

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RELIGION, CLASS AND CULTURE - INDIGENOUS CHURCHES IN  
SOUTH AFRICA, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ZIONIST-  
APOSTOLICS

Glenda Kruss

October 1985

Presented in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Arts in the  
Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at  
the University of Cape Town, under the  
supervision of Professor James V Leatt.

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## ABSTRACT

Part one establishes the problematic of this primarily historical and theoretical work on indigenous churches in South Africa. The existing literature is surveyed, explanatory themes isolated and a critique of the dominant functionalist framework offered. A different theoretical framework - historical materialism - is proposed, in order to bring new insights into the explanation of indigenous churches. A periodisation of the South African social formation, and three corresponding forms of indigenous churches is proposed.

Part two considers each of these in a schematic form. It is hypothesized that Ethiopian churches arose at the turn of the century in the Transvaal and Eastern Cape amongst the emerging African petit-bourgeoisie. They were the religious response to unequal incorporation in the developing capitalist social formation. An early form of Zionism, Zion City Churches, arose between the two World Wars, in a period of intense resistance to proletarianization. In each region they were shaped by the particular conditions and conflicts. An attempt is made to demonstrate that, in contrast, Zionist-Apostolics arose after World War II as a church of the black working class. Instead of explaining them in terms of acculturation, it is hypothesized that their healing form can be understood as an expression and a protest of the alienation of the black working class. As a religious-cultural innovation they succeed in subverting missionary hegemony and gaining control over the means of salvation, and in this way, of their own lives.

Part three attempts to evaluate the contribution of a historical materialist analysis to understanding religion, and to isolate directions for future research.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to everyone who helped with this thesis: Prof. James Leatt, my supervisor; the staff of Religious Studies Department for their encouragement; Jerry Mosala, for his thoughts and ideas; Hazel and David Cohen, and Shaan Ellinghouse for the typing; Jannie Hofmeyr for the tables; Sally Fletcher for drawing the maps; and my family and friends, especially those I live with, for their support.

The Harry Oppenheimer Institute Scholarship in 1984; and The Human Sciences Research Council Bursary in 1985, provided financial assistance which enabled this research to be completed.

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## INTRODUCTION.

"In one corner is a whatnot with several English novels on it, and in the opposite corner is a sideboard on which stand a cheese-dish and a pot of brilliantine."<sup>1</sup> This quotation, from an early thesis on Isiah Shembe, exemplifies many of the problems with current studies of indigenous churches. While its level of triviality is extreme, and other studies do not merely concern themselves with such matters, it is held that this kind of description is a logical consequence of the theory and method dominant in the study of religion and social change in general, and of indigenous churches in particular. Many scholars are attracted to the more exotic and "piquant aspects of life,"<sup>2</sup> in the belief that description equals 'understanding'. This thesis thus arose out of a dissatisfaction with current explanations of indigenous churches. Why did these churches arise when and where they did? Why do they persist? What forms do they take and how do they differ? What groups form the majority of their membership and leadership? It is felt that these questions are not adequately addressed in current studies, undertaken predominantly by missionaries, theologians and anthropologists, using positivist-functional theory and method. Scholars remain mystified as to why these churches arose and grew on such a large scale. There appears to be little consensus on the causes of, or reasons for, African indigenous churches. Often we are provided with a variety of causes, but little indication of how any of these causes relate to one another. The majority of studies focus on describing and analysing a limited range of phenomena - the beliefs, ritual practices and organizational structures of these churches. It can be argued then, that the study of indigenous churches has reached an impasse. Any attempt to

re-examine these churches will only corroborate previous findings, unless a different theoretical framework is used.

This dissatisfaction with the study of indigenous churches however, did not arise in a theoretical vacuum, but in the context of theoretical challenge and reformulation. The functionalist theory dominant in Western social science has been criticised fundamentally, predominantly by scholars working within a Marxist framework. In South Africa, a "revolution in historiography"<sup>3</sup> has meant that a large body of research on the history and nature of the South African social formation, informed by Marxist theory, has arisen to challenge existing paradigms.

It was thus decided to use what Gandy calls "historical sociology" in an attempt to provide a more adequate explanation of indigenous churches. This is based on the fundamental principle that

"ideology falls into line with material conditions. Changes in material conditions create new social relations, and these reshape human consciousness. Technical, environmental, economic and class relationships dominate the ideologies of history. The loom of history weaves ideological colours throughout the social fabric. To unravel this fabric we study the changing relations between humanity and the institutional and natural environment, the material world."<sup>4</sup>

While it was borne in mind that a great deal of debate and discussion centres on the validity of the historical materialist approach, the intention was to avoid becoming embedded in theoretical and epistemological debate. Instead an attempt was made to engage, in a far more rigidly historical and sociological manner than hitherto, the existing data on indigenous churches. It must be noted at the outset that this work does not address theological issues in any way. The significance of this thesis rather lies in attempting to test a different framework, historical sociology, which will hopefully illuminate and explain what

has not been adequately explained so far; and to raise new questions and directions for future work.

Methodologically, the existing literature on indigenous churches formed the basic material for this study. What has been collected thus far was exposed to a different theoretical framework. This thesis is not based on extensive archival work, although a certain amount of primary material has been used. Further, the study is not based on extensive fieldwork, in the light of its intention to raise new questions and reveal the complexities perceived in the explanation of indigenous churches. Informal visits and meetings with church leaders nevertheless provided important insights into this predominantly historical and theoretical study.

The argument will take the following form:

Firstly, the existing literature will be examined, explanatory themes isolated and a critique outlined. Secondly, an attempt will be made to use historical materialist theory to analyse the data. Initially, it was intended to focus on an attempt to explain Zionist churches specifically. However, the ahistorical nature of the existing material shifted the focus slightly. Thus, an attempt is made to show that it is possible to differentiate religious cultural forms historically, and to demonstrate their close linkage with different periods of the development of the capitalist social formation in South Africa. Three distinct religious forms arising in a specific period, amongst a specific grouping, are thus isolated. These are demonstrated and outlined in a broad schematic form in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. In this work it is not possible to examine in detail the shape taken by each form. In line with the initial project, Zionist-Apostolic churches are analysed in greater depth. Chapter 6 is thus a preliminary examination of why Zionist-Apostolic churches take the form they do. Chapter 7 considers how the use of historical

sociological concepts contributes to our understanding of African indigenous churches. At the very least, this thesis will clarify the need for a reformulation of traditional explanatory concepts. However, it is intended that this thesis, although only an initial exploration, will establish the usefulness of a historical materialist framework to the explanation of religious phenomena.

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PART I : THE PROBLEM STATED

CHAPTER 1

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON  
INDIGENOUS CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA

The first "Native Separatist Church" in South Africa, the Tembu Church, was founded by Nehemiah Tile, " .. a fine specimen of a Tembu.." who had grown "impatient of European control, and taking advantage of his position, he began to disseminate the ideas of a Separated Church free from White control."<sup>1</sup> That was in 1884, and according to the 1980 census, there are now 4 954 000 members of "Black Independent Churches."<sup>2</sup>

Almost as prolific as the growth of these churches has been the growth of an extensive body of literature on independent churches. As one writer phrased it, "The interesting if pathetic phenomenon of separatism has set many pens and more tongues in motion."<sup>3</sup>

The earliest attention paid to 'separatist churches' was by missionaries threatened by secessions. Lea reflected the common concern that in South Africa, "Native denominationalism has run perilously close to madness!"<sup>4</sup> When Rev. Mzimba broke away to form the African Presbyterian Church in 1898, Dr. James Steward complained that "The effect of this method is to create a cave of Adullam for the restless and dissatisfied and to weaken the discipline of other Churches."<sup>5</sup>

Ethiopianism, with its slogan of 'Africa for the Africans', was feared as a quasi-religious and quasi-political anti-

white movement. However, The Native Affairs Commission (1903-5) found that "The Ethiopian movement is the outcome of a desire on the part of the Natives for ecclesiastical self-support and self-control, first taking tangible form in the secession of discontented and restless spirits from religious bodies under the supervision of European Missionaries without any previous external excitation thereto."<sup>6</sup> Government attention focused on independent churches after the Bulhoek massacre of the Israelites in 1921. The report of the Commission of Inquiry of 1925 was "not disposed to condemn the aspiration after religious independence, unassociated with mischievous political propaganda."<sup>7</sup> However, the Union Government was concerned to maintain control (a "more cordial relationship"<sup>8</sup>), by laying down the conditions whereby churches could gain recognition and the attendant privileges. In this it was hoped that "the movement will be robbed of most if not all its power to harm either the Native himself or the State as a whole."<sup>9</sup> Very few churches ever gained recognition, although most strove for it, and the system was dropped in about 1961.<sup>10</sup>

In 1946, Mqotsi and Mkele attempted to determine to what the Church of Christ, one of the most successful of the separatist movement, owed its prosperity. They found that the greatest growth period had coincided with the depression of the 1930's. "The Church of Christ, with its fervent promise of liberation certainly offered the people a way out from their helplessness."<sup>11</sup> Bishop Limba's personality and role in the church was seen as the major attraction and reason for the stability of the church. Few studies of this nature were undertaken before 1948. Pretorius<sup>12</sup> has summarised the most common reasons given for independency in the literature prior to 1948 as : broadly political (African nationalism, the longing for a purely Bantu church, reaction to conquest), economic, and contributory personal factors (moral issues, discipline, finance).

In 1948 Sundkler published his classic study *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* which has been widely used by almost every other writer to date. Since then, many studies of independent churches have been undertaken by missionaries, theologians, historians, social anthropologists and other social scientists. According to West, "These include a variety of approaches, ranging from theological assessments to historical studies and sociological investigations .."<sup>13</sup>

This chapter intends to survey the literature on independent churches in South Africa which has appeared since 1948, primarily focusing on how each writer has explained the rise and existence of independent churches. Major explanatory themes will be distinguished, to demonstrate what kinds of explanations exist. It will be argued that, despite the apparent variety of approach, studies of independent churches have been undertaken within a functionalist theoretical framework, and that this framework does not adequately explain, or even fully describe, the phenomenon.

## MAJOR EXPLANATORY THEMES IN THE LITERATURE

### 1.1 "REACTION TO CONQUEST"

The first influential explanation of independent churches has been called the "race relations"<sup>14</sup> theory. Independent churches are the "logical reply to the white policy of segregation and separation"<sup>15</sup>, both on the part of the state and the orthodox denominations. Moreover, they may be regarded as the "symptom of an inner revolt against the white man's missionary crusade."<sup>16</sup> This view was advocated in Sundkler's pioneering study of 'Bantu independent churches' among the Zulu, which has laid the foundation and provided guiding principles for many subsequent studies, by

missionaries and by social scientists.

One of his most influential contributions has been the Ethiopian-Zionist typology, widely accepted as the standard classification. Ethiopian churches are defined as those which seceded from mission churches chiefly on racial grounds, or subsequent secessions over the struggle for prestige and power. These churches are thought to be nationalistic but otherwise very similar to the mission church pattern of worship and doctrine. Zionist churches are defined as historically having their roots in the American pentecostal movement, in Zion City, Illinois; but ideologically claiming to emanate from Mount Zion in Jerusalem. They are seen as syncretistic movements with an emotional style of worship - healing, speaking in tongues, taboos, etc. Later, a third type was introduced - the Messianic type, with a leader who operates from a permanent healing colony or Bethesda, and who emerges as a 'Black Christ' figure.

Sundkler's study aimed "to find out what the leaders and followers of these churches do and believe" and only on this basis could he "question the causes of these phenomena."<sup>17</sup> The phenomenon Sundkler was attempting to explain was not so much the existence of independent churches as the 'separatist problem' - why has there been secession from both mission and other Bantu churches on such a large scale in South Africa? An earlier scholar had posed the problem thus: "... every student of Native Affairs endeavours to know why so many separatist churches exist."<sup>18</sup> (own emphasis)

In general, then, independent churches are seen as a "product of social and ecclesiastical separation from the white caste...."<sup>19</sup> Regarding social separation, Sundkler claimed that racial discrimination - 'Net vir Blankes - For Europeans Only' - is the root cause of the large dimensions of the separatist church movement in South Africa.

Separatism can be seen as a corollary of the land problem in South Africa - the increase in the number of independent churches could be "shown on a diagram as a parallel to the tightening squeeze of the Natives through land legislation."<sup>20</sup>

Ecclesiastical separation appears to have played a more direct role in the rise of Ethiopian type churches. Protestant denominationalism, furthermore, by its very nature encouraged breakaways and expectations of further secession. Sundkler criticised missionaries for "selective giving",<sup>21</sup> presenting the church as a preaching and teaching institution only, and failing to transmit the ritual heritage of the church, which is a central emphasis of Zionist churches.

However, the fact that secessions from African churches still occur, particularly to form Zionist type churches, demonstrates that there are other causes at work. Sundkler suggested that this could be explained by the African's urge for leadership and his desire for prestige and power. In a society of racial discrimination, independent churches are the only legitimate outlet for leadership, and one of the few psychological safety valves. Thus, independent churches are portrayed as an "outcome of the Bantu's search for a place of their own, where, under modern conditions they can form a church-tribe, with the leader borrowing traits from the kingship pattern of old."<sup>22</sup>

Sundkler claimed that the activity of Zionist prophets and churches showed that in some cases, "the deepest cause of the emergence of Independent Churches is a nativistic-syncretistic interpretation of the Christian religion."<sup>23</sup> Consequently, as a Christian missionary, he was concerned about the perceived trend that "the syncretistic sect becomes the bridge over which Africans are brought to heathenism."<sup>24</sup>

However, in a 1961 re-edition of his book, Sundkler re-evaluated this interpretation. Events had brought him to realize that "to the African masses in the Reserve or City, their churches appeared as definite Christian organizations, adapted to their own real needs and as bridges to a new and richer experience of life."<sup>25</sup> While the prophet's theme from 1913 - 1945 was protest, after 1945 - 8, Sundkler claimed that the tendency was towards accommodation, and the churches were 'adaptive structures' in city life.

The core of Sundkler's explanation can be summed up thus: "In a segregated and chlorocratic society as South Africa, the separatist church becomes an outlet for the pent-up frustrations of the dominated group and tends to develop into a means of 'reaction to conquest'."<sup>26</sup>

This theme of reaction to white domination and control has been favoured particularly by historians of religious separatism at the turn of the century. Independent churches have been portrayed as "political protest movements against the background of African nationalism and colonial paternalism".<sup>27</sup> Schutte,<sup>28</sup> for example, has analysed the political significance of independent churches in South Africa, and concluded that because there are few channels for political expression, these churches become the only means of changing the status quo, with an attitude of escapism or of adventism.

Mills <sup>29</sup> has examined the long tradition of linking religious separatism and African nationalism. He argued that the Christianity which Africans of the Cape Colony began to adopt from the late 1860's had a definite postmillennial orientation - the primary focus was on the conditions and status of Africans which, it was believed, could be reformed. However, by the period 1890 - 1910, the economic position and living standards of Africans declined, and the "failure of their expectations was forcing Africans to reconsider their

eschatological beliefs".<sup>30</sup> There was thus a turn to premillenarianism - a retreat into an inward-looking pietism and other-worldly attitude. Many left the white-led churches to form or join independent churches. Mills claimed that Sundkler's Zionist category clearly falls within this fundamentalist pentecostal tradition. Far from religious separatism being a precursor and contributor to African nationalism, he argued that they should be seen as two antithetical manifestations of reactions to the same conditions and crisis. African nationalism is postmillenarian, forming organisations to change and improve this life, and religious separatism is premillenarian, with hopes centred on the next life. This can be compared with Kiernan's interpretation of Sundkler's explanation: "The reaction of the first (Ethiopianism) was clearly political; the emotional revivalism of the latter (Zionism) was seen to be a substitute for political action".<sup>31</sup>

Etherington too has interpreted the "decline of secular opportunities for leadership and material advances"<sup>32</sup> as the critical factor in explaining Ethiopian movements. It is claimed that most factors, generally accepted as causes of Ethiopianism (sectarian divisions, private interpretation of scripture, racial segregation, missionary reluctance to ordain African pastors) were present long before the appearance of Ethiopian churches among the Northern Nguni. Etherington hypothesized that the critical factor which accounts for independence in the last decade of the nineteenth century was the decline in opportunities for other sorts of leadership, which led to an increase in African interest in church leadership. "Since there were a limited number of attractive ecclesiastical positions available, Africans were inspired to create new positions by forming new churches".<sup>33</sup> Having left traditional ways for their new Christian identity, there was little reason for founders of Ethiopian churches to devise doctrinal differences. Etherington pointed out that Zionist tendencies, on the other

hand, are not discernible before the turn of the twentieth century. The military conquest and annexation of the old society opened the way for Zionism, as defenders of the old order "tried to parry with new religious weapons".<sup>34</sup> The appearance of Ethiopian churches demonstrated too that Christianity could exist apart from white missionaries. But centrally, Zionist churches have more to do "with the turn from resistance to acculturative behaviour in the face of a 'world turned upside down.'"<sup>35</sup>

Pretorius has attempted to trace the historical growth of Zionism in the Transkei. He asserted that in Transkei "one finds in microcosm a process which at the time was taking place in many areas of the globe: 'interaction between primal society with its religion and ... the powerful Western world with its Christian faith.'"<sup>36</sup> Around 1880, when military and political resistance was waning, resistance moved into other channels, such as independent churches, although the "specific religious dynamic"<sup>37</sup> of these churches must be recognised. Thus, at the turn of the century, religious independency as an adaptation to the changes caused by the "Christian faith, together with a powerful Western influence",<sup>38</sup> took the form of Ethiopianism. The origins of most Zionist groups in Transkei could be traced to influences from Natal and the Witwatersrand, and while some churches were founded in the 1930's, Zionism as a movement in the Transkei only began to grow significantly since the 1950's, when 20% of the total were established.

The explanatory theme of 'reaction to conquest', that independent churches "emerged out of the confrontation between Whites and Blacks, whether this is seen as a cultural clash merely or as involving a conflict of social, economic and political interests"<sup>39</sup> refers predominantly to the early period in which independent churches arose. In fact, the literature focuses primarily on Ethiopian type churches and on rural areas. There has been a shift in recent years

in the study of independent churches by social anthropologists, who have concentrated largely on Zionist type churches in urban areas. The theme pointed to by Sundkler, Etherington and Mills, of a move towards accommodation or adaptation, has become the dominant explanatory motif of Zionist churches. However, this shift has occurred largely because of a change in focus of study, as different forms of independent churches have developed historically, rather than because of major conceptual differences.

