

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reconstructs the history of the development of the African initiated churches in Southern Africa particularly in Botswana. It shows how colonization of the African continent and Apartheid influenced the emergence and development of these churches. It also shows that the South African situation played a significant role in the formation of the African Initiated Churches in Botswana. In broader terms, this implies that the historical comprehensiveness of these churches will always be understood in relation to the South African situation. This, does not necessarily mean that South Africa is the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa which played a key role in the formation of the AICs in Botswana. But, comparatively speaking, South Africa contributed more than any other country in this regard in the region. It also endeavours to show that the fierce opposition which the AICs faced from both the traditional authorities and Euro-American missionaries in Botswana. Lastly, it gives a brief summary of the role of these churches in the community.

African Initiated Churches in Botswana: Historical perspective. The Origin, Growth and Expansion of AICs in Botswana

The emergence and development of the AICs in Botswana, as indicated in the introduction of this study, must be broadly understood and dealt with in the context of the colonization of the African continent and attitude of the Euro-American missionaries of the Mission Churches who brought Christianity to Africa (Amanze 1998:1). This chapter will largely deal with the AICs within the confines of Southern Africa particularly in the context of Botswana. This will serve as a background to the understanding of the Zionist Churches in Botswana, the focus of the research. From chapter two the study will be confined to the Zionists. A consideration of the Southern African situation, as indicated above will place the AICs of Botswana in their proper historical context. The South African context will be a great deal as it influenced the emergence of the AICs in Botswana (Amanze 1998:71), which implies that the history of the AICs in Botswana cannot be divorced from their history in South Africa. By comparison, South Africa has more of these churches than any

other country in Southern Africa (Daneel 1991:43). Recent research by Hendrics and Erasmus shows that while the South African membership of Mission Churches is 48% in population of both blacks and whites, 35% of the population belong to the African Initiated Churches' membership. This demonstrates clearly that the AICs are really a religious force to be reckoned with (West 1975:2).

The question maybe asked: who are the African Initiated Churches and where do they come from? There is a multiplicity of reasons why these churches are called the African Initiated Churches. Daneel, for instance, explicitly states that these churches are of African origin, founded by Africans, despite the fact that some of them are not exclusive and do admit white members, but are largely adapted to the needs, life-view and life-style of the black people (1991:31). Therefore, membership of Whites in the AICs as Daneel has showed, has never been significant in terms of numbers; it can be said that it has always been just a drop in the ocean. The few whites who are members of the AICs easily do what the majority of members are doing. Turner quoted in Daneel (1991:31) asserts that "these churches are primarily for African", *"adding, these churches are predominantly black African in membership, as shown above, because of the secession from the Mission Churches"*. The problem of the colonization of the African continent, apartheid in South Africa etc resulted in white domination of Mission Churches which in turn, resulted in many secessions (Daneel 1991:4660, Makhubu 1988:23). It can be said succinctly that socio-political and economic situations in this continent, especially in the Sub-Saharan region, have far-reaching implications for the existence of these churches. The domination by the whites in all areas such as politics, society, economics, religion etc, and the resulting oppression of the African found expression in the church (Makhubu 1988:17-26). Their dissatisfaction, frustration in the said spheres and the paternalistic attitude of the Euro-American Missionaries conditioned by sentiments of cultural superiority, bias and a subsequent insensitivity as far as African worldview and religious practices were concerned, led to the secessions (Amanze 1998:68, Daneel 1991: 38-60). Again, this was a reaction against an over-Europeanized Christianity, which rejects almost every aspect of African cultural life as unchristian. This state of affairs caused the Africans to desire to have a church in which they could assimilate more of their traditional and natural elements (Daneel 1991:47-60).

From the above information it is evident that AICs are churches in which Africans worship God in an African way. Their Christian faith is grounded on African culture. Makhubu (1988:5) argues that the AICs are purely black controlled denominations with no links in membership, in most instances, or administrative control by any non-African Church. This implies that these AICs are churches which have completely broken their umbilical cord with the Western missionary enterprise. On the other hand, some of these churches came into existence when certain prophetic figures broke away from other churches, drew members around them and recruited others from the non-Christian environment (Daneel 1991:47-60). There are many reasons why these churches broke away from each other but one is the power struggle amongst the prophetic leaders. This has contributed significantly to the multiplicity and proliferation of the AICs in Southern Africa (Keabetswe 1985:4, Makhubu 1988:12). On the other hand Daneel (1991:47-60) has argued convincingly that the AICs existence is not due to a reaction against the Missionary Churches but that they responded to the gospel of Christ by proclaiming the good news in an African context and in terms of an African worldview. He maintains that this is precisely one of the reasons why these churches are known as the indigenous churches. This implies that the AICs are independent institutions in their own right and they are as important as the Mission Churches in Southern Africa. The first churches which came into existence as the result of the secession from Mission Churches were the Ethiopian-type of churches.

The Origin and Growth of the Ethiopian Type of Churches in Southern Africa

The White domination in all spheres also found expression in the church, as indicated above. The Africans could not understand the brotherly love which was preached by the Euro-American missionaries while the latter were failing to act in accordance with the demands of the Gospel (Barret 1968:26-37). They preached that all people were equal in the eyes of God but they failed to practise that equality and instead practised the colour-bar in Christianity. These actors contributed significantly to the secessions from the Mission Churches. The secession which marked the birth of Ethiopian and African ecclesiastical independence took place when Rev. Mangena Mokone broke away from the Methodist Church in 1892 (Dwane 1989:86). Rev Mangena Mokone was a Methodist minister whose style of preaching was disliked by his white

colleagues. They complained to his superintendent who transferred him to another circuit. But Mokone resented this interference although he did nothing about it. At the Methodist missionary conference which was held in Pretoria in 1892 matters came to a head. The blacks were excluded from positions on the board and were not allowed to attend certain sessions opened only to whites (Dwane1989:86, Denis 1995:83-100). This was the last straw: Rev Mokone and others, withdrew from the conference and held their own meeting. They resigned from the Methodist Church, and the following Sunday he and others found the Ethiopian Church. This small congregation of African Christians, assembled in a hut in a location near Pretoria, was to spark off a movement which was to bring about a change in the development of Christianity in South Africa and impart a new spirit as far as the formation of indigenous clergy was concerned. Rev. Mokone declared in his inaugural sermon that the establishment of an African Church was to be understood as the fulfilment of the biblical prophecy concerning the final liberation of the African people (Denis 1995:88, Dwane 1989:86). He referred constantly to the words from Psalm 68:31: *“Princess shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God”*. Hence, Mokone and his followers decided to name the new religious body “Ethiopian Mission”, which later was given the official name of the Ethiopian church (Denis 1995:88). Denis (1995:88) asserts that ‘Ethiopia’ has not only a Pan-African connotation but also a theological meaning: expressing the hope for liberation of the Pan African peoples who had been for too long victims of slavery and white domination. Again, Mokone related the said text to the story of the Ethiopian eunuch who was baptized by Phillip, the evangelist and argued that the story showed a direct link between the Early Church in Palestine and the Church in Africa, thus providing justification for black leadership in the church (Acts 8:26-40).

This led to the rise of the Ethiopian movement which ideologically was marked with a psychological sense of self-esteem and responsibility for spreading God’s kingdom in Africa (Denis 1995:81-100, Dwane 1989:83-100). In broader terms, it can be said that this church, whose leaders were Pan-African in approach, were concerned about the welfare of the African people. Daneel (1991:38) argues that this church right from its inception had been non-prophetic and as a result laid no claim to any special manifestation of the Holy Spirit. But it resembled the Mission Church, the Methodist Church in this case, from which it seceded and in many respects, for example in

organization, worship and practices (Daneel 1991:38, Dwane 1989:38-100). This was the case with all the Ethiopian Churches which came into existence because of the secession from the Mission Churches in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ethiopianism had its heyday from 1890-1920, when most of these churches originated. Makhubu asserts that until the 1950s these churches formed majority of the AICs although at this stage they were showing a considerable decline in growth. Whilst Ethiopianism was declining Zionism was rising rapidly in South Africa.

The Emergence and Expansion of Zionism in South Africa

Zionism as a religious movement historically originated in the USA. In 1896, in Chicago, John Alexander Dowie founded the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion (Daneel 1991:53-67, Makhubu 1988:10-12). This Church was pentecostally inclined: it gave pre-eminence to the work of the Holy Spirit. The main teachings of the Zionists were divine healing, adult baptism by immersion, baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, and the imminent Second Coming of Christ. In addition to these the Church had the missionary vision of reaching out across the Atlantic to Africa. In 1904, Daniel Bryant converted P.L le Roux, who was a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church, who, in 1908 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and turned this experience into his main message. In that year P.L le Roux and several prominent black leaders founded the Apostolic Church (Daneel 1991:54, Makhubu 1988:11). This became one of the most successful Zionist Churches, which had school buildings and church halls in many parts of South Africa. It must be noted that because of the pre-eminence given to the work of the Holy Spirit, the Zionist Churches are regarded as Spirit-type Churches (Dikereke tsa Moya). Daneel (1991:53-59) has convincingly shown that the Zionist Church and all other churches which are its off-shoots are Spirit-type churches because they lay more emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit than others. The Zionist Churches, like the Ethiopian Churches, grew so rapidly in the early twentieth century that within a few decades they had spread all over South Africa. The emergence of these religious movements brought about a real African ecclesiastical independence (Makhubu 1988:5-16). This phenomenon marked the birth of the African Initiated Churches in South Africa, and irrevocably changed the religious landscape of South Africa in the sense that blacks began to form churches in which they could worship God in their

own African way and style (Daneel 1991:31). These two movements, Ethiopianism and Zionism then spread all over South Africa and neighbouring countries such as Botswana

The Influence of Ethiopianism and Zionism in Botswana.

In 1885 Ethiopianisms began to exert a considerable influence across the border in the then Bechuanaland Protectorate. In 1896 some men from Southern Bechuanaland who were expelled from the London Missionary Society (LMS), which was the only legitimate Church then, for offences such as adultery went to Ngamiland and began to preach independently (Amanze 1998:78). Eventually they successfully managed to turn away some Batswana from the LMS in the area. An Ethiopian influence was also detected in Kanye. Rev. Good identified agents of the spread of Ethiopianism as Batswana migrant workers who, after a spell in the Johannesburg and Kimberly mines where they came into contact with Ethiopians from different churches, became disillusioned with their own home church the LMS (Amanze 1998:73). This confirms the fact that AICs were introduced in this country through migrant labourers, as indicated above.

