

RURAL CHURCHES IN BOTSWANA: A CASE STUDY OF JAKALASI 2 VILLAGE

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Abstract

The paper examines the life of seven rural churches at Jakalasi 2 village in the North East of Botswana. Using these churches, the paper outlines some of the key characteristics of rural churches, their problems, and advantages. The paper argues that while these churches are small in size, they are not only very influential in their community, but also rooted in two dominant cultural traditions: the Ndebele heritage and syncretism, a form of Christianity that mixes the Bible and the cultural practices of the people. While the theoretical position of some of these rural churches is against the worship of ancestors, in practice, however, the members take part in family ancestral activities, thus mixing Christianity with cultural religious practices, especially during funeral rites.

Key words: Ancestors, Ndebele Culture, Rural Churches, Syncretism

Introduction

The key factor to the development of a rural form of Christianity (a kind of Christianity found in rural churches in Botswana) is the African cultural context. This form of Christianity has had a great impact on the attitudes of rural people regarding the Bible, as well as their religious thinking and ideas. This picture is not only true for rural churches in Jakalasi 2 village. It can safely be generalized and applied to other rural churches throughout Botswana. While it is evident that the cultural factor is very strong and dominant, there are other new forces or challenges that have affected the spiritual landscape of the village, such as the ageing congregation, the declining and shifting populations, that leads to scarcity of talent and people resources in rural areas. The problems of urbanization and poverty, etc. are having an impact on the rural church life in Botswana and thus contributing to the nature of Christianity that develops in that locality.

Contrary to the imported Christianity of the main-line churches, rural churches have developed a type of Christianity that is rooted in their cultural past of the people. The natural tendency is to develop a Christianity that is authentically African. This form of Christianity is a useful contribution to John Mbiti's cry is that "Christianity has made a real claim on Africa... The question is: Has Africa made a real claim on Christianity? Christianity has Christianized Africa, but has not Africanized Christianity" (Mc Garvin, 1972:144). The rural churches of Jakalasi 2, have in many practical ways Africanized Christianity to the extent that it could be said that they have made 'a real claim on Christianity'.

The study of rural churches has revealed that in their day-to-day encounters and interactions, religion continues to play a central role. The study also serves as a reminder that as religion interacts with societal issues, it either cements or disrupts relations between members of the same family, village or nation. This point highlights the importance of religion

in a rural setting. The paper seeks to dispassionately examine issues of religious nature as they emerge in rural churches.

The reason for choosing to talk about rural churches in a small and insignificant village in Botswana, points to the need to examine issues of religion and society in their proper context. The paper, therefore, observes that rural Christianity is not completely shorn of indigenous cultural elements. Rural churches have sought for ways of relating the Gospel to their social context by addressing those particular problems which rural Christians face. They are not dependent upon ways with alien perspectives.

Rural Churches here refer to both the mainline and African Independent Churches (hereafter referred to as AICs). While the word mainline generally refers to missionary founded churches, the AICs refers to those churches whose practice and theology is based on or reflects an African cultural experience and background. The rural churches are basically inclined towards the latter and its character. The character of rural churches is oriented towards the cultural heritage of its receivers. The form of Christianity that developed in this set up, therefore, underwent the process of indigenisation, which involved the adjustment of Christian practices so that they conformed to the traditional demands. This has cross-cultural implications. This demands that Christianity be communicated in a way that will take the cultural context into account. Christ is presented in a manner that is meaningful to the people. This is what Kwame Bediako (1992) calls the translatability of the Gospel.

The Jakalasi 2 village has seven small rural churches, namely, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC),¹ the Seventh Day Adventist² (SDA), the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion, The Number One Church in Zion Church,³ The Antioch Apostolic Church,⁴ Zion Christian Church (ZCC)⁵ and Izikhoveni Church in Zion.⁶ All these seven rural churches are grounded in two dominant cultural traditions. First, the Ndebele heritage, and second, syncretism, that form of Christianity that mixes the Gospel with indigenous cultural and religious practices. This entails two major worldviews, the modern and the pre-modern. These worldviews have an impact on what the churches preach and believe about life. This is also reflected in their attitudes towards the Bible and a variety of other theological and social issues. To the outsider, mainline churches, (the RCC and the SDA) are theoretically expected to represent the modern worldview, while the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion, the Number One Church in Zion, the ZCC, the Antioch Apostolic Church

¹ While the first Catholic Mission was opened in Botswana in 1928, the Roman Catholic Church at Jackalas was only established by Miss Olivia Sibanda in 2001. Its membership is between 10 and 15 people. The church is led by a woman named Olivia Sibanda, a lecturer at the Francistown College of Education. The church meets in a small room near the local primary school. This room accommodates about 20 people. Ms Sibanda comes to conduct services at the village every Sunday. As Jakalasi 2 is a satellite church of the Satellite Roman Church; it is sometimes visited by a priest from Francistown for the purposes of administering the Mass.

² The SDA is the oldest church in the village and has a bigger church building accommodating about 70 people, but has no local church minister. Chester Jackalas used to be regarded as the local overseer, but due to his polygamous status, the regional leadership of the SDA, which is against a Christian marrying more than one wife has refused to allow him to continue as a leader of the church. SDA was first established in Botswana in 1922. It was introduced at Jakalasi 2 in the late 1950s and early 1960 by Pastor Mfundisi of Senyawe village. He had himself come into contact with the church in Zimbabwe. According to Chester Jakalasi (my informant in October, 2003 and one of the earliest members of the church), the church spread to Francistown from Jakalasi 2.

³ This church is closely related to the Antioch Apostolic Church.

⁴ It was established by Evans Mfazo, after coming into contact with the church in Zimbabwe.

⁵ This is led by Mr Rabi, who is also the local priest.

⁶ It was established by Jabulani Khuchwe, who is also its current leader.

and Izikhoveni Church in Zion, which are part of a family of AICs in Botswana, in terms of classification, beliefs and practices, are thought to fall within the pre-modern worldview. In practice both groups are culturally inclined in as far as their orientation is concerned. This is so because, while urban churches need to modernize to survive, the rural churches need to contextualise to be relevant to the needs of the people.

