

# Case study: african and christian spirituality



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# 1. 0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

## 1. 1 Introduction

This research constitutes a instance survey that explores the relationship between Autochthonal African spirituality and Christian spirituality, in visible radiation of the outgrowth and continual growing of African Initiated Churches ( afterlife, AICs ) . It must be noted that the term AICs has been used in assorted contexts that denotes assorted significances or readings in relation to modern-day African Christianity. In fact, there are five ways in which the term AICs has been used by bookmans. For case, AIC has been used to mention to African *Autochthonal* Churches ( Turner, 1967 ) , African *Mugwump* Churches ( Daneel, 1987 ) , African *Initiated* Churches ( Hastings, 1996 ) , African *Instituted* Churches ( Chitando 2004 ) and African *International* Churches ( Maxwell 2007 ) .

Turner ( 1967 ) contributes valuable academic penetrations refering the causes of the outgrowth of the AICs. Although, true, the topic of AICs has been researched by a figure of bookmans, there continues to be a “ shortage of literature on the interplay between Christian spirituality and autochthonal Spirituality in Africa” ( Anderson, 2004, p. 139 ) . The present survey is undertaken to detect the extent to which autochthonal spirituality has imprinted on Christian spirituality in Africa. Possibly, the major inquiries relevant to the survey are: How has autochthonal spirituality influenced the nature and way of Christian spirituality in Africa? Or, is at that place a

noticeable common adoption or intricate relatedness between Christian spirituality and autochthonal spirituality? Consequently, the survey grapples with these inquiries by analyzing the Masowe Enyenyedzi church in Zimbabwe. The major push of the survey is to look into, to what extent the Masowe Enyenyedzi Christian spirituality and individuality has been influenced by African autochthonal spirituality?

In recent research ( Orobator 2008, p. 142 ) admits that “ indigenous spirituality has been a fecund land in the assimilation or acceptableness of Christian spirituality in Africa.” Olupona ( 2011 ) concurs with Orobator by keeping that, though Christianity came moderately tardily in the 19<sup>Thursday</sup> and 20<sup>Thursday</sup> centuries in Africa, it has grown really fleetly such that Africa has become a major fastness of Christendom ( Verstraelen-Gilhuis, 1992 ) . Orobator ( 2008 ) and Olupona ( 2011 ) , among others have opined that autochthonal spirituality prepared a prolific land for the contextualisation of Christianity in a new skyline. Tienou ( 1997 ) observed that the outgrowth of AICs manifests the world of the contextualisation whose pursuit is meant to happen a relevant African Christianity that is deemed reliable and prolonging autochthonal spirituality and individuality. This contextualisation has given rise to the pictured model of ‘ the boundary production and boundary crossing’ which shapes the way of the present research. These constructs warrant farther expounding in order to locate the survey into proper and broad position.

## 1. 2 The Impression of Boundary Production

In this survey, “ boundary production” ( Binsbergen 2003, p. 10 ) refers to, and is associated with, the cultural peculiarity. The research seeks to clarify on the Autochthonal world-view that predates Christianity ( Mbiti 1970 ) . The manner in which African civilizations and experiences were positioned and subjected in the dominant governments of missionaries, is of concern in this research for one primary ground, notably, colonial missionaries wanted to “ convert Africans to go and joint themselves as Europeans” ( Sundkler 2000, p. 1236 ) . However, this missional undertaking became ineffectual as the autochthonal people were ‘ lost in two worlds’ and became what Fanon ( 1952 ) called the colonised natives, ‘ *Black teguments, white masks*’ and the ‘ *Wretched of the Earth* ’ ( Fanon, 1961 ) . It is the Africans’ effort to return to their individuality and to defy colonial missionaries’ attempts to alter them into looking and acting like Europeans that led to the outgrowth of AICs. However, the present survey focuses on the Indigenous spirituality which seems to hold sustained these AICs in position of the lastingness of modern-day African Christianity in Zimbabwe.