One of the members of the church who came under the influence of the Ethiopian ideology was Mothowagae Motlogelwa, who joined the LMS in 1874. From 1880-1884 Motlogelwa was a Bible student in Kuruman at a Bible Training Center established by Rev. John Macenzie in 1875. When Motlogelwa completed his training he came back to Kanye to work as an evangelist and a teacher (Byaruhanga :1984:10). Motlogelwa was soon to be at loggerheads with the missionaries because he had hopes of being ordained as a minister, yet the church was not at all prepared to accept Africans into ordained ministry (Amanze 1998:73). They were only allowed to work as evangelists and assistants to missionaries. Again, the local LMS missionary, Edwin Lloyd disliked Motlogelwa because of his way of running the church. In 1901 Lloyd transferred Motlogelwa to Luhutu in the Kalahari Desert. Motlogelwa refused to go there because of his wife's ill-health and Lloyd dismissed him from the church (Byaruhanga 1984-10). Edwin Lloyd was heavily criticized for this action. Chief Bathoeng I, of Bangwaketse at Kanye, was aware of the situation that people disliked Lloyd but he did not want to offend the LMS. When things got

out of hand, he secretly requested the LMS to transfer Lloyd to another village and to ordain Motlogelwa but his requests were denied. Hence, Motlogelwa seceded from the LMS and formed his own church, which he named the King Edward Bangwaketse Mission Church in 1901. Amanze (1998:73) asserts that this was a ploy to flatter the British officials in Bechuanaland, for the ruling king at that time was Edward VII in England. Motlogelwa's church, which was the first AIC in Bechuanaland Protectorate, was fully established in January 1902. This in essence marked the beginning of true African ecclesiastical independence in the Protectorate. Because Motlogelwa named his church after the ruler of England he was never persecuted by the British officials in Bechuanaland Protectorate for having started his own church; instead they supported him. As a result, the opposition he faced from LMS was minimal because the latter was not backed up by the British Government (Amanze 1998:73, Byaruhanga 1990:11-13). Motlogelwa's prestige was considerable, as evidenced by the fact that he administered the holy communion according to his own articles of faith. This in itself shows clearly how successful and influential Motlogelwa's church was. By the end of 1903, Motlogelwa's following totalled 900 people from LMS at Kanye. In fact 700 people followed him when he seceded from LMS, while 200 followed him thereafter (Byaruhanga 1990:11-13). But Motlogelwa's success at Kanye was short lived. According to Charles Motlogelwa, the great-grand son of Mothowagae Motlogelwa, (Personal interview 09/04/03), there was a serious conflict between Motlogelwa and Chief Bathoen Gaseitsiwe, emanating from the way the Chief handled the dismissal of Motlogelwa by Edwin Lloyd at Kanye. Motlogelwa and his followers disliked Chief Bathoeng I, for failing to deal with the situation effectively. They felt that Kwenaetsile, Bathoeng's half-brother, would have dealt with the situation differently, hence they supported him as their Chief instead of Bathoeng. This was perceived by Chief Bathoeng I, as subversion on the part of Motlogelwa and his followers; therefore he attempted to stop their church by forcing its members to return to the LMS. In 1910 Bathoeng's son Seepapitso I, banished Motlogelwa to Lokgolobotlo, which was an undesirable part of the Chieftdom, as punishment and he died there in 1942. By then his church at Kanye had become small as some members had joined the AME church under the leadership of Marcus Gabashe, who had worked with Motlogelwa in Church matters. The second AIC which spread Ethiopianism was founded near Selepeng at Tati Reserve in Francistown in 1908, by the Bakhurutshe hence it was named Bakhurutshe Free

Church. It was founded after the Bakhurutshe had lost a piece of their land to the Tati constitute company, which turned it into a mining area. The LMS local missionary, A.J. Gould and Chief Rauwe did nothing about the situation, instead the Chief moved to Tonota with some of the Bakhurutse. But Kgama, who was the Paramount Chief of the area, did everything in his power to stop the Bakhurutshe Free Church by forcing its embers to go back to LMS. The other churches which spread Ethiopianism and Independence were the Bapedi Luthern African Congregational Church and the Bantu Methodist Church in Bechuanaland Protectorate at the beginning of the twentieth century. In spite of the opposition from the government, as will be discussed in this chapter Ethiopianism spread and influenced people all over the country.

The other religious movement which gave rise to African ecclesiastical independence in the Bechuanaland Protectorate was Zionism, represented by the Z.C.C. in Mochudi among the Bakgatla people (Amanze 1998:75). This church was introduced in Mochudi in the Protectorate from South Africa in 1937, at the heat of a tribal political dispute by supporters of Kgosi Molefi who was deposed by the Resident Commissioner, a British official, and replaced by Mmusi his younger brother in 1936. According to Molwantwa Loabile (Personal Interview, 15/04/03) the problem started when Rev. Thomas Phiri at Sikwane in Mochudi the first black person to be ordained into the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) outside South Africa, resigned his post and 251 out of 263 members of his congregation joined him to form a new Church called the Bakgatla Free Church in 1935. Rev. Thomas Phiri involved the Paramount Chief, Molefi Pilane, in the formation of the Church hence he was also a staunch member. After the founding of this Church Mmusi, the Chief's younger brother, declared it illegal and sought the assistance of the Resident Commissioner to stop it. The Resident Commissioner, a British official, did so, deposed the Paramount Chief and replaced him by his brother Mmusi in 1936. Immediately several leading supporters of Molefi Pilane, namely Kalefala Motsisi, Kgosi Lebotse, Mohumagadi Seingwaeng and Bakgatla Pilane, went to South Africa to meet with Bishop Engenas Lekganyane who gave them permission to start a Z.C.C. Congregation at Mochudi, and Ralefala Motsisi was made its first minister in Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1937. In 1945 Molefi was reinstated as a chief of the Bakgatla people and the fortunes of the church began to change in Mochudi. In 1947, he surprised everybody when he banned the Z.C.C. Church whose members had worked hard for his return, on the pretext that it

was a threat to his rule and authority. This is exactly what Chief Bathoeng Gaseitsewe had done to Motlogelwa and his church. It looked as if the tribal authorities felt threatened by the emergence of religious movements or churches which were different from the ones which were already in existence, such as the LMS and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in the case of Mochudi, as shown above, hence they found pretexts to crush and oppose the new churches members. In this case among those who refused to give up their faith were the chief's mother, Mrs. Seingwaeng, and his Uncle Bakgatla Pilane. This was extremely frustrating for the chief because his family was involved but in order to force the Z.C.C. followers to renounce their faith he dispossessed them of all their properties and sent them to Mamashia. From there they were banished to Gaborone in 1948, where they approached the Resident Commissioner and asked for a farm north of Gaborone, but this was refused because the farm was close to the Bakgatla and Bakwena reserves. He asked them to move to Werda or Nata in the Kgalagadi area. Finally they were allowed to buy a farm at Lentswe la Moriti in the Tuli Block in 1951, where they have established their headquarters and later moved to Lentsweletau in 1954. After independence in 1966 they gained freedom of worship and spread throughout the country. Today they Z.C.C. in Botswana claims a total of more than 45 000 members country wide. However, they still look to Moria in Polokwane (Pietersburg), South Africa, as their sacred headquarters, which they visit during Easter.

It is clear that the emergence of Ethiopianism and Zionism in the then Bechuanaland Protectorate sparked off a movement of new religious organisations which became the dominant Christian power in Botswana (Amanze 1998:77). The presence of Ethiopianism and Zionism inspired Batswana to form their own churches or set up branches, whose headquarters were either in South Africa or Zimbabwe. This justifies Amanze's assertion that much of the published and unpublished material available shows that the majority of the African Initiated Churches in Botswana were introduced to the country from South Africa through migrant labourers (1998:71). In any case, Mission Churches began to experience movements, either from within their ranks and file or from outside the country, which they were not able control. The missionaries were no longer able to stop the movement of Batswana from the Churches nor the formation of the new Churches in Bechuanaland Protectorate. It is appropriate here to mention a few of the largest movements or churches which were

formed during the 1930s to 1950s and which were religious forces to be reckoned with in Botswana; some still are.

The African Initiated Churches formed in Bechuanaland Protectorate between 1930 and 1950

From the above information it is clear that the Z.C.C. was the first church which represented Zionism in Bechuanaland Protectorate in the 1940s. The second one was the Spiritual Healing Church, which was founded by the prophet Jacob Mokaleng Motswasele at Matsiloje near Francistown in 1950 (Amanze 1998:78). This church, according to Bayile Xhobe, (Personal interview, 17/05/03) has its roots in the preaching of Harry Morolong, who used to conduct revival services for the Barolong Tribe of Matsiloje near Francistown in 1923. Morolong's revival services had much influence on the youth and children, so much so that a few of them became possessed by the spirits. Motswasele was one of those who were greatly influenced by these services and began to go through a variety of other spiritual experiences. In 1926 he met the Lesabo brothers and left with them for Johannesburg to work as migrant labourers in the mines. Whilst there he joined the St' John's Apostolic Faith Mission of the prophetess Christian Nku in 1930. He organized prayer meetings at Matsiloje whenever he went back there, especially during his leave. In 1946 he felt that God was calling him to be a prophet and he discussed this call with Mrs. Christinah Nku, who also encouraged him to go back home to do God's work there. In 1948 he returned to Matsiloje where he sought permission from the chief of the Barolong, Kgosi George Moraka, to start a church of his own. In 1949 permission was granted and a church was formed under the name of the Apostolic United Faith Coloured Church in Matsiloje. People began to flock to him for prayers and healing from all over Bechuanaland Protectorate, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia and South Africa, so he began to erect a number of buildings for them to stay in and for the sick to be treated in, but after treatment they were sent back to their homes. Soon his followers did not feel comfortable with their mission churches, which condemned them for being associated with Zionism. Due to this pressure, Motswasele announced himself as Bishop Mokaleng, and baptized the people on 10th October 1950, as the head of the church.

According to Bayile Xhobe (Personal interview, 26/03/03), in 1952 Bishop Dichaba who had organised a prayer group at Kgagodi met with Bishop Mokaleng Motswasele. Both men had had visions directing them to “grow in faith and do God’s work together”. Thus Bishop Dichaba and his brother, Rev. Gabadumele Kapaletswe, joined the Spiritual Healing Church. But Bishop Mokaleng Motswasele continued his work at Matsiloje while Dichaba continued at Kgalagadi. Bayile Xhobe asserts that the people flocked to both places when the hospital and tribal authority began to complain about the Spiritual Healing Church. The complaint was that the “*church refused to allow its sick members to be admitted at hospital because its priests rated themselves as doctors; they were taking Kgosi’s responsibility of announcing the beginning of ploughing season (Letsema), they attracted people from historical churches by making use of their healing ministry*” (Byaruhanga 1990:13). In response, both leaders of the Spiritual Healing Church wrote “*we do not stop the people from going to hospitals, we also receive hospitals care and work hand in hand with the medical doctors. The members of our church only pray and bless the seeds when the ploughing season is announced by Kgosi, we are preachers of the word of God and pray for God’s people. We never ask people to leave their churches*”. They also quoted the scripture: “*All that the Father gives me will come to me and him who comes to me I will not cast out*”(Byaruhanga 1990:13-14). This changed the perceptions of the hospital and tribal authorities in the area.

Thereafter, Bishop Dichaba approached Chiefs at Mmadinare and Serowe in order to obtain permission to organize the new congregations. But Kgosi Oteng Mphoeng at Mmadinare said, “*All these ready-made Churches spoil our nation and tradition*” (Byaruhanga 1990:11). Meanwhile Kgosi Kgamane of Serowe also refused his request. Later, as advised by Daniel Kwele who is the present leader of the Botswana People’s Union, they borrowed the voice of Prophecy Literature from the Seventh Day Adventist Church, of Cape Town and drafted a constitution for the Spiritual Healing Church. Producing such a sound constitution meant that the Tribal Authority granted permission to open branches of the said church in the areas around Mmadinare. Very soon under the strong leadership of Bishop Motswasele and Dichaba new congregations were opened at Gaborone, Morwa, Serowe, Mochudi and later in all the main villages in Bechuanaland Protectorate. This church today claims a membership of 35 000 people countrywide and its prestige is on the increase

because of its healing activities. However, this church experienced certain schism at later stage and changed its name several times before its registration on 30th April 1973. In spite of these changes it has been a religious force really to be reckoned with in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

In the 1950s another religious movement was introduced in the Bechuanaland Protectorate from the then Rhodesia under the leadership of John Masowe, the black Messiah. John was born in 1914, Rusape District, Rhodesia. He was named Shoniwa by his parents when he was still young (Amanze 1998:183). He received a special call from God at the age of eighteen. He fell ill for a period of 90 days during which, according to members of the church, his soul was taken up to heaven where he was welcomed by the great archangel. It was during this Spiritual journey in heaven that he received the commission to go back to the earth to start his church; hence the church was commonly called John Masowe's Church (Amanze 1998:81). It was during this spiritual journey to heaven that his name was changed from Shoniwa to John the Baptist. When he recovered from his illness he went to Mount Marimba to begin his mission. He had a Bible, a robe without seam and a rod. Thereafter he began his missionary venture in Rhodesia as an itinerant preacher. His preaching was against white minority rule in the country and this led to his arrest. Whilst he was in prison he experienced a number of miracles and eventually he was released. When he came from Prison he preached everywhere, telling his followers that Jesus came first to the Jews and that Jesus told them that he would come again. Now Jesus Christ had returned in the person of John Masowe as a Black Messiah for the Africans (Amanze 1998:82) John Masowe traveled extensively as he lived in Pretoria and Port Elizabeth in South Africa before the introduction of his church in Bechuanaland Protectorate. In South Africa as anywhere else, he taught his followers manual work so that they could be free from colonial master's labour market. He also preached the word of God emphasizing the Torah, the Ten Commandments (Amanze 198:82). He also established churches in countries such as Namibia, Zambia, Kenya and Dar-esalaam. This church was introduced by F.M. Ngorima to Moroka village in North-East District of Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1950. According to the congregates, Ngorima was sent by John Masowe himself to start a church in this country. From Moroka village this church spread to Tswapong, Serowe and then Southwards. This

church claims a total of 7839 Christians and its success is based on its activities of healing.