Geographical Location of Jakalasi 2

Jakalasi 2, the village on which the study is based and draws its examples is situated in the North East of Botswana. It is a small village, which according to the 1991 Population Census counts had only about 1, 039 people.⁷ The village is about 30 kilometres from the city of Francistown, which is the nearest urban centre.⁸ The nearest tarred road from the village is the Francistown-Bulawayo road, which is about nine kilometers away. The city of Francistown is the administrative and financial centre for the whole North East region within which Jakalasi falls. It is here where the villagers come for their shopping, banking and other administrative facilities. The city is very dynamic, complex, varied and unique in many respects. Its dynamism and proximity have an influence on the life of the village. It compels the church to adopt strategies that will respond to the demands of urban life and also facilitate a spiritually awakened society that is morally upright, compassionate and caring. In comparative terms the Francistown population is characterized by high rates of HIV/Aids, unemployment, crime, corruption, immorality, fear, disunity in families, all forms of strife and stress. Jakalasi 2 is predominantly a Ndebele speaking community, with a very small Kalanga speaking population. The village has a primary school, a clinic, tribal administration offices and tap clean water. The historical background and geographical location of the village have greatly contributed to its spiritual landscape. Its proximity with Zimbabwe has resulted in frequent immigrations between Zimbabweans and Batswana along the borders, thus strengthening the common cultural heritage that exists between the two people, in terms of language, religion and traditions. These visits have not only strengthened social and economic relationships but have also resulted in renewing religious ties, that historically existed between the Ndebele in Botswana and those in Zimbabwe. The Ndebele in Botswana brought their culture from Zimbabwe many years ago. The first Catholics in the village, for instance, brought their Catholicism from Zimbabwe. The founder and current leader of the RCC, Violet Sibanda, became a Catholic when she was studying in Zimbabwe. The first attempt to establish the RCC in Botswana was made in about 1888, when the Jesuits visited Shoshong, Khama I's capital town, but were shown the road to the present Zimbabwe, where their mission work prospered (Amanze, 1994: 237). From these mission stations, Roman Catholicism spread to the different parts of 'Matebeleland' from where through migration, it was carried to Jakalasi 2. The church was, however, only established in the 1990s.

⁷ 1991 Botswana Population and Housing Census, Alphabetical Index of Village, page 155.

⁸ It is the first village as you drive along the Botswana-Zimbabwe road from the city of Francistown. It lies on the eastern side of that road as you drive towards the Ramakgwebana border. It broke away from the number One Church In Zion and was established in 1990 by Jabulani Khutzwé.

My Personal Reflections⁹

I was reared in Jakalasi 2 in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when there were only two prominent churches – SDA and the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion at the village. Church did not seem to mean much to me. My grandfather Ngukhwe Grey Jakalasi had been one of the founding members of the Seven Day Adventist in the village. After every Sabbath, he would always come to our home and teach us some Ndebele Christian hymns, as well as the importance of observing the Sabbath. Together with the small group of other SDA's at the village, my grandpa was seen by most villagers to be a fundamentalist type of a Christian. SDA church was totally against the worship of ancestors, polygamy and the use of traditional doctors. Its members refused to participate in the rain-making rites dedicated to the *Mwali* cult and its mediator – priest Ntogwa. They also refused to observe Friday, generally declared as a day of rest for the adherents of the *Mwali* cult in the whole of the North East region.¹⁰ To complicate the situation was the fact that Mr Grey N Jakalasi was not only a founding member of the SDA Church, but also the traditional authority (i.e. chief). The majority of people expected him as the most senior member of the community to play a leading role in all these traditional religious ritual practices involving their ancestors. Other traditional leaders in the region and neighbouring villages were not only playing a leading role in their own villages, that is, acting as key officiants in such matters, but were also personal frequenting the *Mwali* cult shrines at Ramokwebana. Their activities were more pronounced during the rainy seasons, especially in times of drought. Chief Jakalasi, therefore, always had to face a mounting challenge from the traditionalists, who believed that his refusal to participate angered the tribal ancestors. Despite this situation it is obviously evident that chief Jakalasi ruled the village with two hats of authority: the hat of divine Christian authority and the hat of traditional authority. The fact that his sources of power were two fold – the Church and the traditional structures immensely contributed to his public influence, popularity and recognition. While ruling from his traditional seat, which had been passed on from his forefathers, and his line of royal ancestors, he possessed new sources of power from the Christian Church, where he acted as one of the ministers. Theoretically one would expect him to have had an advantage over those who only drew their power from a single source. In practice, the situation was different. Because of Chief Jakalasi's failure to go far enough in contextualising his experience, he failed to carry with him people's minds, ideas and functions. His failure to relate Christian conceptions to the traditional one, people felt that they were being alienated from their cultural past and experiences, which provided security and meaning. Discontinuity, rejection or abandonment of the cultural past conjured uncertainty and fear of the future.

On the other extreme was my father, Nqayi Nondo Nkomazana, who while claiming to be a Catholic, was a staunch supporter of the Ndebele cultural and religious beliefs and practices. His children were time and again reminded that they were Catholics, although not himself a practicing Catholic in the strictest sense of the word. Although I had been personally given a Catholic-Latin name, I had never entered the doors of the church until 1975 when I went to high school. My father was, however, very spiritual. He knew all the catholic prayers and always demonstrated to his children how a Catholic should pray and put his rosary around his neck. On the other hand my father was a practicing traditional doctor of

⁹ It is my personal experience that remains vivid and alive in my mind, my love and high regard for my grandfather that continue to inspire my memories of this event.

¹⁰ Amanze (2002:114-117) briefly discusses the role played by the *Mwali* cult and Ntogwa among the Kalanga of North East. He cites ML Daneel, TO Ranger, R Webner, NMB Bhebe, JM Schoffeleers, RG Manza, L Nthoi, who have dealt with the subject in great details.

high repute and a polygamist¹¹ with more than six wives. He often brought his family together for the worship of his family ancestors (*amadlozi*),¹² characterized by the performance of appropriate offerings, sacrifices and rituals. This practice was one of the most revered in my family. At times it involved the killing of a black beast – goat, sheep or cow, in order to please the ancestors. My father insisted on the performance of these rituals. They were to be carried out without question or failure. My grandmother, (my father's mother) played a central role in these ritual activities. She was seen as possessing tremendous spiritual influence and was regarded as the family priestess on such religious activities. In this way, the Ndebele religious set-up allowed women to play a leading role in religious matters. They were not completely marginalized and ignored, but in many ways fully and actively participated in every aspect. The culture presented women with respect, recognizing their God given potential and gave them opportunities to develop as religious leaders in their own right. Unlike my father and grandfather, my grandmother did not possess any other religious background outside of the Ndebele religious beliefs and practices. She was content with her religious experience and felt it adequate to respond to any social, economic and political challenge. However, she never expressed any opposition towards Christianity and its adherents.

