

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The sixth and final chapter of this study gives a brief summary of the history of the African Initiated Churches particularly the Zionist Churches in Botswana. It shows that the emergence and development of these churches brought into existence a form of Christianity which is relevant to the life and culture of Botswana. A Christianity which the majority of Botswana perceive as their own religion not a white man's religion imposed on them from Europe and America, or anywhere else outside the African continent. This form of Christianity was born in a church which Africans could assimilate more of their traditional and natural elements.

In conclusion, it is quite appropriate to state that the emergence and development of the African Initiated Churches in Southern Africa particularly Botswana has brought into existence a form of Christianity which is relevant to the life and culture of Botswana. A Christianity which the majority of Botswana perceive as the own religion not a white man's religion imposed on them from Europe and America, or anywhere else outside the African continent. This is a formal Christianity which viewed as an indigenous religion which is born and bred in the bows of mother African and which is here to stay for ever. This is the kind of Christianity which made the African Initiated Churches to stand the test of time looking at the fierce oppositions which they faced from the traditional authority and especially during the leadership of Chief Kgama of Bangwato. The traditional chiefs did everything in their powers to silence the leadership of the Zionist Churches from spreading this form of Christianity in Botswana. They were fined oxen, properties banished, beaten and imprisoned but all these proved to be a futile exercise on the part of the traditional chiefs. The more they tried hard to silence the Zionists the more the leadership Christianity spread like wild fire. And they persecuted the leadership of the Zionists churches with the Euro-American missionaries from the Mission Churches. They too, hang up their gloves, when they realized that they were fighting a losing battle. And they began to accept the African and perceive this form of Christianity as retrogression to paganism and heathenism.

This form of Christianity was born in a church which Africans could assimilate more of their traditional and natural elements. This is an evidence that their faith is grounded on African culture. And it is against this background that Daneel (1991:47 – 670) was argued convincingly that the existence of the African Initiated Churches is not only due to creation against the Missionary Churches but that they responded to the gospel of Christ by proclaiming the goodness in an African context and in terms of an African worldview. This in itself implies that the worship, practices, doctrine of these churches are relevant to the needs of the indigenous people of this continent particularly Botswana. It is within this context that Amanze (1998:xiii) wrote that “these churches have identified and attend to the greatest spiritual and physical needs of their people and explain many of the practices and doctrine of the church in Tswana cultural terms that are easily understood and most appreciated by Botswana. This justifies Mofokeng assertion (1990:47) that the African Initiated Churches are principal religious custodians of African culture and traditional religion. This analysis shows that these churches develop a form of Christianity based on African experiences of human existence as well as the teachings of the universal church of Christ based on Biblical revelation as contained both in the Old and New Testaments.

Again, the African Initiated Churches have taken seriously the healing ministry of Jesus Christ and the early church and made it an integral part of their mission. For them worship and healing cannot be separated, they are perceived as two sides of the same coin. They believe strongly that it was due to healing that Jesus and the Early church commanded such a large following. And they perceive themselves as following the footsteps of Christ and the Early church in this regard, in broader context of this analysis, this is justifiable considering Sundkler’s observation of a Zulu prophet (quoted in Daneel 1971:192) said during the church gathering, “This is not a church but a hospital”. And such remarks are often made by the bishop and prophets of these churches. And it is against this background that Anderson wrote (1993:27) “ healing therefore become an effective evangelistic instrument for preaching the good news to the African poor”. It is this healing, a distinctive feature of the African Initiated Churches which to, a great extent placed them on the religious map of the world thereby changing the religious landscaped of Southern African particularly Botswana. As a result healing will remain hub of the ministry and mission

of the African Initiated Churches to eternity. Whatever is happening in Mission Churches in regard to healing must be perceived as challenge from these churches.