Another religious movement which was formed in the 1950s and which also became a success story, is the St' Phillip's Faith Healing Church. This church was formed by Bishop Willie Raditsebe Gulubane; before he formed this church he was a member of the Salvation of Israel Church (Amanze 1998:82-83). He came under the influence of this church while he was studying for his matric in South Africa, where he had gone in the 1940s. He reached the position of an evangelist in the church and returned to Bechuanaland, where he joined the Ministry of Health in Francistown in 1951. In 1957 the leaders of the Salvation of Israel Church in South Africa encouraged him to start a branch of the church in Bechuanaland (Amanze 1998:83). In response to this advice he started a fellowship, a study group in his house in Francistown. This marked the beginning of the church, which at first was called the Apostolic Faith Healing Church, but this name was changed to St' Phillips Healing Church at the time of registration on 17th April 1973. This church claims a total of 5950 Christians in the country (Amanze 1998:83). These are but a few of the churches, which were formed between 1930s and 1950s in Bechuanaland Protectorate. However, the period between 1950 and 1980 saw the consolidation and proliferation of the AICs in Bechuanaland.

The Consolidation and Proliferation of the AICs in Bechuanaland Protectorate

The period between 1950 and 1960 witnessed a very slow process in terms of the formation of the AICs in the country, although the Mission Churches had already lost power and control over the formation of the said churches. This was caused by the traditional chiefs' strong opposition to the formation of these churches because of their divisiveness (Amanze 1998:83). This subject will be dealt with in greater detail later in this chapter. From 1952 to 1953 there was a movement of people, from Southern Rhodesia to Francistown in Bechuanaland Protectorate, who were responsible for the formation of the Apostolic Sabbath Church of God in 1953. According to the report of the District Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from Mafikeng to his colleague in Francistown Northern Protectorate, the group's presence in the country was illegal, therefore its members had to be deported

back to the country of their origin. He entered into correspondence with his colleague about this situation, having already written to the Native Commissioner of Southern Rhodesia to draw his attention to the matter. He prosecuted the leader of the group, Ebrahim Moyo, and his male followers under the Native Immigration Act on 23rd July 1953. According to the conviction the court ordered the said males, including their wives and children, to quit the territory under the supervision of the said authority, on the 29th July 1953.

According to the correspondence of the District Commissioner to his colleague in Francistown, he blamed Sub-Chief Moroka for the presence of this religious sect in the country. He maintained that Sub-Chief Moroka connived at the invasion of these religious fanatics and alien African into an already overcrowded and overgrazed little Native Reserve rented from the Tati Company, which was a mining company in the area. According to this report it was discovered that when these men were convicted of illegal immigration and had entered the territory without passes or passbooks, as they were called then, they produced receipts showing that they had already paid tax to Sub-Chief Moroka. To make matters worse, it was discovered that one of the convicts had already paid tax for three years, which apparently was done in order to evade the pass laws. The District Commissioner, Mr. Dixons, condemned Sub-Chief Moroka for issuing these tax receipts to illegal immigrants. Consequently, many of these people had to be given citizenship while a few of them were deported to the country from which they came. The ones who gained citizenship worked hard for the growth of their church in the area and eventually it spread to another surrounding villages. Apparently, this was how either churches were formed in Francistown and Ramakgwebane in Northern Protectorate. The other church which was established in Francistown and surrounding areas was the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission, founded by Mrs Evelyn Kaboto in 1956 after she was healed by the prophetess Mrs. Christinah Nku in 1955 (Amanze 1998:80). From 1956 to 1963 Mrs. Evelyn Koboto was the only leader of the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission in Bechuanaland Protectorate. Her husband became a pastor in the church while she assumed the position of prophetess. In 1963 she decided to break away from St John's Apostolic Faith Mission because much of the money which was raised in Bechuanaland was sent to the mother church in South Africa. She had the desire that the money which was raised in Bechuanaland should be used for church development instead of being

sent to the mother church which was already developed (Amanze 1998:81). Also, she was angered by the fact that Mrs. Christian Nku had failed to appoint her as a minister of the church in Francistown when a permanent church was built there in 1960. Instead Rev. D.N. Lekuta was appointed and this affected her greatly, hence she formed her own church under the name St. Matthew Apostolic Faith Mission. She became its prophetess while her husband became the first bishop of the church. Amanze (1998:108) asserts that in the meantime the church in Francistown under Bishop Andrew Ndubano broke away because of the leadership crisis and formed St John's Apostolic Faith Mission of Botswana. All the three sections of this church in Botswana have many in common and still acknowledge prophetess Mrs. Christinah Nku as their original founder. Together as a movement they command a total of more than 9 000 Christians countrywide.

This period saw the formation of other churches such as the Galatia Church by Archbishop Erastus Medupe Abeng in 1956, while the Morian Episcopal Church in Zion was introduced in the Bobonong area through the activities of pastor Solomon Tshokwane in 1959. The period between 1950 and 1960, as indicated above, saw the slow formation of the AICs, while the 1960s witnessed an upsurge in their formation in Bechuanaland, according to Molwatwa Loabile (Personal interview, 15/04/03 and 05/05/03). The period between 1960 and 1970, witnessed a rapid increase in the formation of new churches in the country. Loabile argued that more than 35 new churches were formed within five years, and many of them were formally launched only after independence on 30th September 1966. He attributed this increase in the number of AICs at this stage to two main factors: firstly the fact that the Mission churches had lost their monopoly on religious matters in the Protectorate. Secondly, the return of Sir Seretse Kgama from overseas in 1958 and the prospect of independence made things easier for Botswana to start their own churches or to establish branches of the AICs from outside. One of the few churches worth mentioning which were formed during this period is the Eleven Apostles Spirit Healing Church, by Joseph Lesomo Moselwa in 1963. The founder was born at Potchestroom, South Africa where while he was working as a court interpreter, a white woman met him and said that one day he would be a prophet. Due to the racial discrimination in South Africa he left for Bechuanaland and while working there he met a Mokalanga woman who said she had seen him as a prophet in her dreams

(Byaruhanga 1990:15). Thereafter he was attacked by illness and left for South Africa, where he was healed by the prophetess, Mrs. Christinah Nku, in Evaton. During a consultation he was told that his sickness was due to the hand of God upon him. He was further told to go back home and stay in his mother's house until he received his task from God. At home one night he heard a voice saying "*I, God, have sent the prophets but they have failed to fulfil their obligation*". He realised that God had sent him to tell the leaders of the St. Johns Apostolic Faith Mission and Spiritual Healing Church about their role of being prophets. After the voice he saw a hand throwing a stone and it broke into eleven pieces, followed by another voice saying; "*Out of you I will raise the eleven Apostles*".

Then Moselwa was shown the Maun and Ngamiland district as a place to start his mission (Amanze 1998:85). Thus he left for Maun and founded a church on 15th February, 1963, which was first named the New Jerusalem Church and later called the Eleven Apostles Spiritual Healing Church. The name refers to the eleven Apostles of Jesus after his resurrection. From the time of its inception to the present, the Church has experienced tremendous growth as a result of its healing activities it has a membership of more than 6 000 people at a number of branches in the country. Another Church which gained a large following in Bechuanaland is the St Paul's Apostolic Faith Mission of Botswana, which was initially known as the Five Apostles' Church of America (Amanze 1998:85). The first known African to be a member of this Church was the Prophet Petrus Hlanyela Moloi, who was born in Free State in 1906. In 1926 he broke away from this Church, and formed the St Paul's Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa and established his headquarters at Evaton. The church was introduced to Bechuanaland by Bishop Meshack M. Selolwane who was a member while working as a migrant labour in Johannesburg in 1955. In 1960 he returned to Bechuanaland and started a branch of the church in the country. The first congregation was established in Serowe. Selolwane met strong opposition from Kgosi Rasebolai Kgamane, who arrested him for dissemination of "Zionist" ideas. He was eventually released when he pleaded not guilty and continued to build his Church. It was registered on 27th April 1973, during which the name was changed to the St Paul's Apostolic Faith Mission of Botswana in order to be in line with the changes which were brought about by the independence of the country from the British government on the 30th September 1966. Hence, after registration Bishop

Meshack Selolwane declared the church independent of the jurisdiction of the mother church in South Africa because of misunderstanding between himself and the leadership of the church in South Africa, who wanted to take direct control of the affairs of the church in Botswana. The church claims a following of more than 8000 members in the country (Amanze 1998:85).

After the celebration of independence on 30th September 1966, which marked the breaking of political ties between the Bechuanaland and the British Government, there were new development regarding religion in the country. For instance, Botswana drew up a new constitution which guarantees any person or group of persons the right to worship and to freedom of religion and this led to a phenomenal increase of religious organizations and societies. The period between 1966 and 1972 therefore saw a consolidation and further proliferation of the AICs in Botswana. The atmosphere was very conducive for the creation and development of the new churches. Amanze (1998:86) asserts that some of the new churches were accused of money making, seduction of women, healing scandals, requiring only a low level of education for their leaders and draining finances to other countries. The government began to view the uncontrolled growth of the AICs as an unhealthy development, hence it introduced legislation to regulate and control their activities in the country.

The Government's Attempts to Regulate the Activities of the AICs

As indicated above, some of the new churches were accused of corruption and therefore the government became involved. It attempted to deal with the situation by enacting the Societies' Act of 1972, which made provisions for the registration of societies, which included new religious movements, at the Ministry of Home Affairs (Amanze 1998:86). The Societies Act of 1972 required that all AICs should be registered and should report annually to the government. This was meant to control the growth of the AICs and regulate their activities. Mr. B.K. Sebele, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, during his opening address at the workshop on Independent Churches in Botswana on 5th November 1983, said that, in order to succeed in this regard the Ministry insisted that all churches or societies should bring along their own local adopted constitution for registration. Sebele said this helped the government considerably because most of these Churches started as

branches of Churches outside Botswana, especially in South Africa. As a result, these churches had been operating without constitutions in this country and this was a major problem which was to be solved. Sebele remarked that when the Ministry began to deal with these problems it realized that some constitutions of these churches, for example, the Z.C.C. (with its star symbol), did not even permit the creation of a branch of the church in Botswana. Now, the implication was that any legal action that had to be instituted by the church in Botswana could be instituted in the courts of South Africa. This situation, in most instances, led to protracted correspondence between the Registrar and the mother body in South Africa and registration had to be delayed, in some cases, for a period of two years.

This issue of local constitutions and registration of churches at the Ministry of Home Affairs as far as the AICs, were concerned meant a radical change in their set up. This move to bring about change and control was met, with some resistance, which was engineered externally by mother bodies backed by the local leaders and members who did not want to lose power and control, whilst some members were solely committed to religious worship. This led to the churches splitting into two or more factions whilst at the same time both factions owned allegiance to one bishop, prophet, priest, etc, as head of the church in South Africa. This is exactly what had happened with the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission during the leadership of Mrs. Christinah Nku as prophetess. The Church in Botswana used to be greatly affected because of this state of affairs. Yet in the end the two factions would submit different applications for registration under the same name and constitution. Again, Mr. Sebele maintained that some of these Churches used to come up with good and acceptable constitutions when applying for registration but quite often these documents were never followed. He asserted that the majority of these churches were having problems which centered on leadership. He claimed that in most cases dishonesty was the main contributing factor. He maintained that the leadership, in most instances, still used these churches as money raising organizations for their own benefit. He added that some unscrupulous leaders still perceived the church as their own personal property and he attributed this problem to the low standard of education of the leaders. He argued that these problems were the main causes of the splits amongst the AICs, because of unscrupulous persons masquerading as leaders of Christian movements.