Once all the family members had gathered and squatted on the ground, my grandmother would begin the ritual processes. She would take water and begin ritually splashing it on the ground as she murmured some words as if she was directly communicating with the ancestors, who seemed to be attentively listening to her. In the process she would plead with them, asking their blessing on her 'children' with health, fertility, rain etc. In the case of sickness, my grandmother would even go to the extent of rebuking the ancestors for punishing her children with sickness and pain. Through offerings and sacrifice she would plead that the ancestors leave her grand children to live peacefully and in good health. Similar practices were repeated and performed during the time of drought, the ploughing season, after death, and at birth etc.

My father, who first and foremost regarded himself a Ndebele man and second a Catholic, did not see any contradiction between the two religious systems – that is, the Ndebele religious beliefs and practices, on the one hand, and the Catholic form of Christianity, on the other. He comfortably mixed the two together and saw them as sources of divine authority and spirituality. He drew his strength and protection from both sources. For him there was absolutely no conflict between these two religious systems. During the ploughing season he observed Friday, Mwali cult holiday, associated with the worship of ancestors, through the mediatorship and priesthood of Ntogwa.¹³ As a Catholic, he also observed Sunday as a day of worship, contrary to my SDA grandfather, who observed the 'Sabbath' as the day of rest and worship. When I went to high school for the first time, my father being a traditional doctor, gave me a concoction of herbs, with the instruction that I should always apply it before going to class in order to fortify or protect myself against the bad intentions of other students. Being uncomfortable with the idea, I simply threw the packet away as soon as I was a safe distance. When I came home on school holiday, I told my father that I

¹¹ The Ndebele people claim that their ancestors practiced polygamy from time immemorial. A man married as many wives as he could economically support. Amanze (2002:187-191) discusses polygamous marriages among other Botswana groups. The practice has, however, been declining in recent years.

¹² Amadlozi strictly refer to the family ancestral spirits of the dead from whom one descends. This, as also defined by Amanze (2002:62-87) is a general conception accepted by most Bantu people of Southern Africa.

¹³ Ntogwa was a prominent mediator-priest in the Mwali cult, associated with rain-making practices among the Kalanga of North East Botswana. After his death in 1972, a power struggle ensued between his children and resulted in a crisis that left the cult without an obvious leader to the present day.

had become an evangelical/Pentecostal Christian. I also clearly stated my intentions not to participate in ancestral activities nor to use charms. I indicated that my trust was only in Jesus, prayer and the Word of God. My father did not take my utterances kindly. He was very angry. He feared that my irresponsible decision would anger the ancestors, which to his understanding, was going to definitely result in their anger, revenge and curses. My father stated that our family church was the Roman Catholic Church, which was the only church recognized and supported by the ancestors. He stated that the other churches were foreign to Ndebele customs and religious beliefs. This is a very interesting encounter as rural communities try to bring together their Christian and traditional religious experiences. The attempt to do so, as has already been highlighted, always introduces new experiences, challenges and conflicts. This cannot be avoided; it always catches up with those members of the community who try to merge their new and old experiences. The extent to which the person commits his experiences to the test, is the level to which the challenges and conflicts will manifest themselves. My father never saw himself to be caught in a dilemma or to be struggling between Catholicism and Ndebele religious beliefs. He seemed to naturally switch from one to the other without any inner conflict. For him the new strengthened the old, and the old laid a foundation on which the new traded. The old was a pathway on which the new walked or laid its principles.¹⁴

In the 1970s and 1980s the SDA and the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion, founded by Toitoi Mtembu, were the most prominent churches in the village. The latter is classified under the AICs, which my grandfather, together with the rest of the S.D.A members, had no dealings. They rejected the AICs for their syncretistic approach to Christianity, that is, the idea of promoting a type of Christianity that mixes Ndebele culture with Christianity. This was most particularly evident in their method of healing and prophecy, which involved dreams, visions and divination.¹⁵ Whilst the SDA was seen as a church of the aristocrats and the powerful in the village, Toitoi's church, as it was popularly known, was seen as the church of the marginalized, the sick and the weak of the society. Ordinary people flocked to this church for various social and spiritual needs such as healing and protection against witchcraft. Through its syncretistic style of worship the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion, accommodated the Ndebele worldview in various ways, hence becoming the most popular form of Christianity with rural dwellers. This type of Christianity was therefore based on the process of adaptation of the people's past experiences and consequently promoting continuity of indigenous ideas, symbols and rites. When my SDA grandfather was on his deathbed, tormented by severe pains, he personally sought help from Toitoi's church. Seeing this as an opportunity to make spiritual mileage in the village, Toitoi and his followers accepted the invitation and came in their bright regalias of white uniforms and carrying 'holy sticks',¹⁶ which they claimed to use for casting out evil spirits and all forms of witchcraft. This incident became an interesting public event. As they marched along the village main road singing, clapping and dancing, they were joined by villagers on their way to my grandfather's home. Although this religious activity took almost the whole day, my grandfather's life was not saved. It must, however, be pointed out that this marked an important meeting point or relationship between the mainline and the AICs. In fact, many Catholics and SDA Christians at Jakalasi 2 are believed to secretly visit

¹⁴ My experiences and interactions with my father from 1974 to 1979 when he died.

¹⁵ These were particularly the main tenets of Zionism. They were responsible for the growth of this group of churches in Jakalasi 2.

¹⁶ The church uniform and the holy stick are believed to be holy and possessing tremendous power to drive witches and bad spirits away.

different AICs in the village for healing purposes. While their healing and prophetic practices are generally regarded by the radical SDA to be unchristian, they are on the other hand seen to be in line with the traditional forms and practices of healing, which respond to the day-to-day experiences of the people. In a time of insecurity, they provided some stability and hope for the people. The AICs, unlike the Catholics and SDA's, are always available for the people. They are always willing to spend time with people in need and bring comfort and courage.