Therefore, in this survey ‘ boundary production’ is perceived as a manner in which Africans try to resuscitate some elements of autochthonal civilizations that are critical in beef uping Christian Theology in the Zimbabwean context. A Zimbabwean instrumentalist, Oliver Mtukudzi raised the construct of the verve of the African civilization in one of his vocals when he lamented *kusvika riinhi tichitiza mimvuri yedu* ( until when will Africans go on running off from their shadow/heritage ) , ( 1999 ) . In retrospect, for case, colonial missionaries regarded Africans as people without God, without faith and if

they had one, it was non a true faith ( Mbiti, 1969 ) . It is against this background that the forced and imposed Christianity was accepted with assorted feelings in Africa. The survey argues that, in off Christianity in the Zimbabwean context was laid on a false foundation because of colonial missionaries' attacks to autochthonal spirituality. These attacks by missionaries were in a manner prohibiting, burdening and expropriating Africans of their cherished heritage and hence Christianity was seen as a white man's faith and was like a white man's load ( Taylor, 1963 ) . However, the history of Christianity in Africa has shown that the autochthonal people were non amused by the construct of the white man's load. Alternatively the autochthonal people established AICs which are locally *initiated*, *independent* of foreign control, *instituted* within autochthonal boundaries, sustained by autochthonal cultural scenes yet besides *international* in mentality. Missionary Christian religion was, hence, seen as wholly outside faith, an external force whose primary intent was to overmaster Africans in their states and encephalon wash them through an enforced spiritual system. This is the ground why the Masowe Enyenyedzi about dismisses all colonial Christian Holy Eucharists and philosophy in support of a wholly new Holy Eucharist and philosophy. This peculiar autochthonal church argues that borrowed Christianity is unfertile and unfriendly. Masowe Enyenyedzi can be traced back to certain autochthonal classs of civilization which have been trivialized by colonial missionaries. This survey hence, enterprises to analyze the extent to which Masowe Enyenyedzi church spirituality and peculiarity are influenced by such autochthonal penetrations ( Engelke, 2007 ) . Clearly, this is how boundary production becomes relevant in the procedure of

detecting the permeant influence of autochthonal spirituality on modern-day Christian spirituality in the Masowe Enyenyedzi church.

### 1.3 The Impression of Boundary Crossing

In this survey, “ boundary crossing” ( Binsbergen, 2003 ) suggests a merger of colonial missional Gospel and autochthonal cognition about the world of the Supreme Being in Africa. In a manner, boundary crossing suggests theological dialogues on issues that concern procedures of version and acceptance which normally lead to intermixing or what in this survey could be referred to as ‘ hybridity’ .

Shorter ( 1977, p. 150 ) merely calls it embodiment. It is this embodiment procedure or boundary crossing that makes Christianity reliable and besides makes human spirituality efficacious within any spiritual tradition or church establishments. Apparently these dialogues, nevertheless, are possible under certain fortunes, and at definite cost. Boundary crossing can be executable when the borders or boundary lines erected around for illustration between certain objects are porous in nature. For case Achebe ( 1958, p. 9 ) in *Things Fall Apart* lineations a clang that the colonial missionary had with Chief Akunna on spiritual issues. The clang emanated from colonial missional Mr. Brown’s dismissal of Africans’ cognition about a true God and worshiping of him that pre-dates the reaching of colonial missionaries in the continent. Akunna professes that Africans knew God from clip immemorial, which is evidenced by the names they give to their kids such as: Chukwuka ( God is supreme ) . This fresh presents a literary history of the clash- ridden brush between colonial Christianity and African spiritual and cultural world-views in a manner that had permanent feeling. In the <https://assignbuster.com/case-study-african-and-christian-spirituality/>

same vena ( Orobator 2011, p. 140 ) observes that “ Africans are carriers of dual spiritual heritage- African tradition and Christianity.” Therefore, Masowe Enyenyedzi church is suitably sampled in this survey because though it seems to hold rejected about all colonial missional Christian philosophy and instructions, it paradoxically adopts in a manner the colonial missional Gospel. For case, they observe Friday as their twenty-four hours of worship because Jesus was crucified on that twenty-four hours ; they attend Easter conferences, they adopt scriptural names as their spiritual sacred names such as Emanuere from Emmanuel, Masowe ( wilderness ) retroflexing Jesus fasting for 40 yearss and 40 darks in the wilderness, Nyenyedzi ( star ) denoting the star that led the wise work forces from the East ( Matthew 2: 1ff ) and a batch more that will be discussed in the research. Therefore, boundary production and boundary crossing create situational and contextual divinity which is non wholly borrowed but that which the locals would ‘ feel at home’ within an African Church ( Gustavo 1997 ) .

