

**A MISSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE KIMBANGUIST CHURCH IN KATANGA
PROVINCE, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

by

FUNGWA KIPIMO JESSE

Submitted in fulfillment of requirement for the degree of

MASTER OF THEOLOGY

In the subject

MISSIOLOGY

At the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF J.N.J. KRITZINGER

JOINT-SUPERVISOR: DR J. KERR

SUBMITTED: NOVEMBER, 2008

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my daughter
Eva MpandeKipimo and Faith Mwamba Kipimo
for their hard work in the area of academic achievements
and to all upcoming Congolese theologians and missiologists
to always forge ahead in their studies.

Declaration by the candidate

I declare that "A missiological study of the Kimbanguist church in Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of Congo" is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F K Jesse', written over a horizontal line.

SIGNATURE
(Mr F K Jesse)

28 November 2008

DATE

SUMMARY

This is a systematic and critical study of the mission of the Kimbanguist Church in the city of Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The research question was: “How do the Kimbanguist members interpret and express the Christian message in and for the context of Katanga province through their communal life, worship and mission?” A historical chapter traces the origins and growth of the church, followed by four chapters that analyze the mission of the church by means of a ‘praxis cycle.’ The chapters look at mission strategies (leadership, church departments, mission methods), followed by mission agents (spiritual head, clergy, chaplains, women, youth), the theological sources of mission (the Bible, the life of Simon Kimbangu, and a code of conduct) and spirituality (liturgy, sacraments, pilgrimages and festivals). In a concluding chapter several critical issues were identified for critical dialogue between the Kimbanguist church and other African churches.

KEY TERMS

Katanga Province, Simon Kimbangu, Kimbanguism, Missiology, Mission, Mission Initiated churches, African Initiated churches, Legal representative, praxis cycle.

Table of Contents

Declaration by the candidate.....	iii
SUMMARY.....	iv
KEY TERMS.....	iv
CHAPTER 1.....	1
INTRODUCTION	
1.1 AIM	1
1.2 Research question.....	1
1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	2
1.4 THEOLOGICAL INTERESTS AND ASSUMPTIONS	4
1.4.1 The growth of AICs.....	5
1.4.2 A growing interest in AIC growth.....	8
1.4.3 The need for reconstruction in Africa.....	8
1.4.4 My theological approach to African Initiated Churches (AICs).....	9
1.5 RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY.....	13
1.5.1 Regional study of an AIC.....	13
1.5.2 AICs as missionary churches.....	14
1.5.3 The contribution of the Congo to AIC history.....	15
1.5.4 Theological questions.....	16
1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	22
1.8 TERMINOLOGY.....	25
1.8.1 Katanga Province.....	25
1.8.2 Kimbanguism.....	26
1.8.3 Missiology.....	26
1.8.4 Mission	26
1.8.5 Mission-Initiated Church.....	26
1.8.6 Missionary.....	27
1.8.7 Legal Representative (LR).....	27
1.8.8 African Instituted Church (AIC).....	27
1.8.9 Simon Kimbangu.....	27
1.8.10 Praxis cycle.....	27
1.9 SURVEY OF CHAPTERS.....	27
CHAPTER TWO.....	29
THE KIMBANGUIST CHURCH IN KATANGA PROVINCE: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE	
2.1 Introduction.....	29

2.2 Simon Kimbangu's life.....	29
2.3 From N'kamba to Katanga	31
2.3.1 Kimbangu's ministry and arrest.....	31
2.3.2 From N'kamba to Thysville (Bandundu)	32
2.3.3 From Thysville (Bandundu) to Elizabethville (Lubumbashi).....	34
2.4 Testimonies to Kimbangu's wonders.....	37
2.5 Kimbangu's ministry during 30 years in prison (Elizabethville).....	39
2.6 The rise of Kimbanguism in Katanga	41
2.6.1 The Rise of Kimbanguism in general.....	42
2.6.2 The rise of Kimbanguism in Lubumbashi.....	42
2.6.2.1 Immigrants from Kasai province.....	43
2.6.2.2 Official recognition by the state.....	45
2.6.2.3 Reburial of Simon Kimbangu.....	46
2.7 Summary.....	47
CHAPTER THREE.....	48
MISSION STRATEGIES	
3.1 Introduction.....	48
3.2 Church organization and leadership.....	49
3.2.1 EJCSK hierarchy.....	49
3.2.1.1 Legal Representative (Chef de l'Eglise).....	50
3.2.1.2 General Assembly.....	50
3.2.1.3 District Council.....	51
3.2.2 Appointment and training of office bearers.....	52
3.2.3 Leadership succession.....	55
3.3 Church Departments.....	57
3.3.1 Department of Evangelization.....	58
3.3.2 Department of Press and Information.....	65
3.3.3 Department of Development and Economics.....	66
3.3.4 Department of Health.....	68
3.3.5 Department of External (Public) Affairs.....	69
3.3.6 Department of Education.....	70
3.3.7 Department of Social Welfare.....	72
3.3.8 Kimbanguist Commission for Peace, Justice and Care for creation.....	73
3.4 Mission strategies and methods.....	76
3.4.1 Preaching.....	77
3.4.2 Personal evangelism.....	78
3.4.3 Life testimony.....	78
3.4.4 Christian literature.....	78
3.4.5 Healing.....	81
3.4.6 Kimbanguist diaspora.....	82
3.4.7 Mass media.....	82

3.4.8 Mobilization for public witness.....	82
3.5 Summary.....	84
CHAPTER FOUR.....	86
AGENTS OF MISSION	
4.1 Introduction.....	86
4.2 The Legal Representative (LR).....	87
4.3 The Kimbanguist clergy.....	89
4.3.1 Gifts and conditions.....	90
4.3.2 Missionary functions.....	90
4.4 Kimbanguist Prisons and Hospital Chaplain ministry [Aumônerie Kimbanguiste des Prisons et des Hôpitaux]	93
4.5 EJCSK Women’s Association (L’association de femmes Kimbanguistes).....	95
4.5.1 Origin and purpose.....	95
4.5.2 Objectives.....	96
4.5.3 Provincial committee.....	96
4.5.4 AFKI’s role in Kimbanguist mission.....	97
4.6 Kimbanguist Youth Association	99
4.6.1 Origin and character.....	99
4.6.2 Objectives.....	100
4.7 Summary.....	102
CHAPTER FIVE.....	103
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION	
5.1 Introduction.....	103
5.2 The Bible as a source for the EJCSK theology of mission.....	104
5.3 The person of Simon Kimbangu as the source for the EJCSK theology of mission. .	105
5.3.1 The mission of Simon Kimbangu.....	105
5.3.2 Kimbangu’s divine attributes.....	110
5.4 The theology of the EJCSK as a source for Kimbanguist theology of mission.....	118
5.4.1 The Trinity.....	119
5.4.2 The teaching on the Kingdom of God, salvation and eschatology.....	120
5.5 Fundamental Principles and Moral code as a source for the theology of mission. .	122
5.6 Summary.....	128
CHAPTER SIX.....	129
THE SPIRITUALITY OF KIMBANGUIST MISSION	
6.1 Introduction.....	129
6.2 Worship service.....	130
6.3 Liturgy.....	133

6.4 The Sacraments:.....	135
6.4.1 Sacrament of Baptism.....	136
6.4.2 Sacrament of Holy Communion.....	137
6.4.3 The Implication of the sacraments of Baptism and Communion.....	139
6.4.4 The Sacrament of ordination.....	141
6.4.5 The Sacrament of marriage.....	142
6.5 Pilgrimages and festivals.....	144
6.5.1 Pilgrimages.....	144
6.5.2 Kimbanguist Festivals.....	145
6.5.3 Missiological significance of Kimbanguist festivals.....	148
6.6 Summary.....	149
CHAPTER SEVEN.....	150
MATTERS FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE KIMBANGUIST CHURCH AND OTHER AFRICAN CHURCHES	
7.1 Introduction.....	150
7.2 What I have learnt as a researcher.....	150
7.2.1 The call and mission of an AIC founder.....	150
7.3 What other African churches can learn about mission in Africa from the EJCSK ...	152
7.3.1 Mobilisation of members.....	152
7.3.2 Self-reliance	153
7.3.3 Promotion of Christian literature	153
7.3.4 The zeal for fund raising for church projects.....	153
7.3.5 The EJCSK indirect involvement in political issues.....	154
7.3.6 The Kimbanguist identity.....	154
7.4 Issues on which the EJCSK can be questioned or challenged.....	154
7.4.1 The incarnation of the Holy Spirit.....	155
7.4.2 The doctrine of the Trinity.....	156
7.4.3 The EJCSK – a Spirit-type or Charismatic church?.....	159
7.4.4 Water baptism.....	160
7.4.5 The body of Simon Kimbangu.....	161
7.4.6 Marriage as a sacrament.....	161
7.4.7 EJCSK as a multi-ethnic church.....	161
7.4.8 EJCSK hermeneutics.....	162
7.4.9 EJCSK sacraments.....	163
7.4.10 Leadership structure and the role of the Legal Representative.....	164
7.5 Topics for further research	166
7.6 Conclusion.....	167
REFERENCES.....	168

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIM

The aim of this dissertation is to make a systematic and critical study of the mission – understood as the life, witness and social impact – of the Kimbanguist Church in Katanga Province, Democratic Republic of Congo.

1.2 Research question

The African Initiated Churches (henceforth AICs) is one of the most important growing movements in Southern Africa, and in the Katanga Province in particular, when compared with other mission churches. This argument is well supported by the words of Daneel (1987:25): “There is the rapid growth both in the number of these churches and in their membership since the beginning of this century”. In his reference to the growth phenomenon of AICs in Botswana, Amanze (1998:xiii) acknowledges that AICs are growing at a high rate while mission churches are either stagnant or declining. Commenting on the growth and importance of the Kimbanguist Church in the Congo, Yves Morel (2003:115) says: “The Kimbanguist Church is one of the most important independent African churches; it will be wrong to ignore it [“Le kimbanguiste est une des Eglises independantes Africaines les plus importante, il serait injuste de l’ignorer].

According to Morel (2003:116), the importance of the Kimbanguist Church in the Congo, and Katanga in particular, is related to its continuous growth and the impact it is making in society, when compared with other churches. This does not mean that the Kimbanguist Church is the fastest growing church, but it is certainly one of the growing religious groups in the DRC and beyond, and as such it needs to be studied. What is significant in such a report is not the number of branches this church has, but the methods used in the mission of the Kimbanguist Church. This is the major thrust of this research: it strives to analyze and reflect on the mission praxis of this AIC. Bearing this reality in mind, the study will strive to answer one important question:

“How do Kimbanguist members interpret and express the Christian message in and for the context of Katanga province, Democratic Republic of Congo, through their communal life, worship and mission?” This proposed question will be at the centre of all endeavours throughout this study.

In order to answer this central research question, it is necessary to address a number of sub-questions that flow from it. These are:

1. Examining the role of “agency” in the Kimbanguist Church mission: Who are the agents of mission in the Kimbanguist Church?
2. Examining the context analysis of the Kimbanguist Church: How do they view or interpret their society? What do they see as the “problems” that need to be addressed, and why?
3. Examining the theological reflection of the Kimbanguist Church: How do they read the Bible? What is their hermeneutics? On what do they base their mission? How do they understand mission? How inculturated or contextualized is it? What kind of theology do they espouse?
4. Examining the underlying spirituality of Kimbanguist Church life, worship and mission: What do they sing? How do they preach? How do they serve the sacraments, etc.?
5. Examining the mission models, projects, planning and budget for (holistic) mission in the Kimbanguist Church.
6. Assessing the contribution of Kimbanguist Church mission to an African missiology.

These six sub-questions are informed by the particular theoretical framework (a praxis cycle) that I am using in this study.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I use a “praxis cycle” containing five dimensions (or “moments”) to analyze the different forms of mission started and carried out by Kimbanguists. I need to explain

precisely what I mean by a praxis cycle at this point, since different authors have defined it (or a pastoral circle) in slightly different ways.

Kritzinger (2002:149) explains that “praxis” is not simply a synonym for practice or action. It refers to action that is collective and transformative, and that integrates thinking and acting, praying and working. The praxis cycle as a method is holistic and integrative in nature. There is a constant interplay and delicate balance between the five dimensions of the cycle that he identifies: insertion, context analysis, theological reflection, spirituality and planning.

In their understanding of the pastoral circle, Holland and Henriot (1985:8) point out that this circle is frequently referred to as the “circle of praxis” because it emphasizes the ongoing relationship between reflection and action. It is related to what has been called the “hermeneutical circle” or the method of interpretation that sees new questions continually raised to challenge older theories by the force of new situations. Mission is one field of study where new issues and questions surface from time to time. As these questions arise in our ever growing society, those involved in this enterprise have to respond to the new challenges.

This method is helpful to explore the various mission dimensions of any religious group, in this case the Kimbanguist Church in Katanga Province. I agree with Kritzinger (2002:152) that the praxis cycle does not claim to be the golden key that opens all doors and ends all disputes about Christian mission. But in the context of African initiated churches mission – the Kimbanguist Church mission to be specific – the praxis cycle will serve its purpose because it can be used for any and all kinds of Christian activism, from evangelism to ecology to social justice and to all other areas of church mission in the society (:152).

My choice of this theoretical framework has also been influenced by the way in which Kritzinger (2002:148) has applied the five moments of the praxis cycle. What has impressed me the most is his emphasis on the need to avoid “short cuts” in our study of mission. Kritzinger (2002:151) advises that we need to avoid reductionist short cuts (such as political activism, ivory tower intellectualism, missionary activism,

conversionism) if we want to develop a meaningful praxis of mission. We need a full-blown and well-rounded praxis that creates a dynamic interplay between all the dimensions of praxis.

The author in question has demonstrated (in the example of the Sunday school children in his publication) that using five aspects of the praxis can help one avoid short cuts and produce a relevant study of mission. I concur with Kritzinger (2002:152) when he says that: “If the 21st century is to be about anything in Christian mission, then it must be about wholeness, about a creative and meaningful integration of the diverse dimensions of Christian action in society”. For this reason I have adopted this framework as the research approach informing my research methodology.

The praxis cycle that I use has five dimensions. In this respect I follow Kritzinger (2002:150), rather than Holland and Henriot (1985). My choice of five dimensions –and not more or less – is justified by the nature and objectives of the study under consideration, and my interaction with other authors. The praxis cycle should be adaptable to the kind of topic one is researching. The dimensions of the praxis cycle that are used are therefore subject to the intended purpose of one’s research as well as to the specific nature of the group being researched. In the case of the holistic mission of the Kimbanguist Church in Katanga Province, the aspect of spirituality is crucial to understanding their mission. I therefore follow Kritzinger (2002:152) in adding spirituality as a fifth dimension of praxis, for the purpose of this research project.

1.4 THEOLOGICAL INTERESTS AND ASSUMPTIONS

To make my research accountable, I need to clarify my theological interests and assumptions at the outset. As an inter-cultural communicator of the gospel, belonging to a Pentecostal church, I am regularly assigned different missions programmes in Zambia, where I am currently working, and in the Democratic Republic of Congo, my home country. My involvement in these mission ventures has been an inspiring experience that led to the interest shown for this study.

However, the greatest motivation for the study was aroused during my Honours Bachelor of Theology studies in missiology at Unisa two years ago. In the course of the mentioned programme, I had the privilege of doing courses on, among others, theologies of mission, intercultural communication of the gospel, and theologies of interreligious encounter, but the most challenging of all was a course on mission praxis.

My interaction with various sources in this course, and especially the two recent volumes on *African initiatives in Christian mission* (Daneel 2001; Robert 2003), has revolutionized my view of African missions. Four important issues captured my attention and have to a large extent motivated the choice of this topic. These are: a) the growth phenomenon of the African Initiated Churches (AICs) and their contributions to the spread of Christianity in Southern Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo to be specific; b) the growing interest in the western church to learn from African models of missions; c) the lack of literature resources on AIC missions which cover regional experiences; and d) the increased interest in African Christian scholarship.

1.4.1 The growth of AICs

To start with, the missions of the AICs have had a great impact on the African continent. The contributions of these churches can no longer be ignored. They have grown faster than some mission churches, both in quality and quantity, so that they truly deserve to be studied. Kunnie (1992:1) agrees that the indigenous African churches are actually the “mainstream” churches in Southern Africa. Together they have some millions of members, spread across thousands of denominations.

The phenomenal growth of Christianity in Africa in the 20th century is a direct result of African initiatives. Daneel (2001:1) states: ‘The spread of Christianity in Africa, its shape and its character, has been the product of African Christians, especially in the African independent churches’. But surprisingly, all these achievements do not seem to be properly studied. In other words, not much attention is being paid to missiological

studies of African initiatives in Christian mission.¹ Missiologically speaking, Robert (2003: iii) observes that much study has not been made exclusively from the perspective of the so called recipient churches. Such a scenario should encourage anyone participating in missions in Africa today, to venture into serious reflections on what the independent churches are doing.

The missions of the AICs are complex in nature and practice. Each church has some unique features that require consideration. Many African countries have a variety of AICs. This makes it difficult for one to use a generalizing approach to study missions within these churches. There is need for a wider kind of research that should include all regions. This line of thought justifies why the mission of the Kimbanguist Church, the most prominent AIC in Katanga, should be researched from a missiological perspective.

The need for regional African mission literature cannot be over-emphasized. For a long time, literature on Christian missions in Africa has been biased, critical and negative toward foreign mission. Daneel (2001:1) acknowledges that discussions on western mission policies and the relationship of mission to European imperialism have dominated African mission literature. This trend has negatively affected the development of African mission texts. As a theologian and missionary, I am often called to teach introductory courses in mission and missions related issues. During one of these teaching assignments, the lack of literature sources on the missions of AICs became particularly evident to me. As an instructor, I encountered difficulties in finding relevant material for teaching purposes. Most of the books I could lay my hands on were foreign to the realities of the local context, and some of them were too old to meet the contemporary needs of African theological students.

It was not only the instructors who faced difficulties, however; the students also struggled to find relevant material for their research papers. Questions and issues raised in these classes suggested that much had changed in African missions practice, but that the literature to reflect those changes were not yet available.

¹ But some missiological scholars have studied the AICs: e.g. Oosthuizen, Sundkler, Welbourn, Barrett, Daneel, Ranger, Kieman.

In the context of Katanga, several factors contribute to the scarcity of mission literature: The inadequacy of well established theological institutions, as well as political and social instability. I admit that the early missionaries to the Congo in the 1800s were committed to training Congolese people for ministry, but their emphasis was solely on the training of pastors and evangelists (see also Theissen 1968:238). My personal view is that the training itself was good, but that it was not advanced enough to equip people in the area of research. I need to mention here that a number of theological training institutions have been opened in Katanga Province, offering both diploma and degree programmes. There is hope that with such a development more scholars will be raised and much research in mission will be carried out.

The political instability in the DRC, the third largest African country, is a matter of common knowledge. For more than forty years, the nation has been a battlefield for all sorts of ethnic divisions, political conflicts and military wars. This situation hampered the progress of research work in AIC missions. But while instabilities continued, many new churches were born. Most AICs served as oases of peace and security for the thousands of families that were hopeless and dying.

The lack of intellectual interest is another setback. The hardships people have been going through do not seem to encourage scholarship; looking for bread to feed one's family becomes more important than matters of research.

If more African workers are to be raised and equipped for continental and global mission, the issue of literature must be tackled. I believe that the time has come for African Christians to explore what has been kept obscure in the practice of their mission. In his reference to this issue, Daneel (2001:xiii) reveals that the influence of creative inculturated mission models within the AICs remains obscure and underrated. It is a pity that models advancing the spread of Christian faith in Africa have not been given the attention they deserve. Keeping these obscure cannot help in the formulation of African theologies of mission, which is an urgent question. Bosch (1991:447) points out that inculturation, as demonstrated in the models of churches started by Africans, is one of the patterns in which the pluriform character of contemporary Christianity manifests itself.

1.4.2 A growing interest in AIC growth

Similarly, the growing desire in churches outside Africa to learn about African missionary models is another good impetus for research. The western church is becoming more and more interested in learning about African ways of reaching the unreached with the gospel of truth. Healing and exorcism, for instance, have attracted the focus of a number of western academics. Ingenoza (1985:184) attests that the quest for authentic Christianity has arisen in various countries, and that a concentration on exorcism is growing in both ecclesiastical and academic circles. Various books, dissertations and doctoral theses are now being written on this important matter. Intellectuals are emulating the AIC approaches in mission to advance their discoveries. Ingenoza (1985:185) points out that the Church of England and some sections of the Baptist church are beginning to find it necessary to take exorcism seriously. This is more evident in their kerygmatic contextualization, in view of the recent waves of Pentecostalism and the concomitant charismata in their own ranks.

If much interest in exorcism is being generated in the West, where people are less inclined to believe in the existence of spirits and the possibility of their expulsion from people, how much more seriously should it be taken in Africa, where spiritual realities are taken for granted and the mission activities continue to be underrated? It is the contention of this study that African mission models should be studied intensely and taken very seriously as academic endeavours in Africa. This should be done for the purpose of serving the Body of Christ in Southern Africa and the world at large.

1.4.3 The need for reconstruction in Africa

The last stimulus for embarking on this academic exercise comes from a new awareness among African Christian intellectuals. For some time now, debates about theological reconstruction seem to be at the centre of many forums on our continent. This urgency is well expressed in the words of Robert (2003:3), that “the most urgent task for African Christian academics is that of creating indigenous Christian theologies grounded in African world views... self-theologizing is key to the maturity and independence of the African churches.” In addition, Daneel (1987:25) acknowledges that: “Reflection on and evaluation of the independent churches in Africa is one of the greatest tasks confronting

missiology today.” Such an important development cannot be a success without the input of every stakeholder in the mission enterprise. Contributions from various parts of the continent, especially those from theologians and missiologists, have to be brought together. The Democratic Republic of Congo is such an important stakeholder in this region that its missiological input ought to be mobilized for this theological reconstruction programme. There is abundant missiological and theological information that has not been gathered and systematised for decades, particularly within the Kimbanguist Church in Katanga Province. The time has come for this mission institution to be given the attention it deserves.

In a nutshell, the driving force behind this study is my desire to see a new body of scientific knowledge created on the missionary activities of the most prominent AIC in Katanga Province, namely “L’*église de Jesus Christ sur la terre par son envoye special Simon Kimbangu* (abbreviated as EJCSK) [The church of Jesus Christ on earth by his special envoy Simon Kimbangu]. As a Congolese academic, I have always been puzzled by the absence of missiological research work on what is happening in the self-instituted churches in my home country. I am persuaded that I have the opportunity to put this particular contribution to mission work in the DRC on the African map. It is against this background that I make my contribution to this growing discipline in Southern Africa, namely missiology.

1.4.4 My theological approach to African Initiated Churches (AICs)

Since I frequently use the AIC concept, it is necessary to reflect briefly on the term, and to state my theological approach to these groups. According to Turner (1967a:17), African Initiated Churches are “on the whole Christian churches founded in Africa, by Africans and primarily for Africans.” There are a few aspects of this definition that ought to be appreciated and explained.

Turner asserts first of all that AICs are Christian churches. This dimension questions foreign notions and philosophies which undermine the Christian character of African instituted congregations. Daneel (2001:199) argues that some people seem to consider African Independent Churches as simply a continuation of African traditional religion, especially in the area of exorcism and healing. From a lay person’s observation

there seem to be similarities between the Christian and the African traditional way of exorcising, but a critical analysis of these rituals shows that they differ a great deal in context, methods and purpose.

Context-wise, AIC rituals of healing/exorcism take place in a different environment from that of traditional healers. The church is different from the places where traditionalists operate. A comparative study done in Zimbabwe by Daneel (2001:200-201) on Christian churches and African traditional groups revealed the following differences with regard to methods and procedures. Ngangas (Traditional healers) rely on shells, bones, ancestral spirits and alien spirits for divination. Traditional healers do not depend on God, as in the case of AIC prophets. The latter rely totally on the direct involvement of the Holy Spirit for a revelation of their patients' situation. The prophets' insistence on the direct involvement of the Holy Spirit is an important departure from traditional divination. From a Christian perspective, once the afflicting spirit has been identified as a demon, it must be opposed and exorcised, not appeased. Prophetic therapy is based on the belief in the liberating power of the God of the Bible. The prophets seek to take the thought, world and experience of the patients seriously and to introduce, at the existential level, the healing and salvific power of God. Traditional exorcists (*ngangas*) aim at satisfying the demands of the afflicting spirits. After diagnosis, they seek a solution which accedes to the conditions set by the spirits. This comparison reveals that the Christian ritual of healing/exorcism is not in continuity with the African religion ritual, but rather in discontinuity. In a nutshell, AIC congregations are Christian churches by nature and practice, which should not be confused with African traditional religion.

The fact that these churches are started by Africans themselves, without any outside intervention, is another important characteristic that has to be well grasped. The missionary nature of AICs is the heartbeat of this study. This new development in African mission requires careful consideration. The missionary nature of indigenous people in southern Africa, the DRC in particular, should be well explored. It is only when we begin to see ourselves as missionaries to our own people – and beyond that even to those outside – that our continent will begin to appreciate our efforts.

The term “missionary” is no longer used in the old historical sense, when it only referred to a white person, as alluded to by Robert (2003:3). I like the way Yohannan (1986:160) defines the word: “A missionary is anyone sent by the Lord to establish a Christian witness where such a witness is yet unknown.” The word “anyone” includes both whites and blacks; people from all tribes and races are commissioned to go and make disciples of all nations. There is a need for us to understand and make others realize that Africans are a people with a missionary mandate, to their nations and neighbours. The achievements of the AICs in Africa and beyond are proof of the expanding African missionary endeavour – for which credit has to be given. I agree with Pope Paul VI in his Kampala address, as cited by Valentino (1996:88), that the African churches will become missionaries to one another and this will certainly enrich the universal church with the characteristic contribution which they alone can bring to it.

The last element of Turner’s definition is the contextual nature of AIC mission. These churches are started in Africa and for Africans. For decades Africans have been longing for a church that will put African issues and realities at the centre. This opinion is clearly expressed in the words of one African church leader at the second OAIC (Organisation of African Independent churches) conference in Nairobi (Ambassador for Christ 1982:2): “I want to think like an African, adore like an African, and sing like an African, live like an African.” The gospel should be presented to Africans in such a way that they can understand and interpret it with their mentality and with their mode of prayer. The sentiments expressed by this AIC voice, somehow represent the cries, feelings and mindset of the majority of Christians and church leadership in Africa today. Three issues are raised in the words just quoted above.

The church leader emphasizes the need for his African identity to be preserved. He does not want his Africanity to be taken away, as has been the case with mission-instituted churches. African followers of Christ were told to do away with whatever is African, for the sake of being Christian. Being Christian meant “adopting the foreign missionaries’ way of life”: think like a *muzungu*, sing English songs, and pray in English, French, and Latin, even when what is being said cannot be understood. In short, becoming Christian meant losing one’s culture, tradition and identity.

This matter is well stated in the reports that mission organizations working in the Congo sent to their home countries. And this is how one of the reports reads: “All societies have reported a numerical growth, which indicates one kind of progress. Social progress was also being made, as African (Congolese) Christians adopted western dress and ways of living ...” (Thiessen 1968:237). This explains the insistence by the leader under consideration, on being a Christian and African at the same time. In other words, is it possible for one to adore God, follow Jesus Christ or simply be a Christian, without losing one’s African identity? If such ways exist, then it is time they were explored, gathered together and formulated in a scientific format with the aim of enhancing missions in sub-Saharan Africa.

The presentation of the gospel message is another crucial issue. If the Christian faith had been properly presented to the African context, such thoughts as seen in the leader’s mind would not have been entertained. The message could be inspired but what about the messenger and his/her means of transmission? I believe that the era of a universal theology belongs to history. Now is the hour for contextual theologies that take people’s contexts, realities and experiences seriously. This line of thought is well stated in the Roman Catholic Church report (Rapport intérimaire 1986:19) on new religious movements in the DRC. The church’s response to why many people join the AICs from mission churches reads as follows:

Africans want to be Christians. We gave them facilities but not a home for themselves ... They want a simpler Christianity, integrated into the various aspects of daily life – sufferings, joys, work, aspirations, fear and the need of the African (own translation).²

The ability of the hearers of the good news to understand and interpret the message in their own realities is vital in cross-cultural communication. African believers seem to have a lot of unanswered questions. They attend church services with these questions, hoping to get answers, but unfortunately they go back home with more questions added. How long should these questions keep on lingering in the African Christian’s mind? This situation suggests that the message being preached is not clear

² Les africains veulent être Chrétiens. Nous leur avons donné des facilités, mais pas de maison à eux...ils veulent un christianisme plus simple, intégrer aux divers aspects de la vie quotidienne, aux souffrances, aux joies, au travail, aux aspirations, aux craintes et aux besoins de l’africain

enough so as to be translated into people's daily life issues and challenges. The theologies of mission have to be re-formulated. I agree with how John Macquarrie (1966) defines theology, namely as a study which, through participation in reflection upon a religious faith, seeks to express this faith in the clearest and most coherent language. The faith message that is being preached to Africans must be clear to the hearers. Only then will it respond to unspoken issues within the community of believers.

What is more challenging, however, is that despite this great appeal and cry by the followers of Christ in Africa, studies on African initiatives in missions have not been all that impressive. Kunnie (1992:1) observes that, generally, there has been little scholarship done on the subject of the indigenous African churches by most religious scholars. This is unfortunate because these churches are amongst the fastest growing churches in Africa, far surpassing the so-called mission churches, established by Western missionaries.

1.5 RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

African initiatives in Christian mission are a matter of great importance, which continues to attract attention. To date, a number of books, articles, dissertations and theses have been written on the African Instituted Churches. However, most literature revolves around a few southern African countries, especially those whose language of research is English. Very little attention has been paid to the mission activities of self-instituted churches within francophone nations such as the DRC. Having said this, there are four reasons that make the present topic worthy of academic research.

1.5.1 Regional study of an AIC

First, most AIC research conducted so far does not seem to represent regional aspirations. In his evaluation of the progress made in missiological studies of AICs, Daneel (2001:xv) observes that a much wider research programme, geographically speaking, will be required if full representation of regional AIC reports throughout the continent is to be achieved. Katanga is one place where very little missiological research has been done, at least from modern times. Some of the few sporadic works on the independent churches are very old, needing revision or simply new editions. Considering

that much has happened within the AICs in the DRC, especially in the Kimbanguist Church, new empirical studies ought to be carried out so as to keep abreast of these changes. This observation validates the need for in-depth research and reflection on Kimbanguism in Katanga.

1.5.2 AICs as missionary churches

Second, academic research on the AICs in the past often focused on these churches as protagonists, as rebellious movements reacting to the already established mission churches. The tendency in most of these earlier studies has been to assess these churches in terms of reaction to foreign missions, separatism or protest against oppressive colonialism. By doing this, the missionary genius, missionary models and missiological significance of the AICs has not yet been grasped in depth (Daneel 2001:ii). This justifies the present study as an important academic project. It strives to analyze the Kimbanguist Church in Katanga as a mission institution in its own right. I use the word mission in its broader sense which includes the three dimensions, witness, fellowship, and ministry or service (Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman 1994:36-37).

I concur with African writers like Daneel (and others) who believe that it is time that AICs be recognized for what they really are: African mission churches. Daneel (2001:62) thinks that we need to move beyond the one-sided paradigm of attributing a legitimate missionary mandate to the so-called “mainline churches” of the West in Africa and ignoring the rich heritage of AIC mission on account of the bias or assumptions about their so-called “sectarianism” or “syncretism”, as if they belong to a lesser ecclesiastical order.

I personally experienced this one-sided attitude in Katanga, during my empirical investigation recently. Being a minister of the Assemblies of God, I had to inform my superiors that I was attending a Kimbanguist Church service on a particular Sunday. The proposal was received with mixed feelings. Some thought I had backslidden; while others questioned why I did not choose my research title within the circle of Pentecostal beliefs and practices. In response to this attitude, I told fellow believers that time has come for us to change the way we think about AICs. As African scholars, we need to broaden our field of research and learn from other religious groups.

We have to learn models or methods that can enhance our church efforts in fulfilling the Great Commission. AICs belong to the same ecclesiastical order as any other church, and as such they deserve to be studied. Their mission methods ought to be analyzed with the aim of advancing both mission and research in Southern Africa. This dissertation aims at exploring the missionary nature and vision of the Kimbanguist Church in Katanga province.

Critical and fair minded empirical studies need to be done to overcome the bias that characterized and distorted AIC research in the past. Only then our own churches will be capable of contributing to the formulation of an African theology of mission, which is already intuitive and unwritten in our daily mission practices.

1.5.3 The contribution of the Congo to AIC history

Third, the missionary nature of the Congolese churches is something that should not be underrated. The Congo has been associated with African-type churches from its early days. The country has produced one of the key independent church fathers in Africa. Papa Simon Kimbangu will never be forgotten in the history of AICs. Referring to the Kimbanguist Church, Daneel (1987:60) points out that apart from being the largest independent church in Africa for a long time, its history opens up many significant theological perspectives which will help greatly in our attempt to understand the movement in other parts of Africa. To me as a Congolese scholar this is a very important statement. It shows by implication that the Congo has been a leader in the African self-instituted churches movement.

Apart from being the largest independent church in Southern Africa, the growth of Kimbanguism throughout the world is an important development in the history of AICs. In his recent speech on the growth of the Kimbanguist Church, Spiritual Chief Rev. Bobe Mbelowalo pointed out that the church has about seventeen million members world wide (EJCSK 2007b). Such a report seems to confirm that the Kimbanguist Church has succeeded in capturing the hearts and minds of African people, through the use of models that are context based. Therefore, this study will explore the missional models behind this achievement, by using qualitative research methods.

In the same line, Katanga Province is closely connected to the history of the Kimbanguist Church. It is in this area of the country where prophet Kimbangu was kept in prison for many years, until his death. The prison building is still kept intact at the centre of Lubumbashi. In fact, after his death he was first buried in Lubumbashi and then later reburied in his home village of N’kamba. This feature makes Katanga a unique destination for AIC studies. The blood of the African prophet was shed here for the sake of the gospel. Kimbangu’s death on Katanga’s soil may have been a seed planted for a greater future of the independent church movement in the whole region. This rich historical background makes any study on indigenous churches anywhere in the Congo a very important exercise. I say this because there is no future without the past. And talking about the past or history of AICs will be incomplete without revisiting the Congolese soil.

1.5.4 Theological questions

Lastly, the Kimbanguist Church raises some important theological issues that should attract the attention of those engaged in both theological and missiological studies. The church believes in the pneumatological and divine nature of its founder. In their journal *Réflexion*, Nzikimwena & Lembi (1993:23) write:

When studying John 14:16-18 carefully, we understand without any doubt that the Holy Spirit is far from being a force or energy (Acts 1:8). He is a being with a human body. The Holy Spirit referred to by Jesus Christ is not a dove that descended on him, as was the case at his baptism (own translation).³

Kimbanguisme Info (March 2006), the official newspaper of the Kimbanguist Church, reports: “Simon Kimbangu confirms the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus Christ [Simon Kimbangu confirme le Saint-Esprit promis par Jesus-Christ].”

The present project tries to analyze this doctrine in the light of the New Testament mission and theology. The best we can do is to understand, analyze and learn more from this AIC, on how Simon Kimbangu has come to be seen as the incarnation of the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Spirit himself. Such doctrinal issues add value to this academic work and make it an exciting project.

³ « En scrutant bien dans Jean 14:16-18, nous comprenons sans autre forme de procès que le Saint-Esprit est loin d’être une énergie ou une force. (Actes 1:8). C’est un être a corps humain. Le Saint- Esprit dont parle Jésus Christ n’est pas une colombe a la manière de celle qui était descendue sur lui lors de son baptême. »

In short, I believe that it is our responsibility as African scholars to produce reliable theological and missiological research projects, based on empirical studies of our local mission institutions, among others the AICs. These tools in the long run will serve as resources to missionaries, mission students and mission researchers in the region.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Many publications about AICs have appeared in the past decades from the time when Bengt Sundkler wrote his famous book *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (Sundkler 1948), to the modern times with recent publications such as *African Christian Outreach* by Daneel (2001) and Robert (2003).

D.B. Barrett (1968:36) points out that a very extensive literature on religious movements and Christian independency in Africa has come into being, numbering by 1967 some one thousand five hundred published articles, reports, notes, essays, surveys, books and monographs. The number is much greater today, after a further forty years of research. My analysis of Sundkler's book (1961:50) reveals that the author explained in detail the rise of the Zionist movement in Zululand. He opened a new area of scientific inquiry. As regards an overall perspective on the AICs, I agree with Daneel (1987:29) that Barrett's *Schism and Renewal in Africa* (Barrett 1968) is probably the most comprehensive study to date. It aims at analyzing this phenomenon in Africa as a whole and at developing an explanatory theory for the principal reasons for its origin.

It seems, however, that Barrett lapses into superficiality and untenable generalizations because of the enormity of the subject. The superficiality of Barrett's study can be seen for instance in the limited space he dedicates to the Kimbanguist Church. He believes that it is the largest African independent religious group on the whole of the continent, and yet he describes it in only one paragraph:

[B]ut in 1921 a more positively Christian revival broke out in lower Congo led by the prophet Simon Kimbangu. Although he was immediately thrown into prison, the movement spread, until by 1966 when it became a church with half a million (Barrett 1968:26).

The effort by Barrett needs to be saluted, even though much more could have been written on this AIC by looking at its various aspects. Nevertheless, he produced a valuable tool at an early stage of AIC research that gave a continent-wide perspective and stimulated further studies on Kimbanguism and other AICs.

It is worth observing that scholarship on AICs in the past appear to have been primarily historical and biographical in nature. The emphasis was on analyzing historical processes, their origin and growth, and the biographies of their founders (Daneel 1987:26). Little emphasis was put on critical studies of the missions of these religious groups, their methods in membership recruitment and their contributions to an African type of missiology. In recent years, however, academics have made good progress to broaden the research into AICs. Volumes on African initiatives in Christian mission have helped to explore the richly diversified missionary genius of these churches (Daneel 2001:i).

However, scholars in this area have expressed the opinion that future research on the AICs, at least from a theological or missiological point of view, should be directed at individual churches on the basis of sustained empirical research and participant observation (Daneel 2001:xiii), in order to get in-depth information on the unique character of different AICs in their respective contexts. To me this approach will encourage AIC scholarship to keep abreast with new developments within the movement in southern Africa.

The desire expressed above requires that the Kimbanguist Church in Katanga be studied as a missionary movement in its own right. In recent years, a number of publications have appeared on Kimbanguism, written from different points of views. Their contents and conclusions prove serious commitment by scholars to explore the history of this church and the person of its founder.