Emerging Trends of Christianity at Jakalasi 2

The above discussion has revealed that the growth of churches resulted in some very interesting trends characterizing an indigenous type of Christianity peculiar to a rural community. The following sections further demonstrate the response of indigenous people in a rural setting to these developments.

Christianity versus the Cultural Context

The study shows that African traditional religion as represented by the Ndebele of Jakalasi 2 is alive, current, present, and active in the minds of individuals in their communal relationships. It co-exists with Christianity. The study has strengthened – my conviction more than ever before – that it is neither possible nor desirable to study the religious practices of a community without taking into consideration its cultural past and traditions. To neglect the cultural experiences and traditions of the people is to act like a priest who tells his congregation that prayer, the Bible and fellowship are not an important aspect of Christian living. For the Ndebele the entire life cycle presents itself as an experience of celebration. From the period of life before conception through to life after life, the Ndebele live in a chain of rituals and events that mark the rhythm of existence. Events generate celebrations and these in turn give meaning to life. Celebrations are the soul and spice of life, which WC Willoughby calls the 'Soul of the Bantu' (1928). In this same book he observes that: "Bantu life is basically religious... Religion so pervades the life of the people that it regulates their doing and governs their leisure to an extent that it is hard for Europeans to imagine."¹⁷

Marking the core of their ceremonies are the birth, naming, marriage, puberty, agricultural and funeral rites. All these have a unique spiritual, cultural and sociological depth and significance of the people. In all these celebrations, families: women and men, young and old, the wealthy and poor, gather to share the joys, hopes and fears of life. In song, music, dance, incantations and libations, they celebrate the gift of life. For them, therefore, religion is always there and at every stage and event of life.¹⁸ It features in their day-to-day life; when they go hunting, ploughing, fetching water and firewood etc. This is still true even in this modern age, when we find everybody interested in religion and feeling inadequate without the religious factor. Religion is not only inescapable, but always with the people from time immemorial. It is not possible for anyone to avoid or neglect it. Bolaji Idowu confirms this when he observes that "Religion has always served a purpose – a purpose which belongs to the very fabric of life itself – and this is a fact of history as of experience."¹⁹ With this in mind, this paper argues that culture everywhere influences the form of Christianity that develops in any given society. The term culture is here used in its broadest

¹⁷ WC Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, 1938:1.

¹⁸ Amanze (2002:133-219) discusses in depths birth rites, initiation ceremonies, marriage and death rituals.

¹⁹ E Bolaji Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A definition*, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1973:1.

sense, as defined by EB Taylor in his provocative 'Primitive Culture (1871),' when he writes:

Culture, or civilization is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.²⁰

This study shows that rural church activities are not conducted in a state that is isolated from the minds of culture. Culture in which people live and work always intervenes with the church and produces a form of Christianity that is different from that which develops in another culture. This occurs every time the cultural forces blow across and infiltrate the cracks of the church. As these forces blow they affect the operation of the congregation. Some of these forces are positive, resulting in new opportunities, leading to the growth of 'Christianity'. Others undermine the foundation of the church and, if not wisely confronted, will weaken and assault its stability. Still others are neutral, having in themselves moral and spiritual implications, but radically affecting the manner in which the church conducts its ministry. The religiosity of the Jakalasi 2 people has therefore formed a fertile ground for the rapid growth of rural churches, especially as exemplified by the AICs. The study, however, also shows that some ancestral beliefs and practices resisted or even opposed the growth of Christianity. This is the reason why some rural churches are in an ongoing struggle to develop an authentic form of Christianity. This is evidenced by the following examples:

Case study 1

The above-mentioned fact became evident in 1997 when the family of Mr X held a big family gathering for the purposes of conducting an important ritual called '*umbuyiso*' to mark the welcoming back home of a late head of the family, who was alleged to be complaining of negligence, desertion and isolation by family members. His displeasure was believed to be the cause of a series of casualties, such as sickness, unemployment, marriage breakdown and many other problems, and experiences devastating family members.²¹ The ceremony began very early in the morning, with the family elders gathering outside the family home and calling the dead person to come and join them as they walked back to the compound. A goat was roasted and eaten out there, with the dead person believed to join in the feasting. The majority of those participating or playing a leading role in the ritual were themselves members of the four above-mentioned rural AICs. Only a few were members of the RCC. On arrival at the courtyard, they squatted on the ground and the oldest member of the family, who happened to be a woman, performed the necessary rituals. She did this by ritually pouring out some water from a calabash to the ground (libation), as she murmured some words to the ancestors. The water used for libation was to be carried in a traditional container (gourd). Failure to do so was believed to diminish the efficaciousness of the sacrifice or ritual practice. The woman family priest joyfully welcomed back home the ancestors and expressed her confidence in their leadership and intervention in critical moments. She also reported to the ancestors that the family had killed a goat in their honour and hoped to have them happily participate in the celebration. After all this, a Pentecostal Christian, who was also a member of the family, stood up and requested the elders if he could pray and invite Jesus to sanctify the proceedings and the food which was to be later served. This

²⁰ Quoted by Michael Payne, *A Dictionary of Cultural & Critical Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996:2.

²¹ Amanze (2002:64) shows that the presence of ancestors and submission to their authority ensures fertility and crop production.

request created a serious conflict. The elders refused to allow the man to pray, stating that the ancestors were against the idea of involving Jesus in a traditional ritual. They further pointed out that praying to Jesus angered the ancestors and that it could spoil the good relationship the family members had been working hard to establish. The members of the AICs present at the occasion did not only fully participate in the rituals and sacrifices, but also expressed their dissatisfaction with the attitude of this Pentecostal member of the family. Their opposition however compromised the African spirit of religious tolerance and diversity.