## 1.2. ADAPTATION TO URBAN LIVING

Oosthuizen has argued that the proliferation of separatist churches may be explained partly by the race issue and the failure of the church, but most important is the reaction of indigenous cultures in the face of the onslaught of Western civilisation, technology and industrialisation. Independent churches play an important role in the acculturation process by providing old securities in the face of the destruction of traditional society. "Much in these movements is a compensation for what has been lost in the traditional churches, or what threatens to get lost in the new westernized society."<sup>40</sup> Thus, following Sundkler, Zionist churches have been characterised as primarily being "psychological safety valves,"<sup>41</sup> but in the urbanization process.

This approach has been thoroughly formulated by West in his study of some of the approximately 900 Zionist Churches in Soweto in 1970.<sup>42</sup> At the level of general explanation, he adopted an intellectualist approach<sup>43</sup> to explain the proliferation of independent churches. Briefly, independent churches, with their "this-worldly" approach, are more satisfying to African people with the problems they face in

South Africa, than the "other-worldly" orientation of mission Christianity. However, it is then necessary to attempt specific explanation - to examine the "this-worldly" emphasis of Zionist churches in the Soweto urban situation. The major explanatory hypothesis is that Zionist churches "play an important adaptive role in the process of urbanization."<sup>44</sup> West claimed that independent churches should be seen as providing new bases for social organization, which are required in order to adapt to the new and changing urban situation. Soweto's independent churches provide a "blend of old and new"<sup>45</sup> which is particularly attractive to the people who join them: mostly elderly, poorly educated, first generation townspeople, and women. The synthesis of old and new "facilitates adaptation to the urban environment by providing an important link between it and the environment from which they come."<sup>46</sup> Zionist churches are seen as voluntary associations which fulfill the role played by kinship groups in rural areas, by providing personal networks and so security and identity in the new urban environment - "a place to feel at home."<sup>47</sup> Soweto itself is characterised by many difficulties, and in this situation, the Zionist churches provide social security and material support for their members. This "'comforting the uncomfortable' is done through caring communities and particularly through the work of prophets and belief in the healing power of the Holy Spirit".<sup>48</sup> However, West contended that the Zionist movement would not disappear in more settled conditions, because of their positive dynamic aspect. They have created a new religious organization of African orientation which is more relevant to many than the Christianity of the mission churches. Extending this beyond the "urbanization process", West found two major reasons for people joining Zionist churches in Soweto. The charismatic Christianity of Zionist churches, with their 'synthesis of old and new', provides a link with traditional religion. Furthermore, the charismatic experience is important to the socially deprived - "... the Holy Spirit is believed to

comfort and heal people suffering from many physical and social disabilities."<sup>49</sup>

Mqotsi and Mkele have noted that the greatest growth of the Church of Christ was in the depression of the 1930's, when it "rode on the crest of the wave of despair."<sup>50</sup>

Thus, 'deprivation - theory' has been developed as an explanatory tool. Applying this to Zionist churches in Soweto, West<sup>51</sup> argued that poverty should be examined as one facet of a multi-causal explanation of the prolific growth in South Africa. However, it was held that the concept of poverty defined in purely economic terms is inadequate. A definition should be based on Monica Wilson's assertion that "The basic insecurity of men comes not from poverty, but from a feeling that no-one cares for them."<sup>52</sup>

- thus including an inadequate quality of life. While most inhabitants of Soweto have an inadequate quality of life, those who join independent churches may have a perception of inequality relative to the rest of the population. Support for this 'perceived relative deprivation' thesis is found in the characteristics of Zionist churches, for example, healing is "in itself a 'search for security.'<sup>53</sup>

Thus Zionist churches are not a specific reaction to poverty in a narrow sense - "a much more important and positive role is an attempt to create for their members a more satisfactory quality of life than they might experience in some mission churches, and, a fortiori, in the secular world outside."<sup>54</sup>

This kind of explanation is to be found in Kiernan's work on the small-scale study of Zionist Bands in Kwa Mashu. It was suggested that the Zionist band in Kwa Mashu is concerned "to erect boundaries setting off its membership from the rest of the population."<sup>55</sup> This is illustrated by studies of the leadership patterns<sup>56</sup> and communion<sup>57</sup> of Zionist bands, which are seen to be characterised by "competition for social resources"<sup>58</sup> in an urban environment. Zionist bands are thus defined as "small-scale curing communities in

which reserves of spiritual power, called umoya, are ritually built up and expended to offset the effects of human and mystical agents which afflict the individual."<sup>57</sup>

However, Kiernan primarily explained Zionist bands as a "symbol of urban living."<sup>58</sup> The urban situation is characterised primarily by poverty and "in direct response to it, there exists a wealth of associational life in the township."<sup>59</sup> Zionism is a social response to a particular range of poverty - "the poorer than poor."<sup>60</sup>

Zionist bands are thus voluntary associations aimed at transcending the adverse conditions of urban living. The bands are dominated by a Puritan ethic, in the Weberian sense, but their thrift and industry does not lead to capital accumulation, because they are operating in an economy of needs. The "poor and puritan" Zionist organisation thus functions as a "reasonably effective welfare agency operating on the principle of self help."<sup>61</sup>

Thus, above all, Zionist bands are engaged in "a confrontation with the realities of urban living."<sup>62</sup>

Pretorius has summarised the trend since Sundkler's study of explaining the causes of independency as "die akkulturasiefaktor."<sup>63</sup> An aspect of this acculturation process is the search for security and identity. Independency is thus an expression of the need for a group which is intimate enough to allow the African Christian to feel at home, as was the case in the old destroyed tribal solidarity. However, "daar word algemeen saamgestem dat die primere onderliggende oorsaak die botsing van twee kulture en die gevolglike spanning en ontwrigting in die lewe van die Afrikaanse stamme is."<sup>64</sup>

Thus, the dominant explanation of Zionist churches is that their 'synthesis of old and new' facilitates adaptation to urban living, both in terms of the cultural alienness of Africans coming from a traditional religious rural environment, and in terms of the adverse conditions of

poverty and social deprivation.

There remains a large body of literature which has not yet been dealt with - the work of missionaries and theologians, who attempt to explain these movements in order to further their task of propagating the gospel in Africa. The majority share the dominant explanation outlined above as a basis from which to study independent churches. However, they stress as the major reason for the appeal of these churches, the 'blend of old and new' or syncretism. Their missionary concern also manifests in a concern with the challenge, whether viewed negatively or positively, of independent churches for the orthodox mainline church. Their attitude has been characterised as "the pursuit of Christianity in this era and the pursuit of Christian purity in an earlier area."<sup>67</sup>

### 1.3. SYNTHESIS OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND CHRISTIANITY

#### 1.3.1. BRIDGES BACK TO HEATHENISM

At first, missionaries reacted with alarm and "considerable heart-burn"<sup>68</sup> to the perceived threat of separatism. The simplest reason for separation was held to be "we do not like the white man over us: we like to manage our own affairs."<sup>69</sup> No wonder then the resolution of the Witwatersrand General Church Council in May 1906 - "This Council considers that the movement known as Ethiopianism is fraught with grave peril both to the cause of Christ's Kingdom and the interests of the State."<sup>70</sup>

Sundkler originally criticised Zionist churches as "bridges back to heathenism."<sup>71</sup> While acknowledging the failure of

the mission churches in many respects, he nevertheless felt that the church holds the "continuous principles" without which "continuous life" is not possible.<sup>72</sup> The concern was that pagan worship and heathen thought patterns of the African past crept into the church and perverted true Christianity. This critical attitude prevailed in the early period of study.

According to Oosthuizen "when the outer crust is scratched off from the immediate political and social issues put forward to justify the existence of nativistic movements, the undercurrent of the traditional religion and culture will be discovered as the main attraction, because there is found the age-old security which the mission churches could not give."<sup>73</sup> (own emphasis) In the break up of traditional African society, independent churches offer a new spiritual home and a visible community.<sup>74</sup>

However, Oosthuizen's work is based on the premise that the established theology of the Church provides criteria by which other movements may be objectively assessed and typified. Thus, many separatist churches may not be called churches or even sects, but are nativistic movements, and thus post-Christian - "Christian elements are drawn into the life's centre of the old religion and are interpreted so that they lose their Christian value."<sup>75</sup> Although Oosthuizen sharply criticized the mission church for its foreignness and failure in its theological task in Africa, some independent movements can not be regarded as Christocentric - and "for the sake of scientific truth, this must be admitted."<sup>77</sup> But, without becoming ethnocentric and isolated, ceasing to be a Christian community as nativistic movements have done, indigenisation is essential for the mission church. Oosthuizen's primary concern was 'the challenge' and responsibility of the church, to communicate the gospel in the African cultural and social setting, but with a sound biblical and theological basis. To this end, theological

analysis of independent churches was essential.<sup>78</sup>

In a similar vein, a study of messianism in Southern Africa was undertaken by Dr. M.L.Martin. Viewed positively, messianism reflects a "determination to come to grips with a changed world in which so many old values have become obsolete through culture contact, christianization, colonization and industrialization."<sup>79</sup> However, the central problem addressed by Martin is whether African messianism is a false messianism, which can be measured only by the standard revealed by God in Jesus Christ, the true messiah. By this standard, African messianism (for example, Shembe of the Church of the Nazarites) has "gone wrong"<sup>80</sup> - it has a wrong eschatology based on the old African thought patterns and natural theology, and a wrong ecclesiology. Indirectly, then, Martin is explaining the attraction of the churches, but she claimed that followers of messianic figures may simply "not have had a proper chance of learning who Jesus really is."<sup>81</sup> Once again, the church, as the "messianic community on earth"<sup>82</sup> must face not only the wrong conceptions but also the African quests which lie behind messianic movements.

The initial reaction to independent churches, then, was to criticise them as syncretistic movements, and attempt to bring them to a true appreciation of Jesus Christ, while recognising the needs they filled for Africans. However, independent churches continued to grow and attract greater numbers, forcing missionaries and theologians to formulate a more positive approach. Some felt that the challenge was as severe as the encounter between the post-apostolic church and the gnostic movement in the second century. The independent church movement was "apt to humiliate our own ecclesiastical self-confidence."<sup>83</sup> In general then, "we can no longer overlook them and neglect their claims"<sup>84</sup> and the call became one of "re-examination, repentance and readjustment."<sup>85</sup>

### 1.3.2. BRIDGES OF RECONCILIATION

Gerdener summed up the change in missionary attitude - "the Churches will need to realize more and more that growing pains pass by and that separatist courage and leadership - even if misdirected and immature - should be regarded as a wholesome phase of the development of the younger churches towards real autonomy."<sup>86</sup>

The World Council of Churches Department of Missionary Studies Consultation at Mindolo in 1962 was influential in its decision that what is seen in independent churches is a "struggle of the African spirit to express itself."<sup>87</sup> The Western missionary approach has failed to provide the African "a Christian world view to replace the one he has lost."<sup>88</sup> So that the African Christian can remain spiritually free to be himself, more indigenous forms of religious expression, to integrate worship and faith, are needed. The concern of the church became "the building of bridges of mutual understanding and reconciliation."<sup>89</sup> The church seemed to be recognizing what Rev Mzimba had been trying to convince them of in 1928, that the African Church Movement aimed to plant a "self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating African church which would produce a truly African type of Christianity suited to the genius and needs of the race and not a black copy of any European church."<sup>90</sup>

This emerged in South African missionary circles especially since the consultation on an approach to the independent church movement of the Missiological Institute at Umpumolo Lutheran Theological College.<sup>91</sup> Beyerhaus<sup>92</sup> claimed that the main purpose of studying the African independent church movement is to critically re-examine and adjust the traditional church's ecclesiastical forms and religiosity.

Zionists, as opposed to traditional church members, have found a new type of religion which satisfies Africans mentally and existentially, and which can be regarded as their own - hence their attraction. However, the "nativistic movements are the attempt of disintegrating African tribal religion by undergoing a certain cultural and conceptual transformation by-passing the cross to become fit to enter the new age of Western civilization."<sup>73</sup> Thus, Beyerhaus would adopt Oosthuizen's method to distinguish between those in the movement who are content "with a neo-pagan, pseudo-Christian substitute", and those who have rediscovered important biblical elements and "adapted their forms of worship and organisation to the African pattern."<sup>74</sup>

Many subsequent studies have been concerned with the positive challenge of African independent churches to the Christian church, emphasizing the need for improved communication and greater understanding. Becken explains independent churches as the result of the encounter of the Christian message with the pre-Christian African religion, expressing the Christian faith in thought structures understandable to its members, and meeting the needs of the people in an industrial and urban environment. "The expansion of the A I C in the cities reveals that the African answer to secularization is not secularism, but an accommodation of the Christian faith under new African forms which are meaningful to them in the changed situation."<sup>75</sup> These churches must be seen as "partners of the mission",<sup>76</sup> because they find an authentic African response to the biblical message. Thus, he urged dialogue, because while African Independent Churches have built an indigenous church, they "lack an appreciation of the church universal."<sup>77</sup>

Pretorius' explanation of independent churches has been outlined above. However, he has argued that the church's task is to work at a process of understanding independent

churches, and so avoid romanticising them or labelling them as heretical.<sup>99</sup> Independent churches must be recognised as an indelible part of the history of Christianity in Africa, but must be assisted to avoid syncretism and isolation.

Nussbaum <sup>99</sup> claims that the independent church challenge must be taken seriously, to allow for a more well-rounded understanding of the gospel, and more effective ways of communicating it. Thus, for example, he proposed a new form of animal sacrifice, which goes beyond the old Western theological response of rejecting or accommodating it as a culture-bound phenomenon, and the current independent church position which has not been completely successful in incorporating cultural insights into Christian ritual.

Daneel has urged that independent churches are not merely viewed as reactive to a political or social situation, but as genuine contextualisations of the gospel. The church can learn from the missionary outreach of African independent churches,<sup>100</sup> because they communicate the gospel in a way suited to the African world view and experience, as missionaries could not do. They communicate a message of liberation - politically, socio-economically and religiously - and this accounts for their credibility and attraction for Africans.<sup>101</sup> Further, they can make a vital contribution to an African theology, because they provide a context in which "dialogue and confrontation"<sup>102</sup> between the Christian message and traditional religion takes place consistently.

Thus, some missionaries and theologians rejected independent churches, while others saw them as legitimate and called for accommodation. But all agree on the interpretation, that their appeal lies in their theology and form of worship, a synthesis of traditional African religion and Christianity, which is suited both to the African world view and the needs of Africans in a situation of westernization and

urbanization.

#### 1.4. MAJOR ISSUES IN THE LITERATURE

Given the kind of explanation found in the literature, what are the kinds of issues and problems that studies focus on?

##### 1.4.1. THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

It has been shown that a major concern is to explain the proliferation of separatist churches. Thus many studies examine the continuous secessions and fissiparous tendencies of independent churches; as well as the concomitant tendency, of attempts at co-operation between independent churches and reasons for the success or failure of such attempts.<sup>103</sup> One of the major explanatory concepts here has been the competition for leadership - that the church provides one of the few legitimate outlets for African leadership in South Africa.

Thus a major thematic concern in the literature is analysing leadership patterns. Sundkler laid the basis by claiming that the Zulu traditional kingship pattern is imprinted on leadership in all independent churches. The chief type leader, found in Ethiopian churches, has modified the kingship patterns by the "adaptation of leader and mass to the requirements of modern white civilization"; while the prophet type, found in Zionist churches has combined with the diviner "who is a healer and who is in intimate contact with the African past."<sup>104</sup> The Messianic type introduced later has been controversial and Sundkler himself cautioned against the indiscriminate application of the term to South African independents.<sup>105</sup>

Sundkler was concerned with the interrelationships between the leader, his nucleus of active subleaders who act as intermediaries and the church, the bulk of membership. This led him to consider the "dynamics of fission and fusion"<sup>106</sup> and to outline three stages - initial secession, integration of the new church, and then new crisis and new secession. This sequence has proceeded "at a pace and on a scale of geometrical progression which can no longer be controlled."<sup>107</sup>

Kiernan reanalysed Sundkler's types "in the context of action which is taking place here and now."<sup>108</sup> The difference was characterised as between ministerial and prophetic actions, characterised by constitutive and allocative roles respectively, in controlling the flow of scarce social resources (status and prestige) among members and ensuring the unity and harmony of the group. Contrary to Sundkler, Kiernan claims that they can be and are, found in the same organization. Zionist bands incorporate both types as interacting complimentary roles, which can be filled by the same individual.

West <sup>109</sup> too found the existence of "bureaucratic" and "prophetic" sorts of leader within the same church in Soweto, in the person of the bishop, exercising legal authority and the prophet, exercising charismatic authority. Clearly defined hierarchies assigned every member their position and responsibilities. Most prophets are women, and part of an informal hierarchy which exists alongside the established formal (male) hierarchy. Succession to leadership is a major problem, and often involves disputes and conflict, resulting in secession.

The issue of leadership succession has occasioned many studies. There has been an inordinate amount of attention paid to the Church of the Nazarites, a mass "messianic"

church, in attempting to elucidate the issues involved. Fernandez examined the problem of charismatic leadership - "what is the gift of grace embodied in the founder, and does it pass to his successors?"<sup>110</sup> He spent the day with Johannes Galilee Shemba, the second-generation successor of Isaiah Shembe of the Church of the Nazarites, to gain insight into the tendency for new churches to pass from prophetic to chiefly leadership. Isaiah Shembe in many respects typified the prophetic leader, with exceptional spiritual powers. In contrast, J.G. Shembe has a ministerial leadership style, being a highly pragmatic man, a capable executive and a wise judge. His appeal rests on his paternal and personal relationship to every member, evidenced by his burden of personal consultation, and the "implicit promise to include each afflicted person in the prophet's prayers."<sup>111</sup> Thus the Nazarites have succeeded in transferring the supernatural function from generation to generation, although involving a substantial change in style.