From this analysis it is deducible that the life of the AICs in most instances was characterized by conflicts and maladministration; hence the government became involved and it must be credited for doing so. It must also be said that the Societies Act 1972 had a loophole which created a serious problem in the country. For instance, the Act states that for a society to be recognized by the government only a minimum of ten or more persons was required (Amanze 1998:86). This is a serious blunder, which made it easy to form religious societies. Amanze (1998:86) asserts that after this Act was passed 48 churches were formed within a very short space of time in Botswana. Since then these new churches have been increasing daily and recent research has shown that it is not easy to acquire all information about them. Therefore, it is clear that the introduction of the Societies Act, which was meant to control the unhealthy growth of the AICs and regulate their activities, actually worsened the situation. In fact it consolidated and multiplied the AICs in Botswana. So it is quite appropriate to state that since the introduction of the Act in 1972 to date, a great number of churches have been formed in Botswana, thereby causing, in my view, an ecclesiastical over-production in the country. It is in the light of this understanding that the Minister of Home Affairs, Mrs. K.L. Disele, while addressing the organization of African Independent Churches, stated that in Botswana there was no legislation to control the rapid spread of churches and splinter groups into fully fledged churches. She even appealed to this organization to be of help to the government in regulating and standardizing the activities of its churches. However, Botswana, as far as one knows, is the only country which has made an attempt to control the proliferation of the AICs and regulate their activities in Southern Africa. On the other hand AICs are complaining that they are discriminated against even by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which claims to deal with their affairs. And according to the leadership of the AICs their churches have a long history of being discriminated against and opposed in Botswana.

The Opposition of the Mission Churches, Tribal Authorities, and Colonial Protectorate Government to the African Independent Churches (AICs) in Botswana.

The opposition to the AICs by the Mission Churches, tribal authorities and colonial government needs to be understood, right from the outset in the context of convention

which Botswana chiefs signed with the British government, with the aid of LMS missionaries, for the protection of the country against the Boers in 1884. According to Molwantwa Loabile, (Personal interview, 15/04/03, 05/05/03), Chief Kgama I, of Bangwato, Bathoeng I, of Bangwaketse and Sebele of Bakwena, because of their good working relationship with the LMS missionaries among their tribes, agreed to go to England to secure the protection of Queen Victoria's government. Thereafter the British government announced that the whole country was to be a British Protectorate and that LMS Missionary Rev. John Mackenzie was appointed a Deputy Commissioner in Bechuanaland. This appointment meant that politics and religion were intertwined in Bechuanaland. This is precisely the reason why the missionaries were co-operating with the government in dealing with church matters and vice-versa. On the other hand, Batswana Chiefs perceived themselves as owing allegiance to Britain. Hence, the LMS was perceived as an authentic religious body for a long time in Bechuanaland. Therefore, for the chiefs it was convenient to rule a tribe which belonged to one church because this created unity. Hence, the introduction of other churches was seen as a threat and was vehemently rejected by the chiefs. For instance, the presence of the Anglicans in Tonota caused a great deal of conflict between them and tribal chiefs. At one point the Anglican Bakhurutshe at Tonota were forced to abandon their church and join the LMS, for fear that the two denominations in the area would divide the people (Amanze 1998:40).

Again, in 1912, the Anglicans made another attempt to introduce their church among the Bangwaketse but Chief Seepapitso rejected their application for permission to establish the Anglican Church in the Ngwaketse Reserve. Hence, missionaries for other churches such as the Catholics did mission work in Bechuanaland whilst they were living in places like Mafikeng and Kimberly. They were not welcomed in Bechuanaland. Other Mission Churches therefore struggled to establish themselves in this country and in most instances their members were persecuted by the tribal authorities. The only fortunate thing, so to speak, is that the LMS missionaries were personally not opposed to the establishment of other Mission Churches. Hence, they did not trouble the missionaries of such churches nor their members; the opposition came all the time from the tribal authorities. Even when the Pentecostal Churches were introduced in Bechuanaland from America and Europe, mainly through South Africa, the same thing happened (Amanze 1998:44). In 1935 the Church of God in

Christ was introduced by William Sebolao and Dickson Muthume, who worked as migrant labourers in South Africa to Bechuanaland. Mr. Dickson Muthume settled in Kanye and planted the Church among the Bangwaketse, while Mr. Sebolao in Molepolole established it among the Bakwena. In Molepolole the Church met great opposition from the chiefs, who punished all those who expanded the Church there. In 1938 Mr. Sebolao and some of his followers were arrested and imprisoned for two to three months because of their activities (Amanze 1998:44-45). The other Pentecostal Churches experienced similar opposition and persecutions. From this analysis it was clear that the AICs were no exception in this regard; hence their opposition and persecutions need to be understood in the broader context of the history of Christianity in the country and of the allegiance which the local chiefs perceived themselves to be owing to Britain because of the signing of the convention in 1884.

The opposition and persecutions of the AICs began when Chief Kgama, a devout Christian member of the LMS, opposed and punished the famous prophet in Botswana, Sentso Legong in the early 1900s. Sentso's prophecy appealed to his people and offered relief to them because during the first ten years of the 20th century Batswana were very poor. Since the mines at Kimberly in South Africa had shut down, the majority of them were unemployed. Again, there were several years of severe drought. At this stage the LMS was busy building its administrative structures and protecting its schools and other institutions, neglecting pastoral care of the poor and unemployed. At the same time the missionaries in most instances displayed negative attitudes towards Setswana culture (Byaruhanga 1990:12). Sentso, who came from Mmankgodi in the Kweneng District, began to preach at Kanye, introducing himself as an angel, prophet, and even Jesus himself in 1908. He demanded that his followers should give up all European customs and return to the Setswana way of life. He promised that by so doing they would become free from British rule and as a result harvest three crops a year (Byaruhanga 1990:12). The majority of people, including the LMS members, believed Sentso in this regard and brought him cattle, sheep, goats as gifts. The LMS expelled 120 of its members for doing so. Meanwhile Sentso was expelled and sent back to Mmankgodi in the custody of his relatives. However, Sentso continued to preach at Mmankgodi. This time he claimed that darkness would cover the entire Kweneng District and very soon

would be followed by the death of Europeans and Batswana who refused to follow his prophecy, and that their cattle would also die.

As a result the LMS Church at Mmankgodi was left with only three members and Sentso's followers burnt down the church building (Byaruhanga 1990:12). This time Chief Sebele I, became angry and ordered the people of Mmankgodi to pay a fine of 140 cattle. He also tried to arrest Sentso, who fled to Johannesburg to work in the mines. He returned to Mmankgodi after some years to settle down. Again, in 1902, Chief Kgama found himself embroiled in a conflict with five prophets who claimed to possess the power to solve all kinds of misfortunes. Kgama was annoyed by the fact that these prophets commanded some following among the Bangwato people (Amanze 1998:75). In 1905 he convened a court to try them on charges of false pretences; they were found guilty and he ordered his colleagues to burn down their houses. Those who gave the prophet any gifts were also fined twice the value of their goods. Kgama in most instances displayed a consistent hostility towards any form of Ethiopianism and the AICs. This is exactly what happened to Mothowagae of the King Edward Bangwaketse Mission Church, which was the first AIC at Kanye in the Bechuanaland Protectorate when he showed his dissatisfaction with the manner in which Chief Bathoeng handled his conflict with the LMS missionaries and which led to Motlogelwa's secession (Byaruhanga 1990:12). Chief Bathoeng made every possible attempt to stop Motlogelwa's Church. A similar incident took place at Mochudi among the Bakgatla during the introduction of the Z.C.C. in Bechuanaland. Between 1944 and 1950, seven churches were formed with great difficulty because of fierce opposition from the Mission Churches, British officials and traditional authorities in Bechuanaland. Any preaching which was perceived as spreading Zionism was completely forbidden (Amanze 1998:77). Those who refused to give up their preaching and healing activities were persecuted relentlessly, arrested, tried and if necessary imprisoned for a period of time. Bishop Bethuel Bolokwe, for example, attempted to establish the Nazareth Church of Botswana in Ramotswa village in 1949, but he met strong opposition from the chief. He was constantly under surveillance because of his religious activities. He was warned not to engage himself in Zionist activities (Amanze 1998:78). The church leaders like Archbishop Erastus Medupe and Solomon Tshwane had terrible experiences of persecutions. The government of the day was very much against the introduction of the Morian Church in Zion to

Bechuanaland in 1959 (Amanze 1998:83). To avoid reprisals, Pastor Tshokwane who was its minister used to preach to the people in the bush and hills, in order to escape arrest and imprisonment for disobeying government orders.

When Bishop Dichaba approached the Chiefs at Mmadinare and Serowe in order to obtain permission to organize the new congregations. Chief Oteng Mphoeng at Mmadinare said that *“all these ready made churches spoil our nation and tradition”* (Byaruhanga 1990:14). Bishop Dichaba, after travelling 80 km from Kgalagadi, arrived at Mmadinare where he was jailed twice. In 1963 he was fined P160.00 for refusing to stop his prayer meeting at Kgagodi. This analysis shows clearly that the AICs have a long history of suffering and persecutions in Botswana. Despite this, they have gradually increased in numbers over the years even now, they maintain that although there is freedom of religion and worship as guaranteed by the constitution they still experience discrimination from the Mission Churches. They maintain that the Mission Churches do not take the AICs seriously, nor recognize their existence nor work hand in hand with them (Byaruhanga 1990:13). They complain that during State functions in national stadium it is usually only the ministers of the Mission Churches who are asked to preach and pray. They claim that even today, the “House of Chiefs” still wants to pass laws to restrict the AICs. Since the majority of the AIC ministers have little education, they are not recognised as true ministers of religion by the Registrar of Societies (Byaruhanga 1990:13). Hence, the majority of AIC ministers are not allowed to be marriage officers. In spite of these acts of discrimination the AICs are increasing in number and play a significant role in the community.

The Role of the African Initiated Churches in the Community.

The AICs have generally played a significant role in terms of improving the quality of life of Batswana in the country. For instance, in the rural areas where the traditional way of life still appeals to the people, once the chief has announced the date for the beginning of the ploughing season, the AICs come together to pray and bless the seeds. According to Bishop Bethuel Bolokwe (personal interview, 28/03/03), they come together to conduct a special worship service for that occasion. They do likewise once the harvest season is over, and this is followed by the thanks giving

ceremony, in which the chief and community would be involved. This is an occasion where the chief would express his praise and thanksgiving to God and the ancestors for the blessing of rain received, and petition them to give people more rain in the coming season. This togetherness of the AICs and community is seen again during a severe drought when people pray for rain. This practice of the AICs has encouraged the spirit of togetherness and oneness in many communities in the rural areas.

In urban areas, such as Lobatse, the AICs contribute significantly by donating old clothes from their members to destitute families, orphanages and refugees. For example, several communities from these churches have been appointed to work with the Botswana Christian Council in this regard. It is worth mentioning that though Mission and Pentecostal Churches are also involved the AICs are in the forefront of this endeavor. Again, in a time of need these churches make their church buildings available for the use of the community; for example, the Old Apostolic Church of Africa accommodated Bothakga Primary School when its buildings were destroyed by a hurricane in Lobatse. Again, these churches have recently began to build several schools in Lobatse. Mrs. K.L Disele, the Minister of Home Affairs, while addressing the organization of the African Independent Churches, praised the AICs for this endeavour and encouraged them to do more. Furthermore, she acknowledged the fact that though the AICs have not built any hospitals in the country like the Mission Churches, in the health field, they have been very influential in their communities. This in essence means that healing has been an area of specialization for the AICs since their inception. Healing in the AICs, specifically by the Zionist Churches, is the theme of this study. Therefore the remaining chapters focus on it, while chapter one provides a background to a broad understanding of the AICs in Botswana. The dissertation, it is hoped, will clearly show the significant contribution made by the AICs to improving the quality of life of the communities in which they operate.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reconstruct the history of the development of the African initiated churches in Southern Africa particularly in Botswana. It shows how colonization of the African continent and Apartheid influenced the emergence and development of

these churches. It also shows that the South African situation played a significant role in the formation of the African Initiated Churches in Botswana. In broader terms, this implies that the historical comprehensiveness of these churches will always be understood in relation to the South African situation. This, does not necessarily mean that South Africa is the only country in Sub-Sahara which played a key role in the formation of the AICs in Botswana. But, comparatively speaking, South Africa contributed more than any other country in this regard in the region. It also endeavoured to show that the fierce opposition which the AICs faced from both the traditional authorities and Euro-American missionaries in Botswana. Lastly, it gives a brief summary of the role of these churches in the community.