The following are some of the publications on the history of the church and the person of Simon Kimbangu:

- Marie-Louise Martin (s.a.): *Prophetic Christianity in the Congo: The Church of Christ on earth through the prophet Simon Kimbangu*. In this book Martin gives a historical overview of the Kimbanguist church. This book is written from a historical perspective to show the genesis of the church-that is positive. But it has no focus on the mission of the EJCSK.
- Marie-Louise Martin (1975b): *Kimbangu: An African prophet and his church*. The author describes how the church started, the circumstances surrounding the rise of this church and the person behind the movement. This book is biographical in nature, but it could have been better if the person of Kimbangu was studied in line with his God-given mission.
- Fehderau, H.W. (1962): *Kimbanguism in Congo*. This gives a summary account of the Kimbanguist movement. It is a good book written from a historical perspective of the movement. From its inception and some of the main phases it went through.
- Rabey, Steve. (2003). *People's prophet: Simon Kimbangu's brief history*. This book focuses on the biography of Kimbangu, without any emphasis on mission.
- Raymaekers, Paul (1971). *Histoire de Simon Kimbangu, prophète d'après les écrivains Nfinangani et Nzungu, 1921*. Biography of Kimbangu and some of his contemporaries, without any interest in the mission of Kimbangu and the church he started.

All the publications mentioned above were written by outsiders to the Kimbanguist movement, and as a result they are limited in their perspective. To my mind the most important publication on the Kimbanguist Church to date is therefore the book by Kuntima Diangienda in 1984, "*L'histoire du Kimbanguisme*". This book, which is called the *livre vert* ("green book"), has a wide readership among Kimbanguists, and was written by Simon Kimbangu's son, who was the head ("chef spirituel") or Legal Representative of the church for 43 years, from 1958 to 2001. He wrote the book as an insider-leader to give a detailed history of the church, the persecution it went through, its growth, the life and death of the founder. It is surprising to observe that a book of such importance speaks very little about the mission of the church. Diangienda's (1984:287-288) comments on the church's mission are on half a page in a book of more than three hundred pages. His words in this regard are as follows:

The Kimbanguist church is in favour of missionary action, on condition that this is a new type of mission. The gospel must not be confined within national borders, according to Matthews 24:14. The Kimbanguist church has a universal approach to its mission. Even though it is not itself a result of evangelical missionaries, it is in favour of establishing partnerships of equality with the universal Christian family. It subscribes to the idea of one mission by all God's people to all six continents (own translation).⁴

However, a critical analysis of this citation suggests that the author does not clearly define mission, nor does he explain how this church does mission within and outside the Congo. It is also not clear how the mission of the Kimbanguist Church represents a "genre nouveau" (new type) of mission, since the mission methods of the church are not described, nor are the areas of cooperation between the Kimbanguist Church and other churches in the name of mission explained. It seems as if this statement reflects an ecumenical consensus on mission as this has developed in the ecumenical circles of the World Council of Churches, of which the Kimbanguist Church is a member, rather than a detailed expression of how Kimbanguists do mission themselves.

This dissertation represents an attempt to address various missional aspects of this church that do not seem to have received much attention in Diangienda's book, or in the other studies on Kimbanguism to date. To sum up, this academic project differs from previous researches on Kimbanguist Church in three ways:

First, preceding scholarship aimed primarily at describing the origin of the movement, its early history and growth, as well as the person of papa Simon Kimbangu. But this present study will endeavour to reflect on what Kimbanguist Church members are doing currently to influence or change Congolese society on the basis of their religious beliefs. Their holistic mission and their methods of doing mission will be examined critically.

⁴ L'église kimbanguiste est en faveur de l'action missionnaire, à condition que celle-ci soit d'un genre nouveau. L'évangile ne doit pas être enfermé dans le cadre restreint des frontières nationales, Matthieu 24:14. L'église kimbanguiste a une approche universelle de sa mission. Bien qu'elle ne soit pas elle-même l'œuvre des missionnaires évangélistes, elle est en faveur de l'établissement des liens de coopération entre partenaires égaux de la famille chrétienne universelle. Elle souscrit à l'idée d'une mission de tout le peuple de Dieu vers les six continents.

Second, I acknowledge that other publications have been written on various aspects of Kimbanguist Church life. Areas such as music (*The place and function of hymns in the EJCSK*, Gordon 1990), women (*Le ministère des femmes dans l'église kimbanguiste*, Lwamba Nkebi 1990), leadership training (*New development in Kimbanguist Church*, Marie Louise Martin 1979), and others have been researched in the past. My analysis of literature has yielded the impression that these dimensions of the church's life were dealt with in isolation from each other and from the study of mission. This study, in contrast, will consider the different missional dimensions of the Kimbanguist Church together in an interrelated manner. By so doing, I attempt to get a good understanding of the holistic mission of this AIC.

Lastly, most research in the past was conducted on the Kimbanguist Church at a national level or within the context of the whole DRC. Titles such as *Prophetism in Congo*, and *Kimbanguism in the Congo* were common. The national character in these former academic studies encouraged a measure of superficiality and generalization in data collection and research. This study intends to examine Kimbanguist mission at a regional or provincial level. We need to understand that even within the same country (of the size of Congo) cultural differences and contextual distinctives can be observed. And these have a way of affecting one's faith and mission orientation. Hence, the need to study the mission of the Kimbanguist Church and its members in the Katanga Province in particular.

My review of literature, on the AICs in general and the Kimbanguist Church in particular, has shown that AIC scholarship has been going through paradigm shifts and periodical changes. It has moved from a critical-negative to a constructive-positive kind of literature. At the same time another kind of shift is taking place, namely from a general approach to a particular or more specific method in studying AICs. Scholars are of the view that each independent church should be looked at as a separate mission organization with its own challenges and mission experiences. But it will be better if research can move beyond country-wide context to regional, district, urban and rural type of context. That is what I do in this study.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Daneel (2001:xiii) proposes that missiological studies on AICs should be empirical in nature. Research on the mission of AICs should be conducted on the basis of sustained empirical investigation. This will help to avoid the pitfalls of generalization and theorizing which do not match the existential realities of the concerned group. Since this study is empirical, I intend to use various approaches that are common in the area of qualitative research to achieve my aim and objectives. These include participant observation, interviews, and a textual analysis of Kimbanguist documents.

According to Mouton (2001:148), participant observation studies are qualitative in nature. They aim to provide an in-depth description of a group of people or community. Such descriptions are embedded in the life-worlds of the actors being studied and produce insider perspectives of the people group and their practices. Welman, Kruger & Mitchell (2005:194) point out that participant observation requires the researcher to take an extensive period of time, to take part in, and report on the daily experiences of the members of a group, community or organization or the people involved in a process or event being studied. Emphasis is put on time, participation and report on the group experiences. This implies that, in participant observation, the researcher does not observe the experiences of the individuals involved as a detached outsider, but experiences them first-hand as an insider. By so doing, the observer becomes, in some way, a member of the group or event being studied. To me such a method is fitting in collecting data “from the ground” on the Kimbanguist Church. Assuming the role of group member will help in experiencing what the group members experience, understanding their life-world, seeing things from their perspective and unraveling the meaning and significance they attach to their life-world, including their own behaviour (Welman *et al.* 2005:195).

I have attempted to do this without endangering my role as an observer, a role the abovementioned authors regard as indispensable from a research point of view (Welman *et al.* 2005:195). Conducting research by using participant observation entails following certain specific procedures. Welman *et al.* (2005:196) suggest the following (in this sequence): a) obtaining permission from the group members or their representatives; b) disclosing the objectives of the research and building up a position of trust with the

group members need to follow; c) making observation notes while the group activities are taking place; d) making inferences and interpretations known as analytical notes; e) making methodological notes that will help the researcher later when writing the report and conclusions; f) writing a report, which analyses and describes in detail the verbal and non-verbal expressions of the group members' observations of their environment and experiences.

In order to be effective in my research, I followed these procedures to the best of my ability. I met Rev. Katshij Tshauta, the provincial secretary of the Kimbanguist church in Katanga, on 10th November 2007 and obtained his permission. This opened the door for me to disclose my research objectives and build up a relationship with other key members and leaders of the church in Lubumbashi. I attended Sunday services and mid-week services (on Wednesdays and Fridays) on the following dates: April 30, 2006; May 5, 2006; August 5, 2006; November 26, 2006; February 16, 2007; October 7, 2007; May 28, 2008 and July 27, 2008.

All Sunday meetings were characterized by two parts. The spiritual part took place within the church building and the social part outside, for the sake of space and in a relaxed mood. The social part included fund-raising for specific church projects within the province and beyond. Songs and dances added colour to these meetings, everyone feeling at home through active participation in the service. The mid-week meetings are held within the church with not many people in attendance. The focus in these meetings is on discipleship or teaching of the members and prayers, especially intercessory prayers. I attended these services with the aim of obtaining first hand information on its holistic mission.

I used two types of interviews in this project, namely unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Welman *et al.* (2005:165-166) give a detailed explanation that I want to elaborate on in this section. These two methods or types of interview present important aspects that I exploited in gathering my data.

First, in a structured interview the interviewer puts a collection of questions, also known as an interview schedule, to a respondent face to face and records the latter's

responses. The interviewer is restricted to the questions, their wording, and their order as they appear on the schedule, with relatively little freedom to deviate from it. In this method, I read each question and recorded the responses on the standardized schedule. What I liked about this first type is that it offers an interaction between the researcher and the respondent. But Welman *et al.* (2005: 166) write that: “to be able to run the interview efficiently and without any disturbances, the researcher is expected to know the respondent, his background, values and expectations”. Having built a position of trust with Kimbanguist members, I was able to know them and conduct my interviews successfully.

Second, unstructured interviews are informal and are used to investigate a general area of interest in depth. There is no predetermined list of questions to work through in this situation, although the researcher needs to have a clear idea about the area or areas that he or she wants to study. The interviewee is invited and allowed to talk freely about events, behaviour and beliefs in relation to the topic. In this technique it is the interviewee’s perceptions that guide the conduct of the interview. Referring to the use and importance of an unstructured interview, Welman *et al.* (2005:166) state that it is employed in qualitative or explorative research to identify important variables in a particular area, to formulate penetrating questions about them, and to generate hypotheses for further investigation. I agree with Welman *et al.* that, due to the unfamiliarity of the area being entered, such as the holistic mission of the Kimbanguist Church, it is impossible to compile a schedule for interviews that can give one a satisfactory result. Unstructured interviews supplement the results of structured interviews. They helped in the data collection for this study.

The last kind of interview to be used in this work is the semi-structured interview. It is a method between structured and unstructured interviews. This type demands that the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from one interview to another. In this category, interview guides are used. An interview guide involves a list of topics and aspects of these topics that have a bearing on a given theme and that the interviewer should raise in the interview. The most interesting feature in this last approach is that it offers a versatile way of collecting data. It can be used with all age groups-youths and adults (Welman *et al.* 2005:167). Since all

age groups are part of any church organization, including the Kimbanguist Church, using semi-structured interviews improved data collection. I met young adults aged between 18-35 and adults of about 35-60 years. I interviewed twenty young people and fifteen adults. Young people enjoyed semi-structured interviews but the adults were at ease with unstructured interviews, because I wanted to get more from them rather than restricting myself to prepared questions.

When using semi-structured and unstructured interviews, I bore in mind the four stages involved in such methods. Welman *et al.* (2005:167) gives the following stages: preparing for an interview, pre-interview, interview and post-interview.

Preparing for an interview entails analyzing the research problem, understanding what information must be obtained from an interviewee, as well as identifying those who would be able to provide the information. Pre-interview includes scheduling the time properly, dressing in more or less the same way as the respondents. The interview itself demands introducing the study and its purpose, orienting the respondents as to what the research questions are, etc. And lastly, the post-interview stage requires writing a thank you letter to the respondents, and reporting or transcribing the interview.

Furthermore, I also made use of textual analysis and hermeneutics to analyze various documents and sermons of the Kimbanguist Church in Katanga. Mouton (2001:148) reveals how textual analysis and hermeneutics of religious or literary texts can contribute to research of a particular group or movement. This approach enabled me to do textual analysis on EJCSK documents, sermons and teachings.

1.8 TERMINOLOGY

The following terms are used throughout the study, and therefore need to be defined briefly. They are listed in alphabetical order.

1.8.1 Katanga Province

The Katanga Province is the southern-most province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), with its provincial capital in Lubumbashi. Ngoy (1970:8) describes the province as follows: Katanga is surrounded on the east by lake Tanganyika, Moeru and Banguela and by the Republic of Zambia. In the south, Katanga shares a border with Zambia and Angola, in the west the province is surrounded by Angola and another Congolese province of Kasai-Orientale and in the north there are two other provinces, Maniema province and Kasai-Orientale. The Katanga Province has a surface area of 497,000 km² and Katanga Province annual report (2003:33) suggests that the province has a population of around 8.167.240 million (2003 estimates). There is need to mention that this number has almost doubled in the past five years with the migration of many people from other DRC provinces in search of job opportunities.

1.8.2 Kimbanguism

Kimbanguism is the form of Christianity that resulted from the synergy between the actions and witness of Simon Kimbangu [“Christianisme résultant de l’ensemble des Actions et Enseignements de Simon Kimbangu »] (Diangienda 1984:11). It refers to more than merely the Kimbanguist church, and suggests a comprehensive way of life.

1.8.3 Missiology

Missiology is the systematic reflection on the mission (transformative activities) of religious communities (Kritzinger 1995:372).

1.8.4 Mission

Mission is the *raison d’être* of the Christian movement on earth. The church realizes its purpose in history by participating in the *missio Dei*, the mission of the triune God in reaching out to humanity – to restore the broken creation and to work for the coming of the kingdom of God. Mission therefore has to do with the very existence of the Christian community, and is aimed at making a difference to the world, at influencing or changing society in accordance with its religious ideals (Kritzinger 1995:368).

1.8.5 Mission-Initiated Church

A Mission-Initiated Church is a church that has evolved directly from the outreach of a Western church denomination, and still represents the theological tradition concerned (Robert 2003:iii).

1.8.6 Missionary

A missionary is anyone sent by the Lord to establish a new Christian witness where such a witness is yet unknown (Yohannan 1986:160).

1.8.7 Legal Representative (LR)

The title given to the Kimbanguist church's supreme leader, also called the "chef spirituel" (EJCSK 2007b:1)

1.8.8 African Instituted Church (AIC)

African Instituted Churches are on the whole Christian churches, founded in Africa by Africans and primarily for Africans. (Turner 1967a:17).

1.8.9 Simon Kimbangu

The name of the founder of the EJCSK considered as a witness of Jesus Christ Diangienda (1984:307).

1.8.10 Praxis cycle

A mobilizing or analytical tool that views the activities of social movements or churches as collective and transformative, and explores the constant interplay between thinking and acting, praying and working (Kritzinger 2002:149).

1.9 SURVEY OF CHAPTERS

The macro structure of my dissertation follows the logic of the praxis cycle, which is also embodied in the series of sub-questions explained in Section 1.2. That gives the following sequence of chapters:

Chapter Two gives a historical overview of the EJCSK and its missionary implications.

In Chapter Three the key mission strategies or methods of the EJCSK are analyzed, both those of individuals and church groups.

Chapter Four focuses on the players or agents of EJCSK mission. The church and its involvement in the society on various issues the major aspects of this section.

Chapter Five revolves around the theological basis for Kimbanguist mission. Various biblical passages are analyzed to ascertain this foundation.

In Chapter Six the study explores the spirituality of Kimbanguist mission. Their worship, liturgy and sacraments are examined as basis and expression of mission.

In Chapter Seven some matters of dialogue between the EJCSK and other African churches are highlighted. Issues that other African churches can learn from EJCSK are highlighted, as well as issues on which other churches need to engage in dialogue with Kimbanguists.

There is no separate chapter devoted to context analysis, as could be expected in the light of my adoption of a five-point praxis cycle (see Chapter 1.2). The dimension of context analysis is to such an extent implied in (and integrated into) the other chapters, particularly my discussion of the EJCSK mission strategies (Chapter 3), mission agents (Chapter 4), contextual missiological reflection (Chapter 5), and missional spirituality (Chapter 6), that it would have resulted in even more duplication than is already evident in my study. It should be clear from the other chapters that the Kimbanguist church does contextual mission, that is, it functions on the basis of a very specific analysis of the (constantly changing) context in which it operates.

CHAPTER TWO

THE KIMBANGUIST CHURCH IN KATANGA PROVINCE: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 Introduction

To study any movement effectively, be it a sociological, theological or religious study, requires a good reconstruction of the history of that particular movement. The Kimbanguist Church in Katanga has a history behind its rise and expansion or growth that needs to be reconstructed. This chapter gives an historical overview of Kimbanguism in the southern part of the Congo. However, the history of the Kimbanguist Church in Katanga cannot be divorced from the earlier life of the prophet, his calling to ministry, and the response of the colonial administration. The itinerant movement of Simon Kimbangu, his miracles and wonders on the way as well as the contributing factors to the rise of this church in Lubumbashi, will be looked at in this section.

2.2 Simon Kimbangu's life

Born sometime in the 1880s in the village of N'kamba, of Kuyela the father and Kinzembo the mother, both belonging to the Bakongo people of the Ngombe clan, Kimbangu Simon early came under the influence of the Baptist Missionary Society missionaries at Ngombe Lutete, some twelve kilometers away. James (1966:13) points out that by approximately 1915, Kimbangu had attended a village mission school for long enough to have become semiliterate and to be baptized.

Around late 1919 or early 1920, Simon began to experience troublesome dreams in which he sensed himself being urged by God to serve him. In his reference to the dreams of Simon Kimbangu and his calling to ministry, Harold (1962:158) reports that during a considerable span of time preceding 1921, the prophet's destiny was made known to him in a sequence of dreams and visions of dynamic and compelling character. The first call came to him as a youth in his native village. He avoided it by saying he was

not fit for such a task. To silence the continued calls he went to work in Kinshasa, but in vain. He was repeatedly urged to go home to begin the work to which God had called him: "Go home to your village, for I wish to enroll you among my labourers," said the voice.

His continued disobedience to this call was finally met by sickness and a warning that he would die there in the city if he did not go. Overwhelmed by terror, he returned to his village. Then one day, after more dreams and visions, he received a command from a being with a Bible in its hands: "This is a good book. You must study it and preach". Then it told him to go to a certain village nearby to heal a sick young woman. Only after repeated urgings and a final threat of death did he go. He found the sick woman and she was healed after he laid his hands on her head and prayed for her.

Many Kimbanguists believe that this crucial experience in the call to service was the decisive factor that led him to become a prophet to his people. James (1966:14) adds that in a matter of days, word spread like a prairie fire and the village of N'kamba became the centre of increasingly larger crowds of people who came with the ill, the crippled and even the dead, hoping for the reportedly miraculous touch of the new healer.

Kimbangu probably did not think of himself as a prophet, but merely as a man called into God's service. But his emergence as a religious leader in April 1921 was accepted by the local population with great enthusiasm. He was not only a healer but also a preacher. His message is described by James (1966:15) as being animated, simple and direct. His standards of personal conduct for his converts were exacting and uncompromising: no palm wine, no tobacco, and no dancing, and only monogamous marriages. Simon demanded that all protective fetishes be thrown away and replaced by trusting in God for protection. He urged his followers to attend Protestant services and to secure their own copies of the Bible.

Whilst the local population enjoyed the ministry of the new healer and preacher, the colonial administration felt threatened by his ministry. Mackay (1987:145-148) states that one feature of Simon Kimbangu's preaching was the end of the colonial era. His followers believed that there was no need any more for them to pay tax. The

Belgians would leave the Congo and power would return to the Bakongo. Hence the famous Kimbanguist slogan quoted by Mackay (1987:146) “the blacks will become whites and the whites will become blacks”. White was a symbol of power and black that of powerlessness.

Harold (1962:159) adds other factors that drew the negative attention of the colonial authorities: workers left their jobs to go to N’kamba in great numbers, the dead were carried there, Catholic missionaries and other churches were losing members, and the “militant tone” of the hymns sung at services (a favourite being “Onward Christian soldiers”) gave rise to misunderstanding on the part of the colonial administrators. They saw in Kimbangu not only a religious leader but someone with political ambitions, who therefore needed to be opposed at all costs. They took restrictive measures and actions which were oppressive to Kimbanguist followers and their movement. Many of them were arrested and killed, including Simon Kimbangu himself. The next section will focus on the arrest of Simon and his deportation to Katanga, Lubumbashi.

2.3 From N’kamba to Katanga

2.3.1 Kimbangu’s ministry and arrest

The World Council of Churches (WCC 1967:30) report on the arrest of Kimbangu provides a good starting point for this important section:

The missionaries and colonialists were uneasy about his success. The churches and workshops emptied; and he was held responsible for the disorder caused by the movement of large numbers of people towards N’kamba. He was unjustly accused of xenophobia, of inciting people to stop paying taxes or to stop working. Although no white person was ever molested or hurt, Kimbangu was denounced, hunted down and finally arrested in September 1921, after six months of ministry. His trial was a parody of justice, with no witness and no legal counsel, and he was condemned to death by a military tribunal. However his penalty was commuted by King Albert. Kimbangu was deported to Katanga and spent years in prison at Elizabethville, where he died on 12th October 1951.

This quote depicts the main reasons and motives behind the arrest and deportation of the N’kamba prophet. The uneasiness and injustice of both the missionaries and colonial masters cut short the personal ministry of Simon Kimbangu, but it could not stop the genesis of a great African Christian movement.

Silu (1977:71) ascribed the success of Kimbangu's ministry, which threatened white missionaries, to the fact that he used a language meaningful to Africans that took into account the values of their culture. Kimbangu succeeded in drawing more converts to Christianity in a matter of months than foreign missionaries did in ten to twenty years of their presence in the area. This process of contextualization in the Congo seemed to begin with the Kimbanguist movement, a trend which is common in most AICs. The success of Kimbangu's ministry, according to Silu, is directly associated with his ability to use the people's language and culture to communicate the message of Christ. This African church leader developed a liturgy and theology that were consciously and deliberately different from those of the colonial churches. His originality shows itself in that he developed forms of thought and action that made sense to his own people and communities.

It is unfortunate that, instead of emulating the African prophet's method of doing mission, white missionaries and their political partners chose to try and stop this good African Christian initiative in mission in its infancy. This history once again confirms that it doesn't help to keep people oppressed, since at some stage they will rise up and rebel against their oppressors, or leave them to do things differently elsewhere, without them. The latter is what happened in the case of Kimbangu and his early converts.

Simon Kimbangu was not the only one who was arrested and deported at that juncture. The World Council of Churches report (WCC 1967:30) reveals that the number of Kimbangu's followers who were deported is estimated to have been thirty seven thousand, most of whom died as a result. Wherever the deported went, however, they spoke about Simon Kimbangu and his mission to the people they met. They preached their message in prisons with contagious enthusiasm. Groups of disciples sprang up all over the country. The movement spread beyond the Bakongo tribe and soon penetrated into neighbouring countries like Congo-Brazzaville, Angola and Rwanda.

2.3.2 From N'kamba to Thysville (Bandundu)

The captive journey of the prophet was long and eventful. As a result, it left a mark on the inhabitants of all the localities he visited. After Simon Kimbangu surrendered himself to the Belgian colonial authorities on Monday 12th September 1921, his long voyage started. Bandzouzi (2002:99) made the following observations on the subsequent events:

The following day on 13th September, 1921 the crowd left Nzundu village and went to Thysville (Bandundu). More people from surrounding villages joined those who accompanied Kimbangu up to Bandundu despite of being stopped and threatened by Mr. Snoek. Under serious ill-treatment and pain, the prisoners followed by the sympathizers comforted their faith by singing the song known as < nzambi eto watu yikama>, which means Our God, draw near to us, keep us and guide us by your love. Be with us during this difficult time when we shall part company from one another due to this inhuman treatment.

As the journey continued, more and more villagers joined the crowd which accompanied the prisoners from N’kamba. People sang songs with fervour, though the Europeans were unhappy at these African songs. When they approached Thysville (Bandundu), people came to welcome them. Bandzouzi (2002:99) comments that: “All sang together in choruses with prisoners. Though tired because of a long journey and fear of the military presence in their midst who never stopped to whip them, the villagers continued to sing with joy”.

A comment needs to be made on the solidarity shown by Kimbanguists from N’kamba to Thysville. There is a sense of belonging to each other, a sense of fellowship which is an important aspect of life in a community of believers. Their sense of community life is demonstrated in this particular case by how they were ready to share in the suffering of the members of the community. Even when they were not officially invited, they felt a responsibility towards others. They walked together with the prisoners, spent nights together on the road and cried together with members of their church family and the community at large.

People are active in their community life, not primarily because they are taught by the church, but because it is part of their culture and way of life. In instances where the mistreatment of their leaders by colonial administration became too much for

them to bear, the villagers took actions to resist or fight the evils and to deal with the agents of evil in the society, the perpetrators of oppression and injustices.

In two incidents villagers reacted strongly by taking the Belgian administrators to task. They used any means at their disposal to fight for the freedom of their fellow human beings. As they fought injustices, God protected them against the bullets of their oppressors. The role played by songs in inspiring the suffering believers in their time of struggles is something that should not be neglected. Music among African people, especially the Congolese-Bakongo, influences various activities in their daily life. I agree with what Simbandumwe (1992:165) says on the place of music or songs among Congolese. A Mukongo expresses his or her thought and demonstrates his/her actions through songs. Fishermen sing to attract fish, Banganga (priest and traditional doctor) and Banguza (prophets) use hymns or prayer songs in the process of healing the sick, finding Bandoki (traditional diviners), catching criminals or protecting the innocent.

Bandzouzi (2002:119) reports that on 13th September 1921, Simon Kimbangu and his company arrived in Thysville with a large following of men, women and children. The followers were dispersed by soldiers, before they put all the prisoners in one cell that had tight security. However, the crowd didn't leave; they spent the night outside the prison and showed their unhappiness toward the Belgian authorities. The residents of Thysville were grieved to see how Europeans mistreated their African brothers. People responded harshly by fighting Europeans for their evil actions. During the night some soldiers shot at these rioters, but the Lord protected them and none was injured or killed. Martin (1975b:61) writes that

[O]n 3rd October 1921, Simon Kimbangu was sentenced by a court martial to 120 strokes of whip and then to be put to death. The judge was the military commander Rossi. Kimbangu was accused of sedition and hostility towards the whites. The sentence was based on a false charge. Arbitrary procedure on the part of the military court led to this false verdict. Neither witness nor counsels for the defense were admitted.

2.3.3 From Thysville (Bandundu) to Elizabethville (Lubumbashi)

At the end of Kimbangu's case the administrative authorities decided to remove Kimbangu and the other prisoners from Lower-Congo (*Bas-Congo*) and to deport them to Elizabethville- Lubumbashi, in Katanga province, two thousand kilometers from his home village of N'kamba. Bandzouzi (2002:122) comments that upon his arrival in Lubumbashi, Kimbangu was put into Cell No 87 of Kasombo Central Prison. He spent the rest of his 30 years of imprisonment in that cell, which measured only 120 x 80 cm.

Kimbangu's journey from Bandundu to Lubumbashi was characterized by wonders, healings and miracles. These happenings attracted many inhabitants of various localities along the route to be converted to Kimbanguism. What is important for the purpose of this research is the message contained in Simon Kimbangu's last words to his followers. These words contain the heart of the prophet's theology. They reveal his attitude toward various theological issues which were later reflected in the doctrines of the church. I want to look at these words at different instances and reflect on their implications for the theologies of AICs and the Kimbanguist Church in particular.

On 3rd December 1921, Simon Kimbangu was brought to Leopoldville train station in chains, escorted by forty black soldiers and one Belgian official. People went to bid farewell to "Papa Simon" who would not come back alive from Katanga. Bandzouzi (2002:120) observes that whilst at the station Kimbangu's co-workers and followers asked their leader for a farewell message and this is what he said:

I leave you nothing but the Bible. Read it always,
for it is in the Bible that you will find all the answers to your problems
*[Je ne vous laisse que la Bible. Lisez-la à chaque instant
car c'est dans la Bible que se trouve toutes les solutions à vos problèmes]*

Simon Kimbangu pointed his followers and co-workers to the Bible and commanded them to read it regularly ("at every instant"). What is significant firstly is the importance that Kimbangu attached to the Bible and its ability to solve all human problems. This statement, uttered in the early days of the movement, suggests that the ministry of this great African leader was firmly Bible-centered.

For him the Bible had solutions to human problems, in other words, as the Word is being preached, it must relate to human realities and alleviate their sufferings. The challenge is for the interpreter of Scripture to see the solutions which can be proposed to dying humanity in African society. The need for the Christian message to be made relevant to people's needs is a great emphasis in AICs today.

This statement reveals that Kimbangu had his own unwritten theology, placing the Bible at the centre of human crisis, as a document full of answers to human tragedies. As far as the prophet is concerned, the Bible must be used to respond to human problems. In this sense Simon Kimbangu should be seen as one of the many unacknowledged fathers of African contextual theology, at least in its early stages.

The prophet further revealed his theology when he had to part company with 31 of his fellow workers who were sentenced for deportation, to a place called Lowa in the present province Orientale. On his separation from these dear colleagues Kimbangu said the following words, as reported by Bandzouzi (2002:122):

Those who serve God faithfully have the guarantee of eternal salvation. The Lord will always be your guide and your protector. Serve him worthily and with perseverance until you die. Pray always for me, as I will never cease praying for you, whatever lot my persecutors have in mind for me (own translation).
[Ceux qui servent le seigneur infailliblement ont la garantie du salut éternel. Le seigneur sera toujours votre guide et votre protecteur. Servez-le convenablement et avec persévérance jusqu'à la fin de votre vie. Priez toujours pour moi, comme moi aussi je ne cesserai de prier pour vous quelque soit le sort que me réservent ceux qui me persécutent].

The prophet raises four important issues that merit reflection for the purpose of this study, namely the relationship between work and salvation, divine guidance and protection, perseverance, and the importance of prayer.

Kimbangu does not seem to relate salvation to faith but to serving God faithfully, which is perfectly acceptable biblical language. According to the above statement, it is by serving God faithfully that one is assured of eternal life. The scriptural basis for this view is James 2:17, "faith without works is dead". This view of salvation being linked to faithful service of God is the driving force behind works done by most

Kimbanguists. The EJCSK in Katanga and in other parts of the country is actively involved in working for God, and this activism could be a result of the founder's theology as seen in this early statement. In the light of this, the question may be asked whether this means that Kimbangu denied salvation by faith, allowing religious "good deeds" or activism to eclipse the grace of God in Christ.

Kimbangu gives assurance to suffering believers that God will give them protection and guidance. Kimbangu seems to acknowledge God's ability to guide and protect his sheep even as they walk through the valley of the shadow of death. This is an acceptable biblical teaching which this African preacher brings to the memory of his parting friends. It shows his sense of absolute dependence upon God and his need for divine direction.

His call to his co-workers for perseverance during times of trouble is a proof of faith in God. Simon encourages his disciples to serve God until they die, a call similar to that of Jesus Christ to his followers in the Gospels and to that of Paul the apostle throughout his letters. By implication, Kimbangu discourages anyone from quitting God's service, no matter what happens.

Papa Simon concludes his statement by underlying the importance of prayer in a believer's life, especially intercessory prayer. He believes that prayer has the power to help anyone, even when they face the greatest challenges in their lives. Prayer is one of the most important features of all AICs. The strong reliance on prayer for any kind of problems in the Kimbanguist Church distinguishes it from many other churches. People who experienced the wonder-working power of God through his prophet have many testimonies to share with the community of believers. These testimonies will be the focus of the next section.

2.4 Testimonies to Kimbangu's wonders

Simon Kimbangu's forced journey from his home village of N'kamba to Lubumbashi was accompanied by numerous wonders, which led a large number of people to join the movement in its early years. He performed miracles, of which most of

his contemporaries became witnesses. The sojourners, the Europeans and ordinary people who met Simon Kimbangu during his deportation all had something to say on the prophet's wonders.

Bandzouzi (2002:96) points out that he healed the sick, cast out demons, made the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, the dead to come back to life, and the blind to receive their sight. In short, Kimbangu performed extraordinary wonders, which only someone greatly used by God could do. Testimonies to the ministry of Kimbangu suggest that he performed these supernatural acts in various places, namely in Bas-Congo, in Leopoldville and in Katanga. In the following paragraphs I reflect on some of these events.

First, in Bas-Congo much happened in the so called "underground period" [*période de la clandestinité*]. In 1921, when Kimbangu was being pursued by colonial authorities, he moved from village to village preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, healing the sick and prophesying about the upcoming events leading to the independence of the Congo and other African countries. The prophet spent time with his followers in prayer, singing songs of worship, and pleading with God for spiritual assistance.

Bandzouzi (2002:101) reports that upon his arrival at Thysville, Simon Kimbangu was served food by Rev Father Van Cleemput. The Roman Catholic priest brought a plate of cassava porridge with a fried pigeon. While serving the prophet he said: "Simon Kimbangu, I am Father Van Cleemput. I know that you are hungry, that is why by the grace of God I have brought you food for you to eat." Knowing that the food was poisoned, Kimbangu replied: "Are you really a servant of God? What did you put in the food? I do not want it. Then he spoke to the pigeon (fried bird): Depart from Satan! The bird came back to life and flew away, to the amazement of the Catholic missionary".

On Saturday 3 December 1921, Kimbangu was taken to the train station of bas-Congo with chains around his neck and his arms, to be deported to Leopoldville (now Kinshasa). The train driver tried starting the train but was unable, until Simon was allowed to bid farewell to his wife and children. When he had done this, he told the

driver: “I have finished; we can go now” [*J’ai fini, nous pouvons maintenant partir*], after which the train started moving.

Whilst in Leopoldville, Simon was the target of a number of assassination attempts. Both Roman Catholic clergy and Belgian colonial officials plotted to eliminate the African prophet. Bandzouzi (2002: 120-126) explains:

With the help of the prison guardians, a Belgian official and a Roman Catholic father took Simon to the shore of the Congo river in order to kill him. He was put in a drum and thrown into the waters. But, miraculously, he reappeared and came to the dry land. Furious of what had happened, they took him and tied him up and connected him to a heavy stone and threw him the second time into the river. Kimbanguists believe that even this time the prophet came out of the waters alive. Having failed completely, they took Kimbangu back to the prison where he was subjected to other kind of tortures.

In addition, Nyami (2000:12-13) gives a report of the interview he had with Ekutu Camille, a Catholic Church member who was a companion of Kimbangu in Ndolo prison (Kinshasa). This what he said about a supernatural appearance of Kimbangu in November 1948 at Maya Maya airport:

On 2 November 1948, I and other prisoners saw four soldiers escorting a black person dressed in khaki trousers with a green and white shirt. Only to be told that man was transferred from Congo Brazzaville where he was caught in a plane. The plane from Europe had white passengers when taking off, but at landing time a black man was found among the white and his name was Simon Kimbangu coming from Belgium.

There are many other stories of this nature told by Kimbanguists. Most of them, in various parts of the Congo and in other countries, believe and testify that he had appeared to them in dreams, and that this had led them to make claims that he was God’s messenger.

2.5 Kimbangu’s ministry during 30 years in prison (Elizabethville)

On his arrival in Elizabethville prison (Prison Centrale de Kasombo), papa Simon was served poisonous meals, but he never ate them, having been warned by God. Musasa (2000:104-106) reports on the following miracles that the prophet performed in

prison: “Kimbangu prophesied about the freedom of other prisoners namely Naweja, Mashimbi and Musumali. He also predicted the death of another prisoner by the name of Kapinga and many other things”. Of particular importance in the prophetic ministry of Kimbangu in prison are his prophecies on the future of the Congo. Michel (2007:4) has this to say on Kimbangu’s prophecy in 1944:

You will see whites going back to their countries. They will flee or be pursued by a strong power which will make them leave on foot, leaving behind all their belongings. You will see someone emerge among us who will liberate us from the colonial yoke; he will be good but you will not follow him and he will be killed. And you will have a second president. He will be a thief, harsh and full of grudges. The moral standard will be lost, children will not respect their parents, robbery and famine will be on the increase leading to a climate of insecurity in the country. You will hate him and remove him from power. The third president will rule not for a long time and the country will be divided into six parts and you will kill him. When you will be liberated, keep yourselves from robbery for the leader will rule the country and its people. He will also be the master over money and war and also a king over death.⁵

This long prophecy uttered by Kimbangu whilst in prison in 1944 has had its fulfillment in the political life of the Congo. The country has had four presidents since independence and what has happened in their lives seems to be closely associated with Kimbangu’s prophecies. To some people, especially Kimbanguists, Kimbangu saw the future of the Congo and declared this during his thirty years in prison. And this has also led some people to join the church, according to my interviews.

The predictions of Kimbangu came true to his fellow prisoners and continue to be fulfilled today, argue his followers. We can see here a prophetic kind of ministry by Kimbangu whilst in prison in Katanga. The African prophet continues to exercise his ministry to his fellow Africans; he cooked for other prisoners and worked with them. He

⁵ Vous verrez les blancs rentrer chez eux. Ils fuiront ou seront pourchassés par une forte puissance qui les fera partir à pied abandonnant tous leurs biens. Vous verrez parmi nous émerger une personne qui nous sortira du joug colonial, il sera bon, mais vous ne le suivrez pas et il sera assassiné. Et vous aurez un deuxième président. Il sera voleur, rancunier et méchant. La dépravation de mœurs envahira les mentalités, les enfants ne respecteront plus leurs parents, vous verrez l’exacerbation du vol et une grande famine entraînant un climat d’insecureté dans le pays. Vous le détesterez et le chasserez. Le troisième président entrera, il ne régnera pas longtemps, et le pays sera divisé en six parties et vous le tuerez. Quand vous serez libéré, abstenez-vous du vol car le responsable du pays, à ce moment là, sera un chef de terre et du peuple. Il sera aussi chef de l’argent et de guerre et aussi un chef de la mort....

also shared God's Word with those who came into contact with him, especially the prisoners who later became Christians.

According to Musasa (2000:105), Kimbangu did not only prophecy but also miraculously healed a psychologically disturbed person who later on asked the prophet to teach him God's Word. This miracle cost Simon 120 strokes by the colonial authorities; and he was later thrown into acidic water, but he survived all these ordeals. Kimbanguists interpret the ability of their founder to survive colonial aggression and ill-treatment for 30 years as evidence that he was more than a mere human being and, in fact, God's messenger. Most Kimbanguists believe or claim Simon Kimbangu to be their prophet from God on the basis, among other things, of their experience of miracles and wonders done by/through him.

From what has been said so far, it is good to observe that the earlier life of Kimbangu, his calling and arrest, as well as the miracles, happened in other parts of the Congo. However, he also performed miracles in Lubumbashi whilst in prison. So his ministry goes beyond the six months of public work but also his thirty years experience in prison.

The following section looks specifically at the history of the Kimbanguist Church in Lubumbashi; how it started, who were behind its rise and expansion, and the number of Kimbanguist congregations currently in the city. It is important to analyze this, since the Kimbanguist church did not start in the same way in different provinces of the Congo.

2.6 The rise of Kimbanguism in Katanga

God has used different means and vessels to establish the church in different parts of the world. Human beings, natural calamities, suffering and persecution have been tools in the hand of the creator to fulfil his mission. The Kimbanguist Church, which started under the ministry of papa Simon Kimbangu took time to spread into other parts of the country through various ways.