However, the church has not been as successful in transferring to the third generation. Oosthuizen characterised this church as post-Christian, as determined by its Christology,<sup>112</sup> and claimed that "No Shembeite wishes to be called Christian and this is their right."<sup>113</sup> He has documented the conflict over succession to J.G. Shembe, which has been fought in the Supreme Court, divided the Church and has even drawn in the S A C C. The very 'nature' of the church itself is in dispute.

Becken<sup>114</sup> has attempted to explain the conflict with reference to a pattern observed in African Independent Church history. The first period, from the foundation of the church to the death of its founder is the "stage of formation". The second period, from the installation of J.G. Shembe in 1936 to his death in 1976, may be called the "stage of consolidation" with an accelerating increase in membership. The third phase is usually described as the

"stage of institutionalisation." According to Becken, the majority of the movement spontaneously supported A.K. Shembe, a chief type leader, over Londa Shembe, a prophet-type, closer to his grandfather than his father whose strong personality had kept diverging trends together. This is evidence of the "dawning stage of institutionalisation" which "marks the Church History of all A I C's known to me."<sup>115</sup> Sundkler's influence in defining basic types and explanatory concepts is evident. Few studies are concerned with the rank and file membership in any great detail. Kiernan attempted to demonstrate "just how poor the urban African really is"<sup>116</sup> by examining income and infant mortality rates. West<sup>117</sup> provided general characteristics of the membership and considered prophets and healing to be the most important reason for an individual to join an independent church. Brandel-Syrier<sup>118</sup> has considered the important role of women in Zionist churches, where they figure individually as prophetess/healer, and collectively through the church women's organization, whose power resides in their fund-raising activities, and the social services they supply for their members (e.g. sick visits). Thus leadership is examined in terms of how it functions to attract and maintain members to the church; but? how the competition for leadership often leads to secession.

#### 1.4.2. THE BELIEF PATTERN AND STYLE OF WORSHIP OF INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

Description and interpretation of the belief patterns of independent churches is especially important to missionary writers. Sundkler characterised them as "New Wine in Old Wineskins".<sup>119</sup> Biblical and Christian ideas merged into the old Zulu religion.

Oosthuizen's analysis of the hymnal of the Church of the Nazarites led him to conclude that the "Zulu world view has

absorbed the borrowed biblical elements."<sup>120</sup> West claimed that the Christianity of independent churches is both Western and African, a positive blend of old and new. One of the central aspects of Zionist belief is the Holy Spirit or Umoya. "Umoya therefore stands for a whole 'technology' of mystical powers and represents an array of capacities, skills and instruments, without which the work of Zion could not be accomplished."<sup>121</sup> The christology of independent churches, the role of ancestors, and the use of the bible are all topics of concern.<sup>122</sup>

Worship and ritual have been thoroughly examined. Attendance at typical worship services in the course of field work is described in detail.<sup>123</sup> The emphasis again has been on demonstrating how traditional African religious elements have been incorporated into or parallel aspects of Zionist worship - for example, the prophet is often compared with the ritual diviner. A good example of this kind of study is one by Kiernan, in which he examines the powers conferred on members of the church, "who see themselves as an embattled minority under spiritual siege",<sup>124</sup> transmitted through the 'weapons of Zion' - clothing, staves and flags. Every full member has a staff which is essential in healing, and must be cut from a tree growing beside water. Kiernan explained this as invoking Zulu reed symbolism. The reed's cooling capacity is essential to healing; and the stooling characteristic is re-enacted in the worship service by the distribution and collection of staves, expressing the relationship between the leader and the community. These 'weapons' are explained as providing "a battery of resources for use in the ongoing process of social control."<sup>125</sup>

Sundkler claimed that a large part of the appeal of Zionist churches lies in the importance of ritual, as opposed to a religious form centred around a book. Services are characterised by preaching and confessing testimonies, prayer, hymns, sacred dances, emotionalism and possession,

especially evidenced at important religious festivals. Sacred dress and symbols such as colours are revealed in dreams. Ritual avoidance and taboos are also fundamental. But the central actions are baptism by full immersion and purification rites, which are always preceded by confession, and attempt to wash away complexes of sin and sickness, usually believed to be caused by demons. Sundkler goes so far as to call Zionist Churches "a syncretistic movement of baptizers."<sup>126</sup> However, the pivot of all Church activity, and its strongest evangelisation asset, is held to be healing.

The "tribal outlook" on the causation of illness is generally accepted, but medicines are totally forbidden and in fact cause demoniacal possession. Only the power of the Holy Spirit invoked through prayer can overcome disease, although other methods such as laying on of hands, water and ashes can increase the potency of prayer.

Kiernan <sup>127</sup> examined the symbolism and power of water and ashes in healing. He concluded that the power of water is tied to a system of relationships within the Zionist band, without which it has no meaning or effect, and thus functions to bring in fresh recruits.

Becken has pointed out that Zionist healing is effective because it is holistic, "restoring the equilibrium of all aspects of human life under the divine impact of grace."<sup>128</sup> It is social, as evidenced by new diseases such as unemployment and the separation of families - i.e. the problems of modern life settings. It is also religious. Becken asserted a prevalent view that pre-Christian African religion was concerned mainly with healing, and independent churches have taken this over in a Christian way, which he claims is evident in the "outright rejection of medicines."<sup>129</sup> Salvation and recovery from sickness are not seen as different events, but come from God.<sup>130</sup>

West claimed that the integration of worship with healing, and the supportive role of the congregation, makes independent churches attractive to many in the urban setting. The type of complaint usually has an underlying psychological reason associated with urban living. The prophet shares the African world view of the sufferer and can thus understand the nature of the complaint and its whole social context. The emphasis is on reintegration, as opposed to Western categories of illness, which treat a physical part of the body only. The prophet explains the disease meaningfully and administers simple and spectacular remedies.

In general then, according to Mitchell, "the direct healing of man's physical and mental illnesses by Almighty God, often without the use of any medicine, either European or traditional, is proclaimed as of the essence of the Gospel and is perhaps the most universal characteristic of the Aladura or Zionist type of Independent African Church."<sup>131</sup>

Thus, the beliefs and worship of independent churches are examined by determining to what extent traditional African religion has been drawn on and combined with Western Christianity.

## CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

An attempt has been made to survey the existing literature and reduce the numerous studies and explanations of independent churches to a form from which conclusions can be drawn.

Despite the variety of approach - theological, historical or anthropological - and whether independent churches are attacked or viewed as legitimate, scholars to date are in basic agreement as to their interpretation and explanation.

### 1.5. THE COMMON PROBLEMATIC

The problem to be explained is conceptualised fundamentally in the same way by all those currently investigating independent churches:

Why have independent churches proliferated on the large scale they have, largely through secession, (whether from a mission or independent church) in South Africa?

Two sub-problems are then posed, depending on the orientation of the investigator. Missionary and theological writers are concerned to determine:

What, particularly in the belief pattern and worship of independent churches, accounts for their attraction for black people in South Africa?

Anthropological or social scientific writers are concerned to explain:

What social and cultural function do independent churches play which can account for their attraction for black people in South Africa?

This problematic is so widely accepted that it often remains implicit. Thus, many writers will not directly attempt to explain independent churches, but will merely address one of the issues raised by the problematic, (for example, Fernandez's study of leadership in Church of Nazarites, or Kiernan's analysis of the symbolism of 'Zionist weapons' (132))

indeed, the complete lack of explicit theorisation in studies of independent churches in South Africa is striking. This can be explained largely by their positivist methodological assumptions.

#### 1.6. THE POSITIVIST METHOD

As demonstrated, the majority of studies are predominantly descriptive of the belief, ritual and organizational forms of Zionist churches in South Africa. It is claimed to be necessary to first describe the phenomenon before being able to draw any conclusions.<sup>133</sup> Most scholars view their task modestly as "description and preliminary sociological analysis."<sup>134</sup>

Methods such as participant observation, interviews and survey questionnaires are used to collect empirical data, as a basis for this 'analysis'. Thus studies use the "inductive empiricism"<sup>135</sup> typical of positivist social science. The world is seen as a "collection of unconnected appearances"<sup>136</sup>. However, by supposing that neutral observation language is possible, the role of theory in the very rules of observation, measurement and organization of data is ignored.<sup>137</sup>

This tendency is exemplified in the widely quoted work of Barrett, 'Schism and Renewal in Africa'.<sup>138</sup> While emphasizing the interaction and cumulative effect of variables, Barrett ultimately proposed "the root cause common to the whole movement"<sup>139</sup> to be "a failure in love" on the part of the missionaries.<sup>140</sup>

Mitchell, while sharing Barrett's method, has correctly pointed out that Barrett's selection of relatively few independent variables already implies prior decisions regarding the causality of various factors. In terms of the above discussion then, Barrett's method of "inductive generalization"<sup>141</sup> meant that he failed to acknowledge his

theoretical presuppositions, which are nevertheless revealed in his assertion of the root cause of independency - a failure in love.<sup>142</sup>

Positivist social scientists, then, conceive themselves to be 'value-free' investigators of empirical phenomenon. This means that they do not explicitly use theoretical tools to integrate the 'facts' or data. . . We find in the literature on independent churches an overwhelming variety of causes or 'reasons' for independent churches, usually presented as an unconnected 'list of factors'. A prime example of this is Gosthuizen's 'Causes of Religious Independentism in Africa', which lists twelve categories of 'causes'.<sup>143</sup> There is no consideration of how any of these causes are related to each other, or which, if any, are more important than others. However, as with Barrett, there is a prior choice as to which issues and aspects are important in attempting to understand these movements. This is evident in the common set of concepts or hypotheses used to interpret particular phenomena related to independency. Examples are Sundkler's leadership types, which are then re-examined by Kiernan in the light of his own data; or West and Kiernan's understanding of Zionist churches as voluntary associations. A number of debates have arisen, for example whether Shembe's Church of the Nazarites should be interpreted as a messianic movement, a post-Christian nativistic movement or an independent church.<sup>144</sup>

Spurious as the latter problem may seem, it in fact logically arises from the implicit problematic and theoretical framework shared by the various studies - the functionalist theory dominant in South Africa and internationally. The apparent atheoreticism of the studies is thus inherent in the positivism of this framework, and the conception of 'value-free' social science is a mystification of the ideological interests of the writers.

## 1.7. THE FUNCTIONALIST FRAMEWORK

The dominant theoretical perspective in western social science has been positivist functionalism. The basic tenets and hypotheses of this theory, and its historical development must be briefly examined to demonstrate how studies of independent churches have all, implicitly or explicitly, been working within the functionalist theoretical framework.

Influenced by 19th century evolutionists, Spencer and Comte were responsible for extending organic and biological principles to explain the functioning of society. Social progress was seen as a move from homogenous to heterogenous structures, through a process of specialisation and integration, adaptive responses being a central explanatory concept.

The founders of functionalism were rooted in nineteenth century Western European bourgeois society, with its guiding principles of "rationality, utility or functional value, order and progress."<sup>145</sup> The key figure in the development of functionalist theory has been Durkheim, who amalgamated the theories of Comte and Spencer. For Durkheim, religion reinforces a given social structure, restrains deviance and limits change by giving an absolute and sacred authority to the group's existing rules and values.

The functionalist tradition developed through the social anthropologists Malinowski - with the emphasis on social and cultural institution as an adaptive response to the psychological and biological needs of individuals - and Radcliffe-Brown, who sought to discern how different social institutions contribute to the maintenance of the whole. Thus developed the British school of structural-functional anthropology, primarily oriented to synchronic, cross-sectional analysis. The unit of study was cultures, denoting the whole 'way of life' of a society, its systems of

beliefs, meanings and values. "Cultures, seen as neatly bounded entities, defined peoples; a people was, then, a group which possessed its own culture".<sup>146</sup>

Functionalist sociology developed later under this influence, particularly in the United States. Here Weber provided a second important influence, with his conception that cultural sciences deal with meanings and configurations of value, the subject and method of sociology being thus the interpretation of individual subjective meanings and social action through the use of ideal types. Mafeje has argued that Weber's positivism, which lay in viewing science as autonomous and value-free, was one factor which made it easy for Talcott Parsons "to naturalize Weber's sociology by purifying it of its economic and historical ideas and reduce it to adaptive functionalism".<sup>147</sup> Normative types thus replaced ideal types, in the era of 'normative functionalism.' This very briefly chronicles the development of functionalist theory.

Independent churches, and the religion of blacks in South Africa in general, have been studied within the broad framework of 'Religion and Social Change'.

Functionalist theory of religion assumes that the primary cause and function of religion is its integrative function for the individual and society, because of the needs which all religions satisfy for individual human beings. Religion provides culture with ultimate meaning; it contributes to social systems in offering an answer to the problem of meaning at the 'breaking points' when men face contingency and powerlessness, and provides a means for adjusting to the frustrations involved in disappointment derived from the human condition or the institutional arrangement of society; and it offers an outlet and consolation for human emotions.<sup>148</sup> A working hypothesis which arises from this is that religious systems have the function of 'comforting men in distressful situations' - commonly known as 'deprivation' or 'compensation' models.

These concepts have been used by West, for example, the assertion that healing is a search for security on the part of those who feel themselves to be 'relatively deprived'. This understanding is also evident in Kiernan's study of healing rituals in Zionist bands, and in Sundkler's interpretation of Zionist churches acting as a psychological safety valve. The emotional style of worship of Zionist churches in the form of dancing, possession and testimonies, has been stressed. Mills too, has explained Zionist churches as a pre-millenarian retreat in the face of a failure of expectations. Oosthuizen is another example, seeing independent churches as compensation for what has been lost in the new westernised society.

But above all, independent churches have been interpreted in the context of 'social change' - explained by means of 'modernization' or 'neo-evolutionary' theory. 'Modernization' theory sees societies as passing through stages of development, always moving from the primitive, unspecialised and informal, to the complex, specialised and formal. This change is thus gradual, cumulative and essentially determined from within. The external environment (for example the impact of Western technological institutions) enters only to provide a stimulus to adaptation. Since functionalist theory conceives of society as composed of a balance of mutually dependent parts, a change in one sector requires change in others. Until these changes take place, society is in disequilibrium, and there is temporary maladjustment. Thus, in the Third World today, economic growth in traditional societies causes structural transformations through the entire social, cultural and political structure, characteristic of advanced societies. The mechanisms of transformation are pattern variables - "alternative patterns of value orientation in the role expectations of the actors in any social system".<sup>147</sup> Modernization then, is principally a matter of change in accepted values. For example, the pattern variable of the

functional specificity of modern economic roles 'breaks up' traditional kinship patterns of family organization, and presses for nuclear type family patterns. These are not enough to prevent the individual's personal disorientation in the fragmented and impersonal life of town and industry. Thus voluntary associations such as churches, sports clubs and trade unions become typically modern integrative structures, bridging the emotional gap between the too small nuclear family group, and the anomic fragmented modern urban society on the other. Social change is thus summarised in terms of urbanisation, secularisation and industrialisation.

The underlying theoretical assumption of studies of independent churches is that Africans, coming from a small-scale traditional society, with its particular set of cultural values and meanings, have to adapt culturally to a large-scale modern, industrial society with its western and Christian values and meanings.

The prevalent explanation is that independent churches are a reaction or adaptation to conquest, or cultural contact. West explicitly adopted the urbanization process as an explanation of Zionist churches, and stressed their importance as voluntary associations in the alien urban environment. Kiernan too, analysed Zionist bands as voluntary associations aimed at transcending the adverse conditions of urban living. Etherington explained Zionist churches as "acculturative" in a chaotic world, as did Pretorius. Even Sundkler's reaction to conquest explanation shares this framework - the Zionist church is a psychological outlet, the outcome of a search for a 'place of their own'. Another typical study is one by Janosik<sup>1980</sup>, who attempted to analyse the part religious organizations play in modernization, comparing the Kikuyu and the Zulu.

The missionaries and theologians best illustrate how widely and deeply rooted this theoretical framework is in South

African scholarship. The basic assumption is that Africans are "attempting to come to grips with a changed world in which so many old values have become obsolete through cultural contact, christianization, colonization and industrialization".<sup>151</sup> Thus for example, Pretorius explains Zionist churches as providing a place to feel at home in the acculturation process, Daneel explains them as communicating the gospel in a way suited to the African world view and experience, Oosthuizen explains the attraction of the undercurrent of traditional religion and culture which provide "age-old security" for its members and Becken explains independent churches as the African answer to secularization. With these assumptions as their basis, their primary concern and focus is turned to the theological challenge presented by independent churches.

It can be concluded that the dominant explanatory framework is based on a postivist functionalist theory and method. Precisely because it is the dominant framework, scholars do not explicitly define themselves or their work as such. It is thus proposed that there is a need for a greater theoretical self-consciousness and rigour in the study of indigenous churches. We need to be clear on exactly what theoretical tools we have at our disposal - what are the strengths and weaknesses?

An attempt has been made to demonstrate that the concepts and issues focused on in the study of indigenous churches have been determined by a prior theoretical choice. If a different problematic and theoretical orientation were assumed, studies would focus on a different set of issues and use different explanatory concepts in analysis. Is the dominant explanatory method the most adequate for a full understanding of indigenous churches, or are there other problematics which might provide fresh perspectives?

### 1.8. THE AHISTORICAL NATURE OF THE DOMINANT FUNCTIONALIST EXPLANATION

The explanation of indigenous churches in general is characterised by an extreme dualism. On the one hand, we are presented with African culture - a set of values, beliefs and world views - with features characteristic of simple traditional society; on the other, there is a separate entity, Western Christian culture, with features characteristic of complex, modern society. Zionist churches can, and do, take up aspects of African culture and add them to Western culture, to provide a link between the old and new worlds, to ensure Africans a place to feel at home, to provide old securities in a new and threatening world. The assumption is that the two cultures exist as separate neatly defined entities, which can be 'dipped into' at random to select beliefs, values and meanings to meet present needs.

In fact, these cultures are two normative types drawn from theory, with no historical basis. No culture is timeless and static. Thus, 'African' culture no longer exists in the form and with the same features it had in earlier historical epochs. The same may be said of 'modern' society and culture. The standard features of African and Western culture used in analysis and explanation are thus derived from modernization theory, and while once they may have been historically based, they have been universalised across time and space, and are thus inadequate.

