

# The european founded mission churches in africa theology religion



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The European-founded mission churches introduced into Africa during colonial regulation instigated an tremendous growing in Christianity. In many instances the Christianity brought to Africa by foreign Westerns failed to grok and integrate the surroundings of the African worldview. Christianity in Africa had to go sacredly and symbolically apprehensible to Africans if it was to go on successful growing. The flight of indigenizing and initiating African churches allowed the disciples to cast the foreign elements of European Christianity that they so frequently could non place with. AIC ' s developed both matter-of-fact and religious distinctive characteristics that addressed their emotional demands, determining western Christianity into African Christianity. Particular accent is placed upon ' myth and ritual, rhythm and dance, '[ 1 ]every bit good as ' spiritual healing, prognostication, visions and dreams, enchantment and dispossession.[ 2 ]This essay will place the typical characteristics of churches within the Aladura class of AIC ' s in western Nigeria every bit good as the cardinal Kenyan Agikuyu Spirit Churches of the African Orthodox Church ( AOC ) and Arathi. It will see which facets of Christianity remain consistent with the European founded mission churches and to what grade they have disengaged from the disappointing elements of western Christianity.

The unfortunate necessity of classification has led to a wide typology of ' AIC ' s ' that implies cosmopolitan sameness. However, there is a multiplicity of African churches, each one holding unique and shaping characteristics. The typical moral force of each church makes it hard to categorise and sub-categorize these churches accurately. Despite the on-going troubles in the scholarly field refering the definition of AIC ' s, Francis Kimani Githieya

employs the taxonomy of Ethiopian Churches and Aladura ( or Roho ) Churches in an effort to group those with similarities. This essay will follow this typology for the intents of lucidity.

Ethiopian churches are considered to hold departed from the European founded mission churches chiefly for political indifferences and less so for spiritual disagreements. Many of these churches retained features of European Christianity, but rejected the false high quality of the missionaries. Sundkler observes that ' their church organisations and bible reading are mostly copied from the forms of the Protestant Mission churches from which they have seceded. '[ 3 ]This is emphasized by the continuance in many Ethiopian Churches of patterns such as baptism, set Holy Eucharists and European clerical garb. These patterns remained far more conservative, because they are steeped in a European worldview, which differs greatly from the Aladura prophesier mending churches. Allen Anderson describes the latter churches as holding a uniquely African apprehension of Christianity. This uniqueness lies in the echt look of religion that identifies with the religious, cultural and societal elements of African life. This is exemplified in the Roho Spirit churches in Kenya founded by Alfayo Odongo Mango. The outstanding typical characteristics of this popular motion are ' visions, prophetic activity, healings and miracles '[ 4 ], doing them really different from the European founded mission churches. This essay concentrates on the Aladura class.

The Aladura churches, known as ijo elemi, originated in South West Nigeria in the 1920 ' s. These are religious churches directed by the Holy Spirit. The four chief churches within this class are The Christ Apostolic Church ( CAC ) , <https://assignbuster.com/the-european-founded-mission-churches-in-africa-theology-religion/>

the Cherubim and Seraphim ( C & A ; S ) , the Church of the Lord and the Celestial Church of Christ ( CCC ) . These are prophetic motions practising Christian religion that incorporates characteristics from within African civilization and tradition such as ‘ healing, rescue, vaticinating and supplication of angels ‘ .[ 5 ]Due to this African infiltration the AIC ‘ s were vehemently criticized by the mission churches and accused of ‘ overshot resonance with Yoruba cultural mix, syncretism, and of what they perceived as an indiscriminate usage of magnetic gifts. ‘[ 6 ]

The Aladura Christianity is finally similar to the basicss of western Christianity although their looks of religion differ. The absolute belief in God and Jesus Christ, cardinal dogmas of Christianity, were ne’er questioned. This can be seen in the philosophy of the C & A ; S. Joseph Akinyele Omoyajowow states that ‘ the ecclesiology and divinity of the Cherubim and Seraphim Society is chiefly drawn from the Bibles, and hence does non run counter to the true and salvific instructions of the Christian religion. ‘[ 7 ]However, the difference in the look of this same religion is exemplified by the C & A ; S name for God as Olorun Orimolade. Harold Turner opines that ‘ any church that confesses that Christ is Lord and exhibits this in pattern is Christian. ‘[ 8 ]