African Initiated Churches in Botswana: Historical perspective. The Origin, Growth and Expansion of AICs in Botswana

The emergence and development of the AICs in Botswana, as indicated in the introduction of this study, must be broadly understood and dealt with in the context of the colonization of the Africa continent and attitude of the Euro-American missionaries of the Mission Churches who brought Christianity to Africa (Amanze 1998:1). This chapter will largely deal with the AICs within the confines of Southern Africa particularly in the context of Botswana. This will serve as a background to the understanding of the Zionist Churches in Botswana, the focus of the research. From chapter two the study will be confined to the Zionists. A consideration of the Southern African situation, as indicated above will place the AICs of Botswana in their proper historical context. The South African context will be a great deal as it influenced the emergence of the AICs in Botswana (Amanze 1998:71), which implies that the history of the AICs in Botswana cannot be divorced from their history in South Africa. By comparison, South Africa has more of these churches than any other country in Southern Africa (Daneel 1991:43). Recent research by Hendrics and Erasmus shows that while the South African membership of Mission Churches is 48% in population of both blacks and whites, 35% of the population belong to the African Initiated Churches' membership. This demonstrates clearly that the AICs are really a religious force to be reckoned with (West 1975:2).

The question maybe asked: who are the African Initiated Churches and where do they come from? There is a multiplicity of reasons why these churches are called the African Initiated Churches. Daneel, for instance, explicitly states that these churches are of African origin, founded by Africans, despite the fact that some of them are not exclusive and do admit white members, but are largely adapted to the needs, life-view and life-style of the black people (1991:31). Therefore, membership of Whites in the AICs as Daneel has showed, has never been significant in terms of numbers; it can be said that it has always been just a drop in the ocean. The few whites who are members of the AICs easily do what the majority of members are doing. Turner quoted in Daneel (1991:31) asserts that “these churches are primarily for African”, *“adding, these churches are predominantly black African in membership, as shown above, because of the secession from the Mission Churches”*. The problem of the colonization of the African continent, apartheid in South Africa etc resulted in white domination of Mission Churches which in turn, resulted in many secessions (Daneel 1991:4660, Makhubu 1988:23). It can be said succinctly that socio-political and economic situations in this continent, especially in the Sub-Saharan region, have far-reaching implications for the existence of these churches. The domination by the whites in all areas such as politics, society, economics, religion etc, and the resulting oppression of the African found expression in the church (Makhubu 1988:17-26). Their dissatisfaction, frustration in the said spheres and the paternalistic attitude of the Euro-American Missionaries conditioned by sentiments of cultural superiority, bias and a subsequent insensitivity as far as African worldview and religious practices were concerned, led to the secessions (Amanze 1998:68, Daneel 1991: 38-60). Again, this was a reaction against an over-Europeanized Christianity, which rejects almost every aspect of African cultural life as unchristian. This state of affairs caused the Africans to desire to have a church in which they could assimilate more of their traditional and natural elements (Daneel 1991:47-60).

From the above information it is evident that AICs are churches in which Africans worship God in an African way. Their Christian faith is grounded on African culture. Makhubu (1988:5) argues that the AICs are purely black controlled denominations with no links in membership, in most instances, or administrative control by any non-African Church. This implies that these AICs are churches which have completely broken their umbilical cord with the Western missionary enterprise. On the other

hand, some of these churches came into existence when certain prophetic figures broke away from other churches, drew members around them and recruited others from the non-Christian environment (Daneel 1991:47-60). There are many reasons why these churches broke away from each other but one is the power struggle amongst the prophetic leaders. This has contributed significantly to the multiplicity and proliferation of the AICs in Southern Africa (Keabetswe 1985:4, Makhubu 1988:12). On the other hand Daneel (1991:47-60) has argued convincingly that the AICs existence is not due to a reaction against the Missionary Churches but that they responded to the gospel of Christ by proclaiming the good news in an African context and in terms of an African worldview. He maintains that this is precisely one of the reasons why these churches are known as the indigenous churches. This implies that the AICs are independent institutions in their own right and they are as important as the Mission Churches in Southern Africa. The first churches which came into existence as the result of the secession from Mission Churches were the Ethiopian-type of churches.

The Origin and Growth of the Ethiopian Type of Churches in Southern Africa

The White domination in all spheres also found expression in the church, as indicated above. The Africans could not understand the brotherly love which was preached by the Euro-American missionaries while the latter were failing to act in accordance with the demands of the Gospel (Barret 1968:26-37). They preached that all people were equal in the eyes of God but they failed to practise that equality and instead practised the colour-bar in Christianity. These actors contributed significantly to the secessions from the Mission Churches. The secession which marked the birth of Ethiopian and African ecclesiastical independence took place when Rev. Mangena Mokone broke away from the Methodist Church in 1892 (Dwane 1989:86). Rev Mangena Mokone was a Methodist minister whose style of preaching was disliked by his white colleagues. They complained to his superintendent who transferred him to another circuit. But Mokone resented this interference although he did nothing about it. At the Methodist missionary conference which was held in Pretoria in 1892 matters came to a head. The blacks were excluded from positions on the board and were not allowed to attend certain sessions opened only to whites (Dwane1989:86, Denis 1995:83-100). This was the last straw: Rev Mokone and others, withdrew from the

conference and held their own meeting. They resigned from the Methodist Church, and the following Sunday he and others found the Ethiopian Church. This small congregation of African Christians, assembled in a hut in a location near Pretoria, was to spark off a movement which was to bring about a change in the development of Christianity in South Africa and impart a new spirit as far as the formation of indigenous clergy was concerned. Rev. Mokone declared in his inaugural sermon that the establishment of an African Church was to be understood as the fulfilment of the biblical prophecy concerning the final liberation of the African people (Denis 1995:88, Dwane 1989:86). He referred constantly to the words from Psalm 68:31: *“Princess shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God”*. Hence, Mokone and his followers decided to name the new religious body “Ethiopian Mission”, which later was given the official name of the Ethiopian church (Denis 1995:88). Denis (1995:88) asserts that ‘Ethiopia’ has not only a Pan-African connotation but also a theological meaning: expressing the hope for liberation of the Pan African peoples who had been for too long victims of slavery and white domination. Again, Mokone related the said text to the story of the Ethiopian eunuch who was baptized by Phillip, the evangelist and argued that the story showed a direct link between the Early Church in Palestine and the Church in Africa, thus providing justification for black leadership in the church (Acts 8:26-40).

This led to the rise of the Ethiopian movement which ideologically was marked with a psychological sense of self-esteem and responsibility for spreading God’s kingdom in Africa (Denis 1995:81-100, Dwane 1989:83-100). In broader terms, it can be said that this church, whose leaders were Pan-African in approach, were concerned about the welfare of the African people. Daneel (1991:38) argues that this church right from its inception had been non-prophetic and as a result laid no claim to any special manifestation of the Holy Spirit. But it resembled the Mission Church, the Methodist Church in this case, from which it seceded and in many respects, for example in organization, worship and practices (Daneel 1991:38, Dwane 1989:38-100). This was the case with all the Ethiopian Churches which came into existence because of the secession from the Mission Churches in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ethiopianism had its heyday from 1890”1920, when most of these church originated. Makhubu asserts that until the 1950s these churches formed majority of the AICs

although at this stage they were showing a considerable decline in growth. Whilst Ethiopianism was declining Zionism was rising rapidly in South Africa.

The Emergence and Expansion of Zionism in South Africa

Zionism as a religious movement historically originated in the USA. In 1896, in Chicago, John Alexander Dowie founded the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion (Daneel 1991:53-67, Makhubu 1988:10-12). This Church was pentecostally inclined: it gave pre-eminence to the work of the Holy Spirit. The main teachings of the Zionists were divine healing, adult baptism by immersion, baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues, and the imminent Second Coming of Christ. In addition to these the Church had the missionary vision of reaching out across the Atlantic to Africa. In 1904, Daniel Bryant converted P.L le Roux, who was a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church, who, in 1908 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and turned this experience into his main message. In that year P.L le Roux and several prominent black leaders founded the Apostolic Church (Daneel 1991:54, Makhubu 1988:11). This became one of the most successful Zionist Churches, which had school buildings and church halls in many parts of South Africa. It must be noted that because of the pre-eminence given to the work of the Holy Spirit, the Zionist Churches are regarded as Spirit-type Churches (Dikereke tsa Moya). Daneel (1991:53-59) has convincingly shown that the Zionist Church and all other churches which are its off-shoots are Spirit-type churches because they lay more emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit than others. The Zionist Churches, like the Ethiopian Churches, grew so rapidly in the early twentieth century that within a few decades they had spread all over South Africa. The emergence of these religious movements brought about a real African ecclesiastical independence (Makhubu 1988:5-16). This phenomenon marked the birth of the African Initiated Churches in South Africa, and irrevocably changed the religious landscape of South Africa in the sense that blacks began to form churches in which they could worship God in their own African way and style (Daneel 1991:31). These two movements, Ethiopianism and Zionism then spread all over South Africa and neighbouring countries such as Botswana

The Influence of Ethiopianism and Zionism in Botswana.

In 1885 Ethiopianisms began to exert a considerable influence across the border in the then Bechuanaland Protectorate. In 1896 some men from Southern Bechuanaland who were expelled from the London Missionary Society (LMS), which was the only legitimate Church then, for offences such as adultery went to Ngamiland and began to preach independently (Amanze 1998:78). Eventually they successfully managed to turn away some Batswana from the LMS in the area. An Ethiopian influence was also detected in Kanye. Rev. Good identified agents of the spread of Ethiopianism as Batswana migrant workers who, after a spell in the Johannesburg and Kimberly mines where they came into contact with Ethiopians from different churches, became disillusioned with their own home church the LMS (Amanze 1998:73). This confirms the fact that AICs were introduced in this country through migrant labourers, as indicated above.