The dualism that is expressed in the plea to "take the African mind seriously"<sup>152</sup> is a result of this reification of culture. An innate 'Africanness' is assumed to exist in every black person in South Africa (and Africa) - but this is never clearly defined. 'Africans' are therefore treated as a monolithic bloc, with no internal differentiation.<sup>153</sup> Etherington, for example, claims that with the decline in opportunities for leadership "Africans were inspired to

create new positions by forming churches"<sup>154</sup>. Despite the large number of churches, clearly only a limited number of 'Africans' formed their own; and the key factor would be to know who those people were, and what their position in the social formation was. Further, this ignores the majority of 'Africans' who joined these churches, and does not analyse why they become members. West has specified that Zionist churches appeal to poorer, older, least-educated, first generation towns-people. However, for him their major appeal nevertheless lies in the "blend of old and new" - in synthesizing their 'Africanness' with the new urban culture. He is thus still operating within the same reifying approach.

Using this dualist reified concept of culture, everything else is explained in what can only be regarded as culturalist terms. From the literature one gains the impression that black people are primarily (if not only) cultural beings, attempting to find values and meaning in a new Western cultural situation. Further, the needs which are filled by independent churches are largely psychological - they provide identity, belonging and security.

In sum, analysis remains at the level of ideas only. Even poverty is turned into a state of mind - "The basic insecurity of men comes, not from poverty, but from a feeling that no-one cares for them."<sup>155</sup> Zionist churches are a voice offering "general alternatives to the stress arising out of the fragmented, disrupted and disintegrating socio-cultural structures" which "speaks and sounds like an African voice".<sup>156</sup> The alternative offered is a cultural one - beliefs values and meanings. The explanation of indigenous churches may thus be characterised as idealist, based on the premise that "the relationships of men, all their doings, their chains and their limitations are products of their consciousness."<sup>157</sup> They attribute an independent existence to "all the products of consciousness"<sup>158</sup> - to beliefs, values and meanings.

The historical conditions under which most black South Africans have lived in the period of conquest and the present, are conveniently ignored. Sundkler, for example, has presented a brief history of traditional Zulu society, missions and racial discrimination. But this remains largely as "religious and social background of the Zulus"<sup>157</sup> (own emphasis); while his study focuses on what Zionists do and believe. Similarly, West argued that the role of Zionist churches in Soweto had to be understood in the urban situation in which they are placed. He thus described the characteristics and problems of life in Soweto; but again, these form a backdrop to explanation, which ultimately is in terms of the needs the "blend of old and new" of Zionist churches meet for Africans in an alien urban environment. The concern with syncretism in belief and worship prevalent in missionary writings, is thus a mystification which diverts attention from more basic issues, and the material conditions under which people are living.

It appears that the dualism posed between the two worlds of African and Western cultures, and the analysis of culture at the level of ideas only, is rooted in the ahistoricism of the positivist functionalist theory and method.

Examining the literature, therefore we find very little awareness of historical processes. When the origins of churches are considered in the literature, this generally consists of tracing patterns of secession or leadership succession. Some writers have pointed to the need for more historical studies. Etherington for example, showed the importance of the historical dimension in understanding the typology of Zionist and Ethiopian, for these churches had historically distinct origins, separated by some decades, and thus served different functions. The majority of studies however, do not analyse or seriously take into account the historical periods in which indigenous churches arose and exist.

Thus for example, although independent churches are studied in a particular region in a particular historical period, findings are nevertheless generalised and universalised. In particular, many missionaries and theologians "collect" information gathered in different historical contexts, and use it indiscriminately as the basis of their analysis and recommendations. Functionalist theory is inherently ahistorical. The positivist method of cross-sectional synchronic analysis - or comparative statics - means that it is logically impossible for historical interconnections to be studied. The problematic is not posed in a way which will elicit such information. Modernization theory "resorts to ahistorical inferences based upon a purely logical series, which confuses variation with change and classification with the explanation of process."<sup>140</sup>

This is evident in the explanation of indigenous churches in terms of normative, idealised types. The selection of the standard features of African and Western cultures still used in analysis was predisposed by modernization theory, and have since become fixed, though history has moved on, inhibiting a genuine historical analysis. Further, idealist analysis - concentrated at the level of beliefs and practice - with the emphasis on cultural change, means that indigenous churches have in effect been studied in isolation from the social formation in which they arose and exist.

It is therefore suggested that it would be fruitful to adopt a theoretical approach which would take historical processes and interconnections seriously. Perhaps this would enable us to move beyond the confusing situation where scholars are confronted with myriad reasons for and causes of indigenous churches.

The problems and perceived inadequacies of functionalist explanations of indigenous churches are not isolated. Indigenous churches have been studied predominantly by

missionaries, often dubbed the agents of imperialism, and anthropologists, whose discipline in recent years has been denounced as the "Child of Imperialism."<sup>161</sup>

In short, since the 1960's functionalist theory in general has been widely criticised in every discipline. The challenge has come predominantly from scholars adopting a historical materialist approach. Concomitant with this has been the attempt of some social scientists to modify their approaches in response to the critique or to adopt different ones. For example, anthropologists have attempted to re-define their discipline resulting in the emergence of Radical Anthropology.<sup>162</sup>

#### 1.9. FUNCTIONALISM AS THE THEORY OF THE IMPERIALIST EPOCH

Hirst has characterised "... the fifties as the decade of functionalism and the sixties as the decade of the criticism and repudiation of functionalism."<sup>163</sup> The theoretical and ideological foment continues to the present, across all disciplines, internationally and in South Africa. According to Seddon "... it appears to be generally agreed that the 'crisis' is, in some way, moral as well as theoretical and practical ( i.e. that it has to do with values) and that it is intimately related both to the fundamental economic and political changes that have taken place in the 'real world' since the mid-1950's and to the inability of the social sciences to explain adequately or even to take full account of these changes and their implications."<sup>164</sup>

Mafeje has provided incisive insight to this crisis by analysing the ideological status of functionalism in the imperialist era. His basic assumption is that "Like social forms, modes of thought, their shared intellectual and conceptual organization are sponsored by particular nations

and specific classes at different times".<sup>145</sup> Positivism and functionalism viewed in historical perspective, are products of bourgeois society, which represents a specific mode of production and social organisation - capitalism. Positivist functionalism is thus the theory of the imperialist epoch.

The breakdown in positivist functionalist paradigms, in bourgeois theory can be explained as a result of a crisis in bourgeois economic and social practice. The contradictions between bourgeois theory of modernization and development, and historical events in both the Third World and the metropolitan centres, are becoming too great to be easily explained away. "Positivism has generated theoretical paradigms which while once valid, are now becoming too difficult to reconcile with historical reality".<sup>146</sup> For example, with independence in Africa in the fifties and early sixties, anthropology, with its concepts of static 'tribal societies' in equilibrium, found itself having to explain a number of phenomena which had not been anticipated in its theory. Thus arose the concepts of 'social change' outlined above, characterised by ahistoricism, which could only provide ad hoc solutions "symptomatic of a theoretical crisis in the face of new challenges".<sup>147</sup> Functionalist approaches to social change are limited to change that is determined by and takes place within the existing social structure, or by the impact of outside forces. As a consensus model, functionalism is inherently incapable of dealing with contradiction and revolution - which has characterised the Third World in the fight against colonialism - except in negative terms.

Bernstein has phrased the current theoretical debate as a "confrontation between historical materialism and the range of bourgeois social theory."<sup>148</sup> Thus, while much of the debate has centred on anthropology <sup>149</sup> Mafeje argues that other bourgeois social sciences originating in positivism -

economics, political science and sociology - are as much "generically (a) child of imperialism."<sup>170</sup>

Anthropologists and their fellow-missionaries, traders and administrators, being bourgeois by class-affiliation and intellectual conviction (i.e. functionalist) were an integral part of capitalist imperialism, as well as its agents. They all shared an "implicit belief in the 'civilising' mission of Europeans".<sup>171</sup> (This is not to say that they were in direct conspiracy with colonial governments, although some were; individually, some were 'liberal humanists' while others were 'reactionary European chauvinists'.)

Anthropology was merely the first social science to be directly linked with imperialism, because anthropologists were the first to study colonial countries. This was necessary because bourgeois society was least informed about the 'primitive peoples' made accessible by colonialism. Thus, functionalist anthropology was "as much a bourgeois enterprise in the colonies as other social sciences were in the metropolitan centres."<sup>172</sup>

In general, it is "the Marxists, more than any other group of scholars who offer not only a critique of, but also a powerful alternative to the present fragmented and admittedly unsatisfactory approaches."<sup>173</sup>

#### 1.10. THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

South African scholarship reflects this theoretical and ideological critique of bourgeois functionalism and the development of a variety of alternative theoretical approaches. The social sciences have been irrevocably challenged by the "revolution in the historiography"<sup>174</sup> of South Africa. Writers like Wolpe, Legassick, Trapido and Johnstone initiated the "contemporary academic Marxist debate

on South Africa's past,"<sup>175</sup> seeking to reinterpret the dynamics of South African society and challenge the hegemony of liberal historiography.

Freund has isolated some of the important elements of this critique. Significantly, "Fundamental political developments in South Africa and notably the development of a racial order required an explanation founded in social and economic circumstances."<sup>176</sup> He demonstrated that in the 1960's the apparent political failure of both African nationalism and the liberal world-view suggested a turn towards more radical analytical frameworks and a search for entirely new kinds of influences. Some of the influences have been economic anthropology, particularly the work of French anthropologists, of the Annales school, and British and American social history. He argues that these in turn reflected the refraction of classic Marxist historiography after the Stalinist era.

Maduro has similarly pointed to a "thaw in Marxism itself, with its questioning of dogmatism, economism, ethnocentrism, scientism, teleological evolutionism, etc.,"<sup>177</sup> which also contributes to the new theoretical debate. Bernstein argues that in the critique of bourgeois social science, while questions may have been posed in an initially crude manner, they have become increasingly sharpened in the course of debate within the materialist problematic. Similarly in the new school of history, the focus shifted from critique of existing bourgeois or liberal history to "the production of theoretically rigorous and consistent analysis."<sup>178</sup>

Instead of 'race' as the dominant issue and relation in South African history, the explanation is derived from the analysis of the articulation of class and race in the development of capitalist relations of production, which paralleled a process of conquest and proletarianization determining that the dominated classes were mainly African. The defence and reformulation of alternatives by those criticised as liberal

scholars, has led to a lively and fruitful theoretical and methodological debate.<sup>177</sup>

A body of varied research with a new and different perspective has emerged, not only in history but also in sociology and anthropology. Van Eeden, considering the paradigmatic status of contemporary sociology concluded that it "lacks an explicit and integrated paradigm ... characterized by rival schools ..."<sup>180</sup> Very briefly, a number of trends can be isolated. Positivism has "paved the way for the wide acceptances of two forms of functionalism"<sup>181</sup> - Parsonian and Mertonian. These have been challenged by Marxism and by phenomenological sociology. A popular trend is the pluralist theory, which attempts to synthesize the Parsonian and the Marxist models, as more relevant to the complexities of South African society.<sup>182</sup> Another school taught in universities is Calvinist sociology. According to Rex "The main argument seems to be whether South Africa is to be understood as a pre-capitalist, sub-capitalist or regressed capitalist society on the one hand, or as following the inherent logic of capitalism on the other."<sup>183</sup>

Anthropology similarly has developed theoretically and displays various trends. Sharp has analysed the development and state of volkekunde - the form of anthropology to be found at Afrikaans-medium universities, ethnic universities in the Bantustans and in several state departments.<sup>184</sup> It assigns explanatory power to the phenomenon of ethnicity and focuses on the process of acculturation. "The development of its central concern with 'ethnos' must be seen as part of the broader process of intellectual mystification underlying the volk ideology of Afrikanerdom itself."<sup>185</sup> However, Sharp points out that few volkekundes regard the functionalist perspective of the British liberal tradition which influences most other South African anthropologists, as "alien to the manner in which they define their fields of

study".<sup>186</sup> As Bernstein and Depelchin phrased it, in South Africa, "the liberal position distances itself from that of the conservatives only by means of a moralistic stance and not by any distinctive mode of analysis."<sup>187</sup> The relation between the two needs to be clarified, in the light of the failure of English-speaking liberal intellectuals to question their own activities and assumptions.

Magubane <sup>188</sup> has criticised liberal urban anthropology, which has influenced the study of indigenous churches.<sup>189</sup> He argues that the "problem of culture change is dissociated from the fundamental socio-economic changes and is examined as something which exists by itself in the consciousness of people."<sup>190</sup> In doing this, anthropology "raises contemporary facts as immutable evidence to justify the status quo and ignores the general laws of historical process."<sup>191</sup> For Magubane, this reveals that "racial bigotry and ideological biases can be articulated under the guise of 'scientific analyses' in the social sciences."<sup>192</sup> Here Magubane is articulating a moral aspect of the critique of bourgeois social science.

Thus, in the social sciences in South Africa, the dominant theoretical paradigm has been variants of bourgeois functionalism. Since the 1970's, the ideological hegemony of functionalism has been challenged, both theoretically and politically. Alternative frameworks, influenced to varying extents by Marxism, have been proposed for analysis, and are being discussed, criticised and elaborated, side by side with work which continues with the (often implicit) use of functionalist assumptions.

### 1.11. NEW DIRECTIONS IN THE STUDY OF RELIGION

The sociology of religion, in general and particularly in the

study of religion in Africa has also taken new directions. For example, Asad has examined a well-known and widely accepted definition of religion, that of Clifford Geertz, who attempts to formulate a universal, ahistorical definition of religion.<sup>173</sup>

Geertz uses a concept of culture as meanings and symbolic forms, without conceiving of the relationship of culture to the material conditions and activities for maintaining life. Religion is defined as

"a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence, and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic."<sup>174</sup>

Asad argues that symbols are not "meaning-carrying objects external to social conditions and mental states"<sup>175</sup>, because they alone do not impart a religious form. Power - ranging from the power of laws (state and ecclesiastical), to sanctions such as death and salvation, to the disciplinary activities of social institutions such as the family, school and church, and to the power of human bodies, such as fasting, penance, obedience, etc. - imposes the conditions for experiencing the truth of religious symbols. The mind could not move spontaneously to that truth. Thus Asad claims "social disciplines are intrinsic to the field in which religious representations acquire their force and their truthfulness."<sup>176</sup> The possibility and authoritative status of religious symbols and practices (but not necessarily their meanings) are to be explained as products of historically distinctive disciplines and forces. Asad suggests that the student of religion should begin from this point, not as Geertz does "from a notion of culture as an a priori totality of meanings, divorced from processes of formation and effects of power, hovering above social reality."<sup>177</sup>

Asad's contribution lies in arguing the problems inherent in

an idealist definition of culture and religion; and in suggesting that "Instead of approaching religion with questions about the social meaning of doctrines and practices, or even about the psychological effects of symbol and rituals, let us begin by asking what are the historical conditions (movements, classes, institutions, ideologies) necessary for the existence of particular religious discourses."<sup>199</sup>

Maduro has worked on the "dual process of Marxism's self-critical openness in the area of sociology of religion and its renewal by contact with the Marxist critique."<sup>199</sup> He has compiled an extensive bibliography as an aid to this process of theoretical development.<sup>200</sup> He has through his study of religious forms and processes in Latin America attempted to theorise the relationship between religion and the social formation.<sup>201</sup> His work provides useful theoretical tools.

There have been an increasing number of attempts at applying these methods of analysis to African religions. For example, Tsomondo has examined the applicability of the "Marxian conceptual framework" to the study of African traditional societies and, with (debatable) reservations, concluded that it can enhance and sharpen understanding.<sup>202</sup>

Ranger, in the face of a critique and the asserted redundancy of the historical study of African religion, has argued that without implying a desire for the revival of traditional forms, the study remains necessary and is even more important in the context of liberation and modernization or development.<sup>203</sup>

Bonte, in the context of the Marxist critique of anthropology has attempted a historical materialist analysis of the religion of East African herdsman.<sup>204</sup> He argues that the religious representation of social relationships and relationships with nature is the result of a specific social

practice. "This imaginary representation surely reflects these (real) conditions partially, but it is also the support for the real relationships which in certain circumstances can function as production relationships."<sup>205</sup> The communal relationships among East African herdsmen thus stem from their religious organization. Stockbreeders gather together to produce the cattle necessary for the sacrifices to God, and they justify the totality of their economic and social relationship with the divine world, the ultimate guarantee of social life. Bonte points out that his work is merely some contribution to analysis and research "in the still poorly explored field of the theory of historical materialism."<sup>206</sup>

A similar and more extensive approach was adopted by Lebullu in examining the religion of the Pare of Tanzania.<sup>207</sup> He began with the assumption that beliefs must have an objective foundation in the material and social condition of existence.

"Taking into account the content, form and expression of the Pare indigenous religious beliefs and rituals all through the seasonal and generational cycles, it appears to us that the Pare religion developed within the dialectical relationship between the productive forces and the relationships of production as a spontaneous response to the material and social constraints and contradictions which confronted the Pare people in their relationships to each other and to the forces of nature."<sup>208</sup>

The collective manner of owning the means of production, the co-operation in the organization and implementation of the labour process and a communal distribution of the social product - required for the production and protection of the means of production - gave rise to a mode of life inspired by communalism, collectivism and co-operatism. The kinship structure was the underlying order and organizational principle for the production and reproduction of human life and existence. "At the symbolic level, therefore, life becomes the dominant element which governs the functioning of all the other elements of the superstructure."<sup>209</sup> The characteristic Pare totemism and ancestor cults were induced

by the pressures which natural and social forces exerted on the consciousness of social actors. Thus the ancestors, whose embodied characteristics represent the most desired means and ways to assure human life and existence, are singled out and equated in an analogical manner with the natural and social forces which govern the course of history.

Needless to say, the above represents an extremely brief and schematic impression of Lebullu's analysis of the role, impact and effect of religion in the reproduction of social relationships, intended to indicate the direction of research.