2.6.1 The Rise of Kimbanguism in general

Diangieda (1984:182) states that officially the church was founded on 6 April 1921. This date marks the healing of a young woman with the name of Nkiantondo by Simon Kimbangu. It happened in a village called Ngombe-Kinsuka near N'kamba village.

The period from 1921 to 1959 is known in Kimbanguist circles as “the underground period” [*la période de la clandestinité*], since in this time Kimbanguists experienced the deportation of many of their members into different provinces. This policy of the Belgian colonial authorities was clearly intended to weaken or destroy the movement, but – as in the early Christian church – dispersion produced growth. Most of the deported people played a vital role in spreading the movement in its early days. Prior to this decree the EJCSK was not allowed to gather publicly because it was considered as a protest movement. But with the decree freedom of worship was eventually granted them 38 years later by decree-arête no 2211/846 of 24 December 1959 and l’ordonnance No. 2/149 of 1 December 1960.

However, the official organizational structures of the church were established already in 1953, under the leadership of Marie Mwilu Kiawanga (Kimbangu’s wife) and Kimbangu’s three sons, Charles Kisolokele Lukelo, Salomon Dialungana Kiangani and Joseph Diangienda Nkutima in Leopoldville. This church organization was done secretly, which is why this period of the church is called the underground (clandestine) period. The running of the church and its organizational structure in other cities (provinces) of the Congo were not easy; in the sense that every church in the province seemed to have its own way of working, with no accountability to the church leadership in Leopoldville. And doctrines taught in other cities were different from what the church in Leopoldville had adopted. The church was closely associated with tribal groups, their customs and traditions rather than following the EJCSK norms and set of beliefs.

2.6.2 The rise of Kimbanguism in Lubumbashi

Katshiji (2003:24) believes that Kimbanguism started in Lubumbashi in 1948, during the underground period, shortly before its official recognition by the colonial

Belgian government as a Christian church. Three factors led to the rise of Kimbanguism in Lubumbashi, namely the arrival of Baluba people from Kasai province, the official recognition of the movement by colonial authorities as a Christian church, and the removal of the remains of Simon Kimbangu's corpse from Lubumbashi cemetery to N'kamba, his home village.

2.6.2.1 Immigrants from Kasai province

To start with, Anyenyola (1984:77-78) believes that people from Kasai province were instrumental in the spread of the movement in Katanga. Their primary motive for migrating to Lubumbashi was not religious – the establishment of the church – but economic or professional, since the Kimbanguists from Kasai province came to Lubumbashi in search of employment. At that time the mining company *Union Minière de Haut Katanga* (UMHK) and the railway company *La Compagnie du Chemin de Fer Bas-Congo au Katanga* (BCK) were looking for workers. UMHK was recruiting people from other provinces to help with the exploitation of the mines. The company set very good conditions of service for its workers, food supply, decent accommodation, medical care and good salaries. And these benefits drew a number of Kasaiens (as people from Kasai are called in the DRC) to Lubumbashi.

One of the prominent Kasaiens employed by the mining company as the provincial managing director was Gilbert Tshimanga, who was a Kimbanguist. He is believed to be the person to bring the Kimbanguist Church to the Katanga province. Anyenyola (1984:79) reports that Tshimanga said the following to him in an interview:

In 1948 when I came for the first time to Katanga in search for employment, I was already a member of the Kimbanguist movement known as 'Nzambi malemba' in Kasai. In Lubumbashi I was the first person to practice this religion. I invited fellow Baluba people from Kasai who joined the movement. This is why in 1949; we managed to form a small group of ten members, all from Kasai province.

The ethnic factor therefore seems to have played a role in membership recruitment in the beginning. So, according to Tshimanga, the church started in the province officially in 1949, established by Kasaiens.

Other sources, however, suggest that whilst Tshimanga was organizing his group, there was also another group being established by an indigenous Katangese leader by the name of Tshifutshi Victor. He became the head of the church in the province in the year 1966. During his leadership Kimbanguist chapels were built in the urban townships of Kenya and Ruashi in Lubumbashi.

In other townships of Lubumbashi people's homes were turned into meeting places or they were simply rented by the church. In 1971 the church obtained a large and spacious plot in Lubumbashi Township, which is where the largest Kimbanguist temple in Katanga has been built. It took decades to complete and is commonly known as "Simon Kimbangu Centenary Temple" [*Temple du Centenaire Simon Kimbangu*] since it was built in honour of the church's founder and inaugurated in the year of the centenary of his birth.

From what has been reported above, it is clear that two individuals – Tshimanga and Tshifutshi – were associated with the founding of the church in Katanga. Unfortunately the relationship between them was not always healthy, which brought about conflict. Katshiji (2003:24) writes that it took the message of peace and unity from the spiritual leader ("Chef") of the church, Joseph Diangienda Kuntima, to re-unite the hearts of Kimbanguists in Lubumbashi.

This brought all Kimbanguist churches together and they started working for their common goal, namely spreading the religion and the teachings of Simon Kimbangu. As time went by, Kimbanguism spread to all the districts of Katanga province. Other tribes from the province such as Luba Katanga, Hembra and others embraced the religion, each with its own culture, beliefs and customs.

An analysis of the two groups (Tshimanga and Tshifutshi) shows that the dominant Kimbanguist church in Katanga was established by Tshifutshi. This is so because Tshimanga's group (influenced by the *Nzambi wa malemba*) was different in matters of ethics from the original Kimbanguist movement (the one practiced in Kinshasa at that time). Tshimanga encouraged men to keep their beards, to wear long shorts even in the church, people were told that they could plant ground nuts and maize, and these could

grow and be harvested the same day. This kind of teaching did not represent official Kimbanguist teaching, hence it became a problem to many Kimbanguist members. Women were forbidden to walk in front of men. They were asked to walk backward to avoid showing their bodies to men. On the basis of 1 Peter 3:1-4, women were not allowed to wear jewellery or any other decoration since these were considered “worldly”. These issues had never been part of the traditional values in African cultures in the DRC. The practices and beliefs during the days of Kimbangu the prophet were Bible-based, unlike the practices in *Nzambi wa malemba*.

From what has been said above, it is clear that the rise and development of Kimbanguism in Lubumbashi is indebted to the work of immigrants from other parts of the country. Some left their own provinces for purely religious reasons, to reinforce the teaching of the church and help with the building of the Centenary Temple (*le Temple du Centenaire*) in Lubumbashi. Another group of young people came to Katanga Province for study purposes and also contributed to an extent to the expansion of the movement in the province. But the most important of all were the immigrants from Kasai, who came in search of employment and played a vital role in establishing the movement in the region. Immigrants have continued to play a missional role in the Kimbanguist Church, even in recent times, as will be seen in later chapters. Students and professionals from the Congo have taken their church wherever they went, especially in other African countries, USA and Europe.

2.6.2.2 Official recognition by the state

Once the church had registered an official name (on 1st December, 1960) the group had a good covering and a clear direction to follow in matters of doctrines and structures. An official name gave credibility to the church and a sense of security to its members. Previously, people feared to join this church because the Belgian authorities fought it and arrested its members – on the allegation that it was not a church but a protest movement against the colonial powers. And such a pressure made the church not to grow because not many people were willing to be associated with it. In the “underground” period of the church’s existence, different names and sets of doctrines developed in different parts of the DRC, which created uncertainty and tension between the different groups. In Kasai province, for instance, the Kimbanguist Church was known

under the name *Nzambi wa malemba* or *Nzambi wa malemba wa Kimbangu*, meaning the religion of non-violence of Kimbangu. The reference to non-violence in the name was in reaction to the accusation of the Belgian colonial authorities that Kimbanguism was a platform for anti-colonial violence in the country. By calling the movement by this name the nature of the movement could be known. This name was common between 1940 and 1950s.

Anyenyola (1984:77) points out that in Leopoldville the Kimbanguist movement was called *Kintwadi*, which means a “union” in Kikongo. It was later called *Eglise de Jésus-Christ sur la terre par le prophète Simon*, but when the church was finally given its official recognition in the country, it was called *Eglise de Jesus-Christ sur la terre par le prophet Simon Kimbangu* [The Church of Jesus Christ on earth by the prophet Simon Kimbangu] (abbreviated as EJCSK). This unified name and doctrines gave stability to the movement, which attracted more and more followers.

2.6.2.3 Reburial of Simon Kimbangu

The removal of Kimbangu’s body from Lubumbashi cemetery took place in 1960, nine years after his burial (Anyenyola 1984:79). This act had some effects on the EJCSK and its future leadership succession (even though this is not an officially declared issue) but a critical observer would argue that this move made the EJCSK more of an African ‘clan’ with family succession determining its leadership. The analysis of the EJCSK leadership structure shows that nobody outside Kimbangu’s family has ever been the Spiritual Leader (*le chef spirituel* or Legal Representative) of the church. What motivated the followers to remain faithful to their leader was not the fact that his body was moved from Lubumbashi to N’kamba. Kimbanguists believe that his body did not experience any corruption, even after being buried for a number years. This made many people to believe that Kimbangu was not just an ordinary person, but a supernatural being worthy of trust or faith. Whilst in Lubumbashi, Kimbangu’s grave was a place of prayer for his followers. They visited the grave whenever pressed by an issue requiring divine help and Kimbanguists testify that many received answers to their prayers. The grave also played – and continues to play – a role in Kimbanguist faith. The EJCSK has annual rituals at the grave during the celebration of the “holy family”.

The Kimbanguist church currently has 24 congregations within the city of Lubumbashi. A number of them have built chapels, especially the congregations in the urban townships like Kenya, Kamalondo, Rwashi, Kampemba, Commune Lubumbashi, Bel Air, Katuba, and Commune Annexe. It is important to stress that these large church buildings were built with money from Kimbanguist members themselves, without any help from outside. Funds are raised every Sunday in all local churches, in a format of special fund raising competitions called *Nsinsani* (see Chapter 3.3.7).

2.7 Summary

As a conclusion to this historical chapter, it must be emphasized how important it is to interpret a religious movement in the light of its history. The Kimbanguist movement was decisively shaped by its birth under Belgian colonial oppression, by the unique character of its leader and his clear commitment to his divine calling: from his early life, through 30 years in prison, and to the time of his death.

It is surprising to note that a six month period of Kimbangu's public ministry and his thirty years of private ministry in prison have left such an impact, which is still being felt in various parts of the world today. Kimbanguism from its inception proves to have been born out of its founders' personal experience of encounter with God, as it is the case with a number of other AICs that have arisen in the Southern African region. In addition, the history of Kimbanguism suggests that it was born out of suffering and persecution, as was the case with the early church, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles.

Having made a brief analysis of the origin and historical development of the EJCSK, I start in the next chapter with an analysis of Kimbanguist mission by means of the praxis cycle, as explained in Chapter 1. The first dimension of the praxis cycle that I address is that of mission planning or action. Chapter 3 therefore examines the key strategies of mission in the Kimbanguist Church.

CHAPTER THREE

MISSION STRATEGIES

3.1 Introduction

The history of the EJCSK presented in Chapter 2 inspires most strategies of mission used by Kimbanguists nowadays. During its formative years, Kimbangu and his colleagues carried out a number of actions to meet the needs of their followers and of the Congolese people as a whole. In Chapter 2 those actions were highlighted in an isolated manner, not in an organized or systematic way. That is the purpose of the present chapter.

The praxis cycle (as I use it here) is not a mobilizing tool but an analytical one, as explained in chapter 1. For a researcher who employs the praxis cycle as an analytical tool to highlight the interplay between the different dimensions of missional praxis, the exact sequence in which these dimensions are treated is not important, as long as all the dimensions are taken seriously. I regard it as appropriate to start with the most visible and tangible aspect of mission, namely the planning or strategy dimension.

Kritzinger's (2002:171) quote of the unknown saint Exuperius (4th century) makes a good starting point for this chapter: "To love someone is not to look at that person, but to look in the same direction. Love has a face-to-face dimension, but the basic posture of love is shoulder-to-shoulder. Loving our neighbors, whether Christian or not, therefore means facing a common future and working towards it together".

In this chapter I demonstrate that the Kimbanguist Church (henceforth EJCSK) in Lubumbashi understands love as action-oriented, expressed in concrete projects. This attitude is based on what is known as the "basic principles" of the EJCSK, which is summarized by Akiele (1998/99:198) under three headings: *Bolingo* (Love), *Mibeko* (Divine Laws), and *Misala* (Good Works). Kimbanguists believe that *Bolingo* (Love) needs to be expressed through *Misala* (works). This particular chapter looks at practical actions and projects (*Misala*) carried out by the EJCSK as well as the models it uses to reach out. It will look at three aspects of EJCSK mission strategy, namely church

organization and leadership structure (3.2), church departments (3.3), and projects or strategies of mission (3.4).

3.2 Church organization and leadership

Leadership and church organization is a key feature in understanding the mission of the EJCSK in Lubumbashi. Indeed, many observers feel that Kimbanguism offers superior organizational structures when compared to other AICs. Its overall leadership structures in the Congo evolved around the family tree of Simon Kimbangu, as is the case in many other African churches. From its inception the church was led by the founder himself. Upon his arrest and death, leadership shifted to his wife, Marie Mwilu Kiawanga, and their three sons, Kisolokele Lukelo, Dialungana Kiangani and Diangienda Kuntima.

Since July 1992, when Simon Kimbangu's last son, Diangienda Kuntima, died in Geneva, the leadership of the church is in the hands of the prophet's grandsons. A well-elaborated family process has now been put in place to ensure good leadership succession. This implies that succession in the EJCSK top leadership is a family issue. Considering that all three Kimbangu's sons have died, the church brings grandsons and great-grandsons into leadership. To ensure that only Kimbangu's direct descendants take the leadership role, a family tree starting from Kimbangu himself and his sons, going down to great-grandsons capable of leading the church, has been put in place. This is designed to avoid confusion when it comes to who becomes the next leader. In this process, the input of the incumbent leader is also very important.

The following sections deal with various facets of the EJCSK leadership structure: calling into ministry, appointments, training and succession of office bearers. Most of the data in this section come from the church's Constitution (EJCSK 2005b:19-44), which describes the current functioning of the church, throughout the country and beyond.

3.2.1 EJCSK hierarchy

At the world-wide level, the church is led by the Legal Representative (henceforth abbreviated as LR) who is also called *Chef de l'Eglise*, followed by the General Assembly of the church. The National Council and the Executive Committee lead the church at the national level. The church is organized in the same way at all levels of administration, from provincial to village level. In a province, for instance, the church is headed by the Provincial Legal Representative, the Provincial Assembly (committee), and heads of departments. A similar leadership structure is found in districts, towns and villages.

3.2.1.1 Legal Representative (*Chef de l'Eglise*)

The Constitution (EJCSK 2005b:23) describes more than fifteen functions of the LR. Some of these are: He is the supreme chief of the universal Kimbanguist Church, presides over the meetings of the General Assembly, is the source of legitimate spiritual power of the church, and looks after its unity, harmony and cohesion. He consolidates the Christian faith of Kimbanguist members through his teachings, messages of peace and love. He appoints and removes clergy at all levels and in all ministries and organs of the church – from the world level to the local church pastor. He is assisted by private advisors. These are his family brothers and sisters who are faithful to the doctrines and ethics of the EJCSK. He also has a cabinet; the organ through which he exercises his administrative, legal, social and religious functions.

3.2.1.2 General Assembly

The General Assembly of the EJCSK is made up of the LR, his private advisors, the highest clergy, deputy representatives, national pastors, and registered members. The Constitution (EJCSK 2005b:21) defines “registered” (or “effective”) members as follows:

Registered members are those faithful Kimbanguists who are appointed by the Spiritual Leader and Legal Representative. They are committed to working for the benefit of the church. They ensure the continuity of the church and watches over its normal operations toward the Congolese state.

[Les membres effectifs sont des fidèles Kimbanguiste appeler a cette qualité par le chef spirituel et Représentant Legal. Les membres effectifs prennent l'engagement d'oeuvrer pour le bien de l'église. Ils sont les gérant de sa continuité dans le temps et veillent à sa normalité vis-à-vis de l'état.]

It is not easy to give the exact number of members making up the General Assembly, for the following reasons: First, the EJCSK Constitution itself does not give an exact number but only the positions or categories of those who make up the General Assembly. The number of members increases as the church grows in different places and countries, since there are people who are invited to the General Assembly (on the basis of their expertise) by the LR every time a session is held. What is clearly stated by the Constitution (EJCSK 2005b:43-44) is that the total number of the “long serving members” should be thirty-eight (a long serving member is someone who has been in the EJCSK leadership for more than ten years).

Second, the General Assembly does the general planning of the church, but all its conclusions are subject to the approval of the LR. Third, the Assembly meets once every three years in ordinary sessions on 6th April.⁶ It can also meet in an extraordinary session as requested by the LR.

3.2.1.3 District Council

There are many other organs with different functions within the church, but due to the limitations of this study, it is only necessary to look at Kimbanguist church leadership structures in Lubumbashi. The highest organ of the church in that city is called “le Conseil de District” (the District Council). The Constitution (EJCSK 2005b:29) determines that the council should consist of the following people: district pastor, district secretary, district evangelist, accountant, pastors from territories or townships, head of various movements and services in the city.

The functions of the District Council are as follows: to exercise control over all church organs and services; to submit to the Executive Council nominations for both ecclesiastical and administrative positions; to approve the church budget and work towards its implementation in the district. The council meets once per semester, depending on the needs in the district.

⁶ 6th April marks the beginning of the ministry of Simon Kimbangu (« cette date marque en lettre d’or le début du ministère de notre envoyé spécial, papa Simon Kimbangu » (*Kimbanguisme info* 2006:7).

From what has been said so far regarding the Kimbanguist church leadership structures, it seems that it may fit in what Sundkler calls the “chief” type of leadership (see Daneel 1987:140). The features of this type of leadership include being a capable executive official, bold in the fight against the white and any other oppressive powers, supreme leader in all affairs of the church, final judge, etc. The EJCSK type of leadership fits this category because what most of the features mentioned above are found in the LR. The history of the Kimbanguist Church in Chapter 2 suggested that Simon Kimbangu was keen in the struggle against the white colonialists, and every new LR stands against any form of exploitation and injustices in the nation. The LR is consulted by the government officials on issues of national interest, he decides and rules over all the affairs of the church, appoints office bearers at all levels and gives directions on the appointment of the next LR. The LR of the church is seen by the membership as the incarnation of all the power and authority in the church.

3.2.2 Appointment and training of office bearers

In the Kimbanguist Church in Lubumbashi people are brought into ministry either through appointment by the LR or through formal training. The interviews I conducted in June 2007 revealed that the majority of Kimbanguist pastors in Lubumbashi have had no formal theological training. Most of them are in ministry through appointment by the LR, which is a sign of great honour. The appointment is made on the basis of one’s long service and good performance in other church ministries such as catechist or deacon.

Those who are theologically trained are less than five out of more than twenty pastors in the city of Lubumbashi. Being a pastor within the Kimbanguist Church is a title or position and not really a function or ministry, as in most other churches. This means that one can have the title of pastor without having a pastorate. Pastors are given functions such as heading a primary or secondary school, being a human resource manager or accountant, or heading a service in the church. The few trained pastors I met during my research visits were holding administrative positions because these positions seemingly required qualified personnel. The interviews I had in October 2007 with these trained Kimbanguist pastors revealed that they occupied administrative positions for two reasons: first, these administrative positions are part of ministry within the church, and

second, there are no vacant churches where they can serve at the moment, but once such pastorates are available they will be ready to pastor them.

From my interviews during June 2007, I gathered that the Kimbanguists believe that a person who wishes to be involved in ministry or to pastor a local church does not really need theological training. Kimbanguists tend to believe that it is the Holy Spirit who works through people, and the Spirit can use anyone (a trained or untrained minister) to do ministry in the church. The purpose of theological training is to equip the church workers for the work of ministry, and ministry (according to most Kimbanguists I interviewed) is not only about pastoring the church, though that is primary. Heading a school or a church department is also seen as ministry. Those who have theological training often have more than one professional qualification. Apart from having a degree or diploma in theology, they may also have qualifications in fields such as education, sociology or management, which may enable them to handle administrative positions.

According to my empirical findings, even these administrative officers are not paid and get no special recognition. They are treated like any other pastors in the church. All Kimbanguist clergy and workers in various departments are allowed to pursue another occupation to earn a living. But the church gives them some support in kind (material things) when these are available, unlike in other churches where salaries for the clergy are part of the conditions of service. The current pastor of the main Kimbanguist church in Lubumbashi, for instance, works as a security officer (guard) at a shop in the city, while others are involved in business, farming, or other occupations.

The EJCSK teaches a conditional salvation. Diangienda (1984:259) writes that for one to be saved three conditions have to be met: grace, faith and works:

Kimbanguist theology emphasizes the fact that every human being has to work individually for his/her salvation, since the Lord will return to reward everyone according to his/her works [*La théologie Kimbanguiste insiste que chaque être humain doit individuellement oeuvrer pour son salut, car le seigneur reviendra pour rétribuer chacun selon son œuvre*].

This belief seems to motivate Kimbanguists in the area of ministry; they do this without asking for any reward because it is part of the requirements for salvation. More attention will be paid to this issue in Chapter 5, which deals with theological reflection.

Referring to leadership training in the Kimbanguist church, Martin (1979:113) writes that in order to meet its needs for trained leaders, the church established a theological seminary in 1970 in the former Zaire. The institution offered a five year diploma course, but in 1977 it was upgraded to a university-level seminary. An institute for pastoral training was attached to the seminary for those candidates unable to qualify for university-level work. The seminary is closely connected to the church and the African tradition which it upholds, although the staff and faculty are quite ecumenical. In fact, the seminary draws its faculty from many other churches such as Lutherans, Catholics, Anglicans, and many more.

During my empirical research in July 2007 I interviewed five graduates from the seminary. Since I could not find any published literature on the *Faculté de Théologie kimbanguiste de "Lutendele"* I have relied on information gathered from former seminarians for my insights into current leadership training among Kimbanguists in Lubumbashi.

Those who feel called into ministry and have Grade Twelve certificates first need to get a recommendation from the local church leadership and the provincial representative. Then they are allowed to enter the Lutendele⁷ theological seminary in Kinshasa, which is the only theological college for the EJCSK in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with full sponsorship by the church. The seminary offers both diploma and degree programmes.

There is a *Novicia* year before seminary and an internship after the seminary studies. The *Novicia* (conducted in N'kamba) is a nine months programme during which

⁷ Lutendele is a name for a territory within Mongafula Township, Kinshasa. Kimbanguists believe that Simon Kimbangu appeared to the chief of Lutendele many years ago and this one promised to give to Simon Kimbangu a piece of land for his church to use. This place was later on given and this is where the theological seminary is built (October, 2007 interview).

students are given basic courses to be developed later on in the seminary. Courses offered at the Kinshasa seminary include biblical, theological and human science courses. Emphasis is put on Kimbanguist theology and history. Students who excel are given scholarships to further their studies, to do either Masters or doctoral programmes in Europe. From the data I collected in July 2007, Kimbanguist students further their studies mainly in France (at the Universities of Sorbonne or Strasbourg) and in Switzerland (at the University of Lausanne).

In the context of Katanga Province, leadership training is conducted by five trained theologians. Seminars and workshops are organized from time to time in different local churches to help develop personnel for church work. Katshiji (2004:11) describes four levels of training which Kimbanguist leaders undergo: human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral. Katshiji believes that human training is the basis for all other pastoral training, since it aims at developing the image of Jesus Christ in the life of the leader.

Spiritual training is offered to prepare the leader to live in continuous fellowship with the Father through his Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Leaders are taught how to become like Christ through meditation on God's Word and through fellowship with other Christians who are active in the life of the church. Spiritual training can be summarized in three phrases: a) faithful meditation of the Word of God, b) active participation in the life of the church, and c) service towards other members of the church.

For the Kimbanguists, intellectual training is closely related to human and spiritual training. Due to the increasing pluralism of Katangese society, Kimbanguist pastors and church leaders have to be intellectually well equipped to face the challenges of the new millennium. Pastoral training is drawn up to include reflection on the Scriptures and practical exercises on spiritual issues.

3.2.3 Leadership succession

Regarding leadership succession, the observation of Sundkler (1961:118) on the practice in South African "independent" churches applies also to the EJCSK: "The independent Bantu church tends to have its leadership passing on from father to son, this

being one of the characteristic ways in which the independent church adapts itself to the African heritage”.

The above reference needs to be looked at from two angles, the biblical and the cultural angle. Sundkler (1961:117) says that in most “prophetic type” AICs, like the EJCSK, hereditary leadership is often justified on the grounds of Jewish monarchy or the transfer of Aaron’s function to his son Eliezer. From my view, such references do not seem to make any distinction between the royal and the priestly leadership in the Old Testament or the religious leadership of the Jewish temple in the New Testament ecclesia. I think that God’s promises on hereditary leadership to Israel as nation do not seem to have any connection with the New Testament church or the church of today. On the other hand, AICs tend to use some selected Bible texts to justify a traditionally oriented and accepted kind of leadership. The EJCSK is a “Prophetic type” of AIC with a “Chief type” leadership style.

Culturally speaking, the hereditary kind of leadership or succession implies a number of issues: the first aspect has to do with a strong belief by the Africans, Kimbanguists in particular, in the relationship that exists between the living and the “living” dead. Daneel (1987:170) argues that a major factor in inherited leadership is the intimate tie that grows between a founder-leader and his followers: “The leader and the church are identified in the minds of the members to such an extent that one could expect his name and his influence to continue even after death”.

Some Africans, like the Kimbanguists I interviewed on this issue, believe that even when the founder-leader dies his influence is perpetuated through his appearances to the followers in dreams and his continuing presence in the person of his successor-son(s). The interaction between the deceased leader and his church reflects in a sense the aftermath of the traditional views on the relationship between the living and the “living” dead. Kimbanguists believe that just as an ancestral spirit protects his living descendants, so the deceased leader (Simon Kimbangu or any of his late sons) – even if he is considered to be “with the Lord” – still continues to be actively involved in his church.

Thus, in the effort and aim of honouring the founder-leader and ensuring his continuous influence over the church, hereditary leadership is encouraged. Ideally, from the Kimbanguist perspective, this kind of succession might well protect the interests of the EJCSK against schism, give the successor-son or grandson (as it is the case within the EJCSK) an additional means of control over the church, protect the initiative or the vision from passing into the wrong hands and enhance biological expansion of the church.

This pattern of succession is followed by the Kimbanguist church in the Congo, especially where the office of the LR is concerned. According to Kimbanguists, the LR is appointed “by divine revelation.” This means that God speaks through the person of Simon Kimbangu to show who is to be the next head of the church. The current head of the church determines his successor, using his personal discretion. This practice is still regarded as “divine revelation” among all Kimbanguists and their leaders. He is the head of the church until death and can only be succeeded by a member of the family.

However, for the rest of the leadership positions (at a provincial or district level), nominations are submitted by capable leaders to the LR for appointment. Generally, succession takes place through transfer and promotion, and is often occasioned by death. Within the Kimbanguist structures there is no retirement age. For better or worse, leaders hold their positions and functions until they die.

3.3 Church Departments

Most of the Kimbanguist mission activities in Lubumbashi are carried out by different church departments. The current Constitution (EJCSK 1997) makes provision for fourteen departments within the church. Some of them are: the department of finance, evangelization, public or external affairs, social welfare, information and press, movements and associations, education, health, economics and development.

Due to the limitations of my study and its missiological focus, I will consider only seven of these departments, namely evangelization, public or external affairs, health, education, social welfare, economics and development, and information and press. These

departments are more directly engaged in mission⁸ than the others, and it is easier to assess their work in the community.

3.3.1 Department of Evangelization

This department embodies one of the strategies used by the Kimbanguist church in doing mission in Lubumbashi. The Constitution (EJCSK 1997:8) states that the main goal or objective of the evangelization department is as follows: “Conveying God’s word through different evangelistic programmes to all humanity with the aim of saving souls” [*L’objet principal du department d’evangelisation est d’apporter la parole de Dieu par des missions d’evangelisation, a toute l’humanité pour le salut des âmes*].

To implement this goal, the department uses five methods. It formulates and looks after the church liturgy, seeking to ensure that church services are held with the aim of saving the lost. It runs chaplains’ ministries outside the traditional confines of the church. It organizes church retreats once or twice per year where specific topics related to evangelism are taught to members. It also organizes spiritual evenings and coordinates the music and drama groups in the church. The following section discusses these methods one by one.

Alluding to the retreat method in the Kimbanguist church, Martin (1975a:28) reveals that it is one of its most powerful means of evangelization. Retreats were begun in December 1972 by the women’s movement. Since 1973 all members of the Kimbanguist church, men and women, old and young, take part in a five-day retreat, far from the noise and bustle of town. Specially trained teams lead members through five days of meditation, prayers, fasting, and singing, preceded by open and individual confessions of sins “to get rid of all dirt”.

Kimbanguists report that during these retreats, many have visions of Christ, of the heavenly glory and angels, and of Simon Kimbangu and his courageous wife, Marie Mwilu. There are reports that sick people get well, and many are renewed by the Spirit of God. Quite a number of non-Kimbanguists attend these retreats and nobody is

⁸ Mission (see Introduction) is a dimension of the existence of the Christian community which is aimed at changing society (Kritzinger 1995:368).

excluded. Kimbanguists report that these retreats represent the evangelization of the evangelized and the non-evangelized, and that they have given a new intensity to the spiritual life of the church.

Another method used by the department is what is called “spiritual evenings”. They are held every day apart from the morning devotion meetings. In these evening meetings the followers are taught different aspects of the church’s doctrines, beliefs and practices. These sessions are designed to enable members to grow and reach out to the non-Christians.

Music and drama groups are another strategy used in bringing people to the saving knowledge of Christ. The Kimbanguist church, unlike some other churches, has a number of choirs in every local parish. The names of some of the singing groups are: Leaders’ choir; Fareki (this choir’s name is in memory of those who were arrested and killed for identifying with Kimbanguism); Coreki (this is the Kimbanguist children choir, carrying a name given to those who are born and grow up in Kimbanguist families); Friki (Kimbanguist flutists); Faki (fanfare Kimbanguistes). The two last groups’ names are given after the kind of instruments they use. These choir groups relate to each other because they all belong to Kimbanguist movements and associations. The Department of Evangelization is the church organization that coordinates all the choirs and associations in the church.

All of these groups sing every Sunday during the worship service, especially during fund-raising time. But the choirs are also invited to sing at public government functions and at the funerals of public figures in the city. Molyneux (1990:153) comments that songs within the Kimbanguist Church are of special importance. Kimbanguists themselves believe that songs, especially hymns, are not ordinary religious songs composed by those with a music gift. Rather, they are received by revelation and under inspiration. Molyneux (1990:156) adds that in 1987 there were 46 registered people in the EJCSK with the spiritual gift of receiving and composing songs.

Molyneux (1990:156) found three ways in which a *capteur* (someone with the gift of receiving songs) “receives” a song. First, while the capteur is asleep, he/she

will have a dream or a vision of an angelic choir. They draw near and find themselves joining in, adding his/her voice to those of the celestial singers, learning by participation. Upon waking he/she remembers the tune and the words he/she was singing. Secondly, the same thing can happen during the day, while walking along the street or in the fields. A distant but gradually more distinct sound of singing will cause him/her to stop and take note (this would normally not be accompanied by a visual experience). Thirdly, the words and music can simply “well up in his heart” [*les choses arrivent au Coeur*], and the individual will sense that it is a hymn communicated by God.

The gift of inspired hymns is an important confirmation for Kimbanguists that their experience of God is not second-hand but direct. The fact that the many of the *capteurs* apparently have no human qualification such as a fine voice, musical ability, advanced education, etc., make most Kimbanguists believe that these hymns are evidence that God is at work among them.

Molyneux (1990:158) reports the following testimony of a Kimbanguist on the significance of these inspired hymns:

It must not be forgotten that these hymns are received by Christians without any special training, often cultivators, sometimes children, who would not normally be expected to know the essentials of evangelical theology... and above all, these hymns, given to us Blacks by inspiration from the Holy Spirit, are the striking manifestation that for us Africans Jesus Christ is really our Lord and savior by the intermediary of the ministry of our Papa Simon Kimbangu, openly and with power....

The author observes that Kimbanguist hymns are for communal (corporate) rather than for solitary use. Kimbanguist literature emphasizes the central role that singing plays in their worship, and hymns are perhaps the major means by which members can affirm their sense of community, which is so important in African society.

Molyneux (1990:164-166) points out that Kimbanguist hymns are divided into four categories, on the basis of their contents. There are hymns that are directed Godward, mutual, and outward, and then there is a general “other” category. The first category can be divided into four groups: hymns of praise and worship, confession,

petition and response. The second (mutual) category includes hymns addressed by members to one another. This type is subdivided into three: exhortation, instruction, and affirmation (testimony). Hymns of the third category are oriented toward those outside the Kimbanguist fold and may be termed ‘outward’. These are evangelistic hymns of entreaty or warning. There is a fourth “other” group, comprising hymns for special occasions, like Christmas, marriage, bereavement, greeting of visitors, and child dedication.

When analyzing 565 Kimbanguist hymns that are sung in most Kimbanguist churches, I have found that 187 of them are addressed to God, 205 to fellow members (mutual), 74 toward outsiders and 99 address special occasions. Of the 565 hymns analyzed, the great majority (over 400) mention Jesus Christ under various Kikongo terms of ‘Yisu’, ‘Mfumu Yisu’ (Lord Jesus), ‘Mvuluzi’ (Savior), and ‘Mwana Nzambi’ (Son of God). It is difficult not to state that Jesus Christ is central to the beliefs of Kimbanguists, just as he is for other Christians. Out of the 565 hymns, some 135 (almost a quarter) speak of the Prophet, using a variety of different names in Kikongo like ‘Ngunza’ (Prophet), ‘Nguza Yisu’ (prophet of Jesus), ‘Ntumwa’ (sent one, Apostle) and many more.

In addition, the interviews I had in November 2006 and June 2007 revealed that Kimbanguist songs include songs composed by Simon Kimbangu, Psalms, and *cantiques* that have been composed by the *capteurs* mentioned above. This being so, even the content of these hymns has changed due to different church experiences and contemporary realities.

In order to highlight the nature of Kimbanguist evangelism, I look at a number of Kimbanguist hymns and reflect briefly on their contents and messages. In my view the following three songs give clear insight into the message conveyed in Kimbanguist evangelism. Most of these songs are cited by Simbandumwe (1992), in English translation:

Hymn 1 (in Simbandumwe 1992:171):

God the father,

I come to you
 To show my sins,
 Because I am going to enter
 Only the pure in heart enter there.
 Lord Jesus, I come to you
 To show you my sins,
 Because you are my
 Savior on earth,
 Show me the way where I must walk.
 Holy Spirit, I come to you
 Forgive my sins,
 Because I am a sinner on earth,
 I do not see what I should do.

This is one of the Kimbanguist hymns sung during retreats when all members seek God to purify their lives. The song makes reference to all three persons of the trinity as having the power to forgive the sinner. Jesus Christ is acknowledged as the Saviour of the sinner and the Holy Spirit is sought to give guidance when people lack proper direction.

Hymn 2 (in Heintz 1978: 8)

Go around the whole world,
 Go and heal the sick.
 Go around the whole world,
 Preach the new covenant.
 Go around the whole world,
 Go and raise the dead.
 Go around the whole world
 Announce the new covenant

This hymn emphasizes the vision of the worldwide outreach mission of the Kimbanguists, which echoes the universalism of the messianic age with its prophetic threefold ministry function: healing the sick, raising the dead, and preaching the good news of the new covenant. Simbandumwe (1992:177) points out that the followers of Kimbangu tend to believe that the two former ministries are just the means towards fulfilling the later function (preaching the good news).

Hymn 3. (In Heintz 1978:8):

Friends, let us go,
 Let us go to see the glory;
 Leave sin behind for sure the door is open.
 In the holy city near Tata Simon (Kimbangu),
 He is pure; you, he calls you.

This is a hymn of mutual encouragement among Kimbanguists. They are calling themselves to purity, leaving sin behind, aiming to enter the heavenly city where they will find Papa Simon.

This teaching in Kimbanguist Hymns goes back to 1921, the very first year of the Kimbanguist “event”. The story is frequently told how Kimbangu sent some of his helpers to the station of the Baptist Missionary Society at Ngombe-Lutete to purchase hymn books. They were rebuffed with the sarcastic reply: “Has your prophet Simon Kimbangu only received the gift of healing the sick and raising the dead? Has he not also received the gift of inspired hymns?”

When some time later the missionary Jennings from the Baptist station went to N’kamba to get back some of the books that Kimbangu had in his possession, Kimbangu received a message from God that from then on he should never look to the missionaries for anything he needed in his mission of evangelization. There and then, in the presence of the missionary, Mukoko Jean, a close friend of Kimbangu, “received” the first hymn: “Soldiers of righteousness, put on your armor”.

Martin (1975a:26) shows that Kimbanguist songs have rich content. The central teachings of the church are clearly expressed in them: suffering, forgiveness through Christ, victory, following him, even though the devil is always present to snatch us from Christ, obedience at all cost, willingness to suffer for him, final victory which is not only a future reality but anticipated already here and now. Martin (1975a:26) continues:

From the outset of the movement the message was spontaneously sang. The Kimbanguist church sings and thus touches the very heart of the African. One to two hours are spent on singing during the Sunday service, with one choir appearing after the other. Evangelization happens to a large extent through singing gospel songs.

A number of Kimbanguists I interviewed during my research trip in November 2006 reported that one of the ways to reach out to the lost in many (Kimbanguist) churches within Lubumbashi is through singing the gospel. Passers-by are attracted by the songs and choose to join the church in order to hear more.

There are people who have joined the church because of the music from various singing groups. And this is how choirs play their missionary roles in the Kimbanguist church. The drama groups act out the Biblical message and some events from Kimbanguist history, like the arrest of Simon Kimbangu and his friends. These plays are performed in public places and halls with an evangelistic intent.

In short, from what I saw and heard during my investigations in Lubumbashi, every member in the Kimbanguist church is a missionary for the church, and plays a role in the spread of the Kimbanguist faith. This view is well supported by Martin (1968: 25-26)

Each member of the Kimbanguist church is in practice a missionary, each in his own way, members get involved in one of the movements within the church: they join the choirs, the dramatic groups, the women's meetings with their many social activities, the flutists, the brass band, the retreat-movements of boys or girls, or the *surveillants* who in their uniform and military formation keeping order in large gatherings and take turns at supervising church property during the nights against the gangs of delinquent youths and robbers. The choir-members sing their faith, and many non-Kimbanguists have found their way into the church through the choir. This total involvement of members in all kinds of church activities encourages each one of them to be "an evangelist" and bring new members into the group.

Within the church in Lubumbashi members get involved in one of the movements: they join a choir, a drama group, the women's meetings with their many social activities, the flutists, the brass band, the retreat movement, the youth movement or the group of *surveillants* who, in their uniforms and military formation, keep order in large gatherings and protect church property at night. This "total involvement" of members in church activities testifies to the high level of commitment that encourages each one to be an "evangelist" and bring new members into the church.