## **1. 4 Frame work of duologue in Christian spirituality and Indigenous Spirituality**

Harmonizing to ( DESA, 2005 ) the Department of Economics Social Affairs defined duologue as the purpose to seek shared understanding and mutual adjustment on an issue or state of affairs through geographic expedition and acquisition that can take to negotiation in decision-making. In simple footings, duologue means a confab between two or so people or a barter of beliefs and sentiments Adamo ( 2011 ) . Religious duologue therefore, denotes a common adoption of ideas and penetrations by agencies of constructs expressed in words that are based on old understandings refering

the familiar, which the duologue thenceforth tries to broaden and escalate so as to place discrepancies, similarities complementarities and unfavorable judgments every bit good as to happen the venue where shared influence or fertilization may take topographic point ( Adamo, 2011 ) .

## **1. 5 Inter-religious duologue**

Interreligious Dialogue is dying with the interfaith between spiritual traditions and universe positions ( Fazel, 1997 ) . It welcomes all parts which kindle a deeper apprehension of the systematic and reasonable issues referring different faiths. Inter- spiritual Dialogue besides allows for treatment of the assorted inquiries which are caught up in the modern state of affairs of multiple civilizations ( Fuga, 2010 ) . Besides, it provides an chance for academic treatment and comparative survey of spiritual beliefs and constructs of life, of the different rules concerned, and the possibilities of common adoption of some or all constructs ( Fuga, 2010a )

## **1. 6 Hindrances of duologue**

Colonial Christianity from its early history has maintained a dismissal attack toward other spiritual traditions such as African faiths ( Adamo, 2011 ) . In other words for colonial missionaries, there is unfriendliness relationship between Christianity against African Indigenous Religions ( AIR ) . The hindrances of spiritual duologue between African Religions and Christianity came as a consequence of the congenital biass developed by past colonial missionaries and the feeling of laterality over cardinal faiths of Africa ( Oborji, 2005 ) .



## 1. 6 Statement of the job

The survey explores the impact of autochthonal spirituality on Christian Spirituality, peculiarly in the Masowe traditions in Zimbabwe. It has been noted that the rapid and phenomenal enlargement of Christianity in Africa has been so because of the deep devoutness in the African heritage ( John Mbiti, 1980 ) . Supported by Mugambi ( 1989, p. 2 ) African heritage has initiated instead than mired the credence of Christianity. It is on this premiss that African religionism ought to be esteemed instead than ridiculed ( Mugambi, 1989 ) . However, in a figure of contradictory ways, the colonial missionaries presented a divinity that raises a batch of inquiries than replies to the Africans. In their procedure of evangelising Africa, the colonial missionaries dismissed autochthonal spirituality as fiddling. It is this attack that saw Africans receives the colonial missional Gospel with a batch of grouching and dissatisfaction.

Contrastingly, in seeking to contextualise divinity, Masowe Enyenyedzi attracted a batch of inquiries peculiarly on the genuineness of its Christian Spirituality. Engelke ( 2007 ) professes that all Masowe Traditions admit to be people who do non utilize the Bible, reprobating it to be the book of the Whites, used by Europeans to brainwash Africans during colonisation. Masowe Enyenyedzi dismisses the Holy Bible as irregular ; its sacred topographic points for worship are those most celebrated African Indigenous sacred topographic points like: *Gonawapotera hill* , *Mabwe – adziva*, *Matojeni* , sacred dikes such as Shashe, Nyatsime and cemeteries as their topographic points of worship. Tellingly, Masowe Enyenyedzi Church in Zimbabwe is associated with such topographic points. This disparity in a manner has

kindled an appetency for this research. Therefore, the survey seeks to detect Masowe spirituality in the visible radiation of other Christian Spiritualities.