One of the members of the church who came under the influence of the Ethiopian ideology was Mothowagae Motlogelwa, who joined the LMS in 1874. From 1880-1884 Motlogelwa was a Bible student in Kuruman at a Bible Training Center established by Rev. John Macenzie in 1875. When Motlogelwa completed his training he came back to Kanye to work as an evangelist and a teacher (Byaruhanga :1984:10). Motlogelwa was soon to be at loggerheads with the missionaries because he had hopes of being ordained as a minister, yet the church was not at all prepared to accept Africans into ordained ministry (Amanze 1998:73). They were only allowed to work as evangelists and assistants to missionaries. Again, the local LMS missionary, Edwin Lloyd disliked Motlogelwa because of his way of running the church. In 1901 Lloyd transferred Motlogelwa to Luhutu in the Kalahari Desert. Motlogelwa refused to go there because of his wife's ill-health and Lloyd dismissed him from the church (Byaruhanga 1984-10). Edwin Lloyd was heavily criticized for this action. Chief Bathoeng I, of Bangwaketse at Kanye, was aware of the situation that people disliked Lloyd but he did not want to offend the LMS. When things got out of hand, he secretly requested the LMS to transfer Lloyd to another village and to ordain Motlogelwa but his requests were denied. Hence, Motlogelwa seceded from the LMS and formed his own church, which he named the King Edward Bangwaketse Mission Church in 1901. Amanze (1998:73) asserts that this was a ploy to flatter the British officials in Bechuanaland, for the ruling king at that time was Edward VII in

England. Motlogelwa's church, which was the first AIC in Bechuanaland Protectorate, was fully established in January 1902. This in essence marked the beginning of true African ecclesiastical independence in the Protectorate. Because Motlogelwa named his church after the ruler of England he was never persecuted by the British officials in Bechuanaland Protectorate for having started his own church; instead they supported him. As a result, the opposition he faced from LMS was minimal because the latter was not backed up by the British Government (Amanze 1998:73, Byaruhanga 1990:11-13). Motlogelwa's prestige was considerable, as evidenced by the fact that he administered the holy communion according to his own articles of faith. This in itself shows clearly how successful and influential Motlogelwa was. By the end of 1903, Motlogelwa's following totalled 900 people from LMS at Kanye. In fact 700 people followed him when he seceded from LMS, while 200 followed him thereafter (Byaruhanga 1990:11-13). But Motlogelwa's success at Kanye was short lived. According to Charles Motlogelwa, the great-grand son of Mothowagae Motlogelwa, (Personal interview 09/04/03), there was a serious conflict between Motlogelwa and Chief Bathoen Gaseitsiwe, emanating from the way the Chief handled the dismissal of Motlogelwa by Edwin Lloyd at Kanye. Motlogelwa and his followers disliked Chief Bathoeng I, for failing to deal with the situation effectively. They felt that Kwenaetsile, Bathoeng's half-brother, would have dealt with the situation differently, hence they supported him as their Chief instead of Bathoeng. This was perceived by Chief Bathoeng I, as subversion on the part of Motlogelwa and his followers; therefore he attempted to stop their church by forcing its members to return to the LMS. In 1910 Bathoeng's son Seepapitso I, banished Motlogelwa to Lokgolobotlo, which was an undesirable part of the Chiefdom, as punishment and he died there in 1942. By then his church at Kanye had become small as some members had joined the AME church under the leadership of Marcus Gabashe, who had worked with Motlogelwa in Church matters. The second AIC which spread Ethiopianism was founded near Selepeng at Tati Reserve in Francistown in 1908, by the Bakhurutshe hence it was named Bakhurutshe Free Church. It was founded after the Bakhurutshe had lost a piece of their land to the Tati constitute company, which turned it into a mining area. The LMS local missionary, A.J. Gould and Chief Rauwe did nothing about the situation, instead the Chief moved to Tonota with some of the Bakhurutshe. But Kgama, who was the Paramount Chief of the area, did everything in his power to stop the Bakhurutshe Free Church by forcing

its embers to go back to LMS. The other churches which spread Ethiopianism and Independence were the Bapedi Luthern African Congregational Church and the Bantu Methodist Church in Bechuanaland Protectorate at the beginning of the twentieth century. In spite of the opposition from the government, as will be discussed in this chapter Ethiopianism spread and influenced people all over the country.

The other religious movement which gave rise to African ecclesiastical independence in the Bechuanaland Protectorate was Zionism, represented by the Z.C.C. in Mochudi among the Bakgatla people (Amanze 1998:75). This church was introduced in Mochudi in the Protectorate from South Africa in 1937, at the heat of a tribal political dispute by supporters of Kgosi Molefi who was deposed by the Resident Commissioner, a British official, and replaced by Mmusi his younger brother in 1936. According to Molwantwa Loabile (Personal Interview, 15/04/03) the problem started when Rev. Thomas Phiri at Sikwane in Mochudi the first black person to be ordained into the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) outside South Africa, resigned his post and 251 out of 263 members of his congregation joined him to form a new Church called the Bakgatla Free Church in 1935. Rev. Thomas Phiri involved the Paramount Chief, Molefi Pilane, in the formation of the Church hence he was also a staunch member. After the founding of this Church Mmusi, the Chief's younger brother, declared it illegal and sought the assistance of the Resident Commissioner to stop it. The Resident Commissioner, a British official, did so, deposed the Paramount Chief and replaced him by his brother Mmusi in 1936. Immediately several leading supporters of Molefi Pilane, namely Kalefala Motsisi, Kgosi Lebotse, Mohumagadi Seingwaeng and Bakgatla Pilane, went to South Africa to meet with Bishop Engenas Lekganyane who gave them permission to start a Z.C.C. Congregation at Mochudi, and Kalefala Motsisi was made its first minister in Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1937. In 1945 Molefi was reinstated as a chief of the Bakgatla people and the fortunes of the church began to change in Mochudi. In 1947, he surprised everybody when he banned the Z.C.C. Church whose members had worked hard for his return, on the pretext that it was a threat to his rule and authority. This is exactly what Chief Bathoeng Gaseitsewe had done to Motlogelwa and his church. It looked as if the tribal authorities felt threatened by the emergence of religious movements or churches which were different from the ones which were already in existence, such as the LMS and the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in the case of Mochudi, as shown above,

hence they found pretexts to crush and oppose the new churches members. In this case among those who refused to give up their faith were the chief's mother, Mrs. Seingwaeng, and his Uncle Bakgatla Pilane. This was extremely frustrating for the chief because his family was involved but in order to force the Z.C.C. followers to renounce their faith he dispossessed them of all their properties and sent them to Mamashia. From there they were banished to Gaborone in 1948, where they approached the Resident Commissioner and asked for a farm north of Gaborone, but this was refused because the farm was close to the Bakgatla and Bakwena reserves. He asked them to move to Werda or Nata in the Kgalagadi area. Finally they were allowed to buy a farm at Lentswe la Moriti in the Tuli Block in 1951, where they have established their headquarters and later moved to Lentsweletau in 1954. After independence in 1966 they gained freedom of worship and spread throughout the country. Today they Z.C.C. in Botswana claims a total of more than 45 000 members country wide. However, they still look to Moria in Polokwane (Pietersburg), South Africa, as their sacred headquarters, which they visit during Easter.

It is clear that the emergence of Ethiopianism and Zionism in the then Bechuanaland Protectorate sparked off a movement of new religious organisations which became the dominant Christian power in Botswana (Amanze 1998:77). The presence of Ethiopianism and Zionism inspired Batswana to form their own churches or set up branches, whose headquarters were either in South Africa or Zimbabwe. This justifies Amanze's assertion that much of the published and unpublished material available shows that the majority of the African Initiated Churches in Botswana were introduced to the country from South Africa through migrant labourers (1998:71). In any case, Mission Churches began to experience movements, either from within their ranks and file or from outside the country, which they were not able control. The missionaries were no longer able to stop the movement of Batswana from the Churches nor the formation of the new Churches in Bechuanaland Protectorate. It is appropriate here to mention a few of the largest movements or churches which were formed during the 1930s to 1950s and which were religious forces to be reckoned with in Botswana; some still are.

The African Initiated Churches formed in Bechuanaland Protectorate between 1930 and 1950

From the above information it is clear that the Z.C.C. was the first church which represented Zionism in Bechuanaland Protectorate in the 1940s. The second one was the Spiritual Healing Church, which was founded by the prophet Jacob Mokaleng Motswasele at Matsiloje near Francistown in 1950 (Amanze 1998:78). This church, according to Bayile Xhobe, (Personal interview, 17/05/03) has its roots in the preaching of Harry Morolong, who used to conduct revival services for the Barolong Tribe of Matsiloje near Francistown in 1923. Morolong's revival services had much influence on the youth and children, so much so that a few of them became possessed by the spirits. Motswasele was one of those who were greatly influenced by these services and began to go through a variety of other spiritual experiences. In 1926 he met the Lesabo brothers and left with them for Johannesburg to work as migrant labourers in the mines. Whilst there he joined the St' John's Apostolic Faith Mission of the prophetess Christian Nku in 1930. He organized prayer meetings at Matsiloje whenever he went back there, especially during his leave. In 1946 he felt that God was calling him to be a prophet and he discussed this call with Mrs. Christinah Nku, who also encouraged him to go back home to do God's work there. In 1948 he returned to Matsiloje where he sought permission from the chief of the Barolong, Kgosi George Moraka, to start a church of his own. In 1949 permission was granted and a church was formed under the name of the Apostolic United Faith Coloured Church in Matsiloje. People began to flock to him for prayers and healing from all over Bechuanaland Protectorate, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia and South Africa, so he began to erect a number of buildings for them to stay in and for the sick to be treated in, but after treatment they were sent back to their homes. Soon his followers did not feel comfortable with their mission churches, which condemned them for being associated with Zionism. Due to this pressure, Motswasele announced himself as Bishop Mokaleng, and baptized the people on 10th October 1950, as the head of the church.

According to Bayile Xhobe (Personal interview, 26/03/03), in 1952 Bishop Dichaba who had organised a prayer group at Kgagodi met with Bishop Mokaleng Motswasele. Both men had had visions directing them to "grow in faith and do God's work together". Thus Bishop Dichaba and his brother, Rev. Gabadumele Kapaletswe, joined the Spiritual Healing Church. But Bishop Mokaleng Motswasele continued his

work at Matsiloje while Dichaba continued at Kgalagadi. Bayile Xhobe asserts that the people flocked to both places when the hospital and tribal authority began to complain about the Spiritual Healing Church. The complaint was that the *“church refused to allow its sick members to be admitted at hospital because its priests rated themselves as doctors; they were taking Kgosi’s responsibility of announcing the beginning of ploughing season (Letsema), they attracted people from historical churches by making use of their healing ministry”* (Byaruhanga 1990:13). In response, both leaders of the Spiritual Healing Church wrote *“we do not stop the people from going to hospitals, we also receive hospitals care and work hand in hand with the medical doctors. The members of our church only pray and bless the seeds when the ploughing season is announced by Kgosi, we are preachers of the word of God and pray for God’s people. We never ask people to leave their churches”*. They also quoted the scripture: *“All that the Father gives me will come to me and him who comes to me I will not cast out”*(Byaruhanga 1990:13-14). This changed the perceptions of the hospital and tribal authorities in the area.

Thereafter, Bishop Dichaba approached Chiefs at Mmadinare and Serowe in order to obtain permission to organize the new congregations. But Kgosi Oteng Mphoeng at Mmadinare said, *“All these ready-made Churches spoil our nation and tradition”* (Byaruhanga 1990:11). Meanwhile Kgosi Kgamane of Serowe also refused his request. Later, as advised by Daniel Kwele who is the present leader of the Botswana People’s Union, they borrowed the voice of Prophecy Literature from the Seventh Day Adventist Church, of Cape Town and drafted a constitution for the Spiritual Healing Church. Producing such as sound constitution meant that the Tribal Authority granted permission to open branches of the said church in the areas around Mmadinare. Very soon under the strong leadership of Bishop Motswasele and Dichaba new congregations were opened at Gaborone, Morwa, Serowe, Mochudi and later in all the main villages in Bechuanaland Protectorate. This church today claims a membership of 35 000 people countrywide and its prestige is on the increase because of its healing activities. However, this church experienced certain schism at later stage and changed its name several times before its registration on 30th April 1973. In spite of these changes it has been a religious force really to be reckoned with in the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

In the 1950s another religious movement was introduced in the Bechuanaland Protectorate from the then Rhodesia under the leadership of John Masowe, the black Messiah. John was born in 1914, Rusape District, Rhodesia. He was named Shoniwa by his parents when he was still young (Amanze 1998:183). He received a special call from God at the age of eighteen. He fell ill for a period of 90 days during which, according to members of the church, his soul was taken up to heaven where he was welcomed by the great archangel. It was during this Spiritual journey in heaven that he received the commission to go back to the earth to start his church; hence the church was commonly called John Masowe's Church (Amanze 1998:81). It was during this spiritual journey to heaven that his name was changed from Shoniwa to John the Baptist. When he recovered from his illness he went to Mount Marimba to begin his mission. He had a Bible, a robe without seam and a rod. Thereafter he began his missionary venture in Rhodesia as an itinerant preacher. His preaching was against white minority rule in the country and this led to his arrest. Whilst he was in prison he experienced a number of miracles and eventually he was released. When he came from Prison he preached everywhere, telling his followers that Jesus came first to the Jews and that Jesus told them that he would come again. Now Jesus Christ had returned in the person of John Masowe as a Black Messiah for the Africans (Amanze 1998:82) John Masowe traveled extensively as he lived in Pretoria and Port Elizabeth in South Africa before the introduction of his church in Bechuanaland Protectorate. In South Africa as anywhere else, he taught his followers manual work so that they could be free from colonial master's labour market. He also preached the word of God emphasizing the Torah, the Ten Commandments (Amanze 198:82). He also established churches in countries such as Namibia, Zambia, Kenya and Dar-esalaam. This church was introduced by F.M. Ngorima to Moroka village in North-East District of Bechuanaland Protectorate in 1950. According to the congregates, Ngorima was sent by John Masowe himself to start a church in this country. From Moroka village this church spread to Tswapong, Serowe and then Southwards. This church claims a total of 7839 Christian and its success is based on its activities of healing.