Case study 2

The second story occurred at Mr Y's wedding ceremony in 1995 and leaves the impression that the ancestors were against the idea of praying to Jesus. When a Bible Life Church Fellowship (charismatic church) pastor from Francistown, invited by some members of the same family to preach at the reception of that wedding, the family elders, who were themselves members of one of the AICs at the village, expressed their uncompromising opposition to that arrangement. The opponents clearly pointed out that the preaching about Jesus was unacceptable to the family ancestors. In my opinion this contradiction, or rather a rejection of the role of Jesus, marked a major difference in the attitude of Pentecostals and AICs pertaining to the role of Jesus and the ancestors in the life of a Christian. While Pentecostals were uncompromisingly against the idea of involving ancestors in their worship, some AICs saw them as part of their Ndebele culture, hence consulting them as was done in the past. The ancestors, on the one hand, were also obviously against the idea of involving Jesus in the Ndebele religious practices, but welcomed the work of the AICs. There are two possible reasons for this reaction. The first being the fact that the Jesus of the Pentecostal Christians was understood to be foreign to the people and thus unable to relate to their day-to-day issues. Secondly, that 'the Pentecostal Jesus' was seen to be against their ancestors, and attempting to replace the indigenous beliefs and practices with a totally new and alien form of Christianity. This has been partially confirmed by JV Taylor's observation, who writes:

This is the inner significance of the complaint that Christianity is the white man's religion. It is bad enough that religious pictures, films and film-strips should have almost universally shown a white Christ, child of a white mother, master of white disciples; that he should be worshipped almost exclusively with European music set to translations of European hymns, sung by clergy and people wearing European dress in buildings of an archaic European style; that the form of worship should bear almost no relation to traditional African ritual nor the content of the prayers to contemporary African life; that the organizational structure of the church and its method of reaching decisions should be model (ed) ever more closely on Western concepts rather than deviating from them. But in the last resort these are all merely outward forms that could quite easily give place to others. They are serious because they are symptoms. They persist because they are the school uniform of a classroom religion reflecting a world-view that is fundamentally European.²²

This partially provides an explanation to the differences in responses from two Christian groups – the Pentecostals and AICs. The Ndebele people were not necessarily against Christianity, but against the way it was presented by the Pentecostal Christians, especially the call for the transformation of their religious concepts. Jesus, as presented by

²² JV Taylor, *The Primal Vision*, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1963: 13-14.

the missionaries and the Pentecostals, unlike that of the AICs was seen to be against their religious beliefs and practices, especially the ancestors. JV Taylor further observed that:

Christ has been presented as the answer to the questions a white man would ask, the solution to the needs that Western man would feel, the Saviour of the world of the European world-view, the object of the adoration and prayer of historic Christendom. But if Christ were to appear as the answer to the questions that Africans are asking, what would he look like? If he came into the world of African cosmology to redeem Man, as Africans understand him, would he be recognizable to the rest of the Church Universal? And if Africa offered him the praises and petitions of her total, uninhibited humanity, would they be acceptable.²³

Taylor's observations are pertinent to the contextualization of Christianity in a rural set-up. What seems to be evident in the above cited cases is that contrary to the core practice of ATR that encouraged tolerance, and new ideas, members of the Ndebele traditional religion seemed to be intolerant of the radical form of Christianity, presented to them. They were not ready to listen to its propagators, nor were they ready to examine and consider views before rejecting them. Whilst this is generally not the character of ATR, it is evident that in a situation of crisis and defense, religions always adopt new coping strategies to stay alive. What complicates the situation is that most of the people who rejected the Pentecostal type of Christianity were members of the AICs. The possibility is that AICs may have been responsible for fueling the spirit of intolerance, lack of religious diversity and freedom of worship. This is so because the African Traditional Religion has never expressed such tendencies.

The Pentecostals and other radical Christians need to learn from the approaches of Apostle Paul, who while recognizing the transitory nature of the culture, wrote:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under a law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

Part of the reason for Paul's success in spreading the message of Christianity was his ability to keep his finger upon the heartbeat of the culture and adapt his methodology to the Ndebele context. On the other hand Paul did not dilute his message to win people to his side. His teaching was consistently Christ-centred. Any teaching or philosophy, which was not Christ-centred, was not entertained. Despite this fact some trends and cultural issues confronting the rural church today, continually change, while they continue to play a central role in defining and influencing the manner in which the church serves its people and community. Like the Gospel, that adapts to new situations, new questions and provides new answers, the Ndebele culture is dynamic. Its dynamism allows it to accommodate new ideas and challenges, while it resists or even fights against those factors that aim at destroying or completely replacing it.

²³ Ibid, page 16.

Multiple Social Centre

When I grew up as a rural boy in the late 1960s and early 1970s the Church used to be one of the key social centres of the community. At weekends, during public holidays such as Christmas and Good Fridays, people would, for instance, pack the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion, every evening for dance, singing and healing services. At that time church was the only social and entertainment centre for most villagers. In today's culture, the situation has changed to a large extent. There is a wide range of possibilities due to the availability of more social activities for the family than before. Many young people actually feel overwhelmed by this. There are several drinking clubs in different bars in the village, as well as football games taking place over the weekends, especially during public holidays. This became apparent during the Christmas and New Year holidays of 2002, when the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion was having its annual conference at Jakalasi 2. Although there were many people attending from other parts of Botswana, most of the local members were attending the football tournament that was going on at that same time. Young people were particularly pre-occupied with the football games. They only attended the conference in the evenings.²⁴

While in the past it was uncommon for people to drive to Francistown for leisure time, today it is very common and popular for young people to spend their evenings at the city and then drive back to the village when the clubs close down around eleven o' clock. The family and the church as such, feel pulled in a number of different directions, so much that young people have very little time for church activities. Rural churches have to struggle to get their members to attend special Christmas and New Year events, which used to be very popular and well attended in the past. Today there is therefore a tight competition for time. Football tournaments, record nights and drinking clubs, are all doing their best to win young people to their side, especially when these activities take place at the same time. It is becoming extremely difficult, if not impossible, to get the unchurched in the village to attend church services. No longer is the church a social centre that used to be in the past. Rural churches are to rethink and reconsider their strategies for evangelizing young people. They need relevant ways for mobilizing and attracting new people into the church.²⁵ Both the Gospel and the Ndebele culture have the potential to stretch themselves to meet new ways and new challenges of life. They have the capacity to adapt themselves to new styles of doing things that have relevance to young people of the 21st Century. The form of Christianity that emerges from the cultural context must therefore take into account that there are many forces that are pulling young people towards different directions. It is the responsibility of the church to come up with programmes that are cultural, contextual and relevant to the time.

