?
(A Modimo o a itshwarela ka nako tsotlhe fa a kopiwa?)
145. What if one sins deliberately, that is, one doing something one knows one is not supposed to do; doing with full knowledge that the action is wrong, will God forgive?
(Fa motho a leofa ka bomo gonne fa motho a dira sengwe ka kitso ya gore ga a a tshwarela go se dira, a dira fela a ntse a itse gore se a se dirang ga se a siama, a Modimo o tla mo itshwarela?)
146. Can witches be forgiven?
(A baloi ba ka itshwarelwa?)

DEATH

147. What death mean to you as a Cristian?
(Leso le raya eng mo go wena o le mokeresete?)
148. What is "sefifi?"
(Sefifi ke eng?)
149. When/how does a person get "sefifi?"
(Motho o nna le sefifi go rileng?)
150. How does death affect the community?
(Leso le ama batho/morafe jang?)
151. Why does a widow or widower get "sefifi?"
(Moswagadi kana Motlholagadi o tsenwa ke sefifi jang?)
152. Why/how do children get "sefifi?"
(Bana ba tsenwa ke sefifi jang?)
153. How is "sefifi" cleansed?
(Sefifi se tlhatswiwa jang?)

154. Is there any Biblical foundation for cleansing "sefifi?"
(A go na le gongwe mo baebeleng ka ga go tlhatswa/go ntsha sefifi?)
155. Where in the Bible?
(Ke fa kae mo baebeleng?)
156. Why do people wear black when they mourn?
(Ke eng fa batho ba apara bontsho fa ba roula?)
157. Why do people wear blue when they mourn?
(Ke eng fa batho ba apara botala ja legodimo fa ba roula?)
158. How are people cleansed after a death in the family?
(Batho ba tlhapiswa jang morago ga lesa?)

INTERVIEWS OF LEADERSHIP OF THE FIVE CHURCHES

<u>Bishop</u>	<u>Church</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Period covered</u>
Akanyang	BCCCZ	Molepolole	1982 to 1992
Setimela	BCCCZ	Selibi-Phikwe	1985 to 1992
Tanyala	FF	Gaborone	1982 to 1992
Seema	GCZ	Mogonye	1982 to 1992
Seithamo	STG	Gaborone	1982 to 1992
Hlabano	STP	Gaborone	1982 to 1985