3.3.2 Department of Press and Information

This is the arm of the church responsible for news and publication. The Constitution (EJCSK 1997:11, 26) states the goals of this department as making known to the world the activities and works of the church. It is responsible for equipping the church with adequate communication tools or equipment.

It runs television and radio programmes in Lubumbashi on a weekly basis. During these programmes sermons are preached, and debates are broadcast on important issues in society. Press and communication in the church is also involved in publication. There is an official church newspaper called *Kimbanquisme Info*, which appears every two months. This paper is not produced in Lubumbashi, but copies from Kinshasa are circulated by the department in the area. Local church news, projects and achievements are sent to Kinshasa for inclusion in *Kimbanquisme Info* and then copies of the newspaper are sent to provinces and outside the country at a fee. This newspaper is published in French, the official language in the DRC.

The discussions I had with the leaders of the Department of Press and Information in Katanga in October 2007 suggest that the paper started publication five years ago, in 2003. It is headed by an administration board, and three goals guide the work of this journal: education of the public, information, and the spread of Kimbanguism. *Kimbanquisme Info* educates and informs the public in general on social, economic and health issues in the country. It also informs people on the work of the Kimbanguist church in the country and beyond: This includes what the church as a whole is doing, the work journeys of the LR, and the work of the other departments of the church.

The paper has representatives wherever the church has its presence and these send news from different parts of the country and the world to the head office in Kinshasa. News is published and the paper is sold to the public for the equivalent of about one US Dollar.

In the context of Lubumbashi, I was told that there is a bulletin (called *Le Paraclet*) which is locally produced every two months within the goals of *Kimbanduisme Info* (I had a privilege of receiving a copy of this bulletin during my visit). In this particular article three issues are discussed, the meaning of Kimbanduism, the invitation of the LR to three heads of state (namely the presidents of the DRC, Congo Brazzaville and Angola) and the significance of the month of October for the EJCSK. Kimbanduism in this bulletin is defined as Christianity resulting from the actions and teachings of Simon Kimbangu. On the issue of the invitation to the heads of state, the EJCSK LR claims to have received revelations from God that he has to share with the three presidents of the former kingdom of the Kongo, even though these revelations were not divulged in the paper. The bulletin also explained that October is very important to the Kimbanduist church because this is the month when Simon Kimbangu was sentenced to death and Kimbanduists have to reflect on the significance of this. Moreover, the Lubumbashi team sends news to the head office as well for a wider circulation.

Some Kimbanduists I met during my research affirm that *Kimbanduisme Info* is considered as an important mission method in the spread of Kimbanduism. This implies that the newspaper is used as a tool to teach the general public what the EJCSK is all about, what it teaches and what it does, among many other things. As a result some people have come to know this church and joined it, according to my interviews with Kimbanduist members.

3.3.3 Department of Development and Economics

This is an important sector as far as the Kimbanduist church is concerned. The Constitution (EJCSK 1997:13) formulates the following goals for this department:

- to gather necessary financial and material means that will enable the Kimbanduist church fulfill its evangelization mission,
- to contribute to the development of the Kimbanduist church and to the social development of its followers,
- to conceive training programs for the church cadres in matters of development,
- to initiate and coordinate all church projects in matters of development,

- to supply farmers with agricultural input and the technological know how in matters of farming.

The department is responsible for all Kimbanguist church production units. These units are:

- Les centres agricoles (agricultural centres),
- les centres agro-pastoraux (centres for animals),
- les centres artisanaux (artisan skill training centres),
- les centres d'accueil et de conférence (conference and visitors centres),
- les écoles conventionnées Kimbanguistes (Kimbanguist schools),
- l'université Simon Kimbangu (Simon Kimbangu University),
- les coopératives d'achat et de ventes (cooperatives),
- les hôpitaux (hospitals),
- les centres de santé et les dispensaires (health centres),
- les instituts médicaux (medical training schools),
- les maisons d'édition Kimbanguistes (publishing houses),
- les magasins généraux Kimbanguistes (wholesale shops),
- les régies de construction (construction organizations),
- les imprimeries Kimbanguistes (Kimbanguist printing houses),
- les procures (Kimbanguist bookshops),
- Kimbanguistes les agences de voyage et dédouanement (Kimbanguist Customs and travel agencies), etc.

In the context of Katanga/Lubumbashi the following production units (from the list above) are operational:

The members constitute the first production units through their special giving programmes called *Nsinsani*. Other units include Kimbanguist schools (primary, secondary and skill training, health centers, animal and agricultural farming in the interior part of the province. For the EJCSK, these production units play an important role, first as sources of income for the church and secondly as means of the church to offer services to the community or society.

Agricultural products and animals are sold to the public, thereby creating avenues of funding for the church. But at the same time food is distributed to the vulnerable in the society and the church. In all Kimbanguist schools, two kinds of fees are charged to students, government fees and church fees. All fees due to the church are collected by the office of the church accountant and banked. The same applies to the health centres in Lubumbashi. In schools, students without financial means like orphans are given free places. The production units also offer services to the community; they are used as a means to reach out to non-Kimbanguists. The non-Kimbanguists who work in these units often become members in the long run.

Akiele (1998/99: 205) writes that the fundamental sources of income for building and development of the Kimbanguist church come from these production units, different collections, gifts and legacies, and special subscriptions. The church is financially independent and only has relationships of mutual collaboration with the Congolese government in social issues such as schools and health centers.

3.3.4 Department of Health

The objectives of the department as stated in the Constitution (EJCSK 1997:18) include the following:

- to empower the church with medical and sanitary infrastructures;
- to contribute to the improvement of the sanitary and social conditions in society;
- the conception and implementation of health policy in the Kimbanguist church;
- the promotion of traditional medicine;
- the training of medical and paramedical personnel;
- the promotion of health cooperatives within the church.

The church has two health centres in Lubumbashi, where health services are offered at lower fees and in many cases free of charge. These health centres are located in Katuba and Kampemba townships in Lubumbashi. Apart from health centres, the EJCSK has established a commission to combat diseases. It has its head offices in Kinshasa, with sub offices in all provincial headquarters in the DRC. It mainly works within the objectives of the church's health department. But apart from fulfilling those objectives, the commission also operates as an intervention wing of the church in matters relating to

epidemics and other diseases in society. It is headed by two medical doctors who are Kimbanguist members. The commission is involved in health education, mobilization and intervention. It deals with issues of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other epidemics in the city and beyond. It works in conjunction with other health organizations in the country (national and international organizations like the World Health Organisation .

To summarize this section, the EJCSK seems to adhere to the view of mission as healing. The various health centers run by the church meets other physical and social needs of the members and the general population as a whole. Here we see the church that looks at human beings not just as souls to be won, but also social beings with diseases that need to be attended to. We need to acknowledge that this department is unique for the EJCSK within Katanga Province and Lubumbashi city in particular. Not many AICs in the DRC organize such health facilities. This department entails that the Kimbanguism practices mission as healing to the nations.

3.3.5 Department of External (Public) Affairs

This department has two main objectives, according to EJCSK(1997:19):

- 1) To encourage and look after the established relationships of the Kimbanguist church with other churches, the state, and other ecumenical institutions (local, national or international);
- 2) To contribute to the promotion of the ecumenical movements among churches.

To implement its objectives, the department uses different avenues. Some of them are: the service of cooperation in religious matters, cooperation in matters of development, good relations with the State and sister churches.

The Kimbanguist Centenary Temple in Lubumbashi is one of the venues often used for ecumenical gatherings. The EJCSK has only two “temples” in the DRC, one in N’kamba and the other in Lubumbashi. The one in N’kamba is associated with the prophet’s place of birth and the beginning of his ministry, whereas the one in Lubumbashi is connected with his place of death and the centenary celebrations of the church.

The rest of the EJCSK's church buildings are called chapels. All these meeting places are consecrated as 'holy ground' and whenever approaching or entering a temple or chapel people have to take off their shoes. These buildings may not be sold to another church or rented out at all, but they may be enlarged when necessary. There are church facilities built for conferences and seminars, which are rented out to other churches.

Ecumenical meetings convened in Lubumbashi bring together key church leaders from different church denominations – Catholics, Protestants, Pentecostals, Independent Churches like the Kimbanguist church, and many others.

Jageneau (2006:53) reports that the Kimbanguist church was admitted as a member of the World Council of Churches in 1969. It became a member of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in 1974. Its membership of these two bodies has given it credibility in the society. However, in the recent past concerns have been raised by the Roman Catholic Church about some doctrinal issues in the Kimbanguist church, suggesting the breaking of ecumenical links with the EJCSK.

3.3.6 Department of Education

Alluding to mission models in African independent churches, and the Kimbanguist church in particular, Hesselgrave (1978:321) believes that education is one of the most prominent aspects of the propagation and continuation features of Kimbanguism. According to Hesselgrave, there seem to be three reasons why educational institutions are established:

First, they inculcate the precepts of faith as propagated by Kimbanguism in the coming generations of young people. Second, schools train ministerial and missionary staff. The rapid development of the Kimbanguist University, theological seminaries, and colleges are good examples. Third, schools are used as a means of mission outreach in target areas. They are viewed as centres for leading people to Jesus Christ.

Hesselgrave (1978:321-322) is of the opinion that the most important kind of education for the propagation of faith in this church (and other AICs) takes place in the

homes of believers, and in their churches or small group meetings. He regards these as the places where the kind of instruction occurs that is really basic to growth. He may well be correct in this regard, but it will take much empirical research before one can make out a conclusive case for this. What *is* true is that the EJCSK deploys a huge amount of time, energy and people in a formal education programmes consisting of numerous primary and secondary schools, skills training centers, colleges, and universities.

We also need to mention that the Kimbanguist church's involvement according to Asch (1978: 188-191) was a reaction to a social problem among its members. During the (late 1960s) Kimbanguists were not allowed to attend mission schools and hospitals because they were considered as members of a protest movement. Hence the church got involved in social kind of projects to enhance the lives of its followers. This explains why the EJCSK has so many schools.

The Department of Education has four objectives according to the EJCSK (1997:19):

- to provide education to the public in line with the Kimbanguist Christian doctrines;
- to work toward the implantation of national education programs;
- to contribute to the creation of learning institutions in the country starting from pre-school to the university level; and
- to look after all learning Kimbanguist institutions in the nation.

The Constitution (EJCSK 1997:19) shows that by providing education the church will be able to contribute to the training of cadres or personnel who will contribute to integral national development. The department runs a good number of educational institutions in the context of Lubumbashi: two primary schools, three secondary schools and some skills training centres. Teachers and students are drawn from all church denominations within the community. But these schools are built by the EJCSK with the double aim of evangelizing and raising funds for the running of the church. WCC (1967:35) reports that since 1963 Kimbanguist schools have been subsidized by the government. Special emphasis in these schools is put on Kimbanguist catechism as a way of leading teachers and students to salvation. Booklets on Kimbanguist catechism are given to various teachers as part of their didactical material.

Non-Kimbanguists teach this like any other religious material but teachers who are members of the Kimbanguist church use this opportunity to recruit new members for the church. This gives expression to the third reason mentioned above for establishing schools within Kimbanguism: schools are means for mission outreach.

3.3.7 Department of Social Welfare

Asch (1978:188-191) gives a brief historical background to the social engagement of the Kimbanguist church in the Congo. In the late 1960s the Kimbanguist church decided to get involved in the socio-economic issues of the country. Its aim was to establish a mode of community life that responded in a holistic way to the moral and social needs of its members. But another motivating factor was to respond to the exclusion of its members from the established mission churches' schools and health facilities as mentioned under 3.3.6 section above.

Faced by the challenge of funding these new institutions the Kimbanguists, unlike the Catholic and Protestant churches who received funding from developed countries, came up with a fund-raising strategy called *Nsinsani* (special offering) every Sunday. So the second part of each church service is consecrated to fund-raising from members. A targeted amount of money is announced each Sunday and all members give sacrificially to meet that target. The raised money assists in funding different church projects, *Nsinsani* has continued since then up to the modern days in all Kimbanguist churches.

Since the official recognition of the church by the state (see Chapter two), Kimbanguists have been free to attend any education institution and health facility. But the church's social commitment has now been extended to all people in the community. Rather than being merely a means of responding to a social crisis in the church, the social welfare department has become a means for helping the community at large, while attempting to draw new people to Jesus Christ. Martin (1975a:28), for example, shows how the social involvement of the church has played an important role in evangelism. Through the various social programs of the church many have found Kimbanguism to be a caring church and have consequently become members. Silu (1977:73) adds:

Kimbanguists argue that pending the setting up of the kingdom of God, one has no right to stand arms folded. On the contrary, one has to fight strongly with a view to the changing of the socio-economic order which hinders the human being in his search for the fullness of his humanity. Moved by Kimbanguist theology, which demands that body and soul be cared for on an equal footing, Kimbanguists have undertaken to carry out projects of social development conceived and financed by themselves with a view to improving the living conditions of the people.

According to the Constitution (EJCSK 1997:34-35), the goal of this department is to contribute to the improvement of the social conditions of Kimbanguist members and the public in general. These social conditions include the improvement of health facilities (see Department of Health), education facilities (see Department of Education) and shelter to the people. Other functions of social welfare include: reintegrating vulnerable youth and women in the society, looking after disabled persons in social centres, and family care.

The poor and the vulnerable in society are taken care of. Widows, orphans and disabled persons are looked after by the church under this department. During my research visit in June 2007, I met two families who are not Kimbanguist members, who were being looked after by the church. The main church in the town centre of Lubumbashi has provided shelter to these families within the church premises. These social centres receive material and financial support from the church and from other non-governmental organizations for administrative purposes. Workers work on a voluntary basis, so they have other jobs or sources of income to provide for their families.

To end this section, let me point out in summary that the activities of the Kimbanguist church in Lubumbashi are evident through the work of its various departments. Each of them is led by qualified personnel working on a voluntary basis. The methods and strategies used by different departments in implementing the goals and objectives are at the same time some of the missional models used by the church in the area.

3.3.8 Kimbanguist Commission for Peace, Justice and Care for creation

The work of this commission is a continuation of Kimbangu's fight against injustices, racism and segregation as reported in Chapter 2. If at the beginning the founder did it alone, in this part of the work, the commission for peace and justice takes care of this aspect of the EJCSK mission. This commission is one important tool the Kimbanguist Church is using in Katanga to bring change in the community. In the following paragraphs, I will try to give a brief background to the commission, its objectives and methods of work. Data in this section come from the Constitution (EJCSK 2005b:1-5).

The commission started in June 1995 as a response to injustice and abuse of human rights in Congolese society. Kimbanguists believe that injustices started in the days when Kimbangu was arrested and have continued to the present time. As a way of addressing these abuses, the Kimbanguist church established its Commission for Peace and Justice.

The main objectives of the commission are pastoral and educational in nature. It also aims at defending human rights. This Kimbanguist organ is not a political group but a non-partisan wing that aims at reminding Christians of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, inviting them to respond to all sorts of human rights abuses by basing their actions on the non violent principles of Kimbanguist beliefs and practices.

Akiele (1998/99:205) points out that the Kimbanguist church promotes love, peace, non-violence, justice and harmony among human beings. It is against racism, tribalism and all sorts of discrimination. Men and women are regarded as equal in ministry and in society. The church demands strict respect for human rights. Political activities are prohibited when not supporting government. However, the church respects the established authorities, quoting Romans 13:1-2: "There is no authority except from God and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed".

The ideology of 'loyalty to the state' referred to by Akiele comes from the official church position toward 'church and politics.' The official declaration made by Joseph Diangienda after the independence of the Congo (in the 1960s) states how

Kimbanguists ought to relate to the state. Martin (1975b:122f) describes the EJCSK position on church and state in these terms: In its public attitude towards politics and state authority, the church cannot deviate from the principle voiced by Christ himself, 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's'. Following this command, the Kimbanguist church is careful not to interfere directly in problems which are the responsibility of secular government. This does not mean that the church is silent on matters of injustice or that it fails to draw up guiding principles for the conduct of its members as citizens of the state. It does have "guiding principles" based on the teaching and heritage of the founder, the prophet Simon Kimbangu. Martin (1975b: 123) reports:

The EJCSK is against every political, economic or social ideology, doctrine or theory which denies God as the source of life and human progress. The believer of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth through the prophet Simon Kimbangu can not spread or accept an ideology, doctrine or theory on which a political, economic or social system is based which seeks to explain the historical development of the world without reference to the activity of God.

These principles show that the church is opposed to all kinds of atheistic thinking and influence. Furthermore, Kimbanguists members are bound to fulfill their civic duties according to the law of the country in which they reside, and support the government of the day and its programmes. With reference to this principle, Katshiji (1998 :6) comments that «En vertu de ce principe, les Kimbanguistes payent l'impôt, respectent l'emblème et l'hymne nationale, et font le service militaire, ils professent la non-violence». [In line with this principle Kimbanguists pay taxes to the government, respect the national flag and sing the national anthem, do military service and profess non-violence].

In addition, the EJCSK considers the application of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in all countries appropriate and necessary, especially in relation to the fundamental human liberties. The church prohibits its members from getting involved in controversies on denominational issues and believes that all Christian denominations are moving towards the same aim, namely to serve God in the interests of humanity. This statement is a proof of the ecumenical spirit that prevails among Kimbanguists. Lastly,

the EJCSK wishes that among citizens of all countries a sense of political and civil responsibility be developed with a view of bringing people closer to one another.

There is need to mention that these guiding principles show to some extent a positive development in the EJCSK, where issues of politics are concerned. The early history of Kimbanguism shows a totally negative attitude towards the state (colonial government) as recorded by Rabey (2003:32-34); though that attitude was justified by the oppressive measures that the Belgian authorities used toward indigenous people (See Chapter 2).

The activities of the Commission of Peace and Justice in Lubumbashi include the following: To educate Kimbanguists on issues of human rights and civic responsibilities, to educate Christians and non-Christians on good governance, to defend the human rights of Kimbanguist members and that of the needy in society, to lobby for marginalized groups, to defend children's rights and for the promotion of gender equality in the society. The commission offers these services free to the community: civic and political education, human rights education, peace and reconciliation, humanitarian and development actions. It seems that this church feels deeply responsible for the nation and for the civic society in which it exists. It therefore struggles hard for social justice and peace. However, it takes care not to interfere with the responsibilities of the secular authorities. This arm of the Kimbanguist church works in conjunction with other non-governmental groups from other sister churches and international organizations such as: the International Federation for Human Rights, Entraide Missionnaire du Canada, and the Ligue des Droits et Libertes du Canada. The Commission is represented within the Kimbanguist church from the national to the township level and its work seems to be appreciated by the people in the area. From the interviews I had in June 2007, people testify how the commission represented them in legal matters and helped them to get acquitted. It also educated the EJCSK members on electoral matters and they actively participated in the past Presidential, Parliamentary and Provincial (governors) Elections.

3.4 Mission strategies and methods

Having approached Kimbanguist mission so far in this chapter from the point of view of the formal structures and departments set up by the EJCSK to embody its mission in society, I devote the last section of the chapter to a discussion of a number of more generic mission methods. Bevans (1992:26) defines the concept model/method-in the sense that it is most used in theology or missiology as a theoretical model. It is a “case” that is useful in simplifying a complex reality, and although such simplification does not fully capture the reality, it does yield knowledge of it.

In this section the terms method, model and strategy are used interchangeably to refer to ways or approaches used by the EJCSK in doing mission in the context of Lubumbashi. A number of mission methods have already been discussed under the different church departments discussed so far. However, I will consider some other models in this section. The WCC (1967:35) has this to say regarding the Kimbanguist church mission strategies: “Preaching, evangelism, healing, education, cultural development and non-violence – these are ways in which the Kimbanguist church strives to bear witness to its faith and to serve Christ, with brotherly fervor”. These methods are used beside the models used by the first missionaries from the West when they came to Africa, namely the provision of health services, basic education, economic activities and many others.

3.4.1 Preaching

First, the followers of Simon Kimbangu believe in effective preaching as a missional method. True evangelization requires that the preacher announces and explains the name, teachings, life, promises, reign and mysteries of Jesus Christ and that of Papa Simon Kimbangu to non-Christians. In its preaching the church is puritan (emphasis on the purity of life, holiness), this is in accordance with the prophet (Kimbangu) who stressed the importance of practical conduct rather than of dogma. For more details on Kimbanguist preaching the reader is referred to Chapter 2.2. Consequently the church is categorically opposed to all practices of sorcery and fetishism; it insists on pure morals, prohibits dancing and smoking, eating pork or drinking alcohol. The church’s prohibition of these vices is in accordance with the EJCSK moral code prohibitions. Akiele (1998/99:201) lists the following as prohibited practices in the church: Kimbanguists are not allowed to be polygamists, smoke or take illegal drugs, consume any alcoholic

beverages, use divination, or consult astrologists. These moral codes promote purity in the church and in the lives of individual Kimbanguist members.

3.4.2 Personal evangelism

Second, personal evangelism is more appreciated than mass ‘crusades.’ Kimbanguists do not hold crusades; they argue that Jesus Christ never held crusades but evangelized personally, reaching people on an individual basis. They use their personal relationships to communicate the message. Here they would find support in Hesselgrave’s (1978:320) comments on person-to-person witness in African religious groups. Hesselgrave thinks that the most important model of mission in the Kimbanguist church is face-to-face communication. He affirms the studies he conducted would indicate that there is no substitute for this – no buttons to press, switches to pull, or surrogates to send. Either ordinary believers win others by means of person-to-person witness, or the church (movement) is not likely to grow.

3.4.3 Life testimony

Third, life testimony is another method in Kimbanguist mission. Tshauta (2004b:84-85) points out that living according to Christian principles whenever and in whatever circumstances is one way of drawing non-Christians to come to faith. Allowing the gospel to be seen through the believer’s daily life is one way of announcing the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ and in Papa Simon Kimbangu. This is in line with 2 Corinthians 3:2-3: “You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men....”

3.4.4 Christian literature

Fourth, Christian literature has an important place in EJCSK mission. Kimbanguists are of the view that using means such as books, pastoral letters, journals, tracts, calendars, and photos constitute an effective means of evangelization in this modern era. Alluding to the EJCSK methods of mission, James (1966:28) reports that the church leadership regularly distributes material in French, Kikongo, and Lingala and many other local languages to explain Kimbanguist aims, beliefs and views.

Hesselgrave (1978:321) points out that the content of these publications intimately relates the teachings of the movement to the contemporary concerns of society. In other words, religious teachings are not left floating in the air, somehow removed from the common concerns of people who live in the world. In the case of the Kimbanguist church in Lubumbashi, these publications are utilized by members in their person-to-person contacts and their content becomes the subject matter for discussions in groups or public forums.

Pastoral letters are mainly written by the LR, with the aim of strengthening the faith of Kimbanguists in the world, reminding them of the church's mission and beliefs. The most treasured pastoral letter was written by the late head of the church, Diangienda Nkutima, in 1992. The object of that letter was "prayer and fasting" as stated in the Book of Isaiah 58:6-7, 13-14. In his analysis of this passage from Isaiah 58 the head of the church looks at a number of issues in relation to prayer and fasting. The first area tackles the *loosing of the bonds of wickedness*. This implies abandoning sorcery or witchcraft practices. Diangienda in his letter calls Kimbanguists to do away with mystical religions such as magic, rose cross, talisman, maikari and many others secret movements, using the following Scripture passages: Deut. 18:9-12, Lev.19:26-28, 20:1-7, Exod. 20:3-5, Mt.6:24, Col. 3: 5-6, Mc. 3:3, 5:12. He calls the members to divorce with evil spirits, avoid abortion, adultery, prostitution and many more. The second aspect in this teaching is *the loosing of the oppressed* need to be liberated. Young men and women who have no jobs, those who are hungry and naked need to be looked after, debts owned to people have to be paid for one's prayers to be heard, referring to Cl. 3:4-7, Mt. 3: 8, Dt. 18:10-11, Mt. 19:19, Jm 1:6, Rm.13:8.

The pastoral letter also calls for the sanctity of Sabbath (Sunday). Kimbanguists are called not to do any work on Sunday. On the basis of Ex. 20:8-11 it is seen as a day of rest on which everyone is to glorify God (Jr 17: 21-24, Nh.10:32). *Sanctifying the Sabbath day* in this pastoral letter means not doing any work on Sunday, going to church for worship the whole day, avoiding quarrels on such a day.

A good analysis of Diangienda's letter to his followers reveals a strong social, economic, and political emphasis in EJCSK mission. Mission according the

Kimanguists is social action for justice. To establish justice according to Is.58, Kimanguists are called to engage in resisting and separating themselves from all sorts of injustices in the society.

The oppressed need to be liberated spiritually through exorcism but also socially, economically and politically. Socially the church gets involved in social issues affecting people's lives, as described under various church departments, and strives to improve people's lives. Economically, the EJCSK is involved in job creation through its various developmental programmes as explained above under the economic department. Politically, the church fought colonial oppression in the past and has continued to participate in the political life of the country in an advisory way on national matters. The church commitment to issues of justice and good governance is also made possible through the peace and justice commission of the EJCSK. With regard to the church relationship with president Mobutu and his regime, Martin (1975b: 126-127) reports that because Simon Kimbangu was praised by certain Zairian politicians as a national hero, the EJCSK was open to the temptation to become the state church in Zaire. But the leaders were categorically against this. The church could not be dependent on the state it would no longer be in a position to raise its prophetic voice.

However, Mobutu and Kimbangu shares the same tribe, they are both from ba Kongo people. This links made it easier for Mobutu to identify with the Kimbanguist church and make it his place for worship. Not only did Mobutu attend this church but also his surrounding and high ranked official in his government including the army. With such a relationship the EJCSK and Mobutu's regime almost worked hand in hand. This justifies the silence of the EJCSK voice toward to the dictatorship period of president Mobutu. But currently, the church is involved in political issues through its commission for peace and justice not directly but indirectly. The different objectives of this commission, stated above, show how the church carries out social actions for the establishment of justice in the country.

Kimanguists also publish calendars with the picture of Simon Kimbangu on it. Photo's of the holy family are found in all Kimanguists' homes. The term 'holy

family' is used by Kimbanguists to refer to the founder's family.⁹ They are used as a means of attracting visitors to inquire about the Kimbanguist church. This feature is similar to the use of photos in the Roman Catholic Church (of various saints – biblical and others).

3.4.5 Healing

Healing of the sick and setting captives free (this includes exorcism and a political dimension) is a common practice in the church. Michael (1984:207-208) points out that the ministry of healing plays a central role in the EJCSK's life. This is one aspect of mission that was very strong in Kimbangu's ministry as described in Chapter 2.3.3 and 2.4. Two items are used in the healing process: holy water and holy soil from N'kamba. People are asked to drink the water or to wash in it to get healed. Devout Kimbanguists always have small bottles of holy water in their pockets or purses.

This church considers the body to be just as important as the soul; no clear distinction is drawn between the spiritual and the secular, between social and spiritual life. The healing of the sick therefore plays an important role, as it does in the Gospels, but prayer, the laying on of hands and the use of holy water from the spring at N'kamba, are practiced in all simplicity, in a good atmosphere.

The more charismatic form of healing – the healing of the sick, exorcism or deliverance of people from demons and witchcraft, which began in the life of Simon Kimbangu – is continued exclusively through the office of the spiritual head of the church. He does this during his various missionary trips within and outside the country. Water from the source at N'kamba is bottled and shipped to all the church's branches where it is used in rites of blessing, healing, and purification (washing after being prayed over). The use of water in the EJCSK dates from the time of the prophet himself. This is what I was told during my July 2007 research trip: "Water from N'Kamba is holy; every time a person needed healing from Papa Simon Kimbangu, he ordered the sick person to go and wash in the water of the N'kamba River. Up to this day this water continues to

⁹ The holy family is composed of Simon Kimbangu himself, His wife Maman Mwilu Marie and their three sons – Diangienda, Dialungana and Kisolekele. Photos are found not only in homes but also in offices where Kimbanguists work.

heal, purify and sanctify.”¹⁰ Kimbanguists believe that water from N’kamba has power to heal, cast out demons, and protect them from traditional diviners, among many other uses. I had opportunity during my research to see more than four of the Kimbanguists I interviewed having bottles of holy water with them.

3.4.6 Kimbanguist diaspora

Another dimension of Kimbanguist mission is the role played by immigrants from the DRC to other parts of the world. The Kimbanguists make use of their members who relocate to other countries in Africa and beyond to start new churches. This method has helped the church to spread to many neighbouring countries. Kimbanguists do not join other churches where they move to; instead they invite others to join their church. During one of my research trips I asked a number of Kimbanguists why the immigrants were not joining other churches. I was told: “They do this in order to preserve their faith and propagate their religion.”

3.4.7 Mass media

As mentioned before, the Kimbanguist church utilizes choir groups, special retreats and other innovative means to propagate their beliefs. Drama groups also seem to help the Kimbanguist church in its evangelistic efforts in the city. The church has drama groups with good actors who perform plays with Christian messages in public places and these are effective mission strategies. But more important than these approaches and in addition to person-to-person witness, there is also the effective use of the media, printed and unprinted, for evangelism. The favorable mass media exposure of the Kimbanguist church greatly enhances the possibility of growth. With the recent mass media development in Lubumbashi and the Congo as a whole, the Kimbanguist church makes use of media in two ways: by drawing the attention of the secular Congolese media to the Kimbanguist church and by developing its own publications.

3.4.8 Mobilization for public witness

Another striking form of public witness is public marching, while wearing distinctive uniforms. Kimbanguists have special days of the month when they march for

¹⁰ « l’eau de N’kamba est une eau bénite, chaque fois qu’une personne demander guérison à papa Simon Kimbangu, celui-ci l’ordonnait d’aller se baigner dans l’eau de N’Kamba, jusqu’a ce jour cette eau continue a guérir, purifier et sanctifier »

the whole day in different townships of Lubumbashi, wearing their uniforms. These marches are conducted on special days for the church, especially during the church anniversary day (on 6 April every year). The main objectives are to exteriorize the joy of Kimbanguist members and celebrate their victory, as they remember the times when the EJCSK was not allowed to hold public church services.

The colour of their uniforms is green and white. Green is a symbol of life and white of purity of heart. During these marching days Kimbanguists sing and dance to the glory of God¹¹. These marches are also used as strategies for membership recruitment. At the same time they play a role of reminding the general population of the presence of Kimbanguism in the area. It is believed within the Kimbanguist circles that many people have joined the church through these marches.

Kimbanguists also use funeral and wedding times in their members' families as opportunities to reach out. Whenever a Kimbanguist member loses a family member, the church takes care of everything at the funeral house, including buying the coffin and securing the burial place. During wedding ceremonies, the church provides all that is necessary for the new couple to start their own family life: basic furniture from the kitchen to the bedroom is provided by fellow members, as part of the church members' responsibility.

All devout Kimbanguists wear badges with the photos of the spiritual head of their church as an act of public witness. During my research trips I interacted with members wearing badges of Simon Kimbangu, Joseph Diangienda, and the current head of the church, Simon Kimbangu Kiangani. Whenever they are asked whose photo it is, Kimbanguists make good use of the opportunity to explain to outsiders the history of Kimbanguism and its mission.

Tshauta (2004a:84-85) reports that fellowship meals in the form of dinners are organized by the EJCSK, to which non-Kimbanguists are also invited. Whilst eating,

¹¹ « Chaque fois qu'il y a culte dominical ou fête anniversaire, objectif des défilés, extérioriser la joie, aussi signe de victoire. » [Every time that there is a Sunday worship or anniversary celebration, the purpose of the marching is to express joy and as a sign of victory]

presentations are given on the EJCSK and some of the invited guests end up joining the church.

Scientific debates and conferences are organized by the church in institutions of higher learning on different topics related to the life and work of Kimbanguism or its founder. These events draw the attention of scholars who want to learn more. When I visited Lubumbashi in June 2007, there was a series of public debates, organized by the Kimbanguists, on the personification of the Holy Spirit in the person of Simon Kimbangu.

The church has also built guest houses for visitors, both Kimbanguists and non-Kimbanguists, in different local churches. Visitors from far away without a place to sleep are given room free of charge in these guest houses, on a short stay basis. Such gestures of generosity also draw new members to the church.

It is assumed in all the foregoing sections that “lay” members are successfully mobilized for Kimbanguist mission. James (1966:28) observes that active participation of lay people in the church is a feature of most EJCSK congregations. Lay participation and lay responsibility are heavily underlined in the services. The ordinary worshippers have ample opportunity for self-expression in the services and it is constantly impressed upon them that as followers of Kimbangu they are responsible to make personal contributions to advance the mission of Kimbanguism in whatever manner possible.

3.5 Summary

In this chapter we have seen that Kimbanguist mission strategies are diverse, ranging from the various church departments to the activities of local congregations. Church departments are organized so as to meet the needs of the people in the broader society. The strong emphasis on organizational structure is one factor which Hesselgrave (1978:308) regards as vital to the growth of any religious group. The Kimbanguist leadership structures tend to be highly hierarchical, but they seem to serve their purpose – in the sense of carrying on with the church’s mission – as can be seen from its expansion in many parts of the world today. The participation of believers in different church

activities makes the mission of the Kimbanguist church not the business of the clergy but of every church member. All in all, the church uses simple and down to earth methods to lead or bring people to Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER FOUR

AGENTS OF MISSION

4.1 Introduction

To start with, there is a direct link between strategies of mission (Chapter 3) and agents of mission, the main thrust of this fourth chapter. The key mission players within the EJCSK are the ones who are engaged in carrying out various actions using different strategies. In other words, it is not possible to analyze the actions of Kimbanguist mission without a good grasp of the people behind the actions. And the agents of mission cannot be studied outside the framework of their actions. So these two dimensions of the EJCSK mission as observed within this piece of research work are intertwined or have a direct rapport. And once more both the agents and their actions have their inspiration from the EJCSK theology of mission around which Chapter 5 is constructed.

Having said these few words on the connection between mission agents and their actions, let us hear what Kritzinger (2007:6) says on the agents of mission and their impact in the society:

If we wish to make any difference to the societies in which we live, we need to come clear about who we are, where we come from and how we relate to a specific community in which we wish to make a difference. The world does not need hypocrites, who make theologically orthodox or politically correct pronouncements about what is wrong with the world but act like ‘flies on the wall’ who never show themselves, never make themselves vulnerable or accountable to others, after speaking from behind a façade of dogmatic correctness, neutrality or objectivity.

This extract from Kritzinger’s presentation at a Unisa postgraduate seminar provoked those in attendance, the writer included. As we venture to study the mission of religious communities, we are challenged to identify the agents – ourselves included -- who are actively bringing about the changes taking place in society in the name of faith. The EJCSK is an important religious group, whose agents of mission need to be clearly known. Hence, the goal of this chapter is to identify the key mission players in the

Kimbanguist church (in Lubumbashi), and how they relate to their community in order to transform it.

Since the EJCSK is a large African church organization, it is not possible to give an exhaustive list of all agents engaged in its mission. This means that the list of agents to be given below does not represent all key individuals or church groups that play a missionary role within the church. However, the writer contends that the agents discussed in this section are the most important ones in relation to mission in the Katanga region. I will look at five agents, namely the head of the church, the clergy, the chaplains, the youth group and the women association.

4.2 The Legal Representative (LR)

Just as it is the case in other AICs in the region, such as the *Zion Christian Church* in South Africa and Zimbabwe or the *Ibandla lamaNazaretha* of Isaiah Shembe church in South Africa, the head of the church in the EJCSK plays an important missionary role for the whole church, no matter its geographical location. More details on the office of the Legal Representative are found in Chapter 3.2.1.

To begin with, Martin (1975b:149) acknowledges that the spiritual leader is the highest rank in the hierarchy of the Kimbanguist church and all important decisions must be submitted to him for approval. This office is held by Simon Kimbangu's family members, the current leader being Simon Kimbangu Kiangani, a grandson of the prophet. He is referred to in Kikongo as 'Zimvulwala', i.e. bearer of the prophetic and royal staff or sceptre. The term can mean that the prophetic and royal functions are his within the church.

Martin reports that there was a time in 1960 when the spiritual leader was referred to as the Kimbanguist 'Pope' by his enthusiastic followers. This was a passing phase in the life of the church. He is currently addressed as *son Eminence* (his Eminence), a form of address given to him by the state authorities in order to accord him a status similar to that of the highest Roman Catholic dignitaries on official occasions. As the prophet's grandson, Kimbangu Kiangani's role is far more than that of an administrative

head of the EJCSK, and much more than that of a wise spiritual guide, which by all accounts he is.

Molyneux (1990:175) comments that the high respect (even awe) in which the head of the church is held by EJCSK members is explained by their perception of him as forming, while yet visibly and physically present among them, an integral part of the spiritual hierarchy. Their veneration is manifested not merely by their kneeling before him; it is also observable in the crowd of people who are willing to wait many days for an audience with him at his modest residence in Kinshasa, and the manner in which he is spoken of as no ordinary mortal would be. The strong centralized administrative structure of the EJCSK has its spiritual counterpart. For the followers of Kimbangu, their spiritual leader is a 'spiritual facilitator', to whom the needy can go for prayer and blessing in times of illness and unemployment, or when embarking on a new endeavour.

The LR has a twofold office, that of an intercessor and a priest. This office is considered as a spiritual gift and a commission, like that of the Old Testament high priest and intercessor. His decisions are taken seriously by all church members and he is greatly respected because of his position and functions.

EJCSK (2002:10-14) reports that to the nation (Congo as a country), its spiritual leader is a great personality. He is consulted by both the president of the state, his cabinet ministers, members of parliament and high commissioners working in the country. All these dignitaries visit the LR's office in Kinshasa to seek advice and blessing on different matters of national interest. By so doing he plays a special missionary role to the country: As he exerts influence on the highest Congolese leadership, he functions as a prophetic voice for the voiceless and the suffering. He condemns any kind of injustice toward the poor, especial in the area of conditions of services for the civil servants; he also calls for peace in the country. Apart from this public role, the missionary agency of the LR is also expressed through various ministries to all the Kimbanguist members and to the unchurched. Martin (1975a:27) describes the roles of the spiritual leader as follows:

He is a healer, counselor and helper. Everybody has access to his home and office. Kimbanguists bring their non-Kimbanguist friends and neighbors along to see the head of the church so that they too might find help. Thus many are won and begin to attend church services, becoming members and finding their place in one of the many branches of the Kimbanguist church”.

The current spiritual leader fulfils this mandate through mission trips into provinces of the Congo and other parts of the world. Since Lubumbashi is the second largest city in the country, and the site of the former prison of the church’s founder and the cemetery where he was first buried, it is visited by the LR once or twice in a year. During such visits, massive public gatherings take place at the main Kimbanguist temple in town. These meetings bring together Kimbanguists from all classes, but also members of other church denominations, including leaders from other churches who seek advice and blessings from this renowned African church leader. The interviews I had in June 2006 revealed that during such visits several people are healed, delivered and others get converted and join the church.