The Church versus Economic and Population Shifts

Economic, political and population shifts are always important factors that directly affects rural church life. The current drought in Botswana has, for instance, affected many families in rural areas. These populations, who are heavily dependent on arable farming, have no other sources of income to support their families. The economic bases of rural communities have significantly changed. Agriculture no longer supply jobs and the basic food requirements. This factor and a host of other business opportunities attract young people to urban

²⁴ Personal Observation, December 2002.

²⁵ In December 2001 the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion held its annual conference at Jakalasi 2. During football games the attendance declined greatly.

areas. The city of Francistown, which was once isolated from the village has become a bedroom community. This has caused a major shift in the mentality and cultural mind set of rural populations. The population has become culturally eclectic. The result is that people frequent the city, and learn new ideas that have challenged the established patterns set by the 'old timers' in the church. This has led to new behavioural patterns and expectations.

The significant shift in population due to rural-urban migration has also influenced the way the rural churches conduct their ministry, and have resulted in new opportunities for evangelism in the church. Rural dwellers, for instance, drive to the city of Francistown for their shopping, socializing and church activities. It is now a common practice that people leave the rural churches to find denominations of their choice in Francistown. The effect of this movement is that rural churches can no longer assume that people will attend just because their doors are open. The church needs to carefully examine who it desires to reach, what it is doing to attract people and how it will keep them once they start coming. The rural church must recognize that its target population is today exposed to a wide range of socio-religious issues and that it is more complex than in the past.²⁶

Rural Churches are moving towards an Ageing Congregation

Generally, the membership of rural churches is composed of more than an 80% adult population.²⁷ There is, therefore, a lack of young people in these congregations. Without young people, who are the church of tomorrow, the future of rural churches is bleak. With the old constituting the majority of the membership, there is an insistence in keeping the past traditions, methods and strategies. The rural church remains traditional, not open to change, and unwelcoming to new ideas, methods and programmes.

The declining population also means that there is a limited base from which to draw new members to replace older members. Dwindling family sizes due to rural-urban migration has not only further decimated the population, but also led to scarcity of talents, resources, facilities and people with leadership abilities and training – hence the problem of limited programmes and activities, which contribute to the loss of young people in the church. The loss of contact with young people might lead to the entire generation of rural young families unchurched.

The problem of lack of facilities is a serious one. The churches at Jakalasi 2 are not only small, but also have limited facilities. The existing church buildings are only a single room with no separate Sunday school rooms or a nursery. They do not have fellowship halls or simple large rooms where members can gather for social fellowship and could also be used for community social events. The lack of such essential facilities, imposes some limitation on the church's outreach programmes. One of the contributing factors is lack of funds to expand or build better and new facilities. With fewer people having employment in the village and the majority of people in lower economic status to draw support from, the rural churches face severe budgetary constraints. This is one of the factors that contribute towards the difficulty of introducing new programmes, that makes the church more appealing and relevant to the younger generations. Jesus used parables and stories from his Jewish society to teach his contemporaries about the Kingdom of God. Through his down-to-earth teachings the people found new meaning and relevance to their beliefs and practice. His teachings did not only appeal to the older generations, but to all who listened to him: To

²⁶ At weekends one can count several vehicles driving out of the village with young people going for entertainment in Francistown.

²⁷ The 1991 Population Census shows that over 50% of the rural population is mainly composed of adults.

woman, children and men equally. This was so because Jesus addressed the socio-religious issues the people encountered in their day-to-day experiences. Rural churches have the challenge and the responsibility to follow the example of Jesus by drawing from their cultural experiences and contexts to respond to current challenges.

Strong Relationships

Rural Churches create a strong relational and family atmosphere that encourage a spirit of care and concern for members. This depth in relationships among congregants makes the shepherding process meaningful. The relaxed pace in the community and involvement in the larger life of the community is made possible as a result of this. In most cases the minister of the rural church is himself born and bred in the village and hence possesses a wide range of experience with the community. His family background is well known and highly appreciated by congregants. He also knows people's culture, background and experiences very well. When Mr S Toitoi, the present minister of the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion in the village, stood for a political council seat under the umbrella of the Botswana Democratic Party, he was voted in with an overwhelming majority.²⁸ What contributed to this, was position as the son of the late Bishop Toitoi Mtembo and his ministerial status. The church, as well as the villagers, treat him as their spiritual father and are willing to give him the needed support. For rural Christians, therefore, religion is not only inseparable from politics, but also central to all spheres of life. Without the religious, the other spheres of life are meaningless and unintegrated. Religion unifies and directs all. A religious leader is therefore acknowledged as an active agent of the religious life of the community, hence central to its operations. He provides the necessary central role that brings together all the other aspects of life.

Autonomous and African

Of the seven churches at Jakalasi 2 five are classified as AICs. These churches are autonomous, with an all-African membership and all African leadership – factors which have contributed to making the churches truly rural and indigenous.

The formation of these churches is based on the founder being called to the office of 'prophecy' and healing; based on 'the work of the Holy Spirit' that are believed to allow the prophet to preach the word of God and heal people. The leader is believed to be charismatic, and prophetic. In this position, he is believed to predict the future, and foretell the coming crisis. His healing powers and miracles attract large followings. The characteristics of autonomy and the African nature of the rural church is generally dominated by the following aspects:

Membership

The membership of rural churches in Jakalasi 2 is wholly Ndebele with more than 85% of their preaching, and singing done in the Ndebele language. The church attracts people of all social classes, with a large percentage of illiterate or semi-illiterate, most of who occupy the lower social level. Women are the majority and the backbone of the membership that forms a strong movement within the church. In the SDA and the ZCC, for instance, women make up to 75% of the total membership of the congregation. In both congregations, like all other churches, adults (over 45 years) make almost 80% of

²⁸ General Elections of 1998 Results.

the membership. It is tragic that the church leadership in all the rural churches at Jakalasi 2 is dominated by men. The Ndebele tradition has always marginalized women when it comes to leadership positions. It should, however, be pointed out that in the Ndebele traditional religious set-up at times men seemed to be figure heads, while the actual religious rites and other practices were conducted by women. In the Christian set-up, however, this has been reversed – men have the leadership positions and are also responsible for carrying out various religious rituals such as healing, blessing of children etc. Amanze (2002:350-358) points out that the Botswana society is typically patriarchal. He points out that positions of women have traditionally been deplorable and without dignity. The father, the brother and uncle wielded tremendous power and authority. The rural churches at Jakalasi are generally characterized by this picture. And there seems to be no signs that the trend is being reversed.