Another religious movement which was formed in the 1950s and which also became a success story, is the St' Phillip's Faith Healing Church. This church was formed by Bishop Willie Raditsebe Gulubane; before he formed this church he was a member of

the Salvation of Israel Church (Amanze 1998:82-83). He came under the influence of this church while he was studying for his matric in South Africa, where he had gone in the 1940s. He reached the position of an evangelist in the church and returned to Bechuanaland, where he joined the Ministry of Health in Francistown in 1951. In 1957 the leaders of the Salvation of Israel Church in South Africa encouraged him to start a branch of the church in Bechuanaland (Amanze 1998:83). In response to this advice he started a fellowship, a study group in his house in Francistown. This marked the beginning of the church, which at first was called the Apostolic Faith Healing Church, but this name was changed to St' Phillips Healing Church at the time of registration on 17th April 1973. This church claims a total of 5950 Christians in the country (Amanze 1998:83). These are but a few of the churches, which were formed between 1930s and 1950s in Bechuanaland Protectorate. However, the period between 1950 and 1980 saw the consolidation and proliferation of the AICs in Bechuanaland.

The Consolidation and Proliferation of the AICs in Bechuanaland Protectorate

The period between 1950 and 1960 witnessed a very slow process in terms of the formation of the AICs in the country, although the Mission Churches had already lost power and control over the formation of the said churches. This was caused by the traditional chiefs' strong opposition to the formation of these churches because of their divisiveness (Amanze 1998:83). This subject will be dealt with in greater detail later in this chapter. From 1952 to 1953 there was a movement of people, from Southern Rhodesia to Francistown in Bechuanaland Protectorate, who were responsible for the formation of the Apostolic Sabbath Church of God in 1953. According to the report of the District Commissioner of the Bechuanaland Protectorate from Mafikeng to his colleague in Francistown Northern Protectorate, the group's presence in the country was illegal, therefore its members had to be deported back to the country of their origin. He entered into correspondence with his colleague about this situation, having already written to the Native Commissioner of Southern Rhodesia to draw his attention to the matter. He prosecuted the leader of the group, Ebrahim Moyo, and his male followers under the Native Immigration Act on 23rd July 1953. According to the conviction the court ordered the said males, including their

wives and children, to quit the territory under the supervision of the said authority, on the 29th July 1953.

According to the correspondence of the District Commissioner to his colleague in Francistown, he blamed Sub-Chief Moroka for the presence of this religious sect in the country. He maintained that Sub-Chief Moroka connived at the invasion of these religious fanatics and alien African into an already overcrowded and overgrazed little Native Reserve rented from the Tati Company, which was a mining company in the area. According to this report it was discovered that when these men were convicted of illegal immigration and had entered the territory without passes or passbooks, as they were called then, they produced receipts showing that they had already paid tax to Sub-Chief Moroka. To make matters worse, it was discovered that one of the convicts had already paid tax for three years, which apparently was done in order to evade the pass laws. The District Commissioner, Mr. Dixons, condemned Sub-Chief Moroka for issuing these tax receipts to illegal immigrants. Consequently, many of these people had to be given citizenship while a few of them were deported to the country from which they came. The ones who gained citizenship worked hard for the growth of their church in the area and eventually it spread to another surrounding villages. Apparently, this was how either churches were formed in Francistown and Ramakgwebane in Northern Protectorate. The other church which was established in Francistown and surrounding areas was the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission, founded by Mrs Evelyn Kaboto in 1956 after she was healed by the prophetess Mrs. Christinah Nku in 1955 (Amanze 1998:80). From 1956 to 1963 Mrs. Evelyn Koboto was the only leader of the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission in Bechuanaland Protectorate. Her husband became a pastor in the church while she assumed the position of prophetess. In 1963 she decided to break away from St John's Apostolic Faith Mission because much of the money which was raised in Bechuanaland was sent to the mother church in South Africa. She had the desire that the money which was raised in Bechuanaland should be used for church development instead of being sent to the mother church which was already developed (Amanze 1998:81). Also, she was angered by the fact that Mrs. Christian Nku had failed to appoint her as a minister of the church in Francistown when a permanent church was built there in 1960. Instead Rev. D.N. Lekuta was appointed and this affected her greatly, hence she formed her own church under the name St. Matthew Apostolic Faith Mission. She

became its prophetess while her husband became the first bishop of the church. Amanze (1998:108) asserts that in the meantime the church in Francistown under Bishop Andrew Ndubano broke away because of the leadership crisis and formed St John's Apostolic Faith Mission of Botswana. All the three sections of this church in Botswana have many in common and still acknowledge prophetess Mrs. Christinah Nku as their original founder. Together as a movement they command a total of more than 9 000 Christians countrywide.

This period saw the formation of other churches such as the Galatia Church by Archbishop Erastus Medupe Abeng in 1956, while the Morian Episcopal Church in Zion was introduced in the Bobonong area through the activities of pastor Solomon Tshokwane in 1959. The period between 1950 and 1960, as indicated above, saw the slow formation of the AICs, while the 1960s witnessed an upsurge in their formation in Bechuanaland, according to Molwatwa Loabile (Personal interview, 15/04/03 and 05/05/03). The period between 1960 and 1970, witnessed a rapid increase in the formation of new churches in the country. Loabile argued that more than 35 new churches were formed within five years, and many of them were formally launched only after independence on 30th September 1966. He attributed this increase in the number of AICs at this stage to two main factors: firstly the fact that the Mission churches had lost their monopoly on religious matters in the Protectorate. Secondly, the return of Sir Seretse Kgama from overseas in 1958 and the prospect of independence made things easier for Botswana to start their own churches or to establish branches of the AICs from outside. One of the few churches worth mentioning which were formed during this period is the Eleven Apostles Spirit Healing Church, by Joseph Lesomo Moselwa in 1963. The founder was born at Potchestroom, South Africa where while he was working as a court interpreter, a white woman met him and said that one day he would be a prophet. Due to the racial discrimination in South Africa he left for Bechuanaland and while working there he met a Mokalanga woman who said she had seen him as a prophet in her dreams (Byaruhanga 1990:15). Thereafter he was attacked by illness and left for South Africa, where he was healed by the prophetess, Mrs. Christinah Nku, in Evaton. During a consultation he was told that his sickness was due to the hand of God upon him. He was further told to go back home and stay in his mother's house until he received his task from God. At home one night he heard a voice saying "*I, God, have*

sent the prophets but they have failed to fulfil their obligation". He realised that God had sent him to tell the leaders of the St. Johns Apostolic Faith Mission and Spiritual Healing Church about their role of being prophets. After the voice he saw a hand throwing a stone and it broke into eleven pieces, followed by another voice saying; *"Out of you I will raise the eleven Apostles"*.

Then Moselwa was shown the Maun and Ngamiland district as a place to start his mission (Amanze 1998:85). Thus he left for Maun and founded a church on 15th February, 1963, which was first named the New Jerusalem Church and later called the Eleven Apostles Spiritual Healing Church. The name refers to the eleven Apostles of Jesus after his resurrection. From the time of its inception to the present, the Church has experienced tremendous growth as a result of its healing activities it has a membership of more than 6 000 people at a number of branches in the country. Another Church which gained a large following in Bechuanaland is the St Paul's Apostolic Faith Mission of Botswana, which was initially known as the Five Apostles' Church of America (Amanze 1998:85). The first known African to be a member of this Church was the Prophet Petrus Hlanyela Moloi, who was born in Free State in 1906. In 1926 he broke away from this Church, and formed the St Paul's Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa and established his headquarters at Evaton. The church was introduced to Bechuanaland by Bishop Meshack M. Selolwane who was a member while working as a migrant labour in Johannesburg in 1955. In 1960 he returned to Bechuanaland and started a branch of the church in the country. The first congregation was established in Serowe. Selolwane met strong opposition from Kgosi Rasebolai Kgamane, who arrested him for dissemination of "Zionist" ideas. He was eventually released when he pleaded not guilty and continued to build his Church. It was registered on 27th April 1973, during which the name was changed to the St Paul's Apostolic Faith Mission of Botswana in order to be in line with the changes which were brought about by the independence of the country from the British government on the 30th September 1966. Hence, after registration Bishop Meshack Selolwane declared the church independent of the jurisdiction of the mother church in South Africa because of misunderstanding between himself and the leadership of the church in South Africa, who wanted to take direct control of the affairs of the church in Botswana. The church claims a following of more than 8000 members in the country (Amanze 1998:85).

After the celebration of independence on 30th September 1966, which marked the breaking of political ties between the Bechuanaland and the British Government, there were new development regarding religion in the country. For instance, Botswana drew up a new constitution which guarantees any person or group of persons the right to worship and to freedom of religion and this led to a phenomenal increase of religious organizations and societies. The period between 1966 and 1972 therefore saw a consolidation and further proliferation of the AICs in Botswana. The atmosphere was very conducive for the creation and development of the new churches. Amanze (1998:86) asserts that some of the new churches were accused of money making, seduction of women, healing scandals, requiring only a low level of education for their leaders and draining finances to other countries. The government began to view the uncontrolled growth of the AICs as an unhealthy development, hence it introduced legislation to regulate and control their activities in the country.

The Government's Attempts to Regulate the Activities of the AICs

As indicated above, some of the new churches were accused of corruption and therefore the government became involved. It attempted to deal with the situation by enacting the Societies' Act of 1972, which made provisions for the registration of societies, which included new religious movements, at the Ministry of Home Affairs (Amanze 1998:86). The Societies Act of 1972 required that all AICs should be registered and should report annually to the government. This was meant to control the growth of the AICs and regulate their activities. Mr. B.K. Sebele, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs, during his opening address at the workshop on Independent Churches in Botswana on 5th November 1983, said that, in order to succeed in this regard the Ministry insisted that all churches or societies should bring along their own local adopted constitution for registration. Sebele said this helped the government considerably because most of these Churches started as branches of Churches outside Botswana, especially in South Africa. As a result, these churches had been operating without constitutions in this country and this was a major problem which was to be solved. Sebele remarked that when the Ministry began to deal with these problems it realized that some constitutions of these churches, for example, the Z.C.C. (with its star symbol), did not even permit the creation of a

branch of the church in Botswana. Now, the implication was that any legal action that had to be instituted by the church in Botswana could be instituted in the courts of South Africa. This situation, in most instances, led to protracted correspondence between the Registrar and the mother body in South Africa and registration had to be delayed, in some cases, for a period of two years.

This issue of local constitutions and registration of churches at the Ministry of Home Affairs as far as the AICs, were concerned meant a radical change in their set up. This move to bring about change and control was met, with some resistance, which was engineered externally by mother bodies backed by the local leaders and members who did not want to lose power and control, whilst some members were solely committed to religious worship. This led to the churches splitting into two or more factions whilst at the same time both factions owned allegiance to one bishop, prophet, priest, etc, as head of the church in South Africa. This is exactly what had happened with the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission during the leadership of Mrs. Christinah Nku as prophetess. The Church in Botswana used to be greatly affected because of this state of affairs. Yet in the end the two factions would submit different applications for registration under the same name and constitution. Again, Mr. Sebele maintained that some of these Churches used to come up with good and acceptable constitutions when applying for registration but quite often these documents were never followed. He asserted that the majority of these churches were having problems which centered on leadership. He claimed that in most cases dishonesty was the main contributing factor. He maintained that the leadership, in most instances, still used these churches as money raising organizations for their own benefit. He added that some unscrupulous leaders still perceived the church as their own personal property and he attributed this problem to the low standard of education of the leaders. He argued that these problems were the main causes of the splits amongst the AICs, because of unscrupulous persons masquerading as leaders of Christian movements.