Another such attempt is the work of Van Binsbergen in Zambia.<sup>210</sup> In 'Religious Change in Zambia' he presents a series of studies of cults of affliction, reflecting his theoretical development in attempting to explain Central African religion and religious change. Beginning with dominant functionalist theory, he rejected the deprivation hypothesis and attempted to improve upon Horton's intellectualist theory.<sup>211</sup> He was finally led to adopt "Marxist-inspired concepts and theories"<sup>212</sup> in an attempt to move beyond the limitations of this approach. The conclusion of his intellectual search for a theory which would enable scholars to "create a regional and historical framework within which data on Central African religion and religious change could be integrated and interpreted"<sup>213</sup> was that the Marxist model was most appropriate. This is because a historical yet explicitly theoretical approach is built into Marxism, and because the emphasis on modes of production and their articulation helps scholars to see the underlying economic, political and social patterns common to the "amazing similarity of the religious forms and innovations that have manifested themselves in that region over the last few centuries."<sup>214</sup> Van Binsbergen's use of historical materialist concepts is sometimes problematic; and he himself outlines several problems and remaining tasks with the use of Marxist theory, in particular the need for a

theory of symbols. Nevertheless, his work is an important contribution in that it reflects and grapples with current theoretical developments.

Coming closer to the present topic, Tsomondo has written on Zionist and Apostolic prophetic churches in Zimbabwe.<sup>215</sup> He argues that many current studies, while extensive and impressive, fail to show "why the movements and their component sects invariably developed in a particular direction and not in another."<sup>216</sup> He interprets prophetism as an African cultural movement, as a cultural nationalism, which asserts itself in the struggle for cultural supremacy by strategies such as independent parallelism - "doing for and through one's own culture those very things which an alien person or culture is trying to impart, but achieving them independently of the latter."<sup>217</sup> Formal education is thus often opposed, and healing is interpreted as a weapon for evading alien cultural imperialism. Tsomondo claims that a cultural nationalist creates "a counter-culture as an alternative to overthrowing the oppression culture, and in spite of his radicalism he tends to remain basically apolitical so long as he is allowed to function in his own make belief separatist niche."<sup>218</sup> While we would not agree entirely with Tsomondo's analysis, his work represents an attempt to re-evaluate current literature and provide a more adequate analysis.

Moving to indigenous churches in South Africa, Mosala has argued that to understand the nature and function of the faith of indigenous churches "a thorough-going social-cultural analysis of the pre-history of the black working class, and the contemporary conditions of black working class people in the townships and rural areas, is a prerequisite."<sup>219</sup> This is in line with the hypothesis that Zionist churches are strictly speaking working class churches. "They are African to the extent that they are historically rooted in African pre-capitalist social

formations, and are forced by their position of alienation within contemporary capitalist social relations to draw in the struggle for survival from the cultural resources provided by that historical past."<sup>220</sup>

It is in this theoretical climate that the study of indigenous churches occurs. The survey of the current literature reveals it to be repetitious and stale - no significantly different analyses have emerged over the last two decades. What are the theoretical options for the researcher?

The least attractive option is to continue using functionalist theory. The adequacy of the dominant explanation, of adaptation to a Western Christian urban cultural situation, has been questioned and found wanting. Descriptive studies focus on only limited aspects of these churches, as defined by the implicit problematic. Mafeje correctly asserted that all theory is systematically selective, but that omissions are ideologically determined. Thus, the fact that functionalist theory and its positivist methodology cannot deal with certain historical realities is a problem of ideology.

Ideology precedes and predetermines possible forms of knowledge. It is a basic premise of this work that "all empirical research is consciously or unconsciously structured by certain precepts, preconceptions and initial premises - that no set of facts 'stand alone' explaining particular events or processes."<sup>221</sup> Thus, if scholars wish to continue using a functionalist theoretical paradigm, they are challenged to adopt a greater theoretical self-consciousness, to make their explanatory concepts explicit and argue their adequacy. However, it is proposed that in the light of the critique of functionalist theory and the current explanations of indigenous churches, it is necessary to find alternate approaches which may illuminate their nature more adequately.

It was indicated above that the greatest challenge and most consistent theoretical alternative has been posed by Marxist theory. Another option is that which attempts to reconcile and synthesise aspects of Marxism and bourgeois social science in one perspective. This is in line with the positivist concept of 'value free' social science. Mafeje argues that in times of crisis, positivist functionalism tends to substitute "eclecticism as the method of the undogmatic." An example is the anthropologist Firth, whose adoption "of favoured parts of Marxism, which once distorted and falsified, prove to be compatible with bourgeois imperialist theory, is an epistemological transgression..."<sup>222</sup> We would agree with Mafeje that theories are not syncretic adaptations, but semantic posits invented all in one piece. As Moss phrased it, "Aren't concepts integral to, and based on, the paradigms which produce them? And if so, how can one mix notions from the different problematics in the interpretation of a complex, but coherent, social reality?"<sup>223</sup>

The difficulties are exemplified in a critique by West and Sharp of the dualist perspective current in anthropology. They argue for a re-definition of the "'notion of culture' which permits an historical perspective,"<sup>224</sup> but this is incorporated into their existing set of theoretical concepts. Ultimately then, their eclecticism means that they can not move far beyond the perspective which they are criticising, and they are left to conclude that "we claim no specific insight into the way forward - save that a perspective which deals with religious beliefs in the way we have indicated we should approach culture seems to us to offer certain possibilities."<sup>225</sup> As Bernstein and Depelchin argued for the materialist history of Africa - while bourgeois history and thought can not be comprehensively or uniformly dismissed, it must "pose its own questions and cannot progress by taking over questions as they are posed in

bourgeois historiography, even if they are of an ideologically radical character."<sup>226</sup>


In the face of the crisis of functionalist social science, Mafeje called for a complete epistemological break. The contradiction between the historical experience of members of Zionist churches and the functionalist social theory used to explain them has become vast. Thus, it is proposed that a completely different theoretical framework - historical materialism - be applied to the analysis and explanation of indigenous churches. The body of research developing from this new perspective in the study of social phenomena in South Africa can be used in an attempt to explain adequately the origins and existence of indigenous churches.

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## CHAPTER 2

## INDIGENOUS CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the previous chapter it was argued that a major problem with current functionalist explanations is their ahistoricism and their idealist definition of culture. Consequently the relationship between religious forms and the material conditions and social relationships out of which they arise, is obscured and mystified. "Technology discloses man's mode of dealing with nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the material conceptions that flow from them. Every history of religion even, that fails to take account of this material basis, is uncritical."<sup>1</sup>

It is thus proposed to examine indigenous churches starting out from "the first premise of all human history - the existence of living human individuals," from "their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity."<sup>2</sup>

We begin from the premise that "Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process."<sup>3</sup>

It is useful to quote at length Marx's schematic formulation of the historical materialist method:

In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real

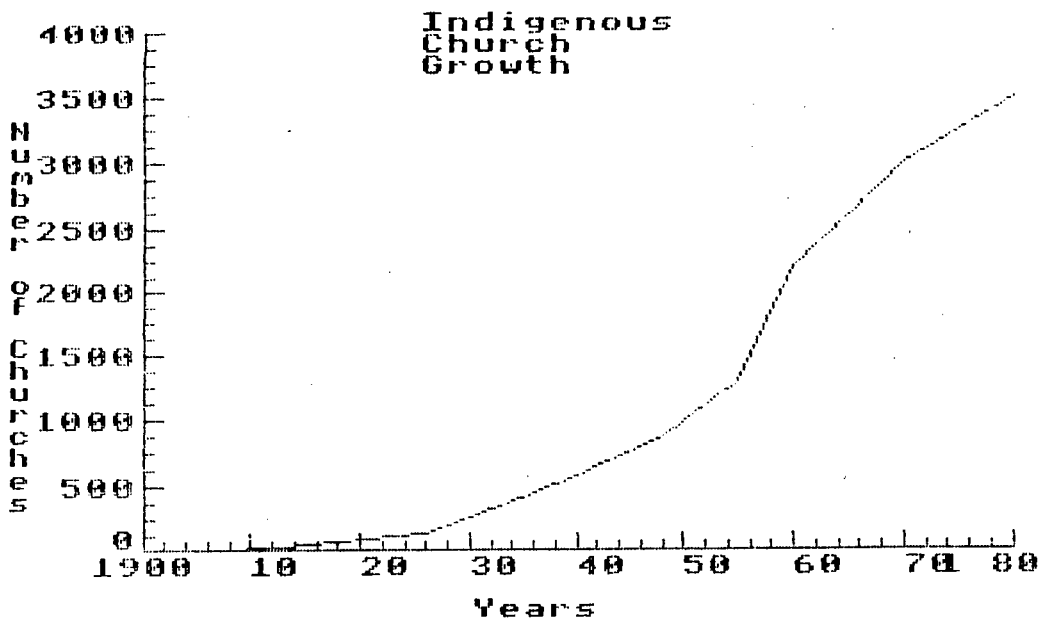
foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."<sup>4</sup>

However, these only are the basic theoretical premises which must orientate historical sociological analysis and research. "Empirical observation must in each instance bring out empirically and without any mystification and speculation the connection of the social and political structure with production."<sup>5</sup>

In sum, it is proposed not to "set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men and on the basis of their real life-process, we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process."<sup>6</sup>

## 2.1. AFRICAN INDIGENOUS CHURCHES

Government records provide us with an indication of the growth of the "Native Separatist Movement" or "Bantu Independent Churches" - or as the movement is known to many of its adherents "Churches of the People." By 1918 there were 76 churches known to the Secretary of Native Affairs. This number increased fairly rapidly over the next three decades, and after 1948 multiplied to a reported 3 500 by 1980. This is reflected clearly in Graph 1.



These figures may not be used unquestioningly.<sup>7</sup> We do not have any indication of the type of indigenous church - are they all the same at all periods? If not, when do different forms arise - and most important, why? Nevertheless, the graph is invaluable in demonstrating the overall trend and process.

A further source is census records, but these have their own inherent problems, and must be interpreted with care.<sup>8</sup> Again, we have no breakdown of different forms of indigenous churches; but this data can also be used in illuminating trends and processes.

It can thus be shown that there has been a progressive increase in the proportion of the black population belonging to indigenous churches; a fairly stable proportion belonging

to mainline or mission churches; and a steadily decreasing proportion who adhere to traditional religious practices and are defined as 'Heathen' or 'No Religion.' (Table 1)

Table 1: Black Religious Affiliation: 1936-1980

	Indigenous	Christian	Traditional	Excluded	Total
1936	16,5	32,4	50,4	0,7	100
1946	9,7	44,1	44,2	2,0	100
1951	18,6	40,7	33,4	7,3	100
1960	21,2	46,7	32,1	-	100
1970	27,4	44,2	25,7	2,7	100
1980	29,3	44,9	25,3	0,6	100

Figures in cells represent percentages

Consistently since the first census of the black population in 1936, the largest single category is 'Heathen' or 'No Religion', the second largest indigenous churches, and the third is the Methodist Church.<sup>10</sup> Further, the percentage belonging to indigenous churches has increased dramatically over the last three decades - from 18,6% in 1951 to 29,3% in 1980. To what can this be attributed?

Information to interpret these trends needs to be found from historical studies. The literature survey in the previous section has demonstrated the ahistorical nature of dominant explanations. The theoretical concerns and problematic of the writers meant that they did not pose research questions which elicited historical data and information. Clearly, there is a significant gap in the body of knowledge. There is little analysis of when and where churches arose, who constituted their leadership, and who constituted the

majority of their membership. The problem thus becomes one of reconstructing the origins and rise of indigenous churches from the material that does exist.

A further problem is the confusion over the classification and development of typologies of indigenous churches. There is endless debate over how types may be defined religiously. Etherington provided an essential insight when he argued that Ethiopianism and Zionism must be seen as two distinct types of church, with distinct origins, instead of the two ends of a continuum of a religious typology.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, it is proposed to separate out different forms of church, and to show that they are different forms of religious and cultural response historically defined. The history of South Africa cannot merely be outlined as 'historical background' for understanding churches - it must be an integral part of the explanation. In short, the origins of indigenous churches cannot be understood in isolation from the historical development of the South African social formation. What is needed is to explain the material conditions and social relations which made it possible for different forms of indigenous church to arise.

## 2.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITAL IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE RISE OF INDIGENOUS CHURCHES

"In the history of primitive accumulation, all revolutions are epoch-making that act as levers for the capitalist class in course of formation; but, above all, those moments when great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence and hurled as free and "unattached" proletarians on the labour-market. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil is the basis of the whole process. The history of this expropriation, in different countries, assumes different aspects, and runs through

its various phases in various orders of succession, and at different periods".<sup>12</sup> Since the nineteenth century South Africa has gone through such a process, whereby the capitalist mode of production has become dominant. African social formations existed in their own right, with dynamic and complex modes of production,<sup>13</sup> when they clashed with the capitalist mode of production in the form of British imperialist mercantile capitalism.<sup>14</sup>

'Contact' or 'clash' in South Africa was thus not merely racial, between black and white, nor cultural, between African and Western. It was in our view primarily<sup>15</sup> a conflict between two different modes of production - a capitalist mode of production which set about systematically destroying, primarily through conquest, the pre-capitalist modes of production it found in existence, and thereby transforming one set of class relations of production into another. An early commando-leader himself stated that they "took from a vast population the flocks upon which they, men, women and children, were exclusively dependent for their very existence".<sup>16</sup> The end result is that those from the African pre-capitalist social formations have become a landless proletariat in an apartheid society. The two modes of production had their corresponding cultural and ideological forms, essential to their reproduction. Furthermore, they were historically represented by black and white - hence the historically important function of race in the social relations of production. "In overall terms, the effect has been that wealth and poverty, power and powerlessness, being the subject or object of exploitation, bears a close though not complete relationship to ascribed racial status"<sup>17</sup>

Brown has pointed to the importance of periodisation - distinguishing qualitatively distinct shifts in social relations, which show the nature of the process of social change.<sup>18</sup> One can periodise a social formation in

general, or single out the rhythms of a particular component process of the social formation - for example, the religious level as manifested in the form of Ethiopianism or Zionism. However, these two approaches cannot be separated - if analysis begins with a particular structure, it is led to the problem of specifying the relevant periods of the social formation itself, in order to situate the analysis correctly. Conversely, an outline of the phases and stages of a social formation can serve as no more than an initial hypothetical basis for a more specific examination of individual processes.

Two major phases in South Africa's progression to a capitalist social formation may be isolated -

a) The first phase, underway by the 1870's and continuing until the late 1930's, was roughly the phase of a transition to a capitalist social formation. The relations of capital - in its mercantile form - existed and were dominant by the last quarter of the 19th century over most of what is now S.A. During this period, capital as a relation of exchange (rather than a relation of production) was operating as a force for change in a number of social relations that were increasingly being linked into one system. Thus, the fundamental social contradiction is understood to be that "between different forms of social relations as defined by the different modes of production that exist together within the social formation".<sup>17</sup>

b) The second phase, from the 1940's to the present was the 'phase of expanded reproduction'<sup>20</sup> of the social formation. In this period, the capitalist mode of production was ascendant at all levels of the social formation. The major contradictions arising out of capital itself are fundamental.

Marx and Engels argued that "It is clear that with every great historical upheaval of social conditions, the outlooks

and ideas of men, and consequently their religious ideas, are revolutionized."<sup>21</sup> It will thus be hypothesized that we can isolate three periods, in which indigenous churches took historically different forms, corresponding with developments in the South African social formation. Each form may be understood as the most "fitting form" of religion for that period. Earlier forms would not merely disappear, but would still exist, perhaps in a changed form. New forms may be emerging, but conditions are not yet such that they are the dominant religious-cultural forms. The next logical question is - the most fitting form for whom? It will be hypothesized that indigenous church take three distinct forms, each with a specific class base at a particular period in the development of the capitalist social formation in South Africa.

### 1. "EQUALITY FOR AFRICANS"

The Ethiopian Movement arose and was most influential at the turn of the century, amongst the emerging African elite and wealthy peasant farmers. The dominant contradiction between the relations of African pre-capitalist social formations, and the social relations of capital - in mercantile form, but increasingly being transformed following the discovery of gold and diamonds - created the conditions out of which they arose.

### 2. "ZION CITY AND THE LAND"

In this period, roughly the first three decades of the 20th century, churches with Zionist features began to emerge. They are hypothesized to be the religious protest of peasants resisting proletarianization, and struggling for access to land, the means of production, as capitalist social relations were extended more systematically over the Union of South Africa.

### 3. "HEALING THROUGH UMOYA."

It is hypothesized that Zionist-Apostolic Churches, or

Churches of the Spirit, arose as a religious-cultural response of the black working class and flourished, in the period following the Second World War, when the contradictions arising out of capital itself were fundamental.

In the following chapters, these historical processes and relationships will be examined, in an attempt to explain why indigenous churches take specific forms in different periods. In this way, we can begin to interpret the pattern observed from official figures, and achieve clarity on the classification of indigenous churches.

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2. Marx, K. and Engels, F. The German Ideology edited and introduced by C. J. Arthur, Lawrence & Wishart, London 1970, p 42
3. Marx, K. and Engels, F. ibid., p 47
4. Marx, K. "Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, Progress Publishers, Moscow and Lawrence and Wishart, London, p20
5. Marx, K. and Engels, F. op. cit., p 46
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7. The method used to compile these figures are unclear, and appears to be based on letters written to the Secretary for Native Affairs requesting recognition of the church. In all probability they are not very exact, for example, when a church ceases to function, it is unlikely that this is reported to Pretoria and included in compiling the statistics. Further, perusal of lists of church names reveals some which appear to be based on official error, such as spelling mistakes etc. Nevertheless, as a broad indication they are an important source.
8. The major problem with census data is that respondents stated religious affiliation is recorded, but that this does not reflect real involvement in church activity. Further, the classificatory system of religion is unclear. For example, should "other Apostolic" in fact be included with indigenous churches, and what is included in the category "other christian?" For the purposes of this study, only the stated figure for Independent Churches was used. However, these considerations could be important for interpretation. For example, in 1946 there is a drop in the percentage of indigenous churches - in 1936, 1 089 479 and in 1946, 758 810 members. Comparing "Various Apostolic sects" however, in 1936 there were 13 003 and in 1946, 177 298. Similarly the category "Various Christian sects" in 1936 numbered 5 315,

and in 1946, 77-877. Thus it is likely that the percentage of indigenous churches did not in fact drop sharply, but that the categories of the census changed.

9. The figures were compiled by adding all Christian groupings other than indigenous churches together. The 'Excluded' category comprises for example, Hindu and Confucian.

10. It must be noted that in 1980 the Roman Catholic church exceeded the Methodist Church slightly in membership figures - 1 676 680 as opposed to 1 554 280

11. See Crafford, D. "Typology of the Independent Churches and the Challenge posed by the Spirit Churches" unpublished paper presented at Symposium on New Religious Movements and Independent Churches in South Africa, University of Zululand, South Africa, Feb. 1985.