Pastoral letters from the LR as spiritual leader are sent to all EJCSK churches in the world to strengthen people’s faith and encourage them through different teachings to remain faithful to the Kimbanguist faith. These letters are sent occasionally, as and when the situation demands. The central role of the LR in the mission of the EJCSK can hardly be overemphasized. He is not only a strong spiritual leader as public preacher, healer and adviser, but also an inspiring role model that fills Kimbanguist ministers and members with pride and confidence to emulate him in their own witness and service to society. In all these ways he provides missionary leadership to this growing African independent church in Southern Africa.

4.3 The Kimbanguist clergy

The need for pastoral ministry in the church comes directly from the ascended Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who looks for trustworthy leaders to take care of his flock, as reflected in his command to Peter in John 21:15-18: ‘Feed my sheep’. The training and appointment into ministry for the EJCSK clergy is well outlined in Chapter 3.3.

4.3.1 Gifts and conditions

Katshiji (2004:1-7) argues that for one to be a pastor or servant of God (*Mosali ya Nzambe* in Lingala and *Serviteur de Dieu* in French) in the church founded by Simon Kimbangu, he/she must have certain gifts, as recorded in Romans 12:6-7 ‘... prophecy, exhortation, teaching...’ and each is encouraged to exercise his or her gift. Besides having the gifting, there are certain conditions that need to be met, as explained to me in an interview by the provincial church representative. The following list of conditions must be met by a prospective pastor. He or she must:

- be born again (this is explained in Chapter 5 under theological reflection),
- be obedient,
- have recognition from the church,
- live a holy life,
- be knowledgeable of God’s Word (2 Tim 3:16-17),
- be capable of enduring overnight prayers, and
- have a strong faith in God.

4.3.2 Missionary functions

Katshiji (2004) describes three missionary functions expected of the clergy: First, *Amener les âmes à Dieu* [leading souls to God]. This is the work of all Christians, but, the EJCSK clergy are called to be an example in winning people for Christ, starting from his/her own household, to the ends of the earth. The author proposes four methods used by the pastor in bringing people to the Saviour: Announcing the good news from the pulpit, speaking to people individually, visiting the sick, distributing church literature (tracts, photos, images, pamphlets).

Second, *Bâtir la communauté* [building the community]. The pastor has the function of building the Christian community in a humble spirit, able to interact with people well, have love toward the sheep, and keep abreast with current affairs in society.

Third, *Officier au cultes* [officiating at church services]. In Sunday services the clergy have to respect or keep time. The starting time and ending time depend on how

the Holy Spirit leads his people on that particular day, but most church services are very long (up to 18 or 19 hours). The clergy lead in songs/hymns, read the Scripture of the day (the EJCSK follow a sort of lectionary with prescribed readings for most Sundays) lead in prayers and preach the Word.

Prayer meetings are also conducted under the supervision of the pastor, these meetings are supposed to be alive and every one to be sensitive to the voice of God to the assembly. Other pastoral functions include: celebrating the Lord's Table (this is just a prescribed function for the pastor but the Lord's table is celebrated only by the LR), administering, blessing marriages and children, exorcism and healing of the sick. Referring to the roles of the pastor in the church, Diangienda (1984:273) writes:

[The pastor] is both a guide and a servant of the community. In this sense s/he carries on the mission entrusted to the apostles by the Lord Jesus Christ. Through prayers and the teaching of the word of God, the pastor brings the community into a relationship with the Lord. S/he is the counsellor and spiritual inspiration of the community, contributing to resolve the moral, spiritual and social problems confronting individuals and the community. S/he serves the sacrament (own translation).¹²

The missionary (or "apostolic") role of the clergy is clearly stated by Diangienda (1984:280) when he indicates that they are "carrying on with the mission of Jesus Christ through coordinating different church programs and activities." This agrees with Silu's (1977:72) view of the pastor's role in the EJCSK, providing the dynamism for the activities and efforts of the congregation in a relevant and creative way. The pastor is not really the social or spiritual elite. The Holy Spirit reserves the choice of whom to use, so the clergy have no evangelistic monopoly.

Diangienda (1984:280) adds that, without underrating the ministry of the clergy, the Kimbanguist theology in matters of mission or evangelization affirms that every Kimbanguist member is a missionary. The propagation of faith in Jesus Christ cannot be left to the clergy. Whoever has received the light of Christ is under obligation

¹² « Il est à la fois guide et serviteur de la communion, en ce sens c'est lui le continuateur de la mission que Jésus confia aux apôtres. Par la prière et l'enseignement de la parole de Dieu, il met la communauté en rapport avec le Seigneur. Il est le conseiller et l'animateur spirituel de la communauté. Il contribue à la solution des problèmes moraux, spirituels, voir sociaux auxquels sont confrontés les individus et la communauté. Il donne les sacrements ».

not to keep this light to her/himself, but to pass it on to those who have not yet received it.

Conditions of service for Kimbanguist clergy (according to more than ten pastors I interviewed) emphasize adherence to the following passages of Scripture:

Matthew 19:29: And everyone who has left houses or brothers, sisters or fathers, mothers or children, or farms for my name's sake, will receive many times as much and will inherit eternal life.

I Timothy 3: 13: For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves high standing and great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

I Timothy 5:17: The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching.

The interpretation of these passages in Kimbanguist circles emphasizes the spiritual reward the clergy will gain, such as eternal life, high standing in matters of faith and honour from church members. This means that the Kimbanguist clergy seems not to put much emphasis on material rewards or honour. Tshauta (2004a:7) says:

The love that the faithful have for and show to the pastor is a great prize. It is one of the things which a leader cannot buy with money. It is a great reward. The pastor has honour and glory in the Kingdom of God and the glorious crown is also one of his/her rewards.¹³

Kimbanguist pastors have the duty of providing for their families and working with their hands to do so. The church acknowledges the possibility for a pastor to suffer, but encouragement is given to focus on the future glory and the reward to come. Romans 8:18 is used to justify the system: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed to us".

The EJCSK attitude toward ministry and the support of the clergy is really challenging, especially in the context of Lubumbashi. With the current post-war economic crisis in the

¹³ « L'amour que les fidèles ont et manifestent pour le Pasteur est un grand prix. C'est l'une des choses que le responsable ne peut pas acheter avec l'argent. C'est une grande récompense. Le pasteur a l'honneur et la gloire dans le royaume de Dieu et la couronne glorieuse est aussi l'une de ses récompenses ».

DRC, it is not all that easy for people to work as volunteers, considering that enough funds are raised by the church every Sunday (through the *Nsinsani*).

Lastly, the clergy in every local chapel keep the following administrative documents as recorded by Tshauta (2004a:7) and confirmed by my personal interviews in July 2007:

Christian register book, new converts register, baby dedication register, marriage register, deaths register, pastoral trips register, farming register, *Sinsani* register, expenditures book, births register, church certificate of registration, cash book, receipt book, church properties book, disciplinary cases book, visitors book, church movements register, register for disabled persons, and widows and orphans register.

A critical analysis of these administrative documents reveals how a local EJCSK congregation runs its affairs. There seems to be accountability in matters pertaining to finances, properties and membership. The new converts, disabled persons, widows and orphans are part of the local churches' priorities, a sign of commitment to the poor.

Without a doubt the Kimbanguist clergy deserve to be called agents of mission, at least from what has been stipulated in this section. The next paragraphs will focus on the ministry of chaplains, youths and women in the EJCSK.

4.4 Kimbanguist Prisons and Hospital Chaplain ministry [Aumônerie Kimbanguiste des Prisons et des Hôpitaux]

Prison and hospital chaplains are important mission agents within the EJCSK. Unlike other groups that operate from within the church, this team works outside the church, in prisons and hospitals. The Kimbanguist church has two groups of chaplain teams: a) University and army/police chaplains, and b) Prison and hospital chaplains. The former group has established Kimbanguist branches within their areas of operation (University or army/police camps), but the latter group simply works as an outreach wing for the church among people who are in custody or hospitalized. The focus in this part of the research will be to analyze the historical background, organization, objectives and methods of work of the prison/hospital chaplain ministry within the EJCSK in Lubumbashi.

EJCSK (1992:2-7) reports that the chaplain wing of the church was established in 1992, as a response by the Kimbanguist church to serve and help the neighbours in society; especially those in detention centres and hospitals. The chaplaincy has four main objectives which express its vision:

- to organize and pursue all charitable works, for the benefit of detained people and those who are in health institutions.
- To organize and pursue all activities aimed at evangelizing and educating detainees and the sick.
- To organize and pursue all social works aimed at improving the welfare of the prisoners, the sick, former prisoners and their families.
- To organize and pursue all economic and developmental projects such as agriculture, animal farming, and skill training and health facilities for the good of all people in the community.

There are five areas of operation for the chaplains' team in Lubumbashi: a) Hospital and health centres; b) Prisons and detention centres; c) Refugee and displaced people camps; d) Orphanages; and e) Old people's homes. The activities or programmes of the team are carried out in the community by two secretaries with a team of members. One secretary is in charge of administrative and religious affairs, whilst another secretary takes care of the production services which support the various programmes of the organization. Through the office of the administrative secretary, the ministry offers the following services to the community in the city of Lubumbashi: Social service support, which is engaged in food distribution, clothes distribution, and basic sanitary education in detention centres. I was told during my research tour that all items distributed by the chaplains come from contributions from EJCSK members, well wishers and even members from other church denominations.

Evangelization and counselling service, where the team gets involved in spiritual transformation programmes among prisoners and those in hospital beds. Counseling sessions are conducted with those who need them and God's word is preached to all in these centres (prisons/health). Legal aid service for detained people, in which the team makes use of Kimbanguists who are lawyers to defend the rights of the

detainees and seek for their freedom. Medical and pharmaceutical service, which offers medical services and medicines to prisoners and sick people.

Finally, the social reinsertion service occupies itself with helping former prisoners to be reintegrated into the community after being in detention for many years. This service is offered by giving skills and visiting former prisoners' families

The production secretary takes care of agricultural projects, for example, animal keeping projects that generate funds for the ministry. The group has a number of agricultural centres around Lubumbashi. In short, *L'aumonerie Kimbanguiste de prison et des hôpitaux* is a nation-wide church organization within the EJCSK. It has its head office in Kinshasa and in all provincial headquarters. Its ministry has complemented that of other church organizations in the Katanga province.

4.5 EJCSK Women's Association (*L'association de femmes Kimbanguistes*)

4.5.1 Origin and purpose

The empowerment and care of women has become a major item on many churches' agendas. The EJCSK seems not to lag behind in this area. Bandzouzi (2002:520) argues that the association in other parts of the Congo started in 1965, but in Katanga/Lubumbashi the association was established only in 1968. Most women associations are formed by women themselves, but the AFKI (*Association des femmes Kimbanguistes*) is different. It was reported to me as I interviewed people that the association was started by Diangienda Kuntima, Prophet Simon Kimbangu's son. His aim in forming this organization was to perpetuate the memory of his late mother, Marie Mwilu Kiawanga. She played a key role in the leadership of the church when her husband was arrested in the early days of Kimbanguism. To honour this woman and help women to emulate her work in the church, the Association of Kimbanguist Women (abbreviated AFKI) was created in 1965. All AFKI programmes are done in line with its emphasis as recorded in EJCSK (2001:24-30)

The Kimbanguist woman must follow the example of Maman Mwilu Kiawanga and have to resist every temptation, persevere in prayer and advance the spiritual

level of her church so that she may contribute to the well being of anyone who belongs to it (own translation).¹⁴

4.5.2 Objectives

Zola (1997:4) reports that the women's group in Lubumbashi has six objectives:

- a) The promotion of the emancipation of Congolese women in general and that of the Kimbanguist women in particular;
- b) The fight against illiteracy among women;
- c) Social support to needy women (prisoners, widows, orphans and old people);
- d) To motivate women to venture into income-generating activities such as farming, tailoring and many others;
- e) To create social centres for the promotion of women and girl children, to uphold Christian moral values among women through permanent spiritual sensitization of women;
- f) The most important goal for the AFKI is to empower the family (the basic unit of the Congolese society) through the reinforcement of the role of women who are the educators.

To attain all the goals mentioned above, the association organizes women's seminars, conferences and mobilization campaigns on fundamental life issues. The group is well structured from the national to the village level.

4.5.3 Provincial committee

For the sake of this study, I will only consider its structure at the provincial (Lubumbashi) level. The provincial committee coordinates all the activities or programs of the association as directed by the national women's leadership. In the context of Lubumbashi the groups focuses on the spiritual development of its members as well as their socio-economic development. Many programmes are conducted within the Association. Seminars and training sessions to empower women are also held. This includes the creation of farming centres, and skill training (tailoring, netting, etc.).

¹⁴ « La femme Kimbanguiste doit suivre le modèle de maman Mwilu Kiawanga et doit résister a toute tentation, persévérer dans la prière et faire avancer le niveau spirituel de son église afin que celle-ci procure la paix à quiconque y adhère ».

The Association is led by a team of six leaders in Lubumbashi: a) The chairperson coordinates the activities of the group. She presides over the committee business meetings. She represents the group to other similar organizations. She authorizes all expenditures on behalf of the association; b) The vice-chairperson assists the chairperson in her duties. She manages the members of the association. She is responsible for public relation with the state and ecumenical groups in the area. She is a link person between her group and other groups such as Catholic women group, Protestant women groups and Non Governmental Organizations working with women; c) The counsellor takes care of the moral, social and spiritual life of the members. She educates young women and pastors wives on marriage issues. She advises the committee on any matter and she is the link between the association and the EJCSK church authorities; d) The secretary handles the administrative issues for the group. She functions as the spokesperson of the association; e) The accountant is in charge of the AFKI finances. She works on the group's budget and keeps all financial records; f) The cashier is responsible for the expenditures. She spends money upon instruction from both the chair person and the accountant.

4.5.4 AFKI's role in Kimbanguist mission

The Kimbanguist women association has been instrumental in the mission of the church in three main areas: the improvement of Kimbanguist families, mutual assistance to members, and Kimbanguist church development.

First, in the area of improving family life, the association argues that Kimbanguist families ought to live in harmony, love and collaboration. Kimbanguist families are called to imitate the model of the founder's family life and that of Mwilu (the wife to the prophet). Each woman member is expected to follow and adopt the attitude of the prophet's wife in caring for her children and husband, and seeking to live at peace with the people around them. On Wednesday every week Kimbanguist women gather for teaching sessions that are tailored to meet the needs of their respective families. A number of women I interviewed in June 2006 had this to say on the Wednesday gatherings:

As it is the practice among Kimbanguists, all the women [literally “mothers”] gather every Wednesday and the teaching they are given is to emulate Maman Mwilu Kiawanga, by how they live with their husbands, their children and for harmonious relations in their families (own translation).¹⁵

The goal of these teachings, as testified by EJCSK women in Lubumbashi, is to help them be transformed both spiritually and morally to the image of Maman Mwilu Kiawanga.

Second, the association values mutual support among members. They are given moral, spiritual and financial support whenever needed. Some are given funds to start small businesses, others are sent back to school and still others are assisted materially.

Lastly, AFKI plays a vital role in the development of the EJCSK in Katanga. In the area of material support, the association is called in the Kimbanguist circles as *Soutien de l'église* (the church's support).

This is what the provincial EJCSK representative reported on the work of the women's group when I visited him in November 2006:

The Kimbanguist mothers contribute effectively to the different challenges facing the church. They are called the support of the church. When construction work is going on, they prepare the mortar, transport the bricks ... they contribute with large sums to the realization of projects” (own translation).¹⁶

From what the provincial church leader reports, women participate actively, even in construction projects of the church. Women are also commended for their financial support toward the church's projects. They ensure that enough money is mobilized to realize church programs. Women also used in running church department (see Chapter 3.5) for more details on the work of these departments.

¹⁵ « Comme il est de coutume chez les Kimbanguistes toutes les mamans se réunissent chaque mercredi et les enseignement leur sont donnés pour qu'elles suivent l'exemple de maman Mwilu kiawanga, comment vivre avec leurs époux, leurs enfants et cela pour une bonne harmonie dans leurs foyers ».

¹⁶ « Les mamans Kimbanguistes contribuent efficacement aux différents programmes arrêtés par l'église. Elles sont appelées soutien de l'église. Lorsqu'il y a de travaux de construction, elles préparent le mortier, transportent les briques... elles contribuent avec des gros montants pour la réalisation des projets ».

Zola (1999: 97) points out some of the AFKI realization in material support to the church. They have built a house at the main EJCSK temple in Lubumbashi. They have purchased dozens of mattresses for the church visitors' centre (*Centre d'accueil*). They have also provided many cooking pots and dishes to the centre and donated many sewing machines to the church's social centres.

Spiritually, women have contributed to the growth of the church in two ways: AFKI has been a source of church leadership and a centre of intercession.

An EJCSK (2006a) report in Lubumbashi gives these statistics where women church leaders are concerned: In this province more than 37 women are deacons, more than 30 are catechists and nine women were appointed as pastors (for the first time in Katanga on Sunday 26 March, 2006). Their names are: Kyungu Mujinga Bernadette, Ponyo Sango, Kalombo Nshoshi, Itala, Ntanga Kanku Elisabeth, Kakama Mujinga Angelique, Kakauz, Sompw Mwad, Sunga wa Kalume. AFKI can rightly claim that the number of its members serving in leadership positions contribute to the growth of the church and its mission in the area.

Kimanguist women are also involved in intercessory ministry for the church. They regularly organize fasting and prayers, overnight prayer meetings, spiritual evenings and many more. All these activities make women key contributors to the expansion of Kimanguism and the building up of the Congolese society as a whole. They also use mission strategies listed in Chapter 3.6 in carrying out their actions.

4.6 Kimanguist Youth Association

4.6.1 Origin and character

The term 'Kimanguist youth' designates a young person sharing the Kimanguist faith, based on the teachings of prophet Simon Kimangu and his three sons: Kisolokele Lukelo, Paul Salomon Dialungana Kiangani and Joseph Diangienda Kuntima. Katshiji (2002:2) states that the *Union des jeunes Kimanguistes* (Kimanguist Youth Union) refers to all young people called by papa Simon and who have a missionary vocation. It is a group of young people who are converted, devout, passionate, prepared and ready to serve God with any possible sacrifice.

This youth movement is believed to have started as a response to the revelation the prophet communicated to his son Diangienda. On 4th August 1951 in the town of Kananga (Kasai province, Congo), Kimbanguists believe that Simon Kimbangu had a revelation of a valley filled with young people, confirming their missionary engagement to the EJCSK. This engagement entails tolerance, patience, integrity and love without racial, regional and tribal discrimination.

In 1972 Diangieda mobilized all Kimbanguist youth to organize massive campaigns for spiritual sensitization. Out of these campaigns was born a movement called *Union des jeunes Kimbanguistes*. The main vision of the group is to become a youth platform that enhances the social, cultural, economical and religious integration of young people. This movement is established in all EJCSK churches throughout the country.

4.6.2 Objectives

In the context of Lubumbashi, Katshiji (2002:3) notes four objectives of the youth union: to testify about God's presence, to preach the good news, to be the memory of its community, to become its people and to be the builder of the future. There is need to examine each of these objectives closely.

Kimbanguist youth as witnesses of God's presence: Youths are to represent God through their physical presence. They desire to make God's presence become a reality in various ecclesiastical communities. They are not only witnesses of God's word, to them the word must be actualized, celebrated and inculturated in their own local languages. Biblical passages such as Exodus 33:20 and Acts 2:7-12 are used as basis for this dimension of their mission.

Kimbanguist youths as preachers: During my interviews in July 2007, I was told that preaching within the EJCSK was a reserved domain for the clergy but as time went by youths were given authority to preach the word, both inside and outside the church. This preaching and teaching ministry of the youths is based on Ezekiel 3:8-11

‘Take my word to the rebellious people.’ They are also considered as the prophetic voice of the church or the watchmen for the EJCSK. This role (I was told) is taken from the book of Isaiah 21:6-12: “Go station the lookout and report what you see...” Youths are commanded to report what they see, observe with great attention, shout and watch on behalf of their church. In line with this mission, youths seem to prevent the church from any external and internal attacks. Youths stand in the gap for the church by teaching members on different aspects of the church and helping them prevent outsiders from attacking Kimbanguism. They also fight all sorts of evils among fellow youths at moral, social and religious levels. All immoral conduct is resisted, and injustice, division and tribalism are discouraged amongst young people.

Kimbanquist youths as the memory of their community: This dimension makes youths to be facilitators of the EJCSK in general. It teaches members to understand the church beliefs, philosophy and theology. Young men and women help the members with what they are supposed to believe and practice.

The last goal of the youths is that of initiating new projects within the church. Youths are called to help the church find solutions to many challenges its followers face in the society. Issues of poverty, unemployment, diseases, democracy... are discussed and projects initiated to help Kimbanguists change their community. In my various interviews I was told that youths are really the builders of the future. They play the role of uniting members of different tribes, religions and nations to become members of the same church. In other words, youths in this church promote unity in the church across tribal or regional lines; they are agents of unity for the EJCSK.

A statement given at the closure of a youth conference summarizes this section well (Katshiji 2002:8):

Kimbanquist youths have a delicate mission: a mission of questioning the past, observing the present, and preparing the future. They have a divine mission of revitalization. In a perspective of rebirth (renaissance), as designers of the future, young people should not be satisfied with managing what has been attained already. They have to create, invent, cry out, and become builders of the future, witnesses, everyday prophets ... The mission assigned to the Kimbanquist youth

is to pursue with total commitment the work that the Lord has given them: labouring for the good of those who need us (own translation).¹⁷

4.7 Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the main agents of mission in the EJCSK in Lubumbashi. The LR, as spiritual leader of the church, plays his missionary role by influencing the highest level of leadership in the Congolese government. He does this in his advisory role (when consulted) and in his prophetic and intercessory roles. The clergy are catalysts for all church programmes in local congregations and church departments. Kimbanguist chaplains reach out to people without opportunity to attend church services. Finally, women's and youth groups play their missionary role within the local churches and in the community where they live. In an impressive way the EJCSK succeeds in mobilizing its membership for the work of God's mission on earth.

¹⁷ « La jeunesse Kimbanguiste a une mission délicate. C'est celle d'interroger le passé, observer le présent et préparer l'avenir. C'est une mission divine de revitalisation. Dans une perspective de renaissance, entant que prospecteurs d'avenir, les jeunes ne peuvent se contenter de gérer les acquis. Il faut créer, inventer, crier, être bâtisseurs d'avenir, témoin, prophète du quotidien... la mission assignée a la jeunesse Kimbanguiste, c'est de faire avec dévouement l'œuvre dont le seigneur nous a chargée : travailler au bien de ceux qui ont besoin de nous ».

CHAPTER FIVE

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the agents of mission within the EJCSK. In this particular chapter, I look at the theological basis of the various mission actions carried out by Kimbanguist agents, as described in Chapters 3 and 4. I need to mention that not all the doctrines of this church inspire its mission actions directly, but most of them do, at least indirectly. The key doctrines will receive attention in this chapter, with the specific purpose of exploring the links between doctrine and mission.

Kritzinger (2002:164) writes: “There can be no creative and inspiring mission if we do not return, again and again, to search the Scriptures, to let the searching Spirit take us also into the deepest recesses of the Bible in order to rediscover our mission”. This particular chapter looks at the biblical basis of the Kimbanguist church mission, its theology, and especially the controversial doctrine of the Holy Spirit within Kimbanguism. Issues on how this church interprets biblical texts in and for the context of Lubumbashi will be analyzed; including some considerations on the international conference on Simon Kimbangu in 2006.

With regards to the dimension of theological reflection in the praxis cycle, Kritzinger (2007:8) argues that the question is whether we are doing justice to the wholeness, comprehensiveness or inclusiveness of God’s mission. The true test of mission is not whether Kimbanguists agents proclaim, make disciples or engage in social, economic or political but whether they are capable of integrating all of this in comprehensive or dynamic wisdom.

This line of thought will guide the present chapter. It looks at the biblical and theological basis of mission from the Kimbanguist perspective, asking the question: How does this church respond to the wholeness of God’s mission as revealed in both the Old

and New Testament? Put differently, what energizes the church to venture into social, economical, political and evangelistic actions in the community? How does this church interpret the Bible missionally in the context of Lubumbashi?

The research I have conducted so far suggest that three sources inform the EJCSK theology of mission; namely the Bible itself, the person and ministry of Simon Kimbangu summarized by his mission to the black people of Africa and the fundamental principles and moral codes of conduct.

5.2 The Bible as a source for the EJCSK theology of mission

The first basis of mission for the EJCSK is the Bible, as implied in its by-laws (EJCSK 2007b:4-5):

The Church of Jesus Christ by his special envoy Simon Kimbangu has the following mission: to save souls; to restore man to his original state through the gospel of Jesus Christ, taught and given life by his special envoy Simon Kimbangu; to preach love of neighbours, respect for the commandments and doing of good works; to create, for the expansion of the church, departments, specialized services, movements, associations and other activities compatible with its primary mission, which is evangelization (own translation).¹⁸

The EJCSK mission is also informed by the “Great Commission” given by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19-20. In line with this, Diangienda (1984:287) writes:

Any Christian theology that is not missionary finds itself in a state of disobedience to [the command of] Christ, who has given the apostles [the order] to go into the world and make disciples of the nations. By carrying out this command of Christ, the Kimbanguist church is in favour of missionary action (own translation).¹⁹

¹⁸ « L’Eglise de Jésus Christ sur la terre par son envoyé spécial Simon Kimbangu a pour mission de: sauver les âmes; restaurer l’homme a son état original par l’évangile de Jésus Christ, enseignée et vivifiée par son envoyé spécial Simon Kimbangu; prêcher l’amour du prochain, le respect des commandements et la réalisation des bonnes oeuvres; créer pour son épanouissement, des départements, des services spécialisés, des mouvements, des associations et d’autres activités compatibles avec sa mission première, celle de l’évangélisation ».

¹⁹ « Toute théologie chrétienne non missionnaire se trouve en état de désobéissance vis-à-vis du Christ qui a donné aux apôtres d’aller dans le monde et de faire des nations des disciples. En exécution de cet ordre du Christ, l’église Kimbanguiste est en faveur de l’action missionnaire ».

This quote from Diangienda shows that the motivation to venture into mission among Kimbanguists comes first from the Great Commission. Just as any other church, the EJCSK strives to show obedience to the command given by the Lord of the harvest. Any failure to obey such a command is disobedience, according to Diangienda. This implies that Kimbanguists venture into mission out of obedience to God and his word, with regard to the lost. This biblical motivation to venture into mission is behind the actions of the Evangelism Department, described in Chapter 3.3.1. The department finds its inspiration in this church belief, which explains its engagement in ministries outside the traditional confines of the church, retreats, spiritual evenings, seminars and other forms of evangelistic programmes carried out by the department. It carries out these actions with the aim of fulfilling the Great Commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ. These principles determine the spirituality and maturity of the followers of Kimbangu. They guide their lives and actions within and outside the church. I was also told that this goes back to the founder, Simon Kimbangu, himself who put much emphasis on these three principles. Obedience to the law of God is critical to any Kimbanguist, as it was to the Jews and other Christians e.g. Galatians 6:2, Romans 13:8-10, James 2: 8-13.

The Kimbanguist church also uses the Mosaic Law as described in Ex. 20:1-20 as the basis for its actions. The law occupies a place of importance within the EJCSK in that whenever there is a gathering or church service a portion of Exodus 20 has to be read. I asked one of the key church leaders the reason for this emphasis. The response was that the law is part of the three key life principles for Kimbanguists, namely love, law and works.

5.3 The person of Simon Kimbangu as the source for the EJCSK theology of mission

5.3.1 The mission of Simon Kimbangu

Apart from the Bible, Kimbanguists get inspiration to do mission from the person and life, or simply the mission, of their founder. Akiele (1998/99:199) postulates that:

EJCSK mission is based on the mission given to Papa Simon Kimbangu by the Lord Jesus Christ in N’kamba in 1918. His words were: ‘Simon Kimbangu, you are the one I chose to testify about me and to guide my people on the way of truth and salvation. Don’t be afraid of anything, because I will act through you,

and I will be with you. And the mission is a spiritual wakening and independence of the black people for their access to the new world and heavenly kingdom’.

In other words, the EJCSK considers its mission as a continuation of Kimbangu’s mission – liberating oppressed black people; a mission which led him into much suffering and eventually death.

“The mission and identity of Kimbangu” was one of the papers discussed during the EJCSK 2006 international conference on Papa Simon Kimbangu. Two presenters handled the subject of Simon Kimbangu’s identity and mission, namely Rev Nzakimwena Matondo (Doctor in philosophy) and Rev Zidi Joseph (a doctoral student in history) and members of the EJCSK national executive committee. The EJCSK (2006a:11-12) reports that these learned Kimbanguists took time to present to people both the human and divine nature of Kimbangu. They examined Kimbangu’s early school life, family, religious and ministry life to identify who he really was. His mission was described as that of evangelizing and liberating the people, as he received it from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their reflection centred on the liberating nature of Kimbangu’s mission to the black people in the world. The presenter explained the suffering of black people from its beginnings, and the different forms of injustices that blacks experienced in history. They also showed how and why Kimbangu had to appear amongst the oppressed people to liberate them, interpreting the well-known saying among Kimbanguists: “In every epoch and generation God sends a guide to lead his people” (own translation) [A chaque époque et génération, Dieu envoi un guide pour conduire son peuple].

Their presentation focused on the texts taught by the prophet, especially the parables of the lost sheep that was later found, and of the stone rejected by the builders that became the cornerstone. These are well known biblical parables which Kimbangu taught as they are in the Bible. They also analyzed the prophecies of Kimbangu, particularly “The black man will become white and the white will become black” [“l’homme noir deviendra blanc et le blanc deviendra noir”]: the prophet foresaw a period in the future when Africans who were experiencing oppression would be free or

independent from their colonial masters. This implies that blacks will rule their own countries and have power over the white who will be living in African countries. It is a reversal of roles and power. There was an anti-injustice sentiment during Kimbangu's days as he prophesied, mainly because of the abuse of power and injustices committed by the Belgian colonial rulers. The EJCSK has not forgotten this heritage and has continued an anti-injustice mission in the present DRC and African situation. There is need to mention that the EJCSK has membership from all races in the world.

I need to state that if Kimbangu fought the injustices and the oppression of the black people openly in the formative years of the movement, this mission dimension has changed in recent years. The EJCSK is now engaged in this fight indirectly through its different commissions and church departments. This is so partly because the country lives now in a post-independence era with black people ruling themselves. And the other reason is that the levels of injustices within the country have tremendously decreased, with the advent of a democratic kind of government based on the rule of laws and the respect for human rights. So the church thinks that it is better to teach people about their human rights, encourage them to participate in electing political leaders and supporting the government of the day by paying taxes. By so doing the people are empowered to fight injustices themselves. The church also fights injustices indirectly by giving lawyers to the church members and other people in the community who can not afford paying a lawyer in a court. And sometimes prisoners are also helped by the church to find their freedom through legal procedures. Most of these things are done by the commission for peace and justice.

The personal mission of Simon Kimbangu has become the inspiration for every Kimbanguist to continue the work the founder could not finish. This implies that the person of Kimbangu is central to EJCSK mission; the actions the church members carry out in their community as well as the programmes of EJCSK departments analyzed in Chapter 3.3 find their inspiration in the person and mission of Simon Kimbangu. In his efforts to reach out to his fellow African brothers and sisters with the gospel, he presented a holistic kind of gospel that addressed all aspects of human life. This kind of gospel called for the establishment of various services within the church that could meet the social, physical, material and financial needs of the people in a practical way.

As people accepted Kimbangu's message, they were deprived of government social amenities. In other words, Kimbanguists were rejected as social outcasts and in order to respond to the people's needs church departments were organized. What I am trying to emphasize here is that there is a direct link between Kimbangu's mission and the actions carried out by the EJCSK departments. If Kimbangu was not concerned with people's needs as they came to Jesus through his ministry, departments were not going to be involved in their current actions within the church and the society at large.

The involvement of the church in transformative actions described in Chapter 3 have brought significant contributions to the Congolese society as a whole. The impacts of these actions were developed at a theological conference in 2006. EJCSK (2006a:17) reports that a paper entitled "The Kimbanguist church and society." was presented to the conference by Prof Nkembu Lwamba Brigitte, the head of the Kimbanguist school of theology. She highlighted the contributions of the EJCSK to the qualitative transformation of society by their use of ethical codes – a code of ethics for Kimbanguists, the teachings of God's words and precepts, and (as mentioned before) the three theological watchwords of the church: *bolingo*, *mibeko* and *misala* (love, commandments and works).

She emphasised the indigenous developmental models initiated by her church, which included the *Nsinsani* concept, which are competitive offerings by church members to support development projects, done every Sunday as an integral part of worship. Another contribution of the EJCSK to Congolese society mentioned in the paper was its promotion of women in ministry. The speaker pointed out that this is done in memory of the prophet's late wife, Mwilu Kiawanga, as already discussed. The presentation was concluded by mentioning the developmental assets owned by the Kimbanguist church.

Developmental and economic projects within Kimbanguism are inspired by the belief among the members in the person of Simon Kimbangu as an agent of peace and development. Many actions of the Department of Development and Economics (Chapter 3.3.3) and the Commission for Peace, Justice and Care for creation (Chapter 3.3.8) find

their basis in the person and mission of Simon Kimbangu. The importance of this belief was made clear at the 2006 conference of the EJCSK. The last paper of the conference was entitled “Papa Simon Kimbangu, agent of peace, freedom and integral development for the people.” EJCSK (2006a:17) reports that the topic was presented by Dr Matondo Mbiyeyi, who first gave reasons that hinder development in Africa and perpetuate oppression amongst people, even after many attempts by African governments to initiate developmental programmes. These he named: war and conflict, corruption and injustices and the dependence of most African nations on external grants and loans. He called Africans and the world to emulate models left by Kimbangu – loving one another and developing a non-violent culture. He concluded by arguing that Kimbanguist culture and civilization offered the world hope, freedom and global peace.

My interviews revealed that two Biblical texts are considered within EJCSK circles as the basis for Simon Kimbangu’s mission:

What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost (Luke 15:4-6 NASB).

Then he said to his servants the wedding is ready but those who were invited are not worthy. Go therefore to the main high ways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast” (Matthew 22:8-9 New American Standard Bible).

Akiele (1998/99 :199-200) argues that when these passages of Scripture are analyzed, for Kimbangu the lost sheep which needed to be found was the black race and the highways guests the black people. From Kimbangu’s theology of mission, a day would come when the oppression and humiliation imposed on blacks would be done away with. Such a message to the oppressed black people had the power to draw a crowd, especially in the context of the colonial Belgian Congo and also in the context of Zaïre or the Democratic Republic of Congo – a country that has been through many years of war and suffering.

This is the kind of message the EJCSK continues to preach in the city of Lubumbashi: A message of hope, freedom and healing to the people. People feel

encouraged and inspired by such a theology and by the example of Simon Kimbangu, which leads to the growth of the church.

5.3.2 Kimbangu's divine attributes

Apart from what has been discussed above, Kimbanguist theologians advocate a human kind of Holy Spirit. In his reflection magazine, Lembi Dilulu (1993:23) shows that the Holy Spirit for the Kimbanguist church is not only a human being but specifically a black person, implying Simon Kimbangu. In his effort to clarify this doctrine, Diengienda (1984:305) teaches that the Holy Spirit has come, as Jesus promised, and that in Simon Kimbangu the Spirit has manifested himself. This teaching is further explained by Diengienda (1984:257) as follows:

For the Kimbanguist church the Holy Spirit is far from being a kind of magnetic or electric current which supplies energy for the accomplishment of a given task. God created humankind in his image and according to his likeness. This was confirmed by the fact that in Christ, God has lived here below in human form. From this we can deduce that the third person in God, the Holy Spirit, also bears a human resemblance. The Holy Spirit and Christ are kings clothed with a spiritual body (1 Cor 14:1-44) but existing in the image and likeness of humankind, themselves created in the image of God.»²⁰

This argument by Diagienda means that the Holy Spirit has also incarnated in a human form just as Christ did. The incarnation of Christ is part of the biblical message, and has never been a matter of private interpretation. Both the Old and New Testaments teach this doctrine in clear terms, but on the incarnation of the Holy Spirit nothing has been said, at least from what the Bible reveals. However, the EJCSK has produced a doctrine which can be explained in terms of its own theology.

Officially, it was on 14th June 2003 that Simon Kimbangu Kiangani, the current spiritual head of the EJCSK, declared Simon Kimbangu as the Holy Sprit in a letter addressed to the World Council of Churches. The letter (EJCSK 2007a:10) stated:

²⁰ « Pour l'église Kimbanguiste le Saint-Esprit est loin d'être une sorte de flux magnétique ou électrique qui fournit de l'énergie en vue de l'accomplissement d'une tâche donnée. Dieu a créé l'homme à son image et à sa ressemblance. Cela s'est vérifié par le fait que Christ, dieu a vécu ici-bas sous forme humaine. De cela nous pouvons déduire que la troisième personne en Dieu le Saint-Esprit a aussi une ressemblance humaine. Le Saint-Esprit et Christ sont rois personnes revêtus de corps spirituels (1Cor 15 :1-44) mais existent à l'image et à la ressemblance de l'homme, lui-même créé à l'image de Dieu ».

To make this position official [Simon Kimbangu as Holy Spirit], the spiritual head and legal representative of Kimbanguism, Simon Kimbangu Kiangani, addresses himself to the World Council of Churches with this letter No. 0334/EJCSK/8/C.S/01/12 on 12 June 2003 by announcing it to be known: Simon Kimbangu Holy Spirit.²¹

One of the recommendations from the international conference on Simon Kimbangu- in support of the doctrine, published by the EJCSK (2006b:2), reads: “That Simon Kimbangu be solemnly recognized and universally proclaimed as the special envoy of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Comforter and Paraclete, the Holy Spirit promised by Christ, according to John 14:7).”²² Moreover, in the interviews I conducted in November 2006, some of the answers I got gave the impression that Kimbangu is believed not only to have been powerfully anointed by the Holy Spirit, but that he actually was and is the Holy Spirit.

With regard to Kimbangu’s identity, most of his followers appealed in a stereotyped way to a cluster of biblical texts which concern Christ’s promise of the Holy Spirit to his disciples. Here are some of the texts referred to by my interviewees:

- John 14:16 I will ask the Father, and he will give you another counsellor to be with you forever (proving the continuity between Jesus and Kimbangu);
- John 14:12 He will do even greater works than I have because I am going to the Father (hence Kimbangu’s miracles);
- John 15:26 When the counselor comes whom I will send to you from the Father, the spirit, he will bear witness about me (hence Kimbangu’s constant pointing away from himself to Christ);
- John 10:16 I have other sheep which are not of this fold, I must bring them into the pen also (To support the claim that Jesus had Africans in mind when he sent Kimbangu);
- Deut 18:15 (quoted by Peter in Acts 3:22): The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. (To identify Kimbangu as the one Jesus would send).