From this analysis it is deducible that the life of the AICs in most instances was characterized by conflicts and maladministration; hence the government became involved and it must be credited for doing so. It must also be said that the Societies Act 1972 had a loophole which created a serious problem in the country. For instance, the Act states that for a society to be recognized by the government only a

minimum of ten or more persons was required (Amanze 1998:86). This is a serious blunder, which made it easy to form religious societies. Amanze (1998:86) asserts that after this Act was passed 48 churches were formed within a very short space of time in Botswana. Since then these new churches have been increasing daily and recent research has shown that it is not easy to acquire all information about them. Therefore, it is clear that the introduction of the Societies Act, which was meant to control the unhealthy growth of the AICs and regulate their activities, actually worsened the situation. In fact it consolidated and multiplied the AICs in Botswana. So it is quite appropriate to state that since the introduction of the Act in 1972 to date, a great number of churches have been formed in Botswana, thereby causing, in my view, an ecclesiastical over-production in the country. It is in the light of this understanding that the Minister of Home Affairs, Mrs. K.L. Disele, while addressing the organization of African Independent Churches, stated that in Botswana there was no legislation to control the rapid spread of churches and splinter groups into fully fledged churches. She even appealed to this organization to be of help to the government in regulating and standardizing the activities of its churches. However, Botswana, as far as one knows, is the only country which has made an attempt to control the proliferation of the AICs and regulate their activities in Southern Africa. On the other hand AICs are complaining that they are discriminated against even by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which claims to deal with their affairs. And according to the leadership of the AICs their churches have a long history of being discriminated against and opposed in Botswana.

The Opposition of the Mission Churches, Tribal Authorities, and Colonial Protectorate Government to the African Independent Churches (AICs) in Botswana.

The opposition to the AICs by the Mission Churches, tribal authorities and colonial government needs to be understood, right from the outset in the context of convention which Botswana chiefs signed with the British government, with the aid of LMS missionaries, for the protection of the country against the Boers in 1884. According to Molwantwa Loabile, (Personal interview, 15/04/03, 05/05/03), Chief Kgama I, of Bangwato, Bathoeng I, of Bangwaketse and Sebele of Bakwena, because of their good working relationship with the LMS missionaries among their tribes, agreed to go

to England to secure the protection of Queen Victoria's government. Thereafter the British government announced that the whole country was to be a British Protectorate and that LMS Missionary Rev. John Mackenzie was appointed a Deputy Commissioner in Bechuanaland. This appointment meant that politics and religion were intertwined in Bechuanaland. This is precisely the reason why the missionaries were co-operating with the government in dealing with church matters and vice-versa. On the other hand, Batswana Chiefs perceived themselves as owing allegiance to Britain. Hence, the LMS was perceived as an authentic religious body for a long time in Bechuanaland. Therefore, for the chiefs it was convenient to rule a tribe which belonged to one church because this created unity. Hence, the introduction of other churches was seen as a threat and was vehemently rejected by the chiefs. For instance, the presence of the Anglicans in Tonota caused a great deal of conflict between them and tribal chiefs. At one point the Anglican Bakhurutshe at Tonota were forced to abandon their church and join the LMS, for fear that the two denominations in the area would divide the people (Amanze 1998:40).

Again, in 1912, the Anglicans made another attempt to introduce their church among the Bangwaketse but Chief Seepapitso rejected their application for permission to establish the Anglican Church in the Ngwaketse Reserve. Hence, missionaries for other churches such as the Catholics did mission work in Bechuanaland whilst they were living in places like Mafikeng and Kimberly. They were not welcomed in Bechuanaland. Other Mission Churches therefore struggled to establish themselves in this country and in most instances their members were persecuted by the tribal authorities. The only fortunate thing, so to speak, is that the LMS missionaries were personally not opposed to the establishment of other Mission Churches. Hence, they did not trouble the missionaries of such churches nor their members; the opposition came all the time from the tribal authorities. Even when the Pentecostal Churches were introduced in Bechuanaland from America and Europe, mainly through South Africa, the same thing happened (Amanze 1998:44). In 1935 the Church of God in Christ was introduced by William Sebolao and Dickson Muthume, who worked as migrant labourers in South Africa to Bechuanaland. Mr. Dickson Muthume settled in Kanye and planted the Church among the Bangwaketse, while Mr. Sebolao in Molepolole established it among the Bakwena. In Molepolole the Church met great opposition from the chiefs, who punished all those who expanded the Church there.

In 1938 Mr. Sebolao and some of his followers were arrested and imprisoned for two to three months because of their activities (Amanze 1998:44-45). The other Pentecostal Churches experienced similar opposition and persecutions. From this analysis it was clear that the AICs were no exception in this regard; hence their opposition and persecutions need to be understood in the broader context of the history of Christianity in the country and of the allegiance which the local chiefs perceived themselves to be owing to Britain because of the signing of the convention in 1884.

The opposition and persecutions of the AICs began when Chief Kgama, a devout Christian member of the LMS, opposed and punished the famous prophet in Botswana, Sentso Legong in the early 1900s. Sentso's prophecy appealed to his people and offered relief to them because during the first ten years of the 20th century Batswana were very poor. Since the mines at Kimberly in South Africa had shut down, the majority of them were unemployed. Again, there were several years of severe drought. At this stage the LMS was busy building its administrative structures and protecting its schools and other institutions, neglecting pastoral care of the poor and unemployed. At the same time the missionaries in most instances displayed negative attitudes towards Setswana culture (Byaruhanga 1990:12). Sentso, who came from Mmankgodi in the Kweneng District, began to preach at Kanye, introducing himself as an angel, prophet, and even Jesus himself in 1908. He demanded that his followers should give up all European customs and return to the Setswana way of life. He promised that by so doing they would become free from British rule and as a result harvest three crops a year (Byaruhanga 1990:12). The majority of people, including the LMS members, believed Sentso in this regard and brought him cattle, sheep, goats as gifts. The LMS expelled 120 of its members for doing so. Meanwhile Sentso was expelled and sent back to Mmankgodi in the custody of his relatives. However, Sentso continued to preach at Mmankgodi. This time he claimed that darkness would cover the entire Kweneng District and very soon would be followed by the death of Europeans and Batswana who refused to follow his prophecy, and that their cattle would also die.

As a result the LMS Church at Mmankgodi was left with only three members and Sentso's followers burnt down the church building (Byaruhanga 1990:12). This time

Chief Sebele I, became angry and ordered the people of Mmankodi to pay a fine of 140 cattle. He also tried to arrest Sentso, who fled to Johannesburg to work in the mines. He returned to Mmankodi after some years to settle down. Again, in 1902, Chief Kgama found himself embroiled in a conflict with five prophets who claimed to possess the power to solve all kinds of misfortunes. Kgama was annoyed by the fact that these prophets commanded some following among the Bangwato people (Amanze 1998:75). In 1905 he convened a court to try them on charges of false pretences; they were found guilty and he ordered his colleagues to burn down their houses. Those who gave the prophet any gifts were also fined twice the value of their goods. Kgama in most instances displayed a consistent hostility towards any form of Ethiopianism and the AICs. This is exactly what happened to Mothowagae of the King Edward Bangwaketse Mission Church, which was the first AIC at Kanye in the Bechuanaland Protectorate when he showed his dissatisfaction with the manner in which Chief Bathoeng handled his conflict with the LMS missionaries and which led to Motlogelwa' secession (Byaruhanga 1990:12). Chief Bathoeng made every possible attempt to stop Motlogelwa' Church. A similar incident took place at Mochudi among the Bakgatla during the introduction of the Z.C.C. in Bechuanaland. Between 1940 and 1950, seven churches were formed with great difficulty because of fierce opposition from the Mission Churches, British officials and traditional authorities in Bechuanaland. Any preaching which was perceived as spreading Zionism was completely forbidden (Amanze 1998:77). Those who refused to give up their preaching and healing activities were persecuted relentlessly, arrested, tried and if necessary imprisoned for a period of time. Bishop Bethuel Bolokwe, for example, attempted to establish the Nazareth Church of Botswana in Ramotswa village in 1949, but he met strong opposition from the chief. He was constantly under surveillance because of his religious activities. He was warned not to engage himself in Zionist activities (Amanze 1998:78). The church leaders like Archbishop Erastus Medupe and Solomon Tshwane had terrible experiences of persecutions. The government of the day was very much against the introduction of the Morian Church in Zion to Bechuanaland in 1959 (Amanze 1998:83). To avoid reprisals, Pastor Tshokwane who was its minister used to preach to the people in the bush and hills, in order to escape arrest and imprisonment for disobeying government orders.

When Bishop Dichaba approached the Chiefs at Mmadinare and Serowe in order to obtain permission to organize the new congregations. Chief Oteng Mphoeng at Mmadinare said that “*all these ready made churches spoil our nation and tradition*” (Byaruhanga 1990:14). Bishop Dichaba, after travelling 80 km from Kgalagadi, arrived at Mmadinare where he was jailed twice. In 1963 he was fined P160.00 for refusing to stop his prayer meeting at Kgagodi. This analysis shows clearly that the AICs have a long history of suffering and persecutions in Botswana. Despite this, they have gradually increased in numbers over the years even now, they maintain that although there is freedom of religion and worship as guaranteed by the constitution they still experience discrimination from the Mission Churches. They maintain that the Mission Churches do not take the AICs seriously, nor recognize their existence nor work hand in hand with them (Byaruhanga 1990:13). They complain that during State functions in national stadium it is usually only the ministers of the Mission Churches who are asked to preach and pray. They claim that even today, the “House of Chiefs” still wants to pass laws to restrict the AICs. Since the majority of the AIC ministers have little education, they are not recognised as true ministers of religion by the Registrar of Societies (Byaruhanga 1990:13). Hence, the majority of AIC ministers are not allowed to be marriage officers. In spite of these acts of discrimination the AICs are increasing in number and play a significant role in the community.

The Role of the African Initiated Churches in the Community.

The AICs have generally played a significant role in terms of improving the quality of life of Batswana in the country. For instance, in the rural areas where the traditional way of life still appeals to the people, once the chief has announced the date for the beginning of the ploughing season, the AICs come together to pray and bless the seeds. According to Bishop Bethuel Bolokwe (personal interview, 28/03/03), they come together to conduct a special worship service for that occasion. They do likewise once the harvest season is over, and this is followed by the thanks giving ceremony, in which the chief and community would be involved. This is an occasion where the chief would express his praise and thanksgiving to God and the ancestors for the blessing of rain received, and petition them to give people more rain in the coming season. This togetherness of the AICs and community is seen again during a

severe drought when people pray for rain. This practice of the AICs has encouraged the spirit of togetherness and oneness in many communities in the rural areas.

In urban areas, such as Lobatse, the AICs contribute significantly by donating old clothes from their members to destitute families, orphanages and refugees. For example, several communities from these churches have been appointed to work with the Botswana Christian Council in this regard. It is worth mentioning that though Mission and Pentecostal Churches are also involved the AICs are in the forefront of this endeavor. Again, in a time of need these churches make their church buildings available for the use of the community; for example, the Old Apostolic Church of Africa accommodated Bothakga Primary School when its buildings were destroyed by a hurricane in Lobatse. Again, these churches have recently begun to build several schools in Lobatse. Mrs. K.L Disele, the Minister of Home Affairs, while addressing the organization of the African Independent Churches, praised the AICs for this endeavour and encouraged them to do more. Furthermore, she acknowledged the fact that though the AICs have not built any hospitals in the country like the Mission Churches, in the health field, they have been very influential in their communities. This in essence means that healing has been an area of specialization for the AICs since their inception. Healing in the AICs, specifically by the Zionist Churches, is the theme of this study. Therefore the remaining chapters focus on it, while chapter one provides a background to a broad understanding of the AICs in Botswana. The dissertation, it is hoped, will clearly show the significant contribution made by the AICs to improving the quality of life of the communities in which they operate.