## 1. 8 Justification of the survey

The survey is anchored on the undermentioned principle:

1. The discourses about spirituality continue to billow on in universities today. For Kourie ( 2009 ) the survey of spirituality is one of the most electrifying minutes for those involved. In fact, this subject continues to be critical to the analysis of the growing and development of African Initiated Churches and peculiarly the spirit-filled churches ( Chitando, 2005 ) . The present survey constitutes a specific case-study on common adoption between Christian spirituality and African spirituality in Zimbabwe.
2. The survey will indicate out that although missionaries managed to set up formal instruction ( schools ) , introduce conventional western therapy ( infirmaries ) and Christianity ( churches ) , they did non accomplish much in transforming the inside individual of most Africans. The bulk of Africans visit the curates or infirmaries by twenty-four hours, but by dark they still visit *N'angas* ( witchdoctors ) for aid. The most missionaries condemned African autochthonal medical specialties and *N'angas* as evil and inherently crude. In fact Chavunduka ( 1999 ) observes that Africans do non wholly abandon traditional medical specialties. This is supported by Mzumara ( 2013 ) when she notes that most African Christians in Zimbabwe are Christians by twenty-four hours but dark they visit *N'ang* as, witchdoctors. When an African is ill 1 goes to the infirmary but when they become highly ill they engage

N'angas. This scenario provides a paradox of autochthonal existentiality which has become the fountain for the emerging discourses on Christian spirituality in the academy today. Therefore, in order to appreciate the mushrooming of African Initiated Churches 1 has to understand that the history of the missionaries' attack to autochthonal civilizations was to a great extent prejudiced by colonisation in Zimbabwe, merely like in Africa as a whole.

3. From this background, the survey investigates some theological developments ingrained in the African Indigenous Churches to convey a contextual and relevant divinity that potentially mitigates the African experiential jobs in the station colonial Zimbabwe.
4. Consequently, the suitability of the survey besides emerges against the background of the demand to re-evaluate African spirituality and non merely to disregard it every bit unrelated to Christian spirituality ( Coertze, 2005 ). The African Initiated Churches have been intensely involved in “ re-conceiving and re- interpretation divinity that addresses and redresses the strivings of the autochthonal African peoples” ( Toit & A ; Manley 2009, p. 97 ) . Therefore, this survey is relevant in that it encourages dialogical discourse that sustains contextual divinity that replies inquiries frequently asked by the locals ( Taylor, 1963, p. 16 ) . Nearer our twenty-four hours ( Guti, 2011 ) observes that people go to church non because they want to travel to heaven but they have experiential challenges that need to be addressed before one thinks of traveling to heaven. The survey hence, “ endeavors to supply a practical model for the African church to do the Christian religion truly an African phenomenon” ( Coertze 2005, p.

15 ) . On the same note McGravran ( 1972, p. 144 ) observes that “ though Christianity has made a valid claim on Africa...the inquiry that remains is: has Africa made a bona fide claim on Christianity? Christianity has Christianized Africa, but has Africa Africanized Christianity? ” It is on this background that the survey investigates the ether of autochthonal spirituality in visible radiation of Masowe Enyenyedzi church’s attempts to Africanize Christianity.

5. Therefore the survey emerges from the practical world of many missional churches neglecting to go to the experiential issues that bedevil Africans in the society that has triggered the rise of African Indigenous Christianity in Zimbabwe. For Chitando & A ; Klagba ( 2013, p 11 ) “ most laminitiss of AICs, are coming from a religio-cultural context in which wellness and wellbeing is really important, therefore they felt that the missionaries were dismissive of such Worldviews.”
6. However, the survey besides seeks to turn to the locals on the demand to be cautious on what to suit and what non to suit in the procedure of contextualizing the Gospel ; a instance survey of Masowe Enyenyedzi Church in Zimbabwe.

## **1. 9 Aims of the Study**

The survey is guided by the undermentioned aims:

- To follow the outgrowth and intent of autochthonal cultural divinity and its relevancy among the local people in Zimbabwe.
- To set up the kineticss which enlighten the Masowe Enyenyedzi Church in conveying up what I term-‘ hybrid’ spirituality.

- To research the philosophy and Holy Eucharist of Masowe Enyenyedzi Church in the visible radiation of developing a contextually relevant station colonial divinity in Zimbabwe.

## 1. 10 Research Questions

The survey is guided by the undermentioned inquiries:

- Is it appropriate to see Christianity as an wake of colonialism among the people of Zimbabwe?
- How did the Masowe assimilate the missional spirituality and the autochthonal spirituality in their Holy Eucharist and philosophy?
- To what extent was autochthonal spirituality imprinted in the Masowe Enyenyedzi Church spirituality?
- To what extent is African Indigenous Churches a ' quest for belonging? ' ( Daneel, 1987 )