EJCSK (2007a:10) states: “For the Kimbanguist church, the Spirit put on concrete human form in the person of Simon Kimbangu on 12 September 1887. And the name of

²¹ Pour officialiser cette position (Simon Kimbangu le Saint Esprit), le chef spirituel et représentant légal du Kimbanguisme Simon Kimbangu Kiangani s’adresse au conseil oecuménique des églises par cette lettre no 0334/EJCSK/8/C.S/01/12 du 12 juin 2003 en proclamant à savoir: Simon Kimbangu Saint-Esprit.

²² « Que papa Simon Kimbangu soit solennellement reconnu et proclamé universellement envoyé spécial de notre seigneur Jésus Christ, consolateur et paraclet, le saint esprit promis par Christ, selon Jean 14:7 ».

‘Kimbangu’, rich in meaning, therefore means the one who reveals the mysteries of hidden things (Daniel 2:22, 28)” (own translation).²³

Kimbanguists hold the view that the Spirit “put on flesh” (or took human form) on 12th September, 1887 and according to Kimbanguists the name “Kimbangu” in Kikongo –the language spoken by an ethnic group in the DRC – means “he who reveals the mysteries of hidden things.” When I asked Kimbanguists during interviews in November 2006 how the Spirit had “put on flesh” they gave the following view, which is also found in Kimbanguist publications (e.g. EJCSK (2007a:8):

To make the teaching on the Holy Spirit easier to understand, the Kimbanguist church uses the incarnation of Jesus Christ as a starting point to conclude to the incarnation of the Holy Spirit, with the purpose of explaining the personification of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament teaches that the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us (Jn 1:14). In this context the mystery means that the Word became one with humanity. But on the question how the incarnation and the fusion of the two natures in Jesus Christ took place, the holy Scriptures speak of a mystery. Why then, can one not believe in the mystery of the incarnation of the Holy Spirit, knowing that the Bible will [also] be incapable of proving this [doctrine]? However, it does teach the necessity of the incarnation of the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:7). For the EJCSK, the incarnation of the Holy Spirit took place in the person of Simon Kimbangu (own translation).²⁴

This official position of the church leadership has given power to the Kimbanguist clergy to teach the doctrine of the Holy Spirit incarnated in Simon Kimbangu to both its members and the Congolese public at large. This is done in different ways through public forums and seminars, although I have not yet had an opportunity to attend such gatherings. The message is also regularly transmitted through the EJCSK newspaper and radio programmes. Commenting on this issue, Akiele (1998/99:196-197) gives four attributes of the prophet that are worth mentioning:

²³ « Pour l’église Kimbanguiste, l’Esprit finit par prendre une forme humaine concrète en la personne de Simon Kimbangu le 12 Septembre 1887. Et le nom de « Kimbangu » riche de sens, signifie donc, celui qui révèle les mystères des choses cachées (Daniel 2 : 22, 28) ».

²⁴ « Pour se faire comprendre davantage, l’Eglise Kimbanguiste se sert de la notion de l’incarnation du Christ pour aboutir a celle du Saint-Esprit aux fins d’expliquer la personnification du Saint-Esprit. Dans le Nouveau Testament, il est écrit : « le verbe s’est fait chair et il a habite parmi nous » (jean 1 :14). Dans ce contexte, ce mystère signifie que le verbe s’est uni à l’humanité. Quant à savoir comment s’est opérée l’incarnation et la fusion de deux natures en Jésus-Christ, les saintes écritures parlent d’un mystère. Comment alors, ne pas croire au mystère de l’incarnation du Saint-Esprit, quand on sait que la Bible serait incapable de le démontrer. Et pourtant, elle témoigne de la nécessité de l’incarnation du Saint-Esprit (Jean 16 :7). L’incarnation du Saint-Esprit, affirme l’église Kimbanguiste s’est réalisée en la personne de Simon Kimbangu ».

- a. Simon Kimbangu is a special envoy from Jesus Christ. This explains why the church is called “the church of Jesus Christ on earth by his special envoy papa Simon Kimbangu” (Special envoy here is with reference to the Holy Spirit as promised by Christ).
- b. Simon Kimbangu has accomplished several acts of power and will forever be among us, invisible or visible human form, through his blood posterity.
- c. Simon Kimbangu reveals the meaning of hidden things, secrets of heaven and the world. This attribute generally belongs to God alone. The main role of the prophet is to announce divine messages. Kimbangu however reveals teachings of Jesus Christ, unmasking the hidden meaning and announcing past events as well as those to come; and here is the omniscience of Simon Kimbangu clearly stated. (This aspect of Kimbangu’s life means a lot to his followers. He is all knowing or omniscient and as such he knows even the destiny of those who follow him and reveals things pertaining to their lives, present and future. This feature of Kimbanguist belief assures the members of security in life and of their destiny).
- d. Simon Kimbangu showed his omnipresence, a power peculiar to God. With his ubiquity, the prophet demonstrates that he is an extraordinary person; far out of the ordinary, in any case a person “beyond the sphere of the prophets and disciples”.

Kimbanguists argue that Kimbangu’s omnipresence is evident through his appearances, since he appears to people as he wills. And those to whom he appears are the most blessed. His omnipresence also implies that he is always with his people. I had an opportunity to visit the prison where Kimbangu had been kept for thirty years in Lubumbashi and observed that people were kneeling down in various places within the site. When I asked why they were bowing down; I was told that wherever the prophet walked during his prison days represents a sacred place for Kimbanguists. I was also told that anyone wanting a quick response to prayer will do well to spend some time in prayer at such a place and he/she can be assured of what he/she prays for. This show the faith of Kimbanguist in the presence of their leader and his ability to answer prayers.

Furthermore, the recent church publication on the divinity of Kimbangu brings out a number of arguments in support of the doctrine. The EJCSK (2007a:10-17) argues that the divinity of its founder is embedded in his calling, ministry, arrest, death, resurrection and ascension. Let us analyze the divinity of Simon Kimbangu as advocated by his followers.

By calling the Prophet, God showed his will and plan to manifest his presence among people in his continuous effort to save humanity. Through his ministry, Kimbangu performed wonders, which convinced his followers that he was the sent one of God according to John 14:12-18, 15:26, 16:13-14.

The events of his arrest and death are recorded in the second chapter of this study, but in this particular section I will look at the teaching of the EJCSK on the resurrection and ascension of Kimbangu. Diangienda (1984:193) reports that, three days after his death, on 14 October 1951, Simon Kimbangu came back to life and appeared to the soldiers who were assigned to guard his tomb. Nyami (200:4), states that Simon Kimbangu never stopped appearing to people, especially to his followers, in bodily form, sometimes as an old man and other times as a young man.

Kimbanguists have strong beliefs in these reports and they are of great significance to them, since they imply that Kimbangu is always with them. In other words, Kimbangu is omnipresent and, if so, then he is divine in nature. The appearances of Kimbangu make him of the same nature as Jesus Christ and capable of meeting the needs of his members. Recently there was a testimony in a public newspaper (*Le Lushois* No 15, Octobre 2007) of a former magician to whom Kimbangu appeared, asking him to quit magic and follow God through the Kimbanguist church. This testimony appeared in a copy of more than four pages reporting on Kimbangu's discussion with the former magician.

The ascension of Kimbangu seems to be different from that of Christ. If Christ was seen by his disciples as he ascended, Kimbangu was seen by the indigenous people in his home village. EJCSK (2007a:16-17) states that the local people who witnessed his ascension included the Baniamikutu, Lengola, and Lokele people, who are found in the bas-Congo province of the DRC.

The fact that the people who witnessed his ascension belong to his own area implies a number of issues. If looked at objectively, it had a sense to his own people who knew how he started his ministry and who had some grasp of Kimbangu's mission. There is here a sense of divine origin and nature. This also brings in a contrast between the

ascension of Jesus and that of Kimbangu; the former was seen by his own disciples to give them a sense of confidence and faith in what he taught them. But the latter ascension was seen by his own people who were in a position to identify him and also believe in his 'divine nature'. It implied that Kimbangu was indeed a sent one of God who had also finished his mission among his people.

To summarize this section on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit within Kimbanguism, let us look at one of the topics discussed during the international conference (EJCSK 2006a). Rev Kongo Dumbi, a lecturer from the Kimbanguist School of Theology (in Lutendele-Kinshasa), spoke on "Simon Kimbangu, a special envoy of Jesus Christ." He elaborated on the topic and argued that Kimbangu is indeed the envoy of Christ Jesus. This he did by using the testimonies of the founder's life, message and wonders. He made a comparison between Christ and Kimbangu, showing that both were persons in the trinity. They both accepted to suffer for the salvation of humanity. The speaker concluded that Christ who sent Simon Kimbangu was fully human and fully divine. In the same way the one he sent – that is Kimbangu – is also both human and divine.

With regard to the matter under consideration, an interview I had on 30th May, 2008 reveals that this belief is also based on a Kimbanguist interpretation of the promise of the Lord Jesus regarding the "Counsellor" in John 14. Kimbanguists argue that Christ promised to send "another of the same kind" (*homogenes* in Greek), which implies that the promised Counsellor would be of the same nature as Jesus. Since Jesus was both God and man, for Kimbanguists the *parakletos* had to be a human being who is at the same time God. According to Kimbanguists, this is no other than Simon Kimbangu – hence his name, "special envoy of Jesus Christ."

For the EJCSK the understanding of Kimbangu as the Holy Spirit contains some aspects of the "messianic" leadership in AICs, where the leader replaces or eclipses Christ by being the "African Messiah" or an "iconic" kind of leadership as discussed by Daneel (1987:179-184), except that Kimbanguists go beyond the 'iconic' aspect to the extent of considering their founder as being equal to the Holy Spirit. This trend is not new, church history shows that even Montanus called himself the Paraclete, reports

Nicole (1996:28). Montanus was a Christian prophet in Phrygia in the second century who identified himself with the Holy Spirit and was regarded as such by his followers. Broadbent (1945:11-20) reports that Montanus prophesied during the persecution period of the church and proclaimed the coming of the Holy Spirit age and that a village of Phrygia will become the new Jerusalem where the millennial rule of Christ would commence. His followers spoke in tongues and prophesied. Montanism reached Rome and some parts of North Africa.

These two movements, Kimbanguism and Montanism, have three features in common: a) both Montanus and Kimbangu were prophets, who prophesied the coming of a time of peace; for Kimbangu it was the freedom of black people but for Montanus the millennial rule of Christ; b) they both used the name New Jerusalem to refer to an earthly place where Christ will reign; for Kimbangu it was N'kamba and for Montanus a village in Phrygia; c) both were regarded as the promised Paraclete by their followers. Despite these similarities, the two movements differ in significant ways: a) Montanus called himself the Paraclete, but Kimbangu never called himself the Holy Spirit; that was done later, as a result of his followers' allegiance to him; b) Montanus's followers are reported to have spoken in tongues and prophesied but no mention is made of this with regard to Kimbangu's followers.

It seems as if this ancient false teaching has resurfaced and become a doctrine within the EJCSK. Kimbanguists are not ashamed to address their prayers to Simon Kimbangu. Those I met in May 2008 said that they address their prayers either to Christ or to Simon Kimbangu and receive answers accordingly.

This aspect of the EJCSK theology inspires Kimbanguist mission in the area of preaching. They believe that Kimbangu as the Holy Spirit empowers them to preach the gospel to the lost, as alluded to in Chapter 3. Most untrained Kimbanguist pastors are of the view that they do not need a formal training in theology as such; for the Holy Spirit in the person Simon Kimbangu reveals to them what to preach.

The belief in the divine nature of Kimbangu, apart from the empowerment aspect in mission (as reported by Kimbanguists) brings also a sense of assurance and

security amongst those who do mission. Their awareness of his presence makes them to be bold, courageous and fearless as they do their missionary work.

What is surprising from my observation is the fact that Kimbangu himself seems to have said nothing in relation to his divinity. He called himself a servant of God, an envoy or messenger – and not God. This observation is supported by his own view and attitude toward God, his word and prayer as revealed in his last words to the followers during his arrest. By implication, these words seem to contain the prophet's theology, which is why I analyze it below.

In line with his deportation, what is interesting for the purpose of this research is to note Kimbangu's last words or his farewell to the followers. They reveal his attitude toward various theological issues which were later reflected in the doctrines of his church. I want to look at these words at different occasions when they were pronounced or said by Kimbangu and see their implication to the theologies of the Kimbanguist church in particular. Details on these last words are found in Chapter 2 (sections 2.3); here I simply reflect on the words and explore their theological significance for EJCSK mission.

For the EJCSK founder the Bible has solutions to human problems, in other words, as we preach the Bible it must relate to human realities and alleviate their sufferings. From this analysis it seems as if Kimbangu had his own unwritten theology, placing the Bible at the centre of human crisis, a document full of answers for human tragedies. As far as Kimbangu is concerned the Bible must be used to respond to human problems. There seems to be here an aspect of contextualization in preaching so as to address the needs of people.

The prophet also raises four important issues that deserve some reflection, namely the relation of service or work to salvation, divine guidance and protection, perseverance, and prayer. Kimbangu does not seem to relate salvation to faith as such but instead to works, serving assures one of eternal life. There are some aspects of truth in this view, in the sense that faith without works is dead, according to James 2:17. At the same time, faith must not be divorced from works or vice-versa. It is worth mentioning

that the Kimbanguist church in Katanga and in other parts of the country is actively involved in community development projects, assistance to the poor and the needy within the church and outside the church, empowerment of the skills of members, etc. This could be as a result of the founder's theology as seen in his last words, see Chapter 2.3.

Kimbangu's appeal for divine protection and guidance for suffering believers is in accordance with Psalm 23:1-6, where David acknowledges God's ability to guide and protect his sheep even as they walk through the valley of the shadow of death. This is how this African preacher brings hope to the memory of his dying friends. It shows his sense of absolute dependence upon God and his need for divine direction. His call for perseverance during times of trouble is a proof of faith in God. Simon encourages his disciples to serve God until they die, a call similar to that of Jesus Christ to his followers in the Gospels and to that of Paul the apostle throughout his letters. By implication Kimbangu discourages anyone from quitting God's service, no matter what happens.

Papa Simon concludes his statement by underlining the importance of prayer in a believer's life, especially intercessory prayer. He believes that prayer has the power to help anyone, even people who face great challenges in their lives. Prayer happens to be one of the central mission methods used in African independent churches. The strong reliance on prayer in every kind of situation is characteristic of the Kimbanguist church.

In short, the EJCSK argues that Kimbangu is the promised Counsellor according to the Gospel of John. And as such he is God the Holy Spirit. But an analysis of Kimbangu's last words, which seem to clearly express his own theology, shows that such claims were absent in his own mind. He considers himself as a human being who needs God and help as anyone else.

5.4 The theology of the EJCSK as a source for Kimbanguist theology of mission

To start with, it is important to state that Kimbanguist theology has gone through different stages. Initially there was no written theology, but now we are in a period when Kimbanguists themselves have been able to formulate their own theology. A look at the history of Kimbanguism shows that in its early stages the movement

expressed its theology in songs and sermons. In that early period it was often criticized as a movement without a proper theology. But, in recent years, especially with the publication of the book by Diangienda (1984), a great deal has been formulated by Kimbanguists themselves in the area of theology.

Most of Kimbanguist theology is summarized in what Diangienda calls in his book (1984:350f) “the essence of Kimbanguist theology.” Matters pertaining to the Trinity, creation, salvation, and eschatology are discussed.

5.4.1 The Trinity

With regard to the Trinity, the EJCSK teaches that the Father is superior to the Son and the Son superior to the Holy Spirit. The inferiority of Christ is explained by using Philippians 2:5-6 in the *Louis Segond* version of the French Bible (the significant phrase is in italics):

Ayez en vous les sentiments qui étaient en Jésus-Christ, lequel, existant en forme de Dieu, *n'a point regardé comme une proie à arracher d'être égal avec Dieu...* [Have this attitude in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus, who although he existed in the form of God *he did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped*, but emptied himself (NASB)]

Diangienda (1984:255) argues that the fact that Christ did not want to “grasp equality with God” but submitted to the Father in carrying out the mission of saving dying humanity is a proof of his inferiority to the Father, in other words, that he is lower in power and glory than his Father. To me this position does not reflect a good interpretation of Philippians 2:5-8. The *kenosis* teaching, namely that Jesus emptied himself does not imply inferiority to the Father but obedience for the sake of mission. We also need to bear in mind that Christ did this willingly; there was no obligation on him from anyone.

Diangienda (1984:257) writes that the Holy Spirit also submits to the authority of Jesus Christ since he “proceeds” from Christ. The three persons of the Godhead work in perfect harmony and solidarity. This harmony is expressed in the baptismal formula of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19). God in the Old Testament

manifested himself in the person of the Father, in the New Testament in the person of the Son, Jesus Christ. But the incarnation did not stop with Christ. God has further manifested himself in the person of the Holy Spirit, the *parakletos*, in the person of Simon Kimbangu. But after the death of Kimbangu, God has also manifested himself in the three sons of Kimbangu, each of them has become a person of the trinity that is “Father, Son and Holy Spirit”.

This Trinitarian doctrine influences the EJCSK view of mission in different ways. It makes the church understand that the work of reaching the world is a priority within the trinity. And just as the three persons are united in their cause for mission, the EJCSK emphasizes the need for ecumenism if the church is to fulfill its missionary mandate. The incarnation of Christ influences the incarnational practice of mission within Kimbanguism. The church uses local people’s language and culture in preaching the gospel to them. During one of my interviews in November 2007, I was told that whenever the EJCSK plants a church in a new area, those who are sent there have to identify one of the local people’s home where they will stay, eat what the people eat and learn their language whilst preaching the message of Jesus Christ. The report given above suggests that there is a link between incarnational approach of the EJCSK to mission and its understanding of the trinity.

5.4.2 The teaching on the Kingdom of God, salvation and eschatology

Another aspect of Kimbanguist theology deserving attention is its teaching on the Kingdom of heaven or Kingdom of God. Diangienda (1984:265) points out that Kimbanguists make no distinction between God’s kingdom and the kingdom of heaven. Human beings living on earth, even if they are Christians, are not yet members of God’s kingdom. Their theology supports the notion that only those who have left the world or the departed have put on the spiritual body and belong to the kingdom of God. Access to this kingdom is for the select few; not everyone has access to it and it is according to the criteria namely grace, faith and obedience to God’s commandments.

The doctrine of salvation is another dimension of the EJCSK theology which inspires its mission. The church teaches a conditional salvation, which means that salvation is not by grace alone. The grace of God is not enough to save someone from

sins; he/she has to meet other conditions set by the church in its understanding of salvation. Diangienda (1984:260-262) points out that:

Kimbanguist theology does not acknowledge that a person can be saved by grace alone, because grace is only one of the three requirements that bring about salvation. Divine grace is a necessary condition for salvation but not sufficient to bring it about. A person should make his/her own contribution to the achievement (“mechanism”) of his own salvation; he has to bring his part to correspond with that of grace, having already been provided by God to provide proof of faith in holy trinity and also to put into practice the commandments of God. Salvation in Kimbanguist theology can be expressed in the following equation: $\text{salvation} = \text{grace} + \text{faith} + \text{good works}$.²⁵

In other words, all three these conditions are equally important for salvation, namely grace, faith and works. In the interviews that I conducted in April 2006, I found that the necessity of good works is the basis of the volunteer attitude amongst Kimbanguist clergy and members in general. There is a clear understanding that works are an essential condition for salvation. Kimbanguists need to work to make their salvation complete.

Emphasis is also put on eschatology; the Book of Revelation is the basis for this teaching within the EJCSK. It shares the views described by John the Apostle on the last things, up to the establishment of the New Jerusalem on earth. It does, however, reject any approach that suggests dates for the end of the world. Diangienda (1984:279) thinks that the only attitude people ought to have is that of being ready at all times for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Kimbanguist eschatology according to Diangienda (1984:278) does not teach that the church can hasten the coming of the end by preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth. But it emphasises the church’s involvement in preaching the message of repentance and transformation to the world. By so doing, the church will be preparing people for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Eschatology therefore inspires mission as evangelism within the EJCSK. In other words, one motivation in reaching out is the second coming of Jesus Christ. The church must be

²⁵ « La théologie Kimbanguiste n’admet pas que par la grâce seule, l’homme soit sauvé. Car la grâce n’est que l’une des trois exigences qui conditionnent le salut. La grâce divine est une condition nécessaire mais pas suffisante pour produire le salut. L’homme doit apporter sa propre contribution au mécanisme de son propre salut, il lui faut pour cela la grâce, étant déjà pourvue par Dieu de faire preuve de foi en la sainte trinité et puis de mettre en pratique les commandements de Dieu. Le salut dans la théologie Kimbanguist se traduit par l’équation suivante: $\text{salut} = \text{grâce} + \text{foi} + \text{bonnes œuvres}$. »

engaged in telling the world of the coming judgment; this is part of the Great Commission that needs to be carried out by God's people.

5.5 Fundamental Principles and Moral code as a source for the theology of mission

The EJCSK has a set of nine fundamental principles and a moral code that guide the church's mission in society. Akiele (1998/99:200-202) has explained the nine fundamental principles as follows:

1. Faith in the Bible, particularly in the teachings of Jesus Christ:

This implies faithfulness to the whole counsel of God. Acceptance of the Bible as inspired Word of God without selecting any portion at the expense of another. The emphasis on Christ's teaching relates to the Christian nature of the church. For Kimbanguists believe that for any church to be called Christian it needs to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

2. Faith in the holy trinity: Father, Son and Spirit

This is one teaching that seems to raise a lot of difficulties within the EJCSK. First, God is Spirit according to John 4:24 but who manifest himself in different persons. The interview I had on 30th May, 2008 reveals that the followers of Kimbangu stand for a continuous kind of incarnation. During the interview I had with some key EJCSK leaders on what this doctrine was all about, I was told that this does not imply that the names of the three sons have replaced Father, Son and Spirit in official EJCSK documents. The same interview suggests that Kimbanguists themselves, as they pray or repeat this formula, know what it implies and who is the Father, Son and Spirit to them. Two arguments are presented in defence of this new doctrine, namely the EJCSK beliefs and the kingdom concept.

The key EJCSK leaders at provincial level in Katanga whom I interviewed said that this teaching was not from Scriptures, in other words it is not a Bible-based doctrine but a belief held amongst Kimbanguists. This belief came as a result of many revelations of these three sons of Kimbangu, who have all died already. They have been revealing themselves to their church members in words, in acts and in nature in ways that

are supernatural. And because of such revelations and experiences, Kimbanguists have elevated the late sons of Kimbangu to a divine level. They are considered not as 'iconic' leaders; they are seen as identical to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit by their followers.

The late sons of Simon Kimbangu never proclaimed themselves as divine, but the church membership, from experience, have come to believe that the three sons of Kimbangu are divine. This doctrine confirms the old theological phrase 'Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi,' as explained by Fournier (2008): "Worship reveals what we truly believe and how we view ourselves in relation to God, one another and the world into which we are sent to carry forward the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ." The phrase literally means that the law of prayer (the way we worship) is the law of belief (what we believe). How we worship reflects what we believe and determines how we will live. This implies that how we worship not only reveals and guards what we believe but guides us in how we live our Christian faith and fulfill our Christian mission in the world".

From my analysis of the doctrine of the three persons of the trinity within Kimbanguism, it is their worship experience, their encounter with spiritual realities that has shaped their new belief and the way they are now doing mission. So their way of worship toward Kimbangu and his sons determines their belief and their mission. My interviewees confessed that their understanding of the trinity may not be shared by other churches, but explain that they have had those worship and prayer experiences, which have made them formulate this belief.

The second argument advanced by EJCSK members in support of the "trinity" of Kimbangu's sons is the kingdom concept. Their divinization is related to the interpretation of the kingdom of God in the EJCSK. The first Scripture passage that they quote in this regard is Luke 12:32: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom". For the EJCSK, the kingdom is the power of the Father which is passed on to the children. The invisible kingdom of God was made visible through Jesus Christ. But he did not have physical children, as any ordinary Jewish male citizen at the age of thirty was supposed to have. Since the Jews had rejected the kingdom brought by Jesus Christ, he decided to give it to other nations, according to

Matthew 21:43: “Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it”.

Kimbanguists explain that the ‘people producing the fruit of it’ mentioned here are the black people, the Congolese in particular. Through Simon Kimbangu the kingdom has now been given to the black people. He is the king to whom people from all nations are bowing down in worship, and after his death the kingdom has been passed on to his three sons. Since this is a divine kingdom, Kimbangu’s sons have also become divine. These are therefore worshipped and praised amongst Kimbanguists.

To summarize this section, in the light of the *lex orandi, lex credendi* process within the EJCSK, people’s experiences of God affects their beliefs and actions. So spiritual experiences of Kimbanguists are somehow one of the motivating factors for mission engagement. Kimbanguists do mission not only because of what the Bible teaches or in respect of church traditions but also because of their personal experiences of the supernatural.

3. The creation of the universe and its contents by God:

God is viewed as the creator of heaven and earth and all they contain. He created both the visible and the invisible things and beings. Man is the crown of God’s creation.

4. The precedence and superiority of the spiritual over the material:

For Kimbanguists the Spirit existed first and then the material. The spiritual existed and the material was created subsequently. The implication for mission is that the spiritual has influence on the material. God has more influence on the affairs of men and his agenda needs to be proclaimed to all humankind.

5. Attachment to the unity of Christian and global peace:

EJCSK promotes unity and peace. It is unity in matters of faith, based on God and Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The kingdom of God is the reign of God over the Universe and hell is the place where the unbelievers will spend eternity. ‘Unbelievers’ in EJCSK are all those who have not given their lives to Jesus Christ and who do not obey his teachings as revealed by Simon Kimbangu.

6. Faithfulness to the Ten Commandments:

This principle calls for observance of the Ten Commandments. The church discourages a simple memorization of the Ten Commandments but encourages their observance. With regard to the Sabbath, the EJCSK understands Sabbath as simply the day of God's rest. Kimbanguists argue that God rested on the first day of the week and it also reminds them of the day of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. This explains why they consider Sunday as the day of Sabbath and not Saturday. This emphasis has the purpose of promoting holiness among members. The Kimbanguist life ethics is based on the Ten Commandments.

7. Equality of men and women in the church and in the society:

Equality is based on the teaching that women can do what men do, because they are endowed with the same charismata as men. The New Testament verses that instruct women to keep quiet are ignored and understood as cultural Jewish norms and not universal principles. Women and men have the same faith in the same Lord and as such God can use them just as he does with men.

8. The condemnation of racism throughout the world:

The EJCSK condemns racism, making itself a church for all nations – people from all continents. Diangienda (1984) and reports from the EJCSK growth in other parts of the world suggest the presence of people from all nations. This fundamental principle informs the mission of the church in preaching the gospel to all people as stated in chapter three.

9. Forgiveness of others:

Here the emphasis is more on the person who has been offended to forgive the offender, as the Lord Jesus Christ taught.

This brief analysis of the fundamental principles of the EJCSK shows how to some extent they influence the church members' actions in the community. Apart from the principles tabulated above, the church observes a moral code of conduct with fourteen elements:

1. Praying regularly and every day,
2. Confessing sins at church publicly and before the church council or to a pastor,
3. Be a strict monogamist,
4. Worship regularly,
5. Remove shoes in places of worship or sacred places,
6. Women and girls are to cover their heads in all places of worship and sacred places,
- 7 Women and girls are to dress appropriately by not exposing their bodies,
8. Read the Bible regularly and participate in bible studies,
9. Obey and comply with the government and pay taxes and debts,
10. Never quarrel and fight with each other,
11. Bear no grudges against anyone,
12. Pray before going to sleep,
13. Renounce violence
14. Love one another -- including those who are enemies.

A look at these moral requirements shows that they fall into three categories:

a) Spirituality: Those dealing with Kimbanguist spirituality include: praying regularly (1, 12), worshipping regularly (4), confessing sins (2), reading the Bible regularly and attending Bible studies (8). This moral code shows the level of spirituality and sense of communion with God among Kimbanguists. Their devotion to worship and prayer is a result of this moral code.

b) Sacredness of holy places: Those emphasizing the sacredness of holy places are: removing of shoes in any sacred place (5), the covering of the heads by women and girls (6), decent dressing by women and girls (7). The removal of shoes here is sign of holiness as it was the case with Moses during his call at the burning bush. Kimbanguist have a high sense of sacredness, God is in his holy temple. Not only the spiritual one but also the physical temple. Women are asked to cover their heads according to the command of Paul to the Corinthians. Even though this teaching is debated in the name of cultural context, Kimbanguists follow it to letters. A decent code of dressing for women and girls has the aim of promoting holiness amongst God's people especially now that immorality has become almost an accepted culture in our society.

c) Harmony between human beings: These include being a strict monogamist (3), obeying and complying with government and paying taxes and debts (9), never quarrel and fight (10), bear no grudges (11), renounce violence (13), love one another – even enemies (14).

The various fundamental principles and moral code described above have some mission implications that need to be reflected upon. The church attachment to unity and global peace motivates the EJCSK to venture into actions that promote peace within the Congo and beyond. This informs the mission of the EJCSK Commission for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation, discussed in Chapter 3. It also justifies the church commitment to the ecumenical movement which emphasizes the unity of all believers. Another factor motivating the commission for peace is the harmony between all human beings code of conduct. It encourages the church support toward the government of the day in the country as members pay their taxes to civic and political leaders.

Faithfulness to the Ten Commandments is a motive behind the church's teaching activities. Through its various seminars and retreats actions, the EJCSK emphasizes obedience and observance of the law of God. As people get trained maturity is secured in the things of God. This implies that the church teaches because it wants its membership to be grounded in the law of God.

The emphasis on the equality of men and women justifies the mission of the church amongst women. This principle is behind the ministry of women in the EJCSK. Women are treated as equal partners with men in ministry because the church believes in the equality of both genders. The church has women pastors and lay leaders who play a vital role in mission.

By condemning racism, the church motivates its membership to reach out to all races with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This explains why the EJCSK is now present in a number of European countries with some non-African local church pastors and leaders. This principle has made the EJCSK a church for all nations, even if this is just the case at a local church leadership level.

Through the moral code of spirituality, members are brought closer to God. Their commitment to spiritual life increases more and more. The sacredness of holy places draws many to Christ, report Kimbanguist members. This informs the mission of the pilgrimages to N’kamba for instance and to many other Kimbanguists sites within the Congo. People from all spheres of life visit Kimbanguist holy places and some of them end up by joining the church. In other words, the visits to N’kamba discussed in chapter six (6.5) find their basis in this aspect of the church belief.

This brief analysis of the mission implications of the fundamental principles and code of conducts aims at helping the reader understand the motives behind the actions carried out by Kimbanguists in the society.

5.6 Summary

This chapter looked at the theological bases for the Kimbanguist theology of mission, which are the motives behind their mission engagement in society. Three sources are central in this respect: First, the Bible, since the EJCSK argues that its involvement in mission is a sign of obedience to the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, the person and mission of Kimbangu is also a great inspiration for the church. It views its mission as a continuation of the work of its founder – the liberation of the black people of Africa from slavery and all sorts of oppression: spiritual, social, economic. Finally, the “essence” of Kimbanguist theology, which is revealed in the church’s nine fundamental principles and fourteen fold code of conduct, lies at the heart

CHAPTER SIX

THE SPIRITUALITY OF KIMBANGUIST MISSION

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt much with the theological basis for the EJCSK mission. But this particular section or chapter looks at how spirituality informs the actions of the church. According to Kritzing (2007:9), there are two aspects to the role of spirituality in a praxis cycle:

On the one hand, spirituality is a mediation between theological reflection and practical planning/ strategizing; it mobilizes or operationalises biblical narratives and theological insight into forms of prayer and praise, lament and rejoicing, ritual and silence – so that God’s people may be informed and inspired towards actions in their communities. On the other hand, spirituality represents the depth dimension of mission praxis. Spirituality is the deepest secret of mission, the inner heart of the whole enterprise, which distinguishes it from propaganda and conquest. Unless we are vitally connected to Christ as the vine, and unless his Spirit controls and guides our operations, we do not have spiritual integrity.

Following the six different ways of being Christian or being connected to Christ developed by Dale Cannon, namely: prayer of sacramental liturgy, prayer of deeds, prayer of devotional surrender, prayer of spiritual empowerment, prayer of meditative contemplation and prayer of faith seeking understanding (cited by Kritzing 2007:10), it is evident that the prayer of sacramental liturgy and the prayer of deeds (of justice)- liberation of the black people- seem to best express the Kimbanguist spirituality in Lubumbashi. But, the prayer of devotional surrender also finds a place within this church. The choice of these two types is based on the importance the church puts on liturgy and prayers in all its services. The church also practices a lot of devotional surrender kind of prayers through fasting and prayers and during retreats. This last analytical chapter of my project will try to look at different aspects of Kimbanguist spirituality such as worship, liturgy, sacrament, cult of ancestors, and festival calendar.

6.2 Worship service

I was privileged to attend a number of church services in the main Kimbanguist church in Lubumbashi in July 2006, November 2006, April 2007 and June 2007. On the basis of participant observation, I can state the following:

The worship service has two main parts: the spiritual (or liturgical) and the social. The spiritual part of the service is a joyful, fraternal festival lasting several hours, sometimes as long as seven to eight hours. It is led by a 'master of ceremonies' who announces each item of the service in turn. The service is largely Protestant, since it has features that are mainly found in Protestant churches in terms of worship. Such features include having a worship leader in front who leads the church into different aspects of the service. He leads in hymnal songs, he calls for some individuals to pray on particular issues, he calls on choirs to sing, he leads in the Lord's Prayer, and he reads some Scripture passages, he leads in offering, and many more. The service shares some Roman Catholic features such as the bowing down near the seat by everyone who enters into the service, the bowing down of the preacher before the church authorities seated behind the altar as a way of asking permission to preach God's words, and the use of the Trinitarian formula in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit by anyone who is given a role to play during the service.

The service is characterized by congregational hymns and singing by special choirs, prayers (sometimes offered by women), the compulsory reading of one of the Psalms and other Scripture readings before the sermon. The sermon text comes either from the Old or the New Testament, and the preaching is done in Kiswahili- this is the most spoken language within Katanga province and Lubumbashi in particular. But Lingala, Kikongo, Tshiluba are also languages spoken by a few people or the minority in the area.

All members who enter the church have to take off their shoes, as it was the case with Moses when he saw the burning bush. Before sitting down on the chair one has to kneel in prayer for two to three minutes (as is the custom in the Roman Catholic Church). During offering time, the pastor stands and waits until the offering basket is brought to the front and this will be followed by prayers.

The church services of the EJCSK are typical of what Daneel (1987:224) says of Spirit-type churches. Church services are marked with colourfulness, in total contrast to everyday life. The congregation dresses in neat uniforms, men in white and women in green. The Sunday service is not characterized by ecstatic experiences, prophecies and faith healing, except during special services like when the LR of the church is visiting the town or when a service is organized for the specific purpose of healing and deliverance.

Before preaching, the Pastor kneels before a group of church superiors sitting in the front of the church, as a symbol of asking their permission to preach. On Sunday 10 June 2007 the preacher read three passages of Scripture: Psalm 3:17-18, Exodus 20:1-17 and the text for the day was 1 Cor 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (NASB). Every passage of Scripture was introduced with the formula ‘In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’. The view of the EJCSK members on the need to start with this Trinitarian formula is that it reinforces the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Interview with Pastors Tambwe, Tshauta and five members of the EJCSK in Lubumbashi, 2007)

After reading 1 Cor 15:58, the preacher gave the background information that Paul was in Ephesus and then went to Corinth, “Where he planted five churches in a year and half.” He then began his sermon by talking about work that must be done by Christians. The sermon had three points. The preacher affirmed that work here includes three aspects:

a. Evangelization:

Every Christian in the early church preached the Word, despite sufferings. Their words made them to be called Christians. Paul calls all believers not to be shaken as they serve the Lord. If we are called Kimbanguists, Papa Simon calls us to preach that he is the Holy Spirit. We must not only come to church but also preach about Simon Kimbangu and what he is to the people.

b. Teaching:

The Corinthians were believers who did not know God properly. Paul calls them in his letter to grow in knowledge. We have also believed but teaching is lacking among us. This is why, as Kimbanguists, the spiritual head of the church has written on a number of issues we all need to adhere to. What we are lacking as Kimbanguist is tithing or giving tithes. A story was then told of a man who was unfaithful in giving tithes and the suffering he went through.

c. Good works:

When Paul wrote this passage of Scripture he heard that there was famine in Jerusalem. People were encouraged to give towards the poor Christians. For us Kimbanguists the lack of teaching is the cause of disunity and lack of love toward one another. We are Kimbanguists and made an agreement with Papa Simon Kimbanguist, the Holy Spirit, but we are not doing what we promised him. We should all actively participate in the work which the founder requires us to do: “love one another and do what is good to others”.

At the end of this message the whole congregation sang a worshipping chorus in unison, reciting the words of Jesus Christ to his disciples: “Love one another then the world will know that you are my disciples” (This song was in Lingala – a Congolese language).

A closer look at this sermon reveals that the Kimbanguist preacher used the Scripture to preach, but in his interpretation and application he made more use of the life of Simon Kimbangu, his ministry and teaching. In other words, the Kimbanguist hermeneutics uses the biblical text as the source of the message; and Kimbangu’s life as the context of application. This seems to appeal to the mind of Kimbanguist members, as they see the biblical message being related to the life of their founder, and subsequently also their own lives.

In addition, the social part of the service includes information, introducing of guests, gifts, processions, demonstrations, etc. This part of the service is held outside the church building, and it is essentially communal. Everyone takes part in it and it is the time when the community really comes alive. The WCC reports (WCC 1967:31) that in

the EJCSK real worship (real worship implies full church service with all its components, such as preaching of a sermon, offering, blessing of children) takes place on Wednesdays and Sundays.

6.3 Liturgy

Katshiji (2004:117) describes liturgy as a term coming from the Greek word *leitourgia*. This concept is made up of two other words: *laos* (people) and *ergon* (service). *Leitourgia* therefore means the service of the people, the service of the masses to God. In other words, liturgy is a work or a service people render to God, but it also benefits the members in the area of mutual edification.

From a theological point of view, Kimbanguists share the view that God is present during various worship services (theophanies) to save people. Liturgy is called a sacrament of God's presence. It is not a silent gathering, but an existential gathering. In liturgy God speaks through texts and people respond by prayers and songs.

Apart from the theological meaning, liturgy also has a missional meaning. Katshiji (2004:118) points out that there is no church action outside the context of mission. Liturgy, teachings, singing are instruments of the church's mission. This dimension of mission finds its expression in liturgy and the administration of the sacraments.

Katshiji (2004:120) argues that "liturgy must be missional". That is, it has to be attentive to the political, economical, cultural and demographic challenges of the people. Christians attending church services experience different challenges in life; the church has to use every liturgical opportunity to minister to the needs of the members". This implies that whenever a service is celebrated, the pastor or anyone in charge of the service should bear in mind the therapeutic and liberational nature of liturgy. Christ is present at the centre of a service and believers are co-worshippers with the help of the Holy Spirit.

From my observation of the various church services I attended in the EJCSK in Lubumbashi, it is evident that the worship services motivate the (already saved) members to do mission to their neighbors during the week. This shows that the EJCSK liturgy inspires mission.