12. Marx, K. "The Secret of Primitive Accumulation" extract from Capital, Vol. 1, Pre-Capitalist Social Economic Formations, Marx, K. and Engels, F., Progress, Moscow and Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1979.

13. The concept of mode of production has been given theoretical clarity by Hindess and Hirst, who define it as "an articulated combination of relations and forces of production structured by the dominance of the relations of production." The relations of production "define a specific mode of appropriation of 'surplus-labour' and the specific form of social distribution of means of production corresponding to that mode of appropriation of surplus-value." Hindess, B. and Hirst, O. Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1975, p 52. This has given rise to extensive debate and reformulation for example, Asad, T. and Wolpe, H. "Concepts of Mode of Production. Review Article," Economy and Society 5 (3) 1976, pp470-506

14. Mercantile capital's "function consists exclusively of promoting the exchange of commodities, it requires no other conditions for its existence ... outside those necessary for the simple circulation of commodities and money." Further,

"There is therefore, not the least difficulty in understanding why merchants capital appears as the historical form of capital long before capital established its own domination over production. Its existence and development to a certain level are in themselves historical premises for the development of capitalist production, 1) as premises for the concentration of money wealth, and 2) because the capitalist mode of production presupposes production for trade, selling on a large scale, and not to the individual customer, hence also a merchant who does not buy to satisfy his personal wants but concentrates the purchases of many buyers in his own purchase." (Marx, K. "Historical facts about merchant's capital," Pre-Capitalist Socio-Economic Formations. A Collection, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1979, p155 and 158)

Merchant capitalism in South Africa began in the form of the Dutch East India Company in the 17th and 18th centuries, primarily intent on extracting commodities such as cattle and cereals, and not the circulation of goods. The British annexation in the early 19th century brought new mercantile groups who were concerned with export markets for British goods, and raw products, particularly wool. For the latter aspect particularly, see Dubow, S. Land, Labour and Merchant Capital - the experience of the Graaff Reinet District in the pre-industrial rural economy of the Cape 1852-1872. Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, Communications No.6. 1982.

15. A note of caution must be sounded here - this is not to propose that the conflict is only a conflict of modes of production. Here quoting Engels at some length is useful - "According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining factor in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Neither Marx nor I have ever asserted more than this. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic factor is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but

the various elements of the superstructure - political forms of class struggle, and its results, such as constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and especially the reflections of all these real struggles in the brains of the participants, political, legal, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas - also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases determine their form in particular." (Engels to Joseph Bloch in Pre-Capitalist Socio-Economic Formations, p522

16. Andries Stockenström, commando-leader against Ndlambe and paramount chief Hintsa in 1818, quoted in Majeke, N. The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest, Society of Young Africa, Cape Town 1952, p22

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## PART II : A HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

### CHAPTER 3

#### "EQUALITY FOR AFRICANS" - THE ORIGINS OF THE ETHIOPIAN MOVEMENT

The period within which Ethiopian churches arose is significant. The majority of churches were founded between 1884 and 1900. According to Shepperson, the period from 1872 - 1928 may be called "the classical period of Ethiopianism because it was at this time that it exercised its greatest political influence and was most widely noticed in the European, American and African press".<sup>1</sup> Clearly, the movement peaked and was the "most fitting form of religion"<sup>2</sup> for a particular class position in the social formation at the turn of the century.

This form of religion, Ethiopianism, can best be described by quoting extensively from a Manifesto of September 1896, issued by the Ethiopian leadership headed by Dr. J.M. Nembula:

To unite together Christians of the African race and of various denominations in the name of Jesus Christ to solemnly work towards and pray for the day when the African people shall become an African Christian nation.  
To provide capital to equip industrial mission stations.

To demand ... by Christian and lawful methods the equal recognition of the African and allied peoples the rights and privileges accorded to Europeans.

To solicit funds to restore Africans to their fatherland.

To place on record ... the great wrongs inflicted upon the African by the people of Europe and America and to urge upon

Christians who wish to be clear of African blood on the day of God's Judgement, to make restitution.

To establish profitable mining or other industries or manufactures.

To establish transport agencies.

To train and teach African learners any department of commercial, engineering, nautical, medical or professional knowledge, if found necessary.

To mould and guide the labour of Africa's millions into channels that shall develop the vast God-given wealth of Africa for the uplifting and commonwealth of the people, rather than for the aggrandisement of a few ... Europeans.

Finally, to pursue steadily and unswervingly the policy AFRICA FOR THE AFRICANS and look for and hasten by prayer and united effort the forming of the AFRICAN CHRISTIAN NATION by God's power and in his own time and way.<sup>3</sup>

How then can this movement and its ideals be explained? Put another way, for what was it the most 'fitting form' of religion?

Ethiopianism is a religio-cultural response of an emerging class of educated Christian professionals, craftsmen and wealthy peasant farmers, arising out of the contradiction between their position in the pre-capitalist modes of production and their position in the mercantile capitalist social formation within which blacks were being incorporated to varying degrees following violent conquest. The call "Africa for the Africans" embodied a struggle against being incorporated into capitalist social relations on an unequal basis. Ethiopians, in the face of their inequality even after they had appropriated Western religious and cultural forms - Christianity and civilization - were protesting their exclusion on all levels, and asserting that "Africans" could be equal to "Europeans". "The African leadership reacted to the erosion of African political power, its economic well-being and its social stability by establishing independent bodies exclusively for Africans".<sup>4</sup>

### 3.1. PRE-CAPITALIST SOCIAL FORMATIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

"Without a theoretical and historical understanding of the pre-capitalist mode of production dominant in Southern Africa and in the Eastern Cape, it is impossible to understand the nature of class struggle and the organisation of production for the entire second half of the 19th century ..."<sup>5</sup>

Black pre-capitalist social formations are often represented as static, egalitarian and simple. However, "not only were they complex and differentiated, but like their European counterparts, they were also growing economically and demographically and in conflict and co-operation among themselves".<sup>6</sup>

Mosala has argued that immediately prior to colonial conquest societies were "going through a fuedal period after the disintegration of tribal democracies during the communal stage".<sup>7</sup> With this perspective of the historical development of "African societies", following Magubane, three basic modes of production may be isolated in the period immediately prior to conquest:<sup>8</sup>

- a) hunters and herders who inhabited the Western Cape - more specifically, the Khoikhoi and the San.
- b) the tributary mode of production of the Nguni-speaking groups (Xhosa<sup>9</sup> and Zulu<sup>10</sup> speakers inhabiting the Eastern seaboard). This mode of production was mixed, including cattle herding, agriculture and hunting, with cattle the dominant means of production. Politically the Nguni were divided into a number of well-organised and highly developed independent states - at the lowest level were heads of families and lineages, then clan heads, regional chiefs and finally the kings.

c) the tributary mode of the Sotho-speaking groups (South Sotho, Pedi<sup>11</sup> and Tswana<sup>12</sup> in the interior) which was similar to the Nguni mixed economy but with the important development of commerce and handicrafts using iron-ore, clay, ivory, etc.

In these social formations, beliefs in Supreme Beings and the importance of the ancestors as a link between the divine and the people are primary.<sup>13</sup>

The importance of recognising differentiation both within and between pre-capitalist social formations for understanding responses to colonial oppression has been further demonstrated by Isaacman and Isaacman.<sup>14</sup>

In the 19th century, various chieftaincies extended and concentrated political power and consolidated empires, thus weakening existing states and creating 'multi-ethnic' polities. These expansionist activities affected the scale and number of polities within the region, and on balance facilitated European colonial expansion.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore they point to the need to analyse the process of class formation during the 19th century. Thus, for example, Kallaway<sup>16</sup> has shown that amongst the Thlaping (Southern Tswana) hunting was the exclusive preserve of the Masarwa, the San 'slaves' of the Chief. The chief and elders had privileges regarding the distribution of the spoils, although spoils were often distributed to the tribe as a whole or to favourites of the Royal House.

Thus, the ideal type of African culture or society which forms one of the basic tenets of functionalist explanations, does not exist historically. It is a caricature of complex forms which once existed historically but do not exist any longer. The material basis of "African culture" was fundamentally undermined by conquest. The religious, cultural and ideological forms were not preserved intact for use by those born 'African' in later decades. In fact,

"African Traditional Religions reflect the point at which the historical development of the Africans was arrested and halted".<sup>17</sup>

### 3.2. COLONIAL CONQUEST OF PRE-CAPITALIST SOCIAL FORMATIONS

Primitive accumulation in South Africa began with military conquest in the early nineteenth century. "In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part."<sup>18</sup> Spreading outwards from the Cape colony,<sup>19</sup> according to the needs of mercantile capital, a series of military conquests dispossessed African social formations of their land, their means of production.

The violence perpetrated is best reflected by one of the perpetrators himself, Andries Stockenström, Commissioner-General at Grahamstown -

"To have denied the extermination of the Hottentots and Bushmen, the possession of their country by ourselves, the cruelties with which their expulsion and just resistance had been accompanied, the hardships with which the laws were still pressing upon their remnants, the continuance of the same system against the Kaffirs, or the iniquity of the aggression and murders lately perpetrated upon the latter race .... would have been ridiculous".<sup>20</sup>

This is not to suggest that African social formations were passive recipients. Primary resistance was led mainly by chiefs at the head of the military forces of their political units. Particularly in the Transvaal, the Boers were unable to control the African polities in their area.

The discovery of gold and diamonds, the turning point in the development of capitalist relations of production in South Africa, saw a further wave of aggressive wars and wholesale annexations from 1870 - 1900.<sup>21</sup> Thus "the sheer ferocity

of bullet fire and famine was battering at the tribal system of the Bantu and as the disintegration accelerated, so the plans for the control of the ever-increasing labour force were being put into action".<sup>22</sup> The direct effect of military defeat on the black labour force has been documented by Ginsberg. For example, on the Kimberley mines, after a shattering defeat in 1879, with the consequent loss of land and imposition of taxes, the Bapedi comprised some 40% of the migrant work force by 1884; whereas in 1874 the Lieutenant Governor of Griqualand West had been forced to write to Sekhukhune, inviting him to send workers to the mines.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, "military victory and the capacity to set defeated peoples to work are substantially different processes".<sup>24</sup>

It is important to understand these processes, because as Kidd lamented in 1908,

"We thought the Clan-System was a menace to white supremacy, and our moral impulse combined with this belief to urge us to get rid of these evils. In up-rooting the Clan-System we made a mistake that has given us the pernicious developments of Ethiopianism....."<sup>25</sup>

### 3.3. THE RISE OF ETHIOPIANISM

Mercantile colonial conquest could not and did not extend the system of private property, nor expropriate the black population over the whole country. By the period in which Ethiopianism arose, the disintegration of pre-capitalist social formations, their articulation with capitalist modes of production<sup>26</sup> and the transformation of class relationships was differential over South Africa.

An examination of the regions in which Ethiopian churches were first established is revealing (see Charts 1 and 2). The two key areas are the Eastern Cape - particularly around Queenstown - and the Witwatersrand - particularly around

Pretoria. What was specific to those regions, and why did conditions in those regions foster the rise of Ethiopianism rather than Natal or the Orange Free State?

In the Cape, the forces of mercantile capital were strongest, and the disintegration of pre-capitalist structures through military conquest and the activities and ideology of the missionaries was more thorough-going. There was thus a material basis for a liberal assimilationist ideology to emerge out of the dominance of the mercantile class, which was concerned to foster a stable and prosperous African peasantry.<sup>27</sup>

In the Eastern Cape a distinct class structure thus began to emerge in response to the domination of the colonial state and the mercantile capital economy in the 19th century. Lewis<sup>28</sup> has demonstrated that the class structure of the pre-capitalist mode of production ensured great differences in the ability of individual households to participate in the mercantile economy. Thus, at the time of conquest there was a majority of poor households which remained poor and in fact experienced a declining standard of material consumption, as part of a process of political and ideological resistance to proletarianisation. For example, some households marketed grain which should have been used for subsistence, in order to pay taxes. A small percentage of families were able (by way of ownership of ploughs, trek oxen, large families to provide sufficient labour and political power to ensure access to sufficient land of good quality) to market a significant proportion of their total product in wool and grain, to accumulate money, to purchase land and generally prosper. Amongst this emerging prosperous peasant class were land-owners, large households in locations and on mission settlements. Many of these were related to the ruling classes of pre-capitalist modes. Many of them were Christians and among the early converts of the missionaries.

Minor Breakaway Churches

Date	Region	Brief Particulars of Formation
1872	Mt Hermon, Lesotho	Secession from Paris Evangelical Mission - shortlived.
1886-1890	Taung, Bechuanaland	Evangelist, Matsane, dismissed from LMS for supporting resistance of chieftainship. Independence declared, but reconciled.
1893	Manthe, Bechuanaland	Chief Kgantlapane active in break-away from LMS. Native Independent Congregational Church formed by Matolo.
1889	Pretoria	Kanyane Napo, founded African Church. Later joined Ethiopian Church.
1890	Noordsberg, Natal	Zulu Mbiyana Congregational Church founded by Mbiyana Ngidi, seceding from American Board Mission.
1889	Berlin Missionary Society	Missionary, J A Winter instrumental in founding Lutheran Bapedi Church, split from Berlin Mission.
1896	Durban, Natal	Joseph Booth and John Nembula - found African Christian Union - scheme of religious and commercial venture, Africa for Africans, a failure.
1899	Durban, Natal	Rev Charles Morris of Negro Baptist Church incorporated Amakusha and Blinde Johannes groups to form African Coloured Baptist.

Key Leaders of the Ethiopian Movement

Founder	Tile	Mokone & Brander	American Methodist Episcopal
Church	Thembu Church	Ethiopian Church	
Date	1883	1892	1896
Region	Thembuland, Eastern Cape	Marabastad, Pretoria, Witwatersrand	Pretoria, Witwatersrand
Personal History	Born into senior subgroup of Thembu, raised in Boloto, worked in Queenstown, educated at Healdtown. Wesleyan minister. Founded school at Umgwali.	Mokone - one of earliest Wesleyan ordinands - labourer, qualified as carpenter & teacher, eventually became principal of Kilnerton. Pastor in urban areas Transvaal. Brander-born Methodist, became Anglican (1879), began as transport contractor on Kimberley mines.	Founders - Mokone, Brander, Dwane, Khanyane - the latter is on record as forming the African Church 1889 prior to joining Ethiopian - AME Church in Pretoria.
Formation of the Church	Main reason for leaving Wesleyans - his political activity in Thembu chiefdom.  Doctrine - as Church of England, the state church of the Thembus, composed Hymn of the Thembus.	Break came at Wesleyan Conference 1892 when blacks and whites were separated, leaving blacks no control. Africans proclaimed their independence. Founded with 200 members, by Mokone and Brander as his deputy. Wesleyan doctrine, worked with Tile - colleagues - Napo, Goduka, Dwane, joined by Tazi, Xaba and other well known leaders. Ordained own ministers.	Pretoria Conference of Ethiopian Church 1896 decided to amalgamate, for financial support and because well known and established Afro-American church. Formal recognition by Transvaal Government 1897. Turners visit - landmark - membership doubled, disaffected groups from mission churches, especially Congregational and Presbyterian churches in Johannesburg.

Founder	Dwane	Mzimba	Samungu Shibe and fellow evangelist
Church	Order of Ethiopia	African Presbyterian Church	Zulu Congregational Church
Date	1899	1898	1897
Region	Queenstown, Eastern Cape	Lovedale, Eastern Cape	Tafelburg Mission and Johannesburg
Personal history	Son of chief of Ntinda tribe, earlier Gaika's followers in Middledrift district. Educated Healdtown as a teacher, ordained 1881 as Wesleyan minister, Queenstown.	Born at Ngqokoyi, Fort Wiltshire. Became printing apprentice at Lovedale. Evangelist and ordained as First African Free Church of Scotland minister 1875 Fingo.	
Formation of the Church	Initial dispute with Wesleyans over disposition of funds he had collected for the church (1894). Mokone sent deputation to Queenstown inviting him to join Ethiopian church. Turner consecrated Dwane assistant bishop 1898. Did not succeed in carrying majority of AME members with him into the order.	Reason for leaving - also disposition of funds collected overseas; and anger at Tsewu case. Lovedale congregation followed him - claimed church property and land which led to a protracted court case and missionary outrage. Adopted Presbyterian doctrine and church government.	Tensions over issue of control in American Board mission resulted in the secession of two evangelists, one from Tafelburg Station (near Moritzburg) and the other Johannesburg. Took over half the congregations with them - but the Johannesburg congregation returned to mission fold. Many members dependent on mission station and could not break away.

Founder	Joel Msimang	Gardiner B Mvuyana
Church	Independent Wesleyan Church	Uhlanga/African Congregational Church
Date	1904	1917
Region	Swaziland	Zululand but seceded on Rand
Personal history	Characteristic Wesleyan background and educational ambition. Ministered to people on mines.	Born at Umvoti Mission. Studied theology at Amamzintoti, became a teacher, then evangelist 1890. Ordained, worked for mission in Johannesburg
Formation of the Church	Broke away but maintained same doctrine as Wesleyans. Joined by Rev J Conjwa, left Wesleyan Church, Queenstown, at the same time. Very influential in Swaziland - headquarters at Makosini, near Mahomba - dominated S Swaziland and N Zululand. Established school.	Broke away from American Board Mission. Strong political flavour - influential with Zulu royal family in Natal. Spread through Zululand and Natal.

The missionaries in the Cape were also central to the development of a liberal assimilationist ideology and fostering of an 'African elite'.