This is apparent in the traditional African apprehension of enchantresses, forces of immorality, and malevolent liquors. They could non merely abandon these beliefs because a foreign signifier of Christianity saw no demand to turn to them. The African characteristics of religious worship, trust on supplication, Godhead healing, the usage of magnetic gifts and the importance of sacred topographic points all play critical functions in battling <https://assignbuster.com/the-european-founded-mission-churches-in-africa-theology-religion/>

and spreading these outstanding jobs. Particular accent is placed on supplication as it ' not merely forms the bedrock of their pattern and philosophy but is besides the well of all their approvals and successes.

'[ 9 ]Prayer is straight associated with healing and battling subjugation in the Aladura churches and is known as ise iwosan.[ 10 ]Objects are frequently used in concurrence with supplication for mending, such as ' consecrated H2O, tapers, aromas, incense, thenar fronds, manus bells, staffs, lances and consecrated oils. '[ 11 ]Although a figure of these objects are besides seeable in European founded mission churches, they are non used in concurrence with supplication for mending. Religious dependence on supplication in The Aladura is clear through the structural cloth of their religion. Wednesday, known as Ojo aanu, is designated as a twenty-four hours of clemency, while Friday, ojo iwosan, is the designated twenty-four hours of healing.[ 12 ]These characteristics highlight the going from the methods of supplication in mission churches, as the rigidness of conventional supplication that is written down and recited did non co-occur with African demands. Their autochthonal formation of self-generated and individualistic supplication allows for a genuinely African look to happen.

Religious frock is another typical characteristic of the Aladura churches. The CCC emphasizes the importance of have oning white, ' symbolizing the outward pureness of its members as a projection of the interior pureness and holiness. '[ 13 ]The C & A ; S besides wear white garments, nevertheless in this church coloured garments are besides worn. The importance of coloring material is besides associated with objects and followings a similar form as with the vesture. The CCC merely allows the usage of white tapers, whereas

the C & A ; S uses white and colored tapers. The symbolism attached to physical objects in these churches is far greater than in the European founded mission churches, and creates a clear and strong division between the two.

The Aladura signifier of worship besides differs greatly from that of the mission churches. The energy and passion visible in their worship exemplifies the infiltration of traditional African patterns into the churches. The usage of lively music, vocal, dance and applause are built-in in showing their deep-seated religion and spirituality. Ayegboyin describes the difference between the passiveness of the mission signifier of worship and the 'dramatis character' [ 14 ]of the Aladura worship. The members become wholly captive, exemplified by 'rhythmic swaying, stomping, calls and jumping.' [ 15 ]Conversely, the European founded mission churches engage in organized, structured and discreet worship, with accent on the person instead than the community. Such a typical disagreement between the African and the European churches highlights the incapableness of the mission churches to fulfill the deep emotional and religious demands of the Aladura African Christians.

The importance of sacred topographic points, known as ile mimo or ori oke, foreground a farther move off from the European manner of Christian pattern. Adogame and Jafta observe that 'mountains, rivers, and Grovess have been set aside and transformed into holy evidences where rites are re-enacted.' [ 16 ]European founded churches tend to tie in holiness entirely with their churches.