An analysis of Kimbanguist liturgical programmes (see in the appendix of this chapter) reveals some aspects of its spirituality. Its worship services have the following features: the social emphasis, the use of hymnal songs, the Lord's Prayer, individualized prayers and Scripture readings.

From my researches on the Kimbanguist church, it seems that it is strong in both sacramental and devotional types of spirituality. Some features of the devotional spirituality are given by Kritzinger (2002:168-169). He postulates that the "the devotional kind of spirituality focused on Bible study and intercession". Kimbanguist spirituality as portrayed by its liturgy puts emphasis on the reading of the Bible and on intercessory prayers for others. The EJCSK intercedes for the society (the world in general) in terms of peace and harmony. It also prays for the salvation of nations. This could be a reflection of Kimbangu's early life and ministry. He interceded for others and placed Bible study at the centre of his ministry (for more details on Kimbangu's ministry, see Chapter 2). I agree with Kritzinger that this kind of spirituality has shaped millions of believers across the globe – including Kimbanguist believers.

According to Kritzinger (2002:169), music-and-dance are aspects of the context in which the new African spirituality for mission in the 21st century should be born. In EJCSK spirituality, songs and dance occupy a special place. The observation I made during a number of church services I attended, is that the service is interspersed with songs which everyone sings aloud and in unison. This is in accordance with Daneel's (1987:222-223) description of liturgy within the Spirit-type AIC churches.

Kimbanguist songs have a missional dimension; Martin (1975a:27) writes that in the EJCSK the message of the Bible is as important as the message sung by the congregation and the choir. However, dances are more performed by the choirs themselves rather than by everyone. So it would be good to say that dances and songs

within the EJCSK are special to the singers themselves. But the general members get the message from them as well. I do not agree with Martin on the equality of songs messages and sermons preached within the church. Songs have messages that confirm what is preached in a particular church service; in other words, sermon messages are considered more important than the messages from songs. After all, not all songs sang by choirs within the EJCSK are known to all the members, except the hymnal songs. Songs are missional in the sense that the central teachings of the church are expressed in them: suffering, forgiveness through Christ, victory, following Christ, obedience to him at all cost, and willingness to suffer for him (for more details on Kimbanguist songs, see Chapter 3.3.1).

Another feature is the use of the Lord's Prayer in almost every worship service. The interviews I had revealed that this aspect of worship reflects the Christian nature of the EJCSK. It affirms its Christian beliefs and practices like any other Christian church. It also reinforces the communal life among church members. Apart from the Lord's Prayer, Kimbanguists permit individuals to pray freely in public worship. One person prays and others agree with him/her, this is seen as a sign of unity of believers – affirming one another's prayers.

6.4 The Sacraments:

Unlike the Protestant churches, which have only two sacraments (Daneel 1987:226), the EJCSK has four rituals or sacraments: baptism, Holy Communion, ordination and marriage. This is Diangienda's position (1984:276) on the sacraments in the EJCSK: "The four sacraments recognized as such and practiced by the Kimbanguist church are: baptism, Holy Communion, marriage and ordination" (own translation).²⁶ A sacrament is understood as a means by which a Christian receives divine grace. It is an opportunity given to Christians to get in touch with God in order to receive grace and mercy from him. These church practices have been dealt with in depth by Diangienda (1984:266-275).

²⁶ « Les quatre sacraments reconnus comme tels et en pratique dans l'église Kimbanguiste sont: le baptême, la communion, le mariage et l'ordination. »

Diangienda's defines a sacrament as a means of grace, without requiring faith from the person participating in them. This view is similar to the position of the Roman Catholic Church, but not of most Protestant churches within the Congo. And the number of sacraments, which include marriage and ordination, raises many questions. For what has been embraced as sacraments or ordinances amongst evangelicals are first and foremost those that the Lord Jesus Christ himself commanded, namely baptism and Holy Communion.

6.4.1 Sacrament of Baptism

For Kimbanguists baptism includes the laying on of hands and prayers. This is referred to also as the baptism with the Holy Spirit. A number of biblical references are used to support this teaching: Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:33-34, and Acts 11:3ff.

According to Kimbanguist theology, God in Christ set new conditions for baptism. Jesus never baptized people with water because he baptized them with the Holy Spirit. Jesus ended the old way of baptism (water baptism) and instituted a new era of baptism with the Holy Spirit. Diangienda (1984:266-267) argues that if the Holy Spirit descended on Cornelius and his family, people who were not yet baptized with water, it is not necessary for people to be baptized with water. Whatever God does is perfect; who can condemn him?

From the interviews I conducted from 1st to 4th July 2008, Kimbanguists do not baptize people for repentance but for the reception of the Holy Spirit. But before the baptismal ritual, members are encouraged to confess their sins after hearing the Word of God. During the ritual, the set of five Scripture passages pertaining to baptism mentioned above are read, after which the new converts (who have been taught the basic doctrines of the church) are called forward and kneel before the pastor. Then Acts 19:1-6 is read before the minister lays his/her hands on the candidates for the reception of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Regarding the recognition in the EJCSK of the baptism practiced by other churches, Diangienda (1984:269) explains: "The Kimbanguist Church, even though it

does not itself practice water baptism, fully recognizes the validity of this form of baptism, for very simple reasons. Jesus himself was baptized in this way. It is for this reason that whoever comes from other Protestant churches (wanting) to become Kimbanguists are not baptised.²⁷ The EJCSK baptizes adults or those who have reached the age of reason (above twelve years), but children are blessed in accordance with what happened to Jesus Christ whilst a baby (Luke 2:22-38).

The missional aspect of this sacrament within the EJCSK is that whoever wishes to be baptized must put his/her faith in Christ as their Saviour; and undergo a period of catechism – learning the basic teachings of the church on Bible doctrines. This church practice establishes people in their Christian faith and attracts others to become members. Another implication of this sacrament, according to my interviewees, is the changed life of the baptized member. He/she needs to reflect to the world the fruit of the Spirit in his/her life, as set out in Galatians 5:22-23. When the fruit is made manifest, even non-Christians tend to follow the Christians and finally join the church.

6.4.2 Sacrament of Holy Communion

Diangienda (1984) postulates that the sacrament of the Lord's Table was celebrated for the first time in the EJCSK in late 1960, after the church was officially established in 1959. The period between Kimbangu's death and 1959 is called by Kimbanguists "the dark period of the church" when it was not yet officially recognized as a church but only as a movement. It was only in 1959 that the movement became officially known as a church. From the studies I have conducted, during the "dark period" the church was not regulated by any type of organization and there were no guiding principles that were to be followed in running the church's affairs. There were just separate groups within the Congo that were meeting around the teachings of Kimbangu. And considering that public meetings of Kimbanguists were forbidden by the colonial authorities, it was difficult – if not impossible – for the church to celebrate any kind of sacrament. The movement had other important matters to attend to, matters pertaining to its status as a church. It was only after its official recognition that order within the church

²⁷ « L'église Kimbanguiste, bien que ne pratiquant pas elle même le baptême d'eau reconnaît pleinement la validité de cette forme de baptême; cela pour de raisons fort simples: Jésus lui-même était baptisé de cette manière. C'est pour cette raison que ceux qui viennent des autres églises protestantes pour se faire Kimbanguistes ne sont pas baptisés ».

could be put in place. This justifies why the Lord's Table as a sacrament was delayed because it was not a priority for the church at that time.

Regarding the inauguration of Communion within Kimbanguism, the delay was also caused by divergent views within the church as to what elements to use for this sacrament. But after much debate the church opted for two elements: a) a cake made of potatoes with eggs, maize meal and green bananas, representing the body of Christ, and b) honey diluted with holy water of N'kamba (to make it more sacred) as the symbol of the blood of Christ.

Other sources I consulted on this subject (e.g. Daneel 1987:66) support Diangienda's position that Communion was not celebrated during the years of persecution. Even after the church was recognized they did not immediately institute the sacrament, but considered it prayerfully. So Daneel's report agrees with Diangienda's position on the matter of delayed inauguration of the Lord's Table.

Kimbanguists believe that when the two elements are prayed for by the LR they become the real body and blood of Christ (a view they share with the Roman Catholic Church). What happens at the Lord's Table, they argue, is more than remembering Christ's death. It is drinking his real blood, and eating his actual body or flesh.

The interviews I conducted as to the implication of the cake and honey becoming the real body and blood of Christ, Kimbanguists had this to say: the position has come from the experiences of those who partake from the Lord's Table. They report that after partaking of these elements, they feel renewed, regenerated and strengthened spiritually. And on the basis of this experience, they argue that if these elements were just symbols of Christ's body and blood, they could not have brought such an impact in people's lives.

As to the question of why the EJCSK uses the cake- and its components and the honey instead of using bread and drink or wine, my interviewees advanced two reasons:

First, the EJCSK is an African church and cannot afford to import wine and other elements from Europe and America for Holy Communion. Second, the church uses what is locally produced and readily available to be culturally relevant. The sanctity of this sacrament makes it a rare event taking place three times per year on dates specifically chosen by the church: 25th May (the birth of Simon Kimbangu), 12th October (the death of Simon Kimbangu), and 4th April (the anniversary of the inception of the EJCSK). The sacrament is celebrated on the nearest Sunday to the dates when the dates fall on weekdays.

6.4.3 The Implication of the sacraments of Baptism and Communion

According to Kimbanguists, baptism as a sacrament renders them more and more God's children. They only become God's children after being baptized and this leads to the forgiveness of sins by the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

There is the reception of the Holy Spirit (the reference here is made to Simon Kimbangu) by the same sacrament and this makes them one with Jesus Christ and with any other believer, no matter the church affiliation. Baptism breaks class and racial discrimination. Baptism has a missional significance for any Kimbanguist. The interviews I had agree with what Diangienda (1984:271), who discusses the missional importance of this particular sacrament says: Whoever is baptized becomes one with Christ and with other Christians. He/she is now supposed to live beyond racial, tribal and national differences with others; live in solidarity with others, to be joyful during suffering and be able to fight for justice in the society. He/she needs to live according to the Christian standard of living, fighting against sins, all kinds of injustice, exploitation and oppression.

Diangienda (1984:271) adds that the Eucharist has a deep meaning for the members. It implies that Christ once again humbles himself and accepts to live in the life of the partaker of the Lord's Table. The same author argues that Jesus administers forgiveness of sins at such moments and men attain momentary perfection. This is why for one to partake of the holy table he/she needs to go through an intense spiritual preparation. According to Diangienda (1984:270), the preparation includes: all night prayer vigils, retreats and prayer meetings. In these gatherings members are encouraged

to seek God for sanctification. Sermons or teachings during the preparation period revolve around the meaning of Holy Communion and sanctification. The time the church takes to prepare its members for the Eucharist is one of the reasons why the sacrament is rarely celebrated, says Diangienda (1984:270). The members have to prepare for this sacrament by living holy lives and separating themselves from evil. The preparation for the Eucharist amongst the prophetic type of churches – including the EJCSK – is well explained by Daneel (1987:227). He argues that although administered much less frequently than baptism, Communion is in no way considered less important.

The missional significance of the Eucharist is embedded in its celebration. The interviews I had in May 2008 suggest that during the celebration Christ is present amongst the members. For the EJCSK Holy Communion does not only celebrate a historical event (the past death of Jesus) or a future hope (Christ's second coming), but also a present reality (the presence of Jesus among his people).

This view agrees with the peculiar nature of memory in Hebrew thought according to Alexander (1978: 12-18). In his commentary on Deuteronomy 5:1-5, the author argues that the past becomes present through memory. To remember (*zachar*) in Hebrew is to repeat the actions that happened in the past – in order to let that past event become a present reality today to those who have faith in God's promises. This implies that Communion is not just a past or future event but also a present event during which the Lord meets the needs of human beings, for he promised to be with us (Matthew 28:20). And his presence is within the believers – by his Spirit, according to the apostle Paul (Eph 3:14-20).

This sacrament is celebrated only at large annual feasts. A critical thinker would say that since all the three annual feasts are somehow linked to the life of Simon Kimbangu (his birth, death and the inception of his church) this suggests that an element of ancestral veneration is involved in this sacrament within the EJCSK. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the sacrament is the special prerogative of the LR, who is a direct descendant of Simon Kimbangu (and of a 'paramount leader' in other AICs). This implies that the majority of the EJCSK ministers never get to serve the Holy Communion themselves. Motives influencing this practice, according to Daneel (1987),

are numerous: firstly, the mediatory function is associated with the sacrament which is specifically directed at a mystical union with the body of Christ. The spiritual heads meets the needs of the members, spiritual and social-in the place of Jesus.

Secondly, confining Communion to special occasions when the principal leader is present accentuates the rare, exclusive and even mystical significance of the sacrament. Thirdly, there is a purely pragmatic reason, drawing members of the church together to the church's place of origin at least three times a year to receive the sacrament. Kimbanguists from all over the world meet at N'kamba for Communion. This celebration becomes an avenue for outreach and edification among members. It strengthens the control of the leader over the church and encourages unity among members.

When Communion is celebrated during other dates; this happens at times when the spiritual head (Legal Representative) visits a province in the DRC or another country in the world. Arrangements are then made for a special celebration of Communion. The results from my interviews suggest that this sacrament is celebrated three times a year for economic reasons, because it is expensive to buy all the elements and gather Kimbanguists from different nations in the world together for the Communion in Kinshasa or N'kamba. This practice shows some similarities with the Old Testament Passover, which was celebrated only once a year in Jerusalem. This connection is possible considering also the great emphasis the EJCSK puts on Old Testament teaching, especially the law. The only difference is that the celebration of the Eucharist is not done once per year but three times per year, although linked to three foundational events in the life of the EJCSK (as the Exodus was to the life of Israel). The infrequency of this sacrament seems to increase its value and importance in the minds of EJCSK members.

6.4.4 The Sacrament of ordination

Diangienda (1984:272-273) comments that the sacrament of ordination is one ritual by which the church promotes the ministry of its members to the church ministries such as pastor and deacon. This sacrament is administered by the LR or his delegate. The interview I conducted in July 2008 shows that for Kimbanguists, ordination is a

sacrament because through it those who are called into ministry receive divine grace and power to carry out their ministry, different from those who are not ordained.

Through ordination Kimbanguist clergy receive divine wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and all kinds of skills to be effective in mission. For Kimbanguists, during the ordination celebration God gives wisdom, understanding and knowledge to those he has appointed for ministry, as was the case with Moses when he was told to pray for Bezalel and others (Exodus 31:1-6). This power enables the minister to go into the world and preach the gospel, heal the sick, and liberate the captives. The minister is empowered to face any sort of spiritual forces and do ministry in a more efficient way.

Through ordination the pastor is enabled to administer different church sacraments, namely baptism, the Lord's Table, marriage and ordination, when authorized to do so by the spiritual head (LR). Ministers also bless children. What is surprising is that even though one of the duties of those who are ordained is to serve the sacrament of the Lord's Table, in practice they rarely (if ever) do that. As explained above, this is done only by the LR, when he visits regional churches or on the three chosen dates, in Kinshasa or N'kamba.

6.4.5 The Sacrament of marriage

This is a ritual by which a man and a woman are united before God and people by the church. The EJCSK uses Genesis 1:27-28 and Matthew 19:5 as the bases for celebrating the sacrament of marriage. Kimbanguists argue that marriage is divine, since God commanded human beings to multiply and replenish the earth; and at the same time forbids anyone to separate those that have been united through marriage.

According to my interviews in July 2008, marriage is considered as a sacrament in the sense that partners receive divine grace in the area of procreation in an officially accepted way. What makes it a sacrament is the process it takes for one to be married. There is first an official request that is to be made by the husband to the family in law; then the state of chastity of the two marriage partners during their courtship needs to be confirmed; and lastly the nature of the ceremony – conducted before God and people as witnesses of the union.

In practice, after a period of courtship, there should first be a customary marriage, celebrated according to the cultural traditions of the couple. Only after this stage can the wedding be blessed officially in the church. This practice seems to be a wise (or clever) strategy to first check whether the couple can have children before the “Christian” marriage is conducted. Diangienda (1984:275) points out that divorce is not allowed in the EJCSK; instead, the church emphasizes reconciliation and dialogue in the face of marital disputes or problems. However, once a spouse dies the remaining partner may remarry in the church.

The church encourages marriage between Kimbanguists and members of other church denominations, but the wedding has to take place within the EJCSK. During the July 2008 I was told by some pastors that there are two reasons for this: First, marriage is not a sacrament in other Christian churches; it is just a ceremony, while it is a sacrament for the EJCSK. Secondly, other churches such as the Roman Catholic Church perform other rituals for the new couple during the wedding ceremony, which include water baptism and the Eucharist. So the EJCSK does not allow its members to take part in those other rituals as part of marriage. Hence, the wedding has to take place only within the Kimbanguist Church. Furthermore, the monogamous type of marriage is the only accepted form of marriage in Kimbanguism since its inception. As indicated already, it is one of the principles in the Kimbanguist code of conduct. Kimbanguists argue that polygamy undermines the dignity of the woman and is a cause of tensions in the society.

The sacrament of marriage is missional, in that it fosters unity in the society through marriage and also promotes cultural values – emphasizing the customary kind of marriage even among Christians before any church blessings; and the dignity of women. Another aspect worth mentioning is that the celebration of marriage within Kimbanguism is used as strategy for outreach. The interviews I conducted in November, 2006 show that the church provides the necessary basic needs for the new couple in terms of house furniture from the utensils in the kitchen to the bedroom. In this way some people get attracted to the church and end up becoming members. Lastly, a good testimony in a marriage life among Kimbanguists couples exerts a positive influence on the outside world. Non-Kimbanguists are sometimes drawn to the church by the way of life of

married Kimbanguists. Morality and good Christian character are encouraged and upheld in Kimbanguist families.

6.5 Pilgrimages and festivals

6.5.1 Pilgrimages

The EJCSK has a number of sites to which Kimbanguists go on pilgrimage. In Lubumbashi there are the following pilgrimage sites: a) The former prison where Kimbangu was kept for thirty years; b) the hospital where he died; and c) the tomb where he was first buried. There are also a number of pilgrimage sites in N’kamba: a) The place where his body is kept; and b) the river where he used to go for prayers and for baptism of new converts. These centres attract the attention of many people, and therefore play a missional role. The most respected centre of pilgrimage among Kimbanguists is N’kamba – the New Jerusalem – as it is called within Kimbanguism. This is one place which every devoted Kimbanguist dreams to visit in his or her lifetime. My July 2008 interviews revealed that there are three things which make a visit to N’kamba unique and special: a) Meeting with the spiritual head (LR) of the church; b) bathing in the holy water; and c) visiting the place where the body of Simon Kimbangu has been kept since the 1950s. Meeting with the spiritual head of the Kimbanguist church gives an opportunity for pilgrims to share their problems and be prayed for by this spiritual leader who has spiritual power beyond any other Kimbanguist leader.

Secondly, those who have no opportunity to meet the spiritual head – due to the number of pilgrims who at times reach forty thousand people at a time – are allowed to bathe in a big dam with its source from the N’kamba River. Bathing in this water brings purification and comfort to the pilgrim. Lastly, the body of Simon Kimbangu kept in his home village of N’kamba. Kimbanguists report that the body has not been embalmed from the time it was removed from the grave in Lubumbashi in the early 1960’s. It is exposed in a transparent kind of coffin in a mausoleum (*mausolée*) in N’kamba where people go and spend time before it and ask for help. Reports from the pilgrims show that their lives have been changed in a positive way after such visits. Pilgrimage to N’kamba plays a missional role in the sense that not only Kimbanguists but people from all walks of life and from different church organizations and religious groups visit the place and are challenged or renewed by the experience.

Every significant group in the EJCSK is supposed to visit the New Jerusalem at a given date in relation to a specific event in the history of Kimbanguism. During my interviews in November 2007, I was told that Kimbanguist women visit N’kamba on 27th April each year, Kimbanguist students on 4th January, and Kimbanguist Schools representatives on 25th May. Church members generally visit N’kamba on 6th April, 8th July and 12th October respectively. Those who visit N’kamba take holy water and soil with them for healing and protection purposes.

6.5.2 Kimbanguist Festivals

The EJCSK has an annual calendar with different festivals, which plays the role as a guide for the preachers and lay leaders. It helps them in developing sermons for the week and a theme for each month. Sermons in the church are preached according to the following festival calendar (EJCSK 2004:128-132):

January

- 1st: New Year celebration. Scripture reading: Ps 32:11, Mt 6:25-34, Ex 16:1-8.
- 4th / 1960: The establishment of the first Kimbanguist schools and the independence martyrs. Scripture reading: Ps 25: 16, 79: 1-13, 1 Pt 3: 13, 4:14 , Mt 11:12-22, 2Tm 3: 10-12, Rv 6: 9-11, Ac 7: 53-60, Jn 11: 47-53, Eph 2:12-13, Zech 9:10.

February

- 12th /1914: the birth of Papa Kisolokele Charles Daniel: Scriptural reading: Ps 100, 110, Is 7: 14, 9:6.

March

- 22nd /1918: The birth of Papa Diangienda Nkutima. Scripture reading: Ps 100, 110, 92: 13-14, Lk 1:13-17, Zech 9:9-10, Is 2:2-4, Gn 16:11-12.
- 17th /1992: Death of Papa Kisolekele Charles Daniel. Scripture reading: Rv 11: 1-13, Is 6: 1-4, Hos 5:15, Ps 134:1-3

April

- 6th /1921: The inception of Kimbanguism. Scriptural reading: Ps 80:89, Mt 4: 12-16, Lk 7: 11-17, Dn 19:24

- 27th /1959: Death of Maman Mwilu (wife of Simon Kimbangu). Scripture reading: Ps 32: 1-6, 1: 1-3, 125: 1-5, 128: 130, Ac 9:36-42, Lk 2: 36-38, 1Sm 15:1ff.

May

- 25th / 1916: The birth of Papa Dialungana Kingani. Ps 100:110, Is 7: 14, 11:1-6, Dn 7:22, Lk 2:1-4.
- 20th / 1959: Papa Diangienda resigns from the public service. Ps 1: 1-3, 119:1, 23:1-6, Jos 1: 1-9, Judg 6:11-18, Mt 4: 18-19, Neh 6:1-3

June

- 6th /06/1921: the invasion of N'kamba by the colonial government soldiers. Scripture reading: Am 9: 11-15, Is 56: 6-8, 60:4-7, Ac 15: 13-21
- 30th/06/1960: the political independence of the DR Congo. Scripture reading: Ps 44:1-8, 93: 1-13, Ex 12:1-14, 21-36, Lev 25: 8-10, Ps 94:1-9.
- 30th /06/1990: The graduation of Papa Diangienda Kuntima. Scripture reading: Ps118: 19-23, 1:1-3, 119: 1-3, 2Tm 4:6-8, 1Cor 9: 24-27, Jm 1:12.

July

- 2nd /07/1706: Death of Maman Dona Beatrice Kimpa Vita in Angola. Scripture reading: Ps 69:1-21, 143: 1-4, 88: 1-18, Hb 11: 38-40, Ac 7:51-60, Jn 10: 15.
- 2nd /07/1929: Death of Maman Kizembo Marie. Scripture reading: Ps 32: 1-2, 130:1-8, 145:1-2, 1Sm 25: 14-15, Pr 9:14.
- 8th /07/1992: Death Joseph Diangienda Kuntima in Sweden. Scripture reading: Ps 132: 1-18, 48: 1-14, 76: 1-12, Hb 9:28, Ac 20: 17-32, Jn 16:20-22.
- 17th /07/1972: The beginning of retreats. Scripture reading : Ps 51:1-9, 38: 1-13, 30: 1-22, 38: 1-13, Jos 24: 1-24, Is 1: 16-20, Dn 12: 5-30, Rv 22:10-14.
- 26th /07/1963: The beginning of the bible school in N'kamba. Scripture reading : Ps 40: 9-10, 119:98-106, 171: 172, 78:1-7, Mt 11: 28-30, Jn 17: 6-8, Ac 19: 9-10, Hb 8:10.
- 22nd /07/1952: The appearing of Simon Kimbangu (in Lowa). Scripture reading: Ps 16: 8-10, Mt 28: 1-10, Jn 20: 1-18, Ac 13: 35-37.
- 29th /07/1958: The accident of Papa Diangienda Kuntima (in Lukulu). Scripture Reading: Ps 22: 1-26, 28: 1-18, 125:1-5, 129:1-8, Jn 10: 9-15.

August

- 1st: Festival for parents

- 4th /08/1951: Diangienda's vision for youth ministry. This date is dedicated to all youth in EJCSK (the youth group is called UJKI). Scripture reading: Ps 110: 3, 78: 1-7, Jr 1: 4-10, Jo 2: 28-29, Lk 2:52
- 16th /08/1968: The EJCSK accepted as a member of the World Council of churches Scripture reading: Ps 40: 9-11, 35: 18, Jn 15: 22, 9:41, Is 2: 2-3
- 26th / 08/2001: Papa Simon Kimbangu Kiangani becomes the spiritual head of the EJCSK. Scripture reading: Ps 133:1-3, 135: 1-5, 1Sm 9: 15-17, Jn 3: 25-30, 5: 30-34, Mt 3: 13-17, Jn 1: 29-34.

September

- 5th: the first marching of Papa Dialungana Kingani (In Kinshasa). Scripture reading: Ps 81: 1-3, Mt 3: 16-17, Lk 1: 27-28, Jm 1: 22-25
- 12th /09/1887: The birth of Simon Kimbangu. Scripture reading: Ps 89: 1-29, Isa 9: 1-2, Mt 4: 12-16, Eph 2: 11-15, Jn 14: 15-17, 16: 7-15.
- 19th /09/1999: Dedication of the EJCSK Temple in Lubumbashi. Scripture reading: Ps 118: 10, 1Kg 8: 28-35, Rm 13: 1-14
- 3rd /09/1921: Simon Kimbangu sentenced to death. Scripture reading: Ps 80: 19-24, 3: 1-8, 23: 1-6, Jn 10: 16-19

October

- 12th /10/1951: Death of Simon Kimbangu (in Lubumbashi). Scripture reading: Ps 132: 1-3, 135: 1-4, 76: 1-12, Hb 9: 28.

November

- 9th /11/1959: Dialungana Kiangani Salomon request for the official recognition of the EJCSK from the Belgian authorities. Scripture reading: Ps 53: 1-6, Ez 1: 1-4, Es 8: 3-8, Dn 3: 24-30, 6: 19-28.

December

- 24th /12/1959: The official recognition of the EJCSK by the colonial government. Scripture reading: Ps 121: 1-8, 24: 1-8, 44:1-8, Dn 16: 10-28.
- 24th /12/ 1992: Prayer for the forgiveness of Adam and Eve, the interview I conducted in July 2008 suggests that this was done only once by the EJCSK, asking forgiveness for the first Adam and Eve and for all humankind. Scripture reading : Ps 51: 1-18, Neh. 9:1-2, Dn 12 :1-13.

An analysis of this festival calendar is part of the conclusion below.

6.5.3 Missiological significance of Kimbanguist festivals

Kimbanguist spirituality – from the analysis of the festival calendar – is more likely to be Christ-centered and Bible-based. It derives its inspiration from the historical events of the church. This means that the context and the text are related. In other words, Kimbanguists want to understand the Scriptures in the light of people's experiences. What happens in people's lives every day has a way of affecting their knowledge of God and their experiences of faith. Kimbanguists argue that it not possible to understand God outside people's history of sufferings and successes. God uses people's realities to communicate to them or reveal himself to them. This is why every date that marks an important event in the history of the church is used as a starting point to understanding the Scriptures. This also implies that the EJCSK believes in God's involvement in history and in the daily experiences of the Christian community. It seems, then, that Kimbanguist preaching moves from the context to the text. Their context – historical events – informs their texts – God's words. Their contextual experiences of sufferings and joys, opposition and victories, achievements and failures help them to understand how God speaks to people in their own situations. They go to the texts and try to find answers and solutions to their various life events as a church. What the texts reveal or teach with regard to their historical events becomes God's message for the church during that period or month of the year when the event occurred.

Hence, God is understood as a compassionate God when he identifies with his people in their sufferings (church martyrs, death of Kimbangu and all his family members), he is the source of joy when he does good things (the birth of Kimbangu and his family), he is a warrior when he fights for his people (the arrest of Kimbangu and his friends), he is the God of successes (when the church is established and the official recognition given), to mention just a few.

When looking at Kimbanguist spirituality within a praxis cycle approach, it is clear how closely context analysis, practical actions, theological reflection, and spirituality are related to each other. Kimbanguist spirituality, as expressed through the

sacramental calendar, begins with context analysis (honouring historical events from the history of the church), searches for biblical texts that relate to these, and leads to application (church life inspired by God's Word). Kimbanguist preachers value the festival calendar highly in the sense that all their preaching is based on the historical events of the church. The same message is preached in all Kimbanguist churches at a given period of the year.

This chapter has analysed Kimbanguist spirituality as an integral dimension of EJCSK mission. The next chapter looks at the dialogue between the EJCSK and other African churches.

6.6 Summary

The spirituality of the EJSCK is rooted in its liturgy and sacraments. There is a missional emphasis in the various aspects of its spirituality, even though the biblical basis for its sacraments, especially the sacraments of marriage and ordination, are difficult for an outsider to understand. The use of Scriptures, hymnal songs and prayers (the Lord's Prayer to be specific) and the social emphasis of its worship services reveal the Christian centeredness of Kimbanguist spirituality. It shows that God is at the centre of its worship and mission.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MATTERS FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE KIMBANGUIST CHURCH AND OTHER AFRICAN CHURCHES

7.1 Introduction

Up to this point in my study, I have been mainly describing and analysing different dimensions of EJCSK mission, namely its history, methods of mission, agents, theological basis, and spirituality. In this chapter I identify the central issues of concern emerging from the preceding chapters, which represent important matters for dialogue that emerge for the interaction between the EJCSK and other African churches in the 21st century. This chapter is not an evaluation of the EJCSK and its mission, but a missiological dialogue on the crucial issues that have arisen from my study. These issues fall in four categories: a) What I have learnt as a researcher from the project (7.2); b) The unique missional contribution of the Kimbanguist church and its mission, by which it enriches and challenges other African churches (7.3); c) Issues on which the EJCSK could be questioned or challenged by other Christians churches (7.4); d) Topics for further research (7.5).

7.2 What I have learnt as a researcher

In my encounter with EJCSK mission, one major issue got my attention namely the mission of an AIC founder – Simon Kimbangu.

7.2.1 The call and mission of an AIC founder

With regard to EJCSK history, I have discovered that its mission was partly influenced by the Baptist mission. Since this was Simon Kimbangu's church affiliation from childhood, it affected most of his thoughts and practices directly or indirectly. In other words, the EJCSK mission had Protestant roots from its early days.

However, Simon Kimbangu's real mission started through the experience or encounter he had with God. It was this that led him into ministry, as reported by Harold (1962:158). This is similar to the experience of many other AIC founders. It is interesting to observe that Kimbangu's personal experience with God in the early twentieth century

has become almost the trend for many African church leaders today. By this I do not mean that Kimbangu has influenced more recent AIC leaders or that they deliberately follow his example. What I mean is that the same reality is shared by generations of AIC founders for the past hundred years. This seems to be an African reality that is deeply rooted and is also evident in the call experiences of traditional diviners. In other words, most AICs are founded on the basis of the founder's personal experience with God.

This particular feature makes the EJCSK mission share in recent AIC traits. Most AIC leaders start their churches after experiencing a serious sickness, or an experience leading to death. But miraculously this 'bad' experience leads them to encounter God and receive "the call," as Daneel (2001:271) observes. Of particular interest is Kimbangu's first healing experience. After he prayed for a sick woman in his home village, many sick and possessed people were brought to him from different surrounding villages. James (1966:15) describes Kimbangu not only as a healer but also a preacher, who demanded his followers to throw away protective fetishes and replace them by trust in God for protection. He urged his converts to attend Protestant services and secure their copies of the Bible. I observe here a genesis of mission that is based on God's Word, the healing of the total human being, and trust in God. There is also a sense of *koinonia* with other believers in Kimbangu's appeal for his members to attend church services celebrated by Protestants. The beginning of the EJCSK mission shows strong Christian beliefs and practices. From its roots Kimbangu never considered himself as a prophet but as a mere servant of God.

Out of this historical perspective, there are a few common threads to be noted.

(1) Kimbangu's personal encounter with God via serious physical illness is a feature shared by a majority of AIC leaders, when it comes to how they come into ministry or start their mission. This implies that in general a good AIC has its roots in the personal experience of its founder, and this becomes a motivation for mission in the long run.

(2) Healing and the preaching of God's Word that denounces witchcraft and fetishes was discussed in Chapter 3.4.5. This is another dimension of EJCSK mission that we can easily trace in other churches of the same type within the region. It suggests a

Charismatic emphasis in EJCSK mission from its early days. Kimbangu did not only preach, but his preaching was accompanied by healing and deliverance. Thus, he ministered not only to the physical, but also to the spiritual needs of the people.

(3) Furthermore, social and political issues affecting people were at the centre of Kimbangu's mission engagement. He fought against any kind of exploitation and injustices towards the black people. He called for political freedom and independence of the blacks. This seems to have changed in recent years within the EJCSK. Injustices are now being fought indirectly through church departments and other ministries (see Chapter 5.3.1 for more detail on this change in the nature of EJCSK mission).

(4) The history of this church reveals that it started with the mission of its founder, who was Protestant and Charismatic. Full of passion and compassion for his fellow human beings, he called them to have faith in God, because he wanted to see them free spiritually, socially, politically and economically. All these aspects were integral parts of Kimbangu's mission during his six months of public ministry and the thirty years of ministry in the prison (see Chapter 2.5 for more detail).

7.3 What other African churches can learn about mission in Africa from the EJCSK

From the studies I have done, there are aspects of the EJCSK mission that need to be known by African churches within Africa in general and southern Africa in particular.

7.3.1 Mobilisation of members

The Kimbanguist hospital and prison ministry is a unique tool in the mission of the EJCSK. Through this arm, the church reaches out to people outside its walls and introduces them to Christ. There is need to mention that this ministry was first established to meet the needs of the many Kimbanguists who were in prisons in the early days of the movement and now it has continued to be of help to all people.

Women are recognized as key mission agents. This view of women came as a result of the work done by Marie Mwilu Kyangani, the wife of the founder. She has

become a great inspiration to all Kimbanguist women. Their mission is being carried out through improving family lives, meeting the needs of the members and people in the community, developmental projects and also through preaching and teaching in the church.

Kimbanguist youths are also not excluded from the mission of the church. They are at the centre of Kimbanguist mission actions by virtue of providing the needed labourers in many church departments and associations. As it has been observed, from the top leadership to all the members, everyone believes and does mission within the EJCSK. This justifies the reason behind the continuous growth of this church. Mission is everyone's business, even if it is sometimes not well understood. Everyone works for the growth of the church at his or her level.

7.3.2 Self-reliance

The EJCSK has grown into a church with millions of members and numerous church buildings, departments, schools, etc. ... without any financial support from other churches or from government authorities (at least from the reports and data I collected during my research). In a continent where many mission-initiated churches struggle to mobilize their membership, this is a very powerful example.

7.3.3 Promotion of Christian literature

EJCSK promotes the publication of what it does and teaches. The majority of Kimbanguist students in various learning institutions (universities and colleges) within Lubumbashi write their final research papers on their church, its works, and its beliefs in relation to the community life. This makes the church actions known to those who are not yet members of the church and some of them get to know God through this literature. This is one thing most churches in Katanga-Lubumbashi seem not to do.

7.3.4 The zeal for fund raising for church projects

EJCSK members are committed and zealous about raising funds locally to finance church projects. People give out of love for the growth of the church mission within Congo and beyond. As I attended the different church services, I observed that no sermon was preached to provoke people into giving for projects. But the leaders shared

the vision for a particular project and emphasized the fact that the EJCSK was an African church supported by its own members, not receiving funds from elsewhere. And these simple words make people give with all their hearts until they meet the target.

7.3.5 The EJCSK indirect involvement in political issues

The church involvement in political issues of the country through the commission for peace and justice is very inspiring. The church educates people on matters such as human rights, country laws, and the duties of citizens, the fight against corruption, voter education, and many more. This engagement with community life is very encouraging especially when carried out by an AIC. And it is rare to see Protestant churches engage in such actions within Katanga, except the Roman Catholic Church.

7.3.6 The Kimbanguist identity

Kimbanguists within Lubumbashi are proud to be followers of Simon Kimbangu, they do not hide their identity. They put pictures of their founder and his sons in their homes, even in public offices where they work. At least from the Kimbanguists I visited during my research, be it in their homes or in their offices, pictures of their key leaders were displayed openly. And whenever asked about the picture, Kimbanguists share the Christian message with others. This attitude is inspiring in a country where people hide their Christian identity in order to make a living, or get involved in corrupt practices in order to make money and earn a better life.

7.4 Issues on which the EJCSK can be questioned or challenged

My reflections on the different dimensions of the EJCSK mission suggest that the theology and mission of the EJCSK raises a lot questions to a critical Protestant thinker. The assessment of these doctrines and practices shows that many of them do not come from biblical teaching, but from the person, actions and personal religious experiences of Kimbanguists. Even though the Bible is frequently quoted, the true basis of this church mission is the person of Kimbangu and his continuous encounter with his followers in their daily lives. Kimbanguists believe that Simon Kimbangu continues to appear to them, even today. In line with the old theological saying, *lex orandi, lex credendi* (see Chapter 5), new doctrines gradually developed out of the growing religious

experiences (and forms of prayer) of Kimbanguist members and leaders over the past 50 years, since the death of their founder. It is surprising to observe that a church which started with sound Christian beliefs and practices, strongly influenced by the Baptist church, has ended up with views that many other churches would regard as heresies. These seem to give it an identity different from that of being a Christian church.

I have identified ten issues that other African theologians and churches need to be concerned about – and on which they need to engage in respectful, honest dialogue with Kimbanguists. Some of these issues are more doctrinal and others more practical in nature.

7.4.1 The incarnation of the Holy Spirit

The two closely related doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity in EJCSK have become thorny issues between the EJCSK and other Christian churches within the Congo in recent years. As set out already, Kimbanguists teach that Simon Kimbangu is the incarnation of the Holy Spirit promised by the Lord Jesus Christ. They seem to claim that there is no other Holy Spirit except Kimbangu. Their argument is that “just as the Son put on flesh and lived among people, the Holy Spirit has in the last days come and put on flesh in the person of Simon Kimbangu”. This implies that Kimbangu is divine. Logically (and theologically) there is a difference between saying “Simon Kimbangu is the Holy Spirit” and “The Holy Spirit is Simon Kimbangu”. The first statement (“Simon Kimbangu is the Holy Spirit”) would imply that the Holy Spirit takes human form (becomes incarnate) in a special leader; who thus becomes an ‘icon’ of his presence on earth, representing him and participating in him. In this view, the Spirit is not primarily invisible and intangible, but personally present, powerful and life-giving. The second statement (“The Holy Spirit *is* Simon Kimbangu”) would be a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity as understood by most Christian churches and would have the added implication that only Kimbanguists have contact with the Holy Spirit, which would be a sectarian view. In terms of catholic Christian doctrine, the Holy Spirit is always ‘more than’ these ‘icons’: while using them he always transcends them, to ‘blow where he wills’.