In the early 19th century there is evidence of direct co-operation and collusion between missionaries and the colonial government. Majeke has analysed the role of missionaries in conquest and demonstrated their key role as agents of "divide and rule".<sup>29</sup> In the mid 1820's, the Wesleyans began laying a chain of mission stations among the Xhosa, thus effecting breaches in their ranks by winning over chiefs to the side of the British and, by the resultant disunity, facilitating military conquest. Thus, Dr. Philip wrote to the Colonial Government that:

"Mission stations are the most efficient agents to promote the internal strength of the colony and the cheapest and best military posts that a wise Government can employ against the predatory incursions of savage tribes".<sup>30</sup>

This is not to suggest a 'conspiracy theory' between missionaries and colonial state. Individual missionaries were sincere Evangelicals, emphasizing the doctrines of sinfulness of the human heart and the need for personal conversion. However, both the unconscious effects of their activity, and their consciously expressed ideology served to undermine pre-capitalist social formations. Thus Dr. Philip is on record advising Xhosa chiefs

"If they (the soldiery) drive away your people at the point of a bayonet, advise them to go over the Keiskamma peaceably. If they come and take away your cattle, suffer them to do it without resistance. If they burn your huts, allow them to do so. If they shoot your men, bear it till the Governor comes and then present your grievances and I am convinced you will have no occasion to repent of having followed my advice".<sup>31</sup>

The civilising mission - Christianity and civilization - meant that missionaries, to achieve their object, did want to change all those aspects of African life which they believed retarded Western style progress. Thus, for example, the

nudity of Africans was regarded as sinful; clothes had to be bought, but for this money or goods in exchange was necessary. In this way, missionaries facilitated the incorporation of conquered peoples into mercantile relations.<sup>32</sup> The task of "uplifting the Native" entailed the focus on education - both Christian and industrial. The Christian teaching of human brotherhood stressed values such as obedience, humility, patience and passivity, and that the rewards for this life would be in heaven in the next life. Industrial training imparted skills such as blacksmith, carpenter, bricklayer, wagon builder and wheelwright. Mission schools such as Lovedale and Healdtown were instrumental in producing a class from the ranks of Africans that could strengthen the position of the British colonial ruling class, by carrying out the work of the missionaries among their own people while owing allegiance to the British Colony. This emerging class was further formed by being granted full franchise rights. The Parliamentary Registration Act of 1887 excluded all those who held land on communal tenure from the vote.<sup>33</sup> Thus, those who had the vote were the wealthy peasantry described above, and furthermore, Christians formed the bulk of the African voters in the Eastern Cape.

In the Cape then, through "religious training general socialization and formal education" a class of Africans were led to believe that "once they had acquired the white man's civilization they would be admitted as equals into a Christian multi-racial society".<sup>34</sup>

In Natal, the powerful Zulu confederation with its tributary mode of production proved far more resilient. Evidence of the strength of this social formation is the Zulu-Tsonga tributary adjustments to 19th century capitalist intrusions. Colonial requirements for labour went to the Zulu king, who commanded Tsonga petty chiefdoms to send the required quota of labourers, a certain percentage of the wages in turn being

extracted for the king.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, military conquest and annexation in 1879 and the division of the land into 13 chiefdoms was designed to destroy the power of the Zulu king.<sup>36</sup> However, in Natal, settler forces were weak, in that the dominant white class was absentee landlords.<sup>37</sup> These two factors, together with the unwillingness of the British colonial government to pay the costs of totally transforming African social formations, meant that the colonial ruling class had to come to terms with existing structures, and utilize the surpluses as well as the ideological forms of the pre-capitalist mode of production.<sup>38</sup>

In the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the trekker republics were based on patron-client or landlord-tenant relations of production. Boer supremacy was based on outright expropriation of Africans - they were dependent for their permanent labour force on 'inboekselings' en 'oorlams'<sup>39</sup> - mainly children, captured in battle. However, because they were divided and weak (both economically and militarily) there was no articulation between two modes of production but simply the uneasy co-existence of separate social formations within a single geographical area. In some cases Boer households could only retain their land by paying tribute to the local chiefs for protection.

With the discovery of minerals, came the growth of internal markets. After the first waves of military conquest, African chiefdoms reasserted themselves, returning to the land they had previously occupied, which was now owned largely by absentee landlords, Crown lands or mission stations. Black squatter-peasant communities, relatively independent and prosperous, were to be found over large parts of the Transvaal<sup>40</sup> and in the Orange River Colony, particularly in the rich arable Eastern districts.<sup>41</sup>

However, the development of the mining industry had far greater and long term ramifications. The economic fulcrum of South Africa was shifted from the Cape, where merchant capital was dominant, to the Witwatersrand where the capitalist mode of production began to establish itself. A growing contradiction between production or mining capital, and merchant capital emerged.<sup>42</sup> The central feature of the capitalist mode of production is large-scale wage labour, 'free' to sell itself on the open market. The development of a black cheap labour force and the interests of mining capital in the development of a black cheap labour force has been amply documented elsewhere.<sup>43</sup>

What is pertinent to the rise of Ethiopianism is that these contradictions were beginning to dominate the social formation, and blacks were experiencing the effects of a nascent capitalist mode of production, through labour on the gold fields,<sup>44</sup> in the period in which Ethiopianism arose. It was the contradiction between the mercantile exchange relations in the Cape, with its liberal assimilationist ideology, and the experience of industrial production relations on the mines of the Rand, with its ideology of inequality, that gave the impetus to the Ethiopian movement. Elijah Makiwane, a leader of the Christian Mfengu community, expressed this when explaining why his friend and colleague Mzimba had broken away to form the African Presbyterian church:

"According to our (native) estimation, gentlemen among Europeans are of two classes, gentlemen by birth and those who became gentlemen because they have money. The attitude of these two classes towards the native is very different. The one is for raising the native, the other for repressing. The Diamond and Gold fields (especially the latter) has produced a large number of 'money gentlemen' whose influence was beginning to assert itself and to sour the native mind all over South Africa".<sup>45</sup>

However, this forms only part of the explanation. It has been argued that black people in South Africa were in the

process of being differentially incorporated into capitalist relations of production, following the partial destruction of their pre-capitalist social formations through colonial conquest. It is hypothesized that the Ethiopian movement is a religious and cultural protest against this process of subordination, and at the same time an expression of the real conditions of life, of a specific class of black South Africans. The leadership was drawn from the mission-educated emerging black petty-bourgeoisie, and were largely professionals - ministers, teachers and clerks. They represented the interests of those among the ruling classes of the pre-capitalist social formation, who attempted to maintain their position and power by adopting new methods of production and appropriating Western religious and cultural forms, when the tributary modes of production articulated with the dominant and more powerful colonial merchant capital mode of production. The formation of this elite black class has been discussed above. They were those who had most thoroughly adopted the Cape liberal assimilationist ideology. They had come to expect equality of blacks and whites - provided the standards of "Christianity and Civilization" were met. The experience of the Rand, of being incorporated into capitalist social relations on an unequal basis regardless of "Christianity and Civilization", gave the impetus to the formation of Ethiopian Churches. The leadership of the Ethiopian churches successfully articulated their beliefs, values and interests, around an interpretation of Ps 68:31 - "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God". The slogan "Africa for the Africans" and the promotion of "Africanness" as opposed to "Europeans" - that is, the appeal to African nationalism - meant that a broader base could be mobilized around the call for 'Equality.'

### 3.4. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ETHIOPIAN MOVEMENT

Clearly, Ethiopian churches must be analysed as a movement. The evidence demonstrates the direct links and contact between the early founders.

Mokone was said to have been directly influenced by Tile's Thembu Church to form a church of "natives" only.<sup>46</sup> Tile's followers carried his ideas with them to the gold fields, where groups of Christian workers, mostly Wesleyan, like Mokone, had begun to evangelize African workers. Brander and Mokone planned on founding churches at the same time, and came together to form the Ethiopian Church.<sup>47</sup> When Dwane left the Wesleyans in Queenstown, Mokone sent a deputation to invite him to join the Ethiopian Church.<sup>48</sup> In 1893 Mokone travelled to Queenstown to meet Rev. J. Goduka, Tile's successor, with the object of getting the two churches to unite and work together. "After some discussion on the wider meaning of the designation 'Ethiopia' all agreed that according to the prophecies it literally refers to all non-European people".<sup>49</sup> Mzimba probably came into contact with the Thembu church during his time in Transkei in the 1880's, and came into close association with Ethiopianism in Johannesburg in 1896.<sup>50</sup> The experience of Msimang was similar. A number of small groupings affiliated to the Ethiopian Church, for example the African Church of Kanyane Napo.<sup>51</sup>

The founders of Ethiopianism were predominantly the educated early converts of the missionaries (see Chart 2). They of all people had come to expect equality. Tile had his theological training at Healdtown, together with Dwane, who was originally trained as a teacher. Mokone progressed from

labour on sugar plantations to domestic work, to a builder, then a carpenter (note the skills taught by missionaries) and was finally sent as the first African minister to Pretoria, where he started the Wesleyan Church and Day School, later becoming principal at Kilnerton.<sup>52</sup> Mzimba completed his printing apprenticeship at Lovedale before becoming ordained.

Thus, for the Ethiopian movement, education was a key focus for looking to the future. There remained a strong belief in the potential for education to bring about a just and equitable society. Turner, on his tour of South Africa, noted that there was not a "pauper preacher in the more than a hundred who are members of the two conferences".<sup>53</sup> The only request was for a college and qualified teachers. Dwane's individual reason for secession was largely to do with funds he had collected overseas to establish a Native college, and this was a recurring ambition of his - "a university, training preachers, business and professional men, able to cope with the best".<sup>54</sup> Brander in turn, finally broke with the A M E Church to form the Ethiopian Church of Zion because "we had to support our schools and everything here ourselves".<sup>55</sup> In further evidence to the South African Native Affairs Commission 1903 - 1905, three members of the Ethiopian Church of Zion stated that they sought education for Africans so that "they would be allowed to buy farms outside for themselves and to create schools on them, whereon they could be taught industrial work".<sup>56</sup> The Charter also reflected this desire to "Train and teach African learners any department of commercial, engineering, nautical, medical or professional knowledge if found necessary".<sup>57</sup> It was perhaps in the field of education that American influence was most significant. In general, the issue of direct American influence on the Ethiopian movement has been exaggerated largely by missionaries and government officials threatened by Ethiopianism and the links with a black American church which had also experienced slavery, racial oppression and economic

exploitation. While it was a significant influence - it contributed to the form and shape the movement took <sup>50</sup>- it has no causal priority.

The early leadership all began as evangelists and due to missionary reluctance were only later ordained, the majority into the Wesleyan Church<sup>52</sup> (Tile, Mokone, Dwane, Msimang and Brander originally) but also Presbyterian (Mzimba) and Congregational (Ngidi, Mvuyana and the two secessions from the American Board Mission in Natal). Thus, they fully identified themselves with Christianity as taught by the missionaries. Their manifesto calls for "by Christian and lawful means the equal recognition of the African and allied peoples the rights and privileges accorded to Europeans". Their faith in Christianity and lawful means was firm, as a means of accomplishing their aims. They were asserting that Africans could do as well, if not better, than European missionaries.

The founders, it was argued above, articulated the beliefs and interests of a particular class of Africans. They themselves were often directly related or had direct links with the ruling classes of the pre-capitalist social formation. Some were born into chiefly families. Tile was by birth a member of a senior subgroup of the Thembu - the Hala. Dwane similarly was the son of a chief of the Ntinda tribe, earlier Gaika's followers, and was said to "belong(s) to an influential family".<sup>60</sup> Mokone had been forced to flee his home with a few head of cattle following invasion by a hostile Swazi force in 1864. He was led to work on sugar plantations in Natal in order to buy rifles to protect his home against future invasions.<sup>61</sup>

More significant, however, were their religious and political connections with chiefs and headmen. Tile's links are the most direct. When sent to Pondoland by the Wesleyans he became a personal friend of Paramount Chief Mhlonlo, and it

is claimed that his influence spread so far that he also befriended the BaSotho Chief Lehane. His major sphere of activity and influence was Thembuland, where he founded his Thembu Catholic Church. Saunders has demonstrated that he worked closely with Chief Ngangeliswe in articulating the grievances of the Thembu to the Colonial Government and attempting to resist colonial administration. One of the reasons given for his leaving the Wesleyan Church was the criticism of his superintendent, Rev. T. Chubbs, of Tile's political involvement, and more significantly, when Tile presented an ox for the circumcision of the chief's successor, Dalindyabo. To some extent Tile's church is unique, in that it was directly politically involved in the affairs of the chiefdom.<sup>62</sup>

In Natal, the African Congregational Church or Uhlanga Church was supported by the royal family in Zululand.<sup>63</sup> For example, the 1926 general meeting of the church was held at the kraal of Solomon KaDinuzulu at Makashini.<sup>64</sup> There is also evidence of a church called Ibandla like a Mosi active in Natal prior to the Bambatha Rebellion. An evangelist of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk, Moses Mbele convinced people to leave the NGK and promised they would be granted land by Dinuzulu. After being ordained by an Ethiopian minister, he achieved quite a following. He was later killed as a chaplain at the battle of Ikandla.<sup>65</sup> Dwane was also closely associated with Ngangelizwe Kama of the Amagqunukwebe, a large number of whom were Ethiopians. In 1902 and 1903 when Dwane was Provincial of the Order of Ethiopia, he was involved in a prolonged dispute. The Chief had promised land to the Order, but there was such intense local opposition that the land could not be occupied for a number of years.<sup>66</sup>

One contemporary missionary writer complained that:  
 "In the Native territories this Ethiopian Church is at present adopting the dangerous policy of approaching the

chiefs from the side on which they are most susceptible - namely, that of their love of autocratic power and position - and it sets before them the vision of a state church belonging to the tribe and in which the chief shall be practical pope".<sup>67</sup> Similarly, the Christian Express reported that one of the questionable methods used by Ethiopian churches to secure a following was intimidation by native headmen, who "compel the people in their districts to agree with them".<sup>68</sup>

However, these churches cannot be interpreted as an "agency of 'tribalism'"<sup>69</sup> While they identified with the ruling classes of 'tribal' society, they did not define themselves within 'tribal' boundaries. Saunders has argued that even Tile's National Thembu Church was not bound by narrow geographical limits, nor was it ethnically exclusive in its appeal (despite the Thembu framework within which Tile's political activity was conducted).<sup>70</sup> Thus, for example, Tile attempted to persuade a leading Mfengu headman of Butterworth, Veldtman Bikitsha, to join his church. Ethiopianism may in fact be characterised as a proto-nationalist movement.

Although Ethiopianism originated as a religious movement, it was significant in establishing the "demand for the emancipation of the people of African descent inside and outside Africa"<sup>71</sup> - an attempt to reconstruct the conditions of equality on their own terms. Moeti has argued that Ethiopianism involved an awareness of the history and values of African culture. This is best expressed in the slogan "Africa for the Africans" and the aim to "look for and hasten by prayer and united effort the forming of the AFRICAN CHRISTIAN NATION by God's power and in his own time and way." African history and culture became a source of pride, and was reasserted. "Emphasis was laid on glorious African kings and empires and on the widely held belief that African culture and civilization had been the fountainhead of

European culture."<sup>72</sup> For example, aspects of African law were emphasized and held to be more valuable than European institutions - e.g. the adjudication of cases, which was one of the Chief's most important tasks in the pre-capitalist social formation, which the colonial administration had attempted to replace with magistrates.<sup>73</sup> Moeti has pointed out that "This was more eagerly accepted by the African populace at large which was still bent on preserving their cultural traditions."<sup>74</sup>

The Ethiopian form of nationalism then, was a reaction of the leadership, but it attempted to appeal to the broader black population.

Many, particularly missionary writers claimed that the leadership were "the more advanced natives"<sup>75</sup> aspiring to higher positions. Bridgeman unwittingly reflected their aspirations while criticising Ethiopian leaders for seeking privileges while shunning responsibilities: "He talks of building colleges and universities, yet neglects the repair of his district schoolhouse. He dreams of native doctors and lawyers, but has not the stamina to go through the grammar-school. He undertakes to buy a farm, though he is not ashamed of an unweeded mealie patch".<sup>76</sup>

Rich has argued that as an aspirant petty bourgeoisie, the Ethiopian leadership's educational and economic ambitions were motivated by a desire to accumulate capital.<sup>77</sup> This is reflected in the Charter's call "To establish profitable or other industries or manufactures", "To establish transport agencies", and "To provide capital to equip industrial mission stations." These ambitions reflect on the constituency they were appealing to. However, once again the appeal to a broader base of Africans was made - "to mould and guide the labour of Africa's millions into channels that shall develop the God-given wealth of Africa for the uplifting and commonwealth of the people, rather than for the aggrandisement of a few ....Europeans" (own emphasis). As Moeti phrased it "...the political aspirations of the

Ethiopian leadership .... saw the ideal chance for its own ascent in the eviction of the Europeans and removal of slavery from the African continent".<sup>70</sup>

In this respect, one missionary writer complained that Ethiopians

- "go about preaching the doctrine of equal rights, that they must clamour for equal rights, and keep on till they get them, and get the land and get the franchise ... pointing out that the land really belongs to the natives, that the white people have no right here at all, that it is Africa for the black race and not for the whites"<sup>71</sup>

In this respect the issue of land is central. Bridgeman claimed that in Natal, the "purchase by natives of thousands of acres in open competition with Europeans (thus perhaps giving a sense of superiority)" <sup>80</sup> was a contributing cause of schism. One of the activities of Ethiopian churches was the formation of land-buying syndicates, attempting to free themselves from reliance on missionary-owned mission stations. Mbiana Ngidi was accused, while still working for the American Board Mission, of wanting to found new stations in order to increase his land holdings.<sup>81</sup> Thus, evidence was given to the Native Churches Commission that "The early missionaries were given land by the chiefs. Today natives complain that these belong to the missionaries and not to the people. It is the same with the churches built at the expense of the people but registered in the name of the church and not of the chief."<sup>82</sup>

Personal ambition has often been cited as reason for secession. Thus Rev. L.N. Mzimba stated:....