These Aladura churches show that for Christianity in the Nigerian landscape to thrive successfully it must vibrate with the African traditional worldview and integrate the religious and emotional demands of the people within the cardinal patterns of Christianity. Omoyaowo stated ' say what we may, the endurance of the Christian church in Nigeria today lies chiefly in the way of the Aladura churches. '[ 17 ]

The Agikuyu Spirit Churches ( or Kikuyu Spirit Churches ) in Central Kenya originate from the Bantu speech production people. Using the illustrations of the AOC and Arathi ( Watu wa Mungu ) it will go clear how these motions developed typical characteristics bring forth an African and Christian individuality. The AOC is paradoxically more in line with the Ethiopian class as Murray observes that ' it had extended contact with the missions, '[ 18 ]nevertheless there are still many obvious differences. Rawcliffe posits that ' the rise of these two churches was in response to the mission churches ' inability to suit African demands for spiritual freedom and liberty. '[ 19 ]It has been claimed that the Arathi community encompasses an merger of individualities, being ' a curious mixture of pagan religion, Christianity, old testament traditional knowledge, and prophetic inspiration ' .[ 20 ]This observation fails to understand Christianity as moral force in itself. It allows the European reading to regulate the universal. It must be noted that with the European mission churches comes the pervasion of European civilization. It is this that many Africans disposed of or radically adapted in order to make a faith that correlated with their civilization, life style and cosmology. For illustration the Arathi churches ' opposed the missions ' denouncement of polygny and female circumcision. '[ 21 ]The construction of these churches is

hence bound to differing patterns, but this does not needfully warrant disregarding the real Christianity of these churches and the label of them as 'tribal'.

David B. Barrett uses the term 'tribal Zeitgeist' to explicate the general causing of the African Independent Churches,[ 22 ]yet Jomo Kenyatta contends that the AOC and the AIC are non tribal, but new in the landscape of East Africa. Kenyatta shrewdly observes that the 'AOC is a community that wants to be Christian without denouncing its societal customs'; it is Kikuyu and Christian at the same clip. '[ 23 ]Murray states that the Kikuyu 'should be taken earnestly as churches, which have developed a philosophy, codification of ethical behaviour and Holy Eucharist. '[ 24 ]This more broad analysis condones the legitimacy of African Christianity despite differing characteristics. Githieya reiterates this legitimization when he argues that the 'AOC and AIC both regard themselves as Christian and their philosophies are not contrary to the true dogmas of the Christian religion.[ 25 ]Their peculiarity is rooted in their African worldview and the 'newness' of their formation but the cogency of their 'religion is every bit reliable as that of the European missionaries.

The typical characteristics of these Kikuyu Spirit Churches shows many differences in the building of their faith compared to the European founded mission churches. The AOC put great accent on the importance of the demand for African liberty. Welbourn observes that the AOC 'drew its constructions from the Kikuyu tradition'; instead than from Christianity.

'[ 26 ]However, this could be seen as a political desire. The AOC remain to the full rooted in historical Christian tradition, claiming to be 'a true

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Christian church in the apostolic tradition by virtuousness of being historically connected with Archbishop Alexander and subsequently with the Grecian Orthodox patriarchate of Alexandria. '[ 27 ]The structural cloth of the AOC topographic points important importance on household ( mbari ) . Christianity is understood as a place ' that operated like a small-knit community in which the individuality, worth and unity of every person was recognized. '[ 28 ]This is a important difference from the European signifier of Christianity, as this thought originated from Kenyan traditional civilization. The AOC places great importance on both a stopping point community based household every bit good as placing with a household of God.

The Arathi churches strongly dismissed much of the European influence in their land and their faith. Unlike the Ethiopian churches, they separated themselves wholly from the political orientations of the mission churches. They rejected any European infiltration into their civilization, as evidenced by flinging western vesture and following indigenized garb called Kanzu. [ 29 ]This is really similar to the all white garb of the CCC. The Arathi beliefs in ' Urathi ' ( prognostication ) and ' thahu ' ( ritual cleanliness ) [ 30 ]are rooted in their devotedness to prophetic figures, such as ' Joseph Ng'ang'a and Musa Thuo, who claimed Godhead mending to their prophetic ministry, '[ 31 ]. The great accent on the pursuit for the Holy Spirit differs from the European apprehension. Particular accent on the Holy Spirit is unusual in European Christianity. Rather it is understood as portion of the Holy three, as evidenced through Pneumatology.