Healing Practices and Methods

Healing practices are an important feature of the rural churches. They are expressed through the prophets, rituals, dreams and visions. Healing practices are the main factor contributing to rural church growth. The methods of healing involve the use of the holy stick, holy water called *sewacho*, coffee, and a wide range of rituals and practices, including vomiting through drinking salty water to clean the digestion system, taking baths and use of candles. These healing practices, especially the use of the holy stick, holy water and strings, usually tied around the neck, waist, wrists and the ankles, are believed to protect members against witchcraft (*boloi*) and other forms of evil. Amanze (2002:88-118) shows that there is a striking similarity between the healing styles and methods of the AICs in a rural setting and the traditional conceptions and methods. This point is further supported by Obed Kealotswe in his paper entitled 'Healing in the AICs in the era of AIDS'.²⁹ Kealotswe argues that the healing of the AICs is very close to traditional healing. Like in the methods of the latter, their healing styles are said to take 'into consideration all the issues related to the good health of a person' (2001:224).

Finance

The rural churches, most of whom are AICs, are generally characterized by poor financial status. They do not rely on any foreign aid or support. All their funds are raised locally and from locals using indigenous methods. The ZCC, however, contributes large sums of money, which they subsequently transfer to the headquarters in Moria in Pholokwane, South Africa for development purposes there.³⁰ This is surprising because the local church itself has no proper church buildings for meetings. It uses simple structures and has no plans to invest in putting up better buildings.³¹ The church has no social projects in place to practically assist the sick, the poor, the homeless and parentless. While lack of financial accountability and keeping proper accounts is evident in all the rural AICs at Jakalasi 2, there were no complaints of financial mismanagement of funds.

²⁹ Missionalia 29:2 (August 2001:220-231).

³⁰ Amanze (1994:307) provides a list of ZCC congregations in Botswana. In all these congregations, only the Bontleng group in Gaborone has recently started developing its plot. The rest meet under trees or use simple temporary shelters.

³¹ The ZCC especially, and the other AICs at Jakalasi have no buildings for their meetings. They use peoples homes or open spaces under trees.

Another observation is that rural churches do not pay their priests. Although they are believed to be called of God, they do the work on voluntary basis. They were largely influenced by their cultural past whereby the role of priests was seen as a call from Nkulunkulu.³² Most of the priests have regular jobs and do church work on voluntary basis as service to the community, for which no pay is expected. Like priests in the traditional set up, they are involved in the day-to-day life of the community. During the ploughing season, they plough and cultivate their fields. Politically and socially speaking, they attend *Kgotla* (decision-making forums) meetings, celebrated marriage and wedding ceremonies.

Another observation to mention is that rural churches do not spend large amounts of money on buying furniture, church buildings, financing seminars etc. The focus of rural churches is more on people than on material prosperity and gain. Church ministry is more to do with issues affecting people, such as healing the sick, witchcraft and infertility, as well as attending to social problems such as marital breakdown; witchcraft (*boloi*) and many other related issues.

Funeral Services

One of the major contributions of rural churches is in the area of providing services to the community by conducting funeral rites and burial procedures. They comfort those who are mourning the loss of loved ones, especially in the era of AIDS. One of the best examples of this, is the ZCC, which usually performs cleansing and protective rituals for their own members after every funeral service. They do this by sprinkling holy water on them as a process of ritually cleansing them from 'bad luck' and the spirit of death. These cleansing rituals and protective measures are usually only extended to church members. For the other churches such as the Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion holy water is kept at the homes of members for use on special occasions in order to shield members against any form of evil, witchcraft and diseases. These funerary purification rites are strikingly similar to those in the Ndebele traditional religion. Amanze (2002:217-223) provides a useful discussion of funerary purification rites among Batswana. This discussion confirms the point that AICs have been greatly influenced by their past religious experiences in their ritual observations. They, however, still use the Bible but within their cultural context.

The Place of Ancestors (*Amandlozi*)

In all the three abovementioned rural AICs ancestors are not only highly esteemed and respected, but play a central role in people's worship life. At times they play a more central role than that of Jesus. They are believed to continually communicate with their descendents in dreams, visions, prayer and prophetic utterances. Through dreams and visions they are said to warn their relatives against impending danger, such as witchcraft and sorcery directed against them. People offer sacrifices to them in the form of beer and/or by slaughtering a beast. Through these rituals people believe that the ancestors are always with them, directing their lives and giving instructions about the future.

The Ndebele conception of the Supreme Being, Nkulunkulu, is the same as that of the Bible, held by the 'Christians' at Jakalasi 2. The term is always used to refer to the

³² Amanze (2002:46-61) discusses the different names of the Supreme Being among Batswana and other Southern African peoples. He, however, does not mention Nkulunkulu, the name used by the Ndebele.

Supreme Being who was never created and the Maker of heaven and earth. While the majority of rural churches at Jakalasi 2 do not see a major difference between the cultural conception of *Nkulunkulu* and that of the Bible, there are, however, major differences in the way *Nkulunkulu* is approached in ways that differ with those presented in the Bible. For them He is to be approached through ancestors, not through Christ, as the Bible teaches – this was believed to unite the people with their material and spiritual worlds.

The relationship between Jesus and the ancestors was described by a ZCC woman, as follows: From Monday to Saturday she is in the habit of worshipping and communicating her needs to the ancestors. Each time she approaches the ancestors they immediately responded and answered her prayers, protecting and providing for her social, spiritual and economic needs. On Sundays she stated that she went to church and presented her other requests, prayers and worship to Jesus, who she claims has also always favoured her, protecting and providing for her social, economic and spiritual needs. The woman concluded that her experience shows that both Jesus and the ancestors are able to present people's requests to *Nkulunkulu*. As such, ancestors and Christ, could be used interchangeably to meet the various needs of people. The woman reiterated that she did not see any conflict in worshipping Jesus and the ancestors interchangeably. She claimed that in her church they regarded Bishop Barnabas Edward Lekganyane,³³ the founder of the ZCC, as their ancestor, through whom they sometimes approach the Supreme Being. What is important for her is that her needs and requests are usually immediately met whenever she prayed either to Jesus or ancestors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, it must be pointed out that in many ways the rural churches represent the fact that for a church to be relevant, it must be based on the following theoretical principles:

1. Self-propagating principles – every member becoming a teacher within a given cultural context;
2. Self-governing principles – the local people running the affairs of their church using the skills and training that have cultural orientation;
3. Self-supporting principles – with all church structures provided for by the indigenous people and as well as church methods and machinery developed only so far as the natives of the church are able to take care of and to manage them. Resources in terms of finance, personnel and initiative generated locally. This suggests less dependence on foreign resources.