As far as Kimbanguists are concerned this difference does not seem to exist. They use the two statements interchangeably, attributing divine nature to their founder. When they argue that Kimbangu *is* the Holy Spirit they consider both the incarnation and the equality at the same time. And this raises questions as to how the EJCSK understands Scripture on this important biblical doctrine which is key to mission. For by so teaching the EJCSK denies the Trinity. I suggest that African churches should question this kind of teaching in the EJCSK, which claims to be a Christian church. I also think that more studies need to be done in this area, comparing the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught by the EJCSK and its biblical basis as revealed by both the Old and New Testament. This would make a very interesting topic for future research.

7.4.2 The doctrine of the Trinity

The second problematic doctrine of the EJCSK is its views of the Trinity. They raise fundamental questions about the nature of the Christian truth and the contextual formulation of Christian doctrine. To make this particular issue clear, it would be helpful to hear the Roman Catholic Church's recent statement on this. Ekwa (2004:254-255) gives the official declaration of his Church in an article entitled "The declarations of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo on the relations between the Catholic Church and Kimbanguism" [*Les déclarations de la conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo sur les relations de l'église Catholique avec le Kimbanguisme*]. Since this is such an important declaration, I quote it in full in French and in my own English translation:

Considering

1. We, cardinal, archbishops, bishops of the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo, meeting in plenary assembly in Kinshasa from 28 June to 3 July 2004, conscious of our role as pastors of the people of God in the DRC, anxious to overcome divisions, to cultivate ecumenical dialogue in the truth with other churches and ecclesial communities, and to promote unity between all Christians by all means, according to catholic principles of ecumenism, which are based in the unity of faith, hope and love that constitutes the church as people of the new covenant.
Respectful of the dignity of the human person and the freedom of every person to search for the truth and to adhere to it according to his/her own beliefs or convictions and according to his/her desire for a relationship with God;
Disturbed by the recent development of the doctrinal situation in the midst of the Kimbanguist community;

With the aim of enlightening [giving guidance to] our faithful Catholics; have taken the following resolutions to pronounce ourselves on the nature of relations to be maintained with Kimbanguists.

Statements

2. The official title of the Kimbanguist community is “The Church of Jesus Christ on earth through his special envoy Simon Kimbangu”; since its inception this community has been recognized as a dissident daughter of the Protestant church. On this basis it was recommended [for membership] by the church of Christ in the Congo to the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC).

3. If initially the thinking and action of this community of faith conformed to the spirit and principles that are universally recognized as Christian, based on the confession of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and on faith in God, unique in three persons, this is no longer the case today, or the recent evolution of Kimbanguist doctrine leads towards serious aberrations and inconsistencies in relation to Christian doctrine.

4. Today, in effect, certain statements declare an identification of the three sons of Kimbangu (Kisolokele, Dialungana and Diangienda) with the three persons of the holy Trinity. But the latter is the truth on which the faith of all Christians rests and which is the fundamental teaching in the “hierarchy of the truths of faith.” This mystery of faith cannot in any way be accommodated to human measure.

5. These statements, which reveal idolatry and the divinisation of human beings, prove that the Kimbanguist community is no longer a Christian church. By divinizing the three sons of the prophet Simon Kimbangu, it repudiates the holy Trinity. Kimbanguism is therefore a non-Christian religion and should be treated as such.

Conclusion

6. The relationship of the Roman Catholic Church with Kimbanguism should therefore be the same as those maintained with other non-Christian religions. Consequently, Kimbanguist baptism is invalid for Christian Catholics, since it is not administered in the name of the holy Trinity (Mt 28:19). Christian Catholics can no longer practice spiritual ecumenism (share ecumenical prayers) with Kimbanguists.

[Considérons :

1. Nous, cardinal, archevêques et évêques de la conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo ; réunis en assemblée plénière à Kinshasa du 28 Juin au 3 Juillet 2004 ; conscients de notre rôle de pasteurs du peuple de Dieu qui est en RDC ; soucieux de dépasser les divisions, de cultiver dans la vérité le dialogue oecuménique avec les autres églises et communautés ecclésiales et de promouvoir par tous les moyens l'unité entre tous les chrétiens, conformément aux principes catholiques de l'oecuménisme, lesquels sont fondés sur l'unité de la foi, de l'espérance et de la charité pour constituer le peuple de la nouvelle alliance qu'est l'église.

Respectueux de la dignité de la personne humaine et de la liberté qu'a tout homme de chercher la vérité et d'y adhérer selon ses propres croyances ou

convictions et selon son désir de relation a Dieu ; préoccupé par la récente évolution de la situation doctrinale au sein de la communauté Kimbanguiste ; avons pris dans le but d'éclairer nos fidèles catholiques, la résolutions de nous prononcer sur la nature des relations a entretenir avec les Kimbanguistes.

Constats:

2. *Le titre officiel de la communauté Kimbanguiste est: « Eglise de Jésus Christ sur la terre par son envoyé spéciale Simon Kimbangu » de par sa genèse, cette communauté est reconnue comme une fille dissidente de l'église protestante. A ce titre, elle a été recommandée par l'église du Christ au Congo auprès du conseil des Eglises de toute l'Afrique (CETA) et du conseil œcuménique des églises (COE).*

3. *Si, au départ, la pensée et l'action de cette communauté de foi étaient conformes à l'esprit et aux principes Chrétiens universellement reconnus, bases sur la reconnaissance de Jésus Christ comme Dieu et sauver selon les écritures, et à la foi au Dieu unique en trois personnes, tel n'est plus le cas aujourd'hui ou l'évolution récente de la doctrine Kimbanguiste conduit vers de graves aberrations et dérapages, par rapport à la doctrine Chrétienne.*

4. *En effet, aujourd'hui certaines affirmations attestent une identification de trois fils du prophète Simon Kimbangu: Kisolokele, Dialungana et Diangienda aux trois personnes de la sainte trinité. Or celle-ci est la vérité sur laquelle repose la foi de tous les Chrétiens et qui est l'enseignement fondamental dans la « hiérarchie des vérités de foi ». Ce mystère de foi ne peut en aucune manière être conçu à la mesure humaine.*

5. *De telles affirmations, qui manifestent l'idolâtrie et la divinisation des hommes, prouvent que la communauté Kimbanguiste n'est plus une église Chrétienne. Par le fait de diviniser les trois enfants du prophète Simon Kimbangu, elle nie la sainte trinité. Le Kimbanguisme est dès lors une religion non-chrétiennes et doit être traitée comme tel.*

Conclusion:

6. *C'est pourquoi, les relations de l'église Catholique avec le Kimbanguisme doivent être celles qu'elle entretient avec les autres religions non-chrétiennes.*

Par conséquent:

Le baptême Kimbanguiste est invalide pour les Chrétiens catholiques, puisqu'il n'est pas conféré au nom de la sainte trinité, Mat 28:19. Les Chrétiens catholiques ne peuvent plus faire l'œcuménisme spirituel (prières œcuménique) avec les Kimbanguistes.]

According to this declaration, the Roman Catholic Church acknowledges that in its early years, the EJCSK was a member of the Protestant churches in its teachings and actions, and that on this basis the Evangelical Fellowship of Congo recommended the EJCSK to the All Africa Conference of Churches and World Council of Churches for membership. In recent years, however, there has been a negative theological evolution in which human beings have been given the status of the persons of the Trinity.

In his own lifetime, however, Simon Kimbangu considered himself merely as a messenger of Christ to the black people and never as God, nor as the Holy Spirit. The notion that his three sons constitute the persons of the Trinity is a later addition to the teaching of Kimbangu. It is not clear whether the sons themselves ever taught such a doctrine during their days. I subscribe to this Roman Catholic declaration and regard it as essential that other African churches should question these Trinitarian views within the EJCSK. Such views bring doubt to outsiders whether the Kimbanguist church is a member of the ecumenical Christian community of faith.

My position is that the EJCSK has severed its connection with its biblical roots on some crucial doctrinal issues. These issues, which are being debated amongst the followers of Kimbangu, are new to the church -- not really problems during the time of the prophet himself. To grasp the theology of any church group the best way would be to get back to the roots of the movement and the teachings of its founder. The last words of Kimbangu are, to me, essential to understanding the theology of his church. And they suggest a theology that is common or behind the mission of most African-initiated churches today.

Kimbangu considered himself simply as a messenger of Christ to the black people. He never thought of himself as God, or as the Holy Spirit. The notion that his three sons constitute the persons of the trinity is a later addition to the teaching of Kimbangu. It is not clear whether the sons themselves, all three of whom have died already, ever taught such a doctrine during their days. From my evaluation, all these doctrinal problems are by-products of both Kimbanguist members and the current church leadership. These demonstrate strong devotion to the person Simon Kimbangu and his family. I am not sure whether these doctrines will last long within the church or not. Leaders come and go. Even with all these new doctrines, who knows? One day new leadership may abandon them and take the church back to its Protestant and charismatic roots.

7.4.3 The EJCSK – a Spirit-type or Charismatic church?

The nature of the EJCSK as a prophetic or Spirit-type church deserves some consideration. A close evaluation of current Kimbanguist church services in Katanga (Lubumbashi city) suggests that much of the charismatic or prophetic emphasis of the old days are lacking. Here too the church seems to have departed from its beginnings. If it was charismatic and prophetic in the past, such is no longer the case today, at least from the research at my disposal. All the times I attended the church services, not even once did I see a manifestation of the Holy Spirit through any charisma. I do not know if this church should be classified among the prophetic type of the AICS according to Turner's classification referred to by Daneel (1987:38-42). He gives three categories of the Christian AICS, the Ethiopian type, the messianic type and the Spirit-type. Daneel (2001: viii- xi) describes common features among spirit-type or prophetic kind of churches.

Their features include special emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, baptism by immersion, speaking in tongues, prophetic activity of diverse kinds and faith healing. Most of these features are almost non-existent within the EJCSK from the research that I conducted. There are very few leaders who can even exercise spiritual gifts. They seem to have consigned these to the Legal Representative alone. From my assessment, Kimbanguist church services are a mixture of some Roman Catholic and Protestant practices, which could bring the EJCSK closer to the "Ethiopian" type of Sundkler. The prophetic and charismatic nature of the EJCSK deserves detailed study, considering that its current nature can affect the classification of AICs in missiological studies.

7.4.4 Water baptism

The EJCSK stand on water baptism is another important issue to address. It seems to differ from what most Protestant churches and AICs practice. Kimbanguist argue that water baptism belongs to another era of the church, prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit. Now that the Spirit has already come in the person of Simon Kimbangu, people no longer need to be baptized with water. They need to seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. To me this is a challenge the EJCSK puts across to other African churches when it comes to the ordinance or sacrament of baptism. A study of the Book of Acts reveals that even after the coming of the Holy Spirit (as taught by the Scriptures, not the Kimbanguist view of the Spirit) the apostles continued to baptize new believers in water.

They never stopped obeying the command of the Lord Jesus Christ as found in Mat. 28:19-20 and the other Gospels. Arguing that the church no longer needs to baptize people in water, because the Holy Spirit has come, would be contradictory to the biblical teaching. This is a matter that needs to be taken up with the EJCSK in honest and fraternal Christian dialogue.

7.4.5 The body of Simon Kimbangu

The exposure of Simon Kimbangu's body in N'kamba is a key feature of Kimbanguist spirituality. The body of the EJCSK founder has been exposed in a transparent kind of coffin in a mausoleum in his home town. Most pilgrims to N'kamba visit his body and take some time to pray before the coffin as a way of asking for divine favour and intervention from God. Kimbanguists report that Kimbangu's body has not been embalmed since 1960 when it was removed from Lubumbashi. Even when he was buried, his followers reported that he was put in the grave without being embalmed. Thus, the body has not changed up to this day. This kind of practice has similarities with the Roman Catholic Church known for keeping the bodies of the late bishops or highly ranked clergy. It is a practice that does not promote true Christian spirituality. It makes many people question the mission of the EJCSK.

7.4.6 Marriage as a sacrament

The EJCSK believes in the celebration of marriage as a sacrament. But what is strange is that marriage has to be blessed only within the Kimbanguist local churches, even if the other partner (male or female) is not a member of the EJCSK. A follower of Simon Kimbangu cannot be prayed for elsewhere because marriage is not a sacrament for other churches, argue Kimbanguists. This position to me undermines the ecumenical relationship advocated by the EJCSK. Why does it not trust or accept the blessings and prayers of other churches with which it is in communion? What Kimbanguists confess needs to be put into practice and not remain only as theories.

7.4.7 EJCSK as a multi-ethnic church

The EJCSK is a multi-ethnic, inter-tribal church with a leadership (and succession) system that closely resembles that of an African clan or "tribe". Being a multi-ethnic church is good because it is in line with biblical teaching where Jesus Christ

said that the church needs to be a house of prayers for all nations (Mk 11:17). It also agrees with Diangienda's (1984:257f) thrust of the church for all nations. It encourages ethnic and racial integration and fights tribalism and segregation – which present serious challenges to many African churches today. However, the leadership of the church resembles a tribal system, especially when it comes to succession. This to me is a paradox that needs to be studied on a separate research project to further missiological studies in our region. The major question would be “*How can a church be multi- ethnic or inter-tribal at the grass root level but tribal at the leadership level, and still continue to grow?*” I find this to be a big challenge for AIC studies. Church members from ethnic backgrounds different from the Kimbangu family would also want to become leaders and contribute to the mission of the church. But when these are not given any room in the top leadership of the church, they tend to be frustrated and in most cases decide to leave the church. My argument is that the church should either be multi-ethnic from the grassroots to the leadership level or otherwise tribal at all levels. To be both at the same time seems to hinder both qualitative church growth and effective mission actions.

7.4.8 EJCSK hermeneutics

EJCSK hermeneutics is another area of concern. When looked at within the framework of Protestant hermeneutics, their use of Scripture seems unbalanced. Kimbanguist preachers or clergy will use biblical texts as sources for the message; but the meaning of the texts is found in the life and acts of Simon Kimbangu, before application is made to the people.

On the other hand, accepted Protestant hermeneutics gets a text from the Bible and looks for the original meaning from the immediate context of the writer. Then application is made to people's lives. The Kimbanguist way of interpreting the scriptures seems to remove the needed objectivity from the preaching of the Word. This subjective interpretation is an aspect that needs much attention by those who do research on the AICs within the region. The meaning of a biblical text is found in the text itself or within the entire book context. Of course some scholars think that the audience or ministry context can also affect the meaning of the text. But to search for the meaning of a particular biblical text in the life of the late church founder raises doubt about the veracity and vivacity of the word preached by the church.

7.4.9 EJCSK sacraments

The EJCSK teaching on the sacraments is contradictory, confusing and illogical. It is true that many church denominations may include some “sacraments” which are different from others. The Protestants in general hold to the view that there are only two sacraments: Holy Communion and baptism, while the Roman Catholic Church holds to seven (7) As indicated in Chapter 5, the EJCSK has adopted four sacraments: marriage, ordination, the Lord’s Table, and baptism. This shows another similarity between the EJCSK and the Roman Catholic Church, when most Protestants argue that there are only two sacraments. Douglas (1987:878-879) defines the word sacrament in its Christian meaning as a word employed to translate the Greek word *mysterion*. Grudem (1994:966) defines a sacrament as a rite considered as a “testament to inner grace or a channel that mediates grace”. According to Douglas, the Reformers of the 16th century held to baptism and the Lord’s Supper as the only two sacraments since: a) they were instituted by Christ; b) Christ commanded that they be observed by his followers, and c) they are visible symbols or seals of divine grace. To me the two sacraments are symbolic rites setting forth the central truth of the Christian faith: death and resurrection with Christ and participation in the redemptive benefits of Christ’s mediatory death. And since marriage and ordination do not seem to respond to the three criteria given above they should not be called sacraments.

The celebration of the Holy Communion only during the visits of the LR is a handicap to the church. It denies the church an opportunity to remember its Lord and proclaim his death on a regular basis. The celebration of the Eucharist according to the EJCSK is part of the duties of every minister (see 6.4.4) wherever they are, instead of waiting on a visit from the LR, in his busy programme. In addition, demanding that people travel from all over the world to N’kamba for Holy Communion- even if there are a number of advantages such as enhancing church unity, the control of the LR over all church members, the giving of direction by the top church leadership to all the followers, etc. – is costly and impractical. I am of the view that the church will do well to revisit some of its principles that do not seem to serve an ordinary church member, but hinders his/her growth.

7.4.10 Leadership structure and the role of the Legal Representative

Leadership and church structure is a key aspect in understanding the mission of any church organization, the EJCSK included. This is the strength of the EJCSK, but perhaps also an area of concern. I tend to think that too much emphasis was placed on organizational structures, which have developed to such an extent that the mission of the church and the work of the Holy Spirit are affected (see 3.2). In modern Kimbanguism, emphasis should be put on mission, and on encouraging people to seek the Holy Spirit's empowerment for mission, rather than on elaborate structures in the way things are done within the church.

The appointment to ministry is another aspect of the EJCSK mission that drew my attention in this study. The practice does not work in accordance with the biblical pattern of calling to ministry. My analysis of the biblical texts, both in the Old and New Testament, demonstrates God's direct involvement in the calling of those he wanted to serve him. The appointment of pastors into ministry by the Kimbanguist Legal Representative promotes lack of commitment and consecration from those who are serving in different churches. It also encourages favouritism and segregation in the church. One might have served the church as a deacon for many years efficiently, but that does not qualify such a person to become a pastor. Appointing people into pastoral ministry on the basis of their long and good service in other areas of church life seems unbiblical to me and it may well discourage those who have the calling to really serve the church. Church history makes clear that pastoral leaders do not often come up through the ranks of deacons or elders.

This practice explains to a certain extent why the EJCSK in Katanga lacks qualified personnel to serve the church as pastors. The church has a theological training institution in Kinshasa, but has few trained pastors. This is a matter of great concern. The problem is that one can become a pastor by appointment -- even if he/she has no calling and training. To make matters worse, the few who are called and trained in theology end up working as administrators in various church departments and commissions and are detached from preaching and teaching. One can hardly avoid the conclusion that the

EJCSK does not seem to value theological education, despite having a big university and a school of theology.

To me this is a major weakness of the EJSCK mission. Its clergy simply needs to be trained, especially those who are destined for pastoral ministry. If pastorates could be entrusted to well-trained theologians, it would ensure sound doctrinal teachings and good care of the new converts. To a larger extent, even the mission of the church could gain a new orientation. In short, this large church body needs to take theological education more seriously, beginning with the planting of extensions of its theological seminary in other parts of Congo. Thinking that one can do well in ministry without any formal theological or ministerial training -- as do a number of the Kimbanguist pastors I interviewed -- but relying only upon the help of the Holy Spirit, does not show itself to be a good philosophy of ministry in our time.

Knowledge is on the increase in our days in all spheres of life, and the church needs to train its leaders and ministers to meet the demands of the people who attend church services. During my research, I saw evidence that, despite being present in many parts of the world, the EJCSK often lacks strong leadership in its local congregations. This cannot enhance the carrying out of the mission of its founder in an efficient way. I believe that the Kimbanguist mission needs to address this shortfall as a matter of urgency.

The active involvement of the EJCSK LR in mission is another issue of concern. He not only enjoys his position as an overall leader, but works as a missionary himself. Here we see a kind of apostolic ministry in the LR. He does this through his missionary trips to various parts of the Congo and beyond, wherever his church is present. He works as an intercessor and a prophet to his people, blending long hours of intercessory prayers with ministries of healing and deliverance. In N'kamba the entire mission ministry of the church is enhanced as he prays and counsels the pilgrims who visit N'kamba from all over the world -- and all Kimbanguist members in particular.

Still, one can't help but feel that it would be better for the LR and the church in general if such ministries were also practiced by all Kimbanguist clergy. My research

suggests that healing, prophetic and deliverances ministry seem to be exercised by the LR alone. The church believes that he is the only one with such a supernatural power to operate in those areas of ministry. Kimbanguists needs to understand that the Holy Spirit, according to biblical teaching, has been poured out upon “all flesh” and can use any believer to meet the needs of his church.

Not only is the LR involved in mission, but almost all members are involved in mission through church departments and commission. The various church departments try their best to meet people’s needs, both within and outside the church. In some situations, various church departments become good avenues through which the activities of these church wings, we can see how the EJCSK members understand the transformation of communities and many more.

7.5 Topics for further research

During my research I came across a number of areas that are likely to make good topics for further missiological investigations. Here are the major ones:

- a) An adequate missiological framework to evaluate heresy, contextualization and contextualism within AICs. How does one go about it?
- b) Similarities and differences between interpretations of the Paraclete by Montanism, Islam, Mormons, and Kimbanguists. Are there similarities or patterns?
- c) Doctrinal developments within the African initiated churches: how do AIC theologies develop in relation to their leadership generations?
- d) Comparing the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as taught by the EJCSK and its biblical basis as revealed by both the Old and New Testaments. Understanding the Kimbanguist pneumatology in the light of biblical revelation can be the focus.
- e) The charismatic or prophetic nature of the Kimbanguist church in the light of Turner’s AIC classification referred to by Daneel (1987:38-42). Features of a charismatic religious group are to be analyzed to better understand the current nature of the EJCSK as a church.
- g) The last topic for more investigation would be to answer the question: How can a church that is multi-ethnic or inter-tribal at the grass root level but tribal at the leadership level grow both qualitatively and quantitatively? Can the EJCSK be used as the starting point for such a study?

- f) How does the EJCSK relate to other churches and religious movements in the Congo?

7.6 Conclusion

While the matters discussed in this dialogue with the EJCSK mission are not exhaustive, the dialogue itself has been done within the objectives of this dissertation. As I have stated above under four major sections of this chapter, Kimbanguist mission in Katanga province has many new areas that demand new studies by those who have academic interest in the study of the AICs in southern Africa. This research raises the challenge for other investigations in the future. It is my hope that this will follow, and that the assessments above will help point the way forward.

REFERENCES

A. Books and literature referred to in the dissertation

- Akiele, Basile. 1998/99. *Attributes of Simon Kimbangu: Founder of the Kimbanguist Church*. Journal of interdenominational theological centre, vol.26 no 2, pages 190-206.
- Alexander, W.L. 1978. *The pulpit commentary: Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Amanze, J. 1998. *African Christianity in Botswana: The case of African Independent churches*. Gweru, Mambo Press.
- Ambassador for Christ. 1982. *Report on the 2nd OAIC conference in Nairobi*. Unpublished.
- Anyenyola, W. 1984. *La dynamique des sectes religieuse à Lubumbashi. Voies nouvelles pour l'évangélisation*. Lubumbashi : Actes de Synode Catholique de Luishia 12J.
- Asch, Ann. 1978. *L'église Kimbanguiste de ses origines a son rôle actuel au Zaïre*. Paris : Editions Paris.
- Broadbent, E. H. 1945. *The Pilgrim Church*. London: Pickering and Inglis.
- Bandzouzi, A. 2002. *Le Kimbanguisme*. Paris: Jouve.
- Barrett, D.B. 1968. *Schism and renewal in Africa: An analysis of six thousand contemporary religious movements*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Bevans, S.B. 1992. *Models of contextual theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis.
- Bosch, D.J. 1991. *Transforming mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis.
- Daneel, M.L. 1987. *Quest for belonging*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Daneel, M.L. 2001. *African Christian outreach Vol.1. African initiated churches*. Pretoria: Southern African Missiological Society.
- Diangienda, K. 1984. *L'histoire du Kimbanguisme*. Kinshasa: Editions Kimbanguistes.
- Division Provinciale du plan Katanga, Rapport annuel (2003:33)*.
- Douglas, J.D. (ed.) 1987. *Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- EJCSK. 1992. *Dernière lettre de son éminence Diangienda Kuntima, aux croyants du monde*. Centre chrétien de promotion culturelle, Kinshasa.
- EJCSK. 1997. *Règlement d'ordre intérieur des organes de L'église de Jésus-Christ sur la terre par son envoyé spécial Simon Kimbangu*. Kinshasa.
- EJCSK. 2001. *Association des femmes Kimbanguistes*. Editions Kimbanguiste, Kin.
- EJCSK. 2005a. *Commission Justice, Paix et Sauvegarde de la création de l'église Kimbanguiste. Règlement Intérieur*. Kinshasa.

- EJCSK. 2007a. *La personification du Saint-Esprit et la Divinité de Simon Kimbangu*. Département de ressources Humaines, EJCSK. Lubumbashi.
- EJCSK. 2007b. *Rapport du conseiller près du Chef Spirituel en matière de communication, Rev Bobe Bolewalo*. Kinshasa.
- Ekwa, M.K. 2004. *L'Ecole Trahie: Congo Afrique*, XLIVe année (No 388):451-505.
- Fehderau, H.W. 1962. Kimbanguism in Congo. *International Review on Mission*, Vol.44, pages 40-54.
- Fournier, Keith. 2008. How we worship is how we live, Lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi. <http://www.catholic.org>.
- Gordon, M. 1990. *The place and function of hymns in the EJCSK*. London: History of religions.
- Grudem, Wayne. 1994. *Systematic theology*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Harold, F.W. 1962. Kimbanguist: Prophetic Christianity in Congo. *Practical Anthropology* 9 (June):157-178.
- Heintz-Flad .1978. *L'église Kimbanguiste: Une église qui chante et prie*. Leiden: Brill.
- Henry, Thiessen C. 1968. *Introduction to lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Hesselgrave, D.J. 1978. *Dynamic religious movements*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Holland, Joe & Peter Henriot, S.J. 1985. *Social analysis: Linking faith and justice*. Maryknoll: Orbis.
- Ingenozza, A.O. 1985. African weltanschauung and exorcism: The question for contextualization of the kerygma, *African Theological Journal* 14.
- Jageneau, G.H. 2006. *Eglises, Sectes et Mouvements Neo-religieux. Tome I. Missionnaire d'Afrique*. Lubumbashi: Editions Medias Paul.
- James, B.E. 1966. *Kimbanguism A Challenge to Missionary Statesmanship*. *Practical Anthropology* 13 (Jun):13-33.
- Katshiji, T. 1998. *L'église Kimbanguiste et la politique. Essai d'analyse ecclésiologique*. Division de ressource humaine (EJCSK) Lubumbashi.
- Katshiji, T. 2002. *La Mission de la Jeunesse Kimbanguiste*. Division de ressource humaine (EJCSK) Lubumbashi
- Katshiji, T. 2003. *L'église Kimbanguiste et le développement. Essai d'analyse Ecclesio-Caritative*. Division de ressource humaine, Lubumbashi.
- Katshiji T. 2004. *L'église de Jésus christ et la vie religieuse: département des ressources humaines*, Lubumbashi.
- Kritzinger, J.J, Meiring, P.G.J. and Saayman, W.A. 1994. *On Being Witnesses*. Halfway House: Orion Publishers.

- Kritzinger, J.N.J. 1995. Studying religious communities as agents of change: An agenda for missiology. *Missionalia* 23:3 (November):366-396.
- Kritzinger, J.N.J. 2002. *A question of mission – A mission of questions*, *Missionalia* 30:1 (April):
- Kritzinger, J.N.J. 2007. Nurturing missional integrity. Postgraduate missiology seminar, 15-15 May 2007. Pretoria: Unisa. Unpublished paper.
- Kunnie, Julian. 1992. *Indigenous African churches and religio-cultural liberation: The practice of traditional healing*. Washington: African Studies Association.
- Lwamba, Nkebi. 1990. Le ministère des femmes dans l'église Kimbanguiste. *Mélanges de Sciences Religieuses* 47 (Dec).
- Mackay, D.J. 1987. Simon Kimbangu and the B.M.S. tradition. *Journal of Religion in Africa*. 17(2), Jun:113-171.
- Macquarrie, John. 1966. *Principles of Christian theology*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Martin, M.-L 1979. New development in Kimbanguist church. *Missiology* 7 (Jan):113-118.
- Martin, M.-L. 1975a. Confessing Christ in the Kimbanguist Church. *International Review of Mission* 64 (No. 255):25-29.
- Martin, M.-L. 1975b. *Kimbangu: An African Prophet and his Church*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Martin, Marie-Louise. 1968. *Prophetic Christianity in the Congo: The Church of Christ on earth through the prophet Simon Kimbangu*. Braamfontein: Christian Institute of Southern Africa.
- Michael, A. P. 1984. *Acts in progress: a Diacronic overview of Kimbanguism*. *Missiology: an International review*, vol. xii, no 2, April.
- Michel, Papa. 2007. *Les prophéties de Papa Simon Kimbangu*. Lubumbashi: Choreki.
- Molyneux, G. 1990. Place and Function of Hymns in the EJCSK. *Journal of Religion* 20 (Jul):153-187.
- Morel, Yves. 2003. *Seigneur a qui irions-nous? Le Chrétien face aux sectes et aux nouveaux mouvements religieux*. Abidjan: Editions Pauline.
- Mouton, Johann. 2001. *How to succeed in your master's & doctoral studies. A South African guide and resource book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Ngoy, Wakadilo. 1970. La Pénétration de la Mission Méthodiste au Katanga. Thesis, Université Libre du Congo, Kisangani.
- Nicole, J.M. 1996. Précis de l'histoire de l'église. Paris : Editions de l'institut du Nord.
- Nyami, Mashwa R. 2000. *L'apparition miraculeuse de Simon Kimbangu a l'aéroport de Maya Maya*. Kinshasa : Editions Kimbanguistes.

- Nzikimwena & Lembi. 1993. *Réflexion, Revue des chercheurs indépendants sur le Kimbanguisme*. Kinshasa: Editions Kimbanguiste.
- Rabey, S. 2003. The People's Prophet Simon Kimbangu's brief ministry. *Christian history* (No 79):32-34.
- Rapport intérimaire du secrétariat pour l'unité des chrétiens. 1986. Le phénomène des sectes ou nouveaux mouvements religieux: déficit pastoral. Lubumbashi : Editions Saint Paul Afrique.
- Raymaekers, Paul (ed.). 1971. Histoire de Simon Kimbangu prophète, d'après les écrivains Nfinangani et Nzungu. 1921. *Archive de sociologie* 16 (Jan).
- Robert, D.L. 2003. *African Christian outreach Vol.2, Mission churches*. Pretoria: Southern African Missiological Society.
- Silu, Bena. 1977. Message of expectations from indigenous movement: a reaction. *International Review of Mission* 66 (Jan):71-74.
- Simbandumwe, S. 1992. Understanding the role of a modern prophet in Kimbanguist church hymns. *History of religions* 32 (Nov):165-183.
- Sundkler, B.G.M. 1948. *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*. London: Lutterworth Press.
- Sundkler, B.G.M. 1961. *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*. 2nd edition. London: Oxford University Press.
- Tshauta, K. 2004a. *Formation des pasteurs au seuil du troisième millénaire*. Lubumbashi: Division de Ressources Humaines.
- Tshauta, K. 2004b. *Séminaire de formation du clergé Kimbanguiste. L'église et la vie religieuse*. Lubumbashi: Division de Ressources Humaines.
- Turner, H.W. 1967a. A typology for African religious movements. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 1(1).
- Valentino, Salvoldi. 1996. *Africa the Gospel belongs to us*. Ndola: Mission Press.
- WCC. 1967. The Kimbanguist church in the Congo. *Ecumenical Review* 19 (Jan):29-36.
- Welman, J.C., Kruger, S.J. and Mitchell, B. 2005. *Research Methodology*. 3rd edition. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Yohannan, K.P. 1986. *Revolution in world missions*. Indiana: Gospel for Asia.
- Zola, K. 1997. *L'implantation de L'église kimbanguiste au Katanga*. Lubumbashi: TFC, ISP.
- Zola, K. 1999. *Incidence Ecclésiastique des femmes Kimbanguistes au Congo*. Lubumbashi : Memoire, ISP.

B. Literature for further information

- Allen, Roland. 1962. *The spontaneous expansion of the church*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans

- Balandier, G. 1953. *Messianismes et nationalismes en Afrique noire*. Paris: Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie.
- Baur, John. 1994. *Years of Christianity in Africa*. Nairobi: Paulines.
- Boff, L. 1990. *New evangelization. Good news to the Poor*. Maryknoll, Orbis.
- Boff, L. 1992. *Ecology and liberation: A new paradigm*. Maryknoll: Orbis.
- Brown, H. and Keim, C. (eds). 1980. *Missions in Afrika: Relevant or Relic? A conference, Indianapolis, Indiana, December 1 and 2, 1978*. Bloomington: Indiana University African Studies Program.
- Cook, Harold, R. 1977. *An introduction to Christian missions*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Daneel, M.L. 1970. *The God of the Matopo hills*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Daneel, M.L. 1971. *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent churches, Vol 1: Background and Rise of the major movements*. The Hague: Mouton
- Daneel, M.L. 1974. *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent churches, Vol 2: Church growth: Causative factors and recruitment techniques*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Daneel, M.L. 1983. Communication and liberation in African Independent Churches, *Missionalia* 11(2):57-93.
- Daneel, M.L. 1988. *Old and New in Southern Shona Independent Churches. Vol 3. Leadership and Fission Dynamics*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Daneel, M.L. 1989a. *Christian Theology of Africa. Study guide 1 for MSB301-F*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Daneel, M.L. 1989b. *Fambidzano: Ecumenical movement of Zimbabwean Independent churches*. Gweru: Mambo Press.
- Daneel, M.L. 1990. Earth keeping in missiological perspective: An African challenge. *Mission Studies* 13:25-26.
- Daneel, M.L. 1990. *Exorcism as means of combating wizardry: Liberation or enslavement*. *Missionalia*, Vol. 18(1):220-247.
- Daneel, M.L. 1998. *African earth keepers. Vol. 1. Interfaith mission in earth care*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Du Toit, C.W. and Ngada, N.H. 1989. *Hearing the AIC-voice*. Pretoria : Research Institute for Theology and Religion, Unisa.
- EJCSK. 1901. *Liturgies et sacrements Kimbanguistes: département d'évangélisation*. Edition-Eki, Hors –série no 4.
- Fashole-Luke, E.W. 1976. The quest for African Christian theologies, in *Mission trends no 3: Third world theologies*, edited by G.H. Anderson and T.F. Stransky. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

- Fox, M. 1990. *A spirituality named compassion: Uniting mystical awareness with social justice*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Hardin, Daniel C. 1978. *Mission: A practical approach to church sponsored mission work*. South Pasadena: William Carey.
- Hayes, Stephen. 1992. The African Independent Churches: Judgement through terminology? *Missionalia* 20(2):136-146.
- Hoekendjik, J.C. 1967. *The church inside out*. London: SCM.
- Holland, Joe. 2004. *Roots of pastoral circle in personal experiences and Catholic Social tradition; in The pastoral circle revisited. A critical quest for truth and transformation*, edited by Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot and Rodrigo Mjia. Maryknoll: Orbis:23-34.
- Judd, C.M., Kidder, L.H. and Smith, E.R. (eds) 1991. *Research Methods in social relations*. International edition. New York: Dryden Press.
- Kiernan, J.P. 1996. *The production and management of therapeutic power in Zionist churches within a Zulu city*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Kitshoff, M.C. 1966. *African Independent Churches Today. Kaleidoscope of Afro-Christianity*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Kritzinger, J.J. 1988. *The South African context for mission*. Cape Town: Lux Verbi.
- Luzbetak, Louis J. 1988. *The Church and Cultures: New perspectives in missiological anthropology*. Maryknoll: Orbis.
- Malula, J. 1974. The church at the hour of Africanization, *AFER* 16:365-371.
- Martin, M.-L. 1964. *The biblical concept of messianism in Southern Africa*. Morija: Morija Sesotho Book Depot.
- Mazambara, P.D. 1999. *The self-understanding of African Instituted Churches: A study based on the Church of the Apostles founded by John of Marange in Zimbabwe*. (Perspektiven der Weltmission; Bd 29). Aachen: Verlag an der Lottbek.
- Mazibuko, B.A. 1987. Some observations on antecedents to religious independency in Africa. A response to H.L. Pretorius. *Missionalia* 15(1):42-44.
- Mbiti, J.S. 1986. *Bible and theology in African Christianity*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Messer, D.E. 1992. *A conspiracy of goodness: Contemporary images of Christian mission*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Mijoga, Hilary B.P. 2002. African Instituted Churches as vanguards of African culture: A reassessment. *Missionalia* 30(2):183-205.
- Milingo, E. 1984. *The world in between, Christian healing and the struggle for spiritual survival*. Maryknoll: Orbis.
- Molobi, M.S. 2004. African theology, Black theology and the African Initiated Churches: A Vision for mission. DTh thesis, University of South Africa.

- Moltmann, J. 1985. *God in creation: An ecological doctrine of creation*. London: SCM.
- Musasa, K. 2000. *Le système kimbanguiste au Congo-Kinshasa*. Thèse de doctorat, UNILU.
- Ngewa, S., Shaw, M. and Tiénou, T. (eds) 1998. *Issues in African Christian theology*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.
- Nyamiti, C. 1973. *The scope of African Christianity*. Kampala: Gaba.
- Ojo, Matthews, A. 1997. The dynamics of indigenous charismatic missionary enterprises in West Africa. *Missionalia* 25(4):537-561.
- Oosthuizen, G.C. and Hexham, I. 1992. *Empirical studies of African Independent/Indigenous Churches*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Pauw, C.M. 1993. Independency and religious change in Malawi: A new challenge for the church. *Missionalia* 21(2):138-151.
- Rasmussen, A.M.B. 1996. *Modern African Spirituality: The independent Holy Spirit Churches in East Africa from 1902-1976*. London: British Academic Press.
- Saayman, W.A. 1984. *Unity and mission*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.
- Shenk, David A. (ed). 1991. *Ministry in partnership with African Independent Churches*. Elkhart, Indiana: Mennonite Board of Missions.
- Turner, H.W. 1967b. *History of an African independent church. Vol.1 The Church of the Lord (Aladura)*. Oxford, Clarendon.
- Welbourne, F.B & Ogot, B.A. 1966. *A place to feel at home*. London: Oxford University Press.

C. Newspapers and Magazines

- Dilulu, Lembi. 1993. *Réflexion. Revue des chercheurs indépendants sur le Kimbanguisme*. Kinshasa : éditions Kimbanguiste.
- EJCSK. 2002. *Le Kimbanguisme Info, No 28, du 2 Décembre 2002*. Kinshasa: Editions Kimbanguistes
- EJCSK. 2006a. *Le Kimbanguisme Info. Bimensuel d'opinion, d'éducation et d'information générale de l'église Kimbanguiste*. Kinshasa: éditions Kimbanguistes.
- EJCSK. 2006b. *Le Kimbanguisme Info, Troisième année, no 74 du lundi 13 Mars*. Kinshasa.
- EJCSK. 2005b. *Journal officiel no.18 (15 Sept):19-44*.
- Le Lushois (news paper) No 15 Octobre, 2007*.