The underlying factor, therefore, is that Christianity must be relevant to the rural people. For this to happen, the culture of the people must be respected and allowed to develop. However, while it is true that when people 'detrribalise', lose moral and religious integrity, over emphasis of tribal life, and may be dangerous for the spiritual and moral life of church members. One of the best examples is the marginalized place of women in the Ndebele society. This situation cannot be condoned, but will need to be carefully addressed by the

³³ The respect or honour given to Lekganyane (Amanze, 1994:307) by most rural ZCC members is regarded by some as cultic. They frequently mention his name in their prayers. The coffee and other healing articles blessed by Lakganyane have connotations of a cult. Amanze, however, does not agree with such a view. He says it amounts to a misrepresentation of what ZCC stands for.

Word of God without fear of challenging the *status quo*. It is also most interesting to note that rural Christianity, as found at Jakalasi 2, has an important lesson for Botswana and the international church community of today. It teaches that insensitivity to other people's religious practices may be offensive, intolerant and divisive. While it is true that not everything, which everybody believes, is necessarily true, this does not give a license to anyone to view with contempt or cast damaging remarks on those whose beliefs do not agree with theirs. The fact that we are right should make us respect other people's beliefs and religious practices, unless, of course, they are offensive to basic human rights or tend towards violating our God-given life.

The local context of Christianity and the Gospel is important for the rural churches of the Jakalasi 2 village. Since the Gospel is universal and relevant for all people, there is a need to apply and relate it to each context where people embrace Christianity, because people understand Christianity in a particular culture and in a historical context. This is called indigenization, which according to Richard J. Gehman (1987:5), was intended that Christianity become 'native' that is... 'born, growing or produced within.' He writes: "Until Christianity is planted indigenously, until the Christian church takes on the colouring of a given culture, Christianity remains foreign."

For indigenous or rural churches to be established successfully, they must be based on the three 'self's': self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting principles. The idea is to plant churches, which could multiply themselves within their own culture without the need for dependence upon foreign finance or personnel. These churches must also effectively utilize the traditional culture for the communication of the Gospel, for the promotion of autonomy and self-reliance of churches (Ibid, page 5-6). The process of transformation is fundamental to the development of an authentic form of Christianity.

Other important observations must be made as a way of conclusion. First, that the question of ancestors (*amadlozi*) is still central to the religious beliefs and practices of the Ndebele people, specifically, and the Batswana, in general. Rural church people continue to relate to them in their family gatherings. Some do so even in the context of their church life, as the example of a ZCC woman above shows. Most rural Christians, especially those belonging to the AICs and the RCC, do not make clear distinctions between their belief in Christ and their family ancestral practices. They easily switch from one to the other depending on the occasion being celebrated or the environment they find themselves in. While the SDA national leadership is adamantly against their Christian members participating in activities involving ancestral worship, the situation seems to be different at the local church in Jakalasi 2. Their members, like the rest of the Ndebele community at Jakalasi 2, participate in ancestral rituals related to such activities as death, funeral, marriage etc. The second important point has to do with tribal rites and practices such as those of rain-making. While their popularity has sharply declined due the impact of Christianity, modernity and Western education, in a time of crisis such as drought, famine, epidemic, the people always revert to the old religious institutions and practices. The third important point has to do with a wide range of social practices, such as polygamy. The SDA's position on polygamy is clear. For them it is not possible for a Christian to become a polygamist. One of their oldest members, who acts as an evangelist for the church through preaching during funerals and other special occasions, has no official support from the regional committee of the church because of his polygamous status. He was determined to fight against the decision to sideline him from that ministerial position. He argued that polygamy was a Ndebele custom, which found support from the Old Testament.

The rural type of Christianity, like the Ndebele traditional religion, has not only claimed a central place in the community but influences the other spheres of life, such as the political, the social and the cultural, that revolves around it. At the ploughing season, for instance, both church members and non-church members, look to the various rural congregations to fortify their fields, bless and protect their seeds. In some cases the church leaders practically sprinkle holy water and tie green or white strings along the four corners of the field to dispel evil spells. At every stage of the ploughing activity: cultivation, weeding and harvest, the religious factor is clearly pronounced. What is interesting is the striking similarity in the rituals conducted by the AICs and those found in Ndebele religious practices. In fact, most AICs, have continued the Ndebele traditional religious ideas, symbols and rituals in the 'Christian' contexts, a factor that has attracted most people to the membership of rural churches. Two words are therefore key to the growth and life of the rural churches, one being continuity and the other being relevance or contextualization.

Critical to the development of the rural type of Christianity is also the process of confrontation, rejection and transformation. The best example of confrontation and rejection is clearly demonstrated in the case of the response of the SDA towards the Mwali cult rain-making rites. The SDA's labelled the rites as demonic and unchristian. They refused to observe Friday, a day declared as a holiday in the Mwali cult. As such they conducted their usual economic, social and political activities on that day and insisted on Saturday as their day of rest and worship. This radicalism had its own positive results. It represents a very important process that takes place whenever two cultures or religions come into contact. As the radical Christianity confronts and transforms the cultural practices, it produces something radically new and different. If the propagators of Christianity were Western missionaries, the new type of Christianity will not necessarily be Western in character or outlook. It does not compromise standards and produces a Christianity that accommodates everything that is African or Ndebele. It transforms the old practices, rites, ideas and produces something new and different. We call that a process of transformation. It is different from a process of rejection, absorption and confrontation. Transformation will at times agree with the process of confrontation especially where everything is done with a positive attitude. It fights for a contextualized, indigenous and a radical form of Christianity that is truly Biblical and community based.

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