"they had a lower salary and status than the white missionary. They felt much more isolated both from the blacks and whites. Being somewhat educated they wished to better their position, and the more ambitious wished to make a rapid ascent of the social ladder.....The Bantu is determined to have his share not only of the task of living for Christ but also the blessings and the reward".<sup>83</sup>

Evidence of the leadership's self-identification is also to

be found in statements like that of Rev. E.T. Mpela of the A.M.E. - "we here will not represent that class of people who are still far in heathenism and darkness but for those who have already advanced".<sup>84</sup> Rev P.J. Mzimba of the African Presbyterian Church asserted that "all the better class of Natives" were "friendly" to his church.<sup>85</sup> This outlook was most clearly formulated by John Tengu Jabavu, who outlined three classes of Africans in the Cape - those who were able to "maintain an average European mode of living", those who were "more civilised .... endeavoured to improve themselves but .... were as yet, unequal to keep the European standard" and "the raw element ....which was the only class that could properly be subjected to ...benevolent discipline"<sup>86</sup>

However, to suggest that "African interest in church leadership rose in inverse proportion to the decline in opportunities for other sorts of leadership"<sup>87</sup> is being too crude and instrumentalist. Men like Jabavu, Dube and Makiwane were in the same class position as Mokone, Dwane and Mzimba, yet they were not "inspired to create new positions by forming new churches".<sup>88</sup> This is quite simply because Mokone, Dwane or Mzimba were ministers in the church and furthermore, "those ....who had actually achieved higher positions in white-dominated multi-racial mission churches".<sup>89</sup>

Here it must be born in mind that

"....the various elements of the superstructure - political forms of the class struggle and its results,.... and especially the reflections of all these real struggles in the brains of the participants, political, legal, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas - also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases determine their form in particular".<sup>90</sup>

Thus, the struggle of the Ethiopian leadership took a religious rather than an overtly nationalist form because it

was at the same time a protest against inequality in the church.

Tile's injunction to his followers on his death bed expresses this:

"Turn not back but look forward and upward, lifting ever higher the banner of the Thembu Church which knows no difference between men but believes that men are the same in the face of God with equal rights and privileges".<sup>91</sup>

The mission church operating under the aegis of mainline denominations functioned to reproduce the economic relations of mercantile capital, based on unequal exchange. While it preached a doctrine of equality, even within its own ranks 'Native' ministers were unequal, and the church was reluctant to extend equal rights. This is reflected in their reaction to the Ethiopian Church:

"The wiser and more far-seeing among the educated and Christian natives of this country see clearly that the time has not yet come for a self-governing native church .... the real guarantee for the progress of the black man in this country lies in his association and co-operation with the European in all that makes up the social or religious life of the natives. The new movement appears to have come fifty years too soon".<sup>92</sup>

This can be contrasted with statements of the 'educated and Christian natives of this country' - as one argued, "However respected and honoured by their own flocks and people generally, they cannot hope to rise to social equality with their European co-workers".<sup>93</sup> Similarly Dwane criticised "the Wesleyan Church having ....withheld from its native adherents what they consider equal rights with their brethren".<sup>94</sup> A witness to the Native Church Commission:

"Natives have a strong belief that the old Missionaries taught that the Natives should have and manage their own churches when they will be ripe to support themselves.... after nearly a century of mission work among the natives of South Africa, the Native feels that it is time he should do his bit propagating the gospel of Christ".<sup>95</sup>

Another Ethiopian leader pointed out that "we deem that the complete evangelization of the Native races may be achieved by experienced independent native preachers because they know very well the habits and customs of their countrymen".<sup>96</sup> There was bitterness over the lack of Christian brotherhood on a personal level

"Very few missionaries will ever allow natives on their parlours, let alone dining with them or giving them tea out of china. The love of Christ and the brotherhood of man is preached but true sincerity is lacking".<sup>97</sup>

Even more indicative of their experience of missionaries - "There is lack of fellowship, the European minister often adapting the attitude of master rather than a servant of God or a Shepherd".<sup>98</sup> (own emphasis)

Ngubo has pointed out that the move to the Rand to minister to those who had gone to work there meant that many ministers became free of the tight controls of the parent church.<sup>99</sup> Thus, the immediate catalyst to secession, often cited as 'causes' of Ethiopianism, relate to this lack of opportunity and racial discrimination within the church. Mokone's individual 'reason' for leaving the Wesleyans was the annual conference, where blacks and whites had separate sessions, in effect leaving black ministers with no control whatsoever.<sup>100</sup> Mzimba gave as reasons for leaving the Presbyterians that blacks had no share in the control of church affairs. Black ministers had an inferior and often humiliating position and lower status than white ministers.<sup>101</sup> One of the immediate causes of his secession was the Tsewu case, which he felt missionaries used as prejudice against black ministers in general.<sup>102</sup> One of the most commonly expressed reasons for Ethiopian churches has been the 'urge for leadership'. The desire for increased ecclesiastical status for Africans was often a

factor in an individual decision to leave the mission church.

Thus Dwane gave evidence - " ....it was more on account of doctrinal questions than anything else ....I was more inclined to Episcopal form of Church Government and I preferred it more than any other".<sup>103</sup> For the majority of leaders, Ethiopianism provided a chance of advancing to ordination which had often been denied or delayed in mission churches. It was at this individual level that it can be argued that the Wesleyan system facilitated Ethiopian churches because of the way it devolved responsibility, without granting recognition and status.

However, the real issue is not that they had a desire for leadership, but why educated black Christians might have had a desire for church leadership positions in South Africa in the late nineteenth century. It is hoped that this is clear from the discussion above.

As was pointed out earlier, despite the anger at inequality within the white mission church, the Ethiopian leaders fully identified themselves with the Christian message. Their primary aim was "To unite together Christians of the African race and of various denominations in the name of Jesus Christ to solemnly work towards and pray for the day when the African people shall become an African Christian nation". Consequently, their religious doctrine and form of worship was usually adopted as is from the parent church. "The South African Native Church has, until now, adopted the accepted creeds of the older Churches. The Native mind has not yet exercised itself to any great extent in matters of doctrine".<sup>104</sup> Even one missionary exclaimed "It is disappointing to many well-wishers of the Bantu that so few distinctive features of African modes of worship have been made part of the texture of the African Christian Church".<sup>105</sup>

The explanation and last word may rest with Rev. L.J.Mzimba: "The Bantu want to get the Bible and control it first. The

doctrinal controversies are for the future. As the Bantu will say, he thinks it is the white man's faith, not the Bible faith".<sup>106</sup>

### 3.5. THE SPREAD OF ETHIOPIANISM

Thus, the movement which began in the Transvaal spread throughout South Africa. The Christian Express reflected the alarm at its rapid growth:

"Had it confined itself to the two republics of the north, where there is plenty of work for a new church ....there would have been little to say expect in its favour ...Its plan seems to be to lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes by planting branch churches within the fields of labour long occupied by those Societies which have done the real missionary work of this country. It is said that meetings have been held lately in King William's Town and East London and an effort has been made in Cape Town to gain a footing there".<sup>107</sup>

According to Bridgeman, writing in 1904, in seven years of prominence the movement had gained approximately 25 000 members. After Turner's visit in 1896, the A M E church was said to have 10 800 members - 7 175 in Transvaal and 3 625 in the Cape - 250 officebearers and branches in Basutoland, Swaziland, Rhodesia and Barotseland.<sup>108</sup> The African Presbyterian Church in 1904 claimed 6 500 members and 20 000 adherents, with four ordained ministers.<sup>109</sup>

The Wesleyan Church was said to have lost thousands of black members and adherents, while "The Ethiopian and other novel Native Churches of the country are still growing merrily and winning a widening way".<sup>110</sup>

Rev. D. Stormont was unusual in arguing that "It is not surprising that this new movement has spread, it will extend still further in the future, for the self-reliance of the native is growing."<sup>111</sup>

Among the factors to which he attributed this are the following

"When a congregation joins itself to the Ethiopian church, it does not require to change its creed and the ritual of its service. That the money which the congregation brings, should also be spent by it, seems just; that the helper, who takes and teaches the catechumen should also baptise them, seems only fair; and that he who preaches and otherwise leads the congregation, should also dispense the sacraments, appears not difficult, and he shall for that purpose receive the "facultas" from an ecclesiastical authority."<sup>112</sup>

### 3.6. THE ETHIOPIAN MEMBERSHIP

The Ethiopian leadership did not represent all 'Africans', but an emerging aspirant educated Christian petty bourgeois class; however their emphasis on the value of African culture and history, and their stress on Christian equality and brotherhood broadened their appeal somewhat. The majority of the membership however were those who felt their "newly created aspirations blocked by the dominant European ruling class".<sup>113</sup>

It is clear that the basis of the first churches were the congregations of the founders, who had followed them out of mission churches. An early cry of the missionaries against Ethiopianism was the accusation of "sheep-stealing".<sup>114</sup> Their lack of evangelical work among the heathen was a sore point, the belief being that their "policy being to secure additions of 'amatshe abaziweyo' (dressed stones) to their edifice, that is, men who were already educated or trained".<sup>115</sup> Similarly, "their 'converts' are too often drawn from disciplined or disappointed applicants for admission to other churches, or from those who are ready for selfish reasons to forsake their first love".<sup>116</sup> Ignoring the missionaries own interests, these statements serve to confirm the nature of the membership.

A further missionary lament was the danger of the "friendly and even cordial relationship which exists between the seceding Natives and those who remain loyal to the parent church".<sup>117</sup> What was the difference between those who joined Ethiopian churches and those who remained?

Bundy has categorised different social groups in the Eastern Cape during this period in a way which is of some use here.<sup>118</sup> They closely mirror the three "African" classes outlined by Jabavu above. The educated ("school") elite were able to maintain their economic position and many of them remained in the leading mission churches. This corresponds with Jabavu's first class. Many of them rejected Ethiopianism and maintained faith in Cape liberalism and values. "Rev. Nehemiah Tile and his followers were looked down upon by all their fellowmen who were still members of European controlled churches".<sup>119</sup>

Members of the old loyal communities, composed largely of Christian peasants, transport riders, small craftsmen and workers in the towns "found their expectations of advancement in a common society shattered".<sup>120</sup> It was in these communities that Ethiopian Churches and Africanist thought grew. As Parsons showed, in Britain Bechuanaland for example, Ethiopianism "flourished among more settled chiefs and congregations."<sup>121</sup>

Mzimba and Dwane were among the few elite who could understand the aspirations of their community as a whole and articulate them in the Ethiopian Churches. Others like Makiwane and Jabavu still identified themselves totally with the white ruling class and thought they should be given preferential treatment over "the raw element". Dube at one stage was invited to take over the leadership of the Zulu Congregational Church, but refused, having "come to the conclusion that the best of the people would not follow him away from the mission, and that .... his great influence lay in working in unison with ....the American Zulu Mission".<sup>122</sup>

The nature, values and aspirations of the membership of Ethiopian churches is illustrated by Beinart's case study in the Qumbu District in the Eastern Cape.<sup>123</sup> In 1899 a congregation of Mzimba's African Presbyterian Church was formed when a number of leading Nxasana men seceded from the local Presbyterian Church, under Reuben Damane. They were some of the leading families, "very respectable Fingoes"<sup>124</sup> and won the headman Tiyo Njikelana to their side, in this way making some impact on other Nxasana and Hlubi settlements. After the Anglo Boer War the colonial administration attempted to implement the council system of the Glen Grey Act as widely as possible. At Qumbu the headman initially accepted councils, with minor reservations; but three spokesmen, all Ethiopians, "raised more serious objections 'on behalf of the people'".<sup>125</sup> The Ethiopians succeeded in persuading the whole district to resist the imposition of councils. Beinart argues that Councils threatened their position, in that they would undercut African participation in the political institutions of the Colony as a whole. Among these men were the African voters of Qumbu. Yet throughout the campaign, the leaders "played to a populist audience stressing that they represented the people, that 'the people would have no say' and that there was 'nothing for the people' in the council system".<sup>126</sup>

In other areas with different local needs, similar processes were underway.

In the Transvaal (besides on the mines of the Rand), two groups of peasants had emerged. The wealthy peasants held title to land, usually through missionaries, mostly concentrated in the Western Transvaal around Rustenburg.<sup>127</sup> The rest, the majority, squatted on Crown Land and European farms or were still on locations. Rich has shown that Ethiopianism was an influence on the wealthy, predominantly Christian, peasants in the first group. He argued that much

of the support the A M E and other Ethiopian Churches were able to mobilise in the Transvaal was due in some degree to the growing threat of land dispossession to rural black communities, with the growth of settler capitalist agriculture.<sup>128</sup> An A. M. E. bishop, J.R. Coan, claimed that the "process of the spread was by special contact with the chiefs. Keen interest in the education of their sons by the church in America and the establishment of schools among their people led the chiefs to accept the A .M. E. Church...."<sup>129</sup>

Moeti has argued that the Transvaal urban environment, with the mines, railway works and missionary organizations all confined within the area, provided "the movement with an African population which furnished it with unlimited possibilities for success".<sup>130</sup> Turner had found two A M E churches in Johannesburg and left five on his return - several Congregational and Presbyterian churches having joined with them.<sup>131</sup> Pretoria was also important as the place where Mokone and Brander founded the Ethiopian Church. The Christian Express claimed that the Ethiopian Church "appears to have originated in the Transvaal and to be more at home there and in the Orange Free State".<sup>132</sup>

The conditions in the Orange Free State and Transvaal were similar, so one would assume a similar pattern of church membership. However, particularly in the Free State a further problem arose. Rev. Dr. James Yapi Tantsi reported that "The Ethiopian Church in the Free State could not make headway, as the ministers were so persecuted that they had to stay on the hills during the day and preach only at night. But they were so full of God's Spirit that they did not stop promoting the work of the Master".<sup>133</sup>

He further told of the arrests and imprisonment of various Ethiopian ministers - of a Rev. Ndebe who was not permitted to enter the village at Bethuli, of a Rev. Maroka who was

appointed to Smithfield but only given a permit of a month, during which time he had to report daily to the Police Station Officer.<sup>134</sup> There was a concerted attempt to suppress Ethiopianism, which was perceived as a political threat to the white ruling classes. The Cape Colony was also involved in this persecution of Ethiopian leaders - Dwane, for example, was seen as the greatest enemy and placed under surveillance.<sup>135</sup> This problem was not as severe in the Transvaal, because of President Kruger's approval - "Let the Kaffirs preach to other Kaffirs; why interfere with them?"<sup>136</sup> This graphically illustrates the struggle of the Ethiopians.

By 1893, the spirit of Ethiopianism had spread into Natal and Zululand. In the initial wave of the Ethiopian movement, churches were not established in Natal. There was Joseph Booth's short-lived African Christian Union<sup>137</sup> and the unsuccessful attempt by evangelists of the American Board Mission in 1897 to form the Zulu Congregational Church.<sup>138</sup> Conditions in Natal did not contribute towards the rise of Ethiopianism, but they were to be an important factor in the rise of Zionism.

### 3.7. ETHIOPIANISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Developments in the South African social formation were soon to supercede the struggle of Ethiopians against being incorporated into capitalist social relations dominated by a white ruling class.

Legassick has argued that the Anglo - Boer War was a crucial part of the social transformation of South Africa.<sup>139</sup>

The structural limitations of the Boer State in the Transvaal and the division of South Africa into different states impeded the large-scale creation and control of a wage labour force. This could be ensured only by a ruling class more

efficient than the Transvaal landowners and with far wider powers over the entire region. From 1902 then, the state functioned to produce the conditions for capitalist production. The dominant contradiction was between the newly ascendant productive capital and the pre-capitalist mode of production. Politically, this meant the consolidation of the separate states into one united South Africa by the Act of Union 1910, necessitating a common range of ideological, political as well as economic practices. The South African Native Affairs Commission which had reported so extensively on Ethiopianism, was aimed at formulating a common "native policy". The segregationist ideology which triumphed over the Cape liberal assimilationist ideology has been well documented.<sup>140</sup>

The extension of capitalist relations through the economic structure entailed the destruction of productive processes which kept labour from selling itself on the market. Capitalist agriculture had developed since the mineral discoveries and the growth of huge internal markets. While black squatter tenants had been encouraged by mercantile landowners, increasingly the land was needed for large-scale agriculture. This process, which was beginning at the time of the formation of Ethiopian churches intensified. The interests of both mining and agricultural capital<sup>141</sup> ensured that existing labour-creating techniques were strictly and efficiently administered. Agrarian relations of production began to be transformed. (Anti-squatting measures promulgated in 1890's were enforced more strictly.)

A key element of the process of capital accumulation was the 1913 Land Act, which deprived Africans of access to all but 13% of the land, which was set aside as Reserves. This affected and threatened virtually all sections of black society. Wealthy black landowners and their allies were able to support, and at this stage control, the development of a widespread nationalist movement.<sup>142</sup> This was led by

men like Seme, Dube, and Flaattje, men who had never joined Ethiopian churches. The South African Native National Congress formed in 1912 adopted strictly constitutional methods in their struggle against disenfranchisement and dispossession of their land. The Ethiopian movement, appears to have worked closely with this movement as its "religious wing". Thus the opening ceremony was addressed by an Ethiopian minister, the hymn *Nkosi Sikelele i'Afrika*, composed for the Ethiopian Church was adopted as the national anthem and many Ethiopians were involved in the organisations' activities.

Clearly, Ethiopianism did not merely disappear but continued to have religious influence over the next decades. However, this section has been primarily concerned to explain the origins of Ethiopianism and so provide a historical definition in contradistinction to 'Zionism.' The rest of the history of Ethiopianism remains to be researched more fully.

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In 1869, the original land of the Sotho was annexed, large sections falling to the Boers of the Free State, the southernmost parts were confiscated by the Cape Colony, and after a period of protracted wars, 'Basutoland' was declared a protectorate.

By 1879, the conquest of Zululand was complete - although the Bambatha Rebellion of 1906 showed how great the spirit of resistance was. 1870's saw the annexation by the Cape Colony of areas on its North-Eastern border - 1873 the maXesibe and maPondomise; 1877 ma Gcaleka, maNgqika and maThembu - and by 1894 with the defeat of Pondoland, all remaining African areas west of Natal.

1884 Southern Botswana was annexed as British Bechuanaland, incorporated into the Cape Colony and Northern Botswana was declared a British protectorate. 1890 Rhodes and the British South Africa Company invaded Mashonaland and Matabeleland.

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94. Christian Express XXVIII 1898, p65
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96. Quoted in Van Antwerp, C.M. ibid., p165
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## CHAPTER 4.

## ZION CITY AND THE LAND

According to the existing literature, Zionist churches began to arise in the early decades of the twentieth century, and Sundkler claims that the major secessions were around 1917 - 1920. Even a preliminary analysis of this period reveals a number of striking features, which suggest that indigenous churches took a specific form in the first three decades of the 20th century. It is hypothesized that the basic ethos of these churches may be expressed in the symbol of 'Zion City' or the 'New Jerusalem.' The dominant contradiction which gave rise to these churches was the extension of capitalist relations over the rural areas, and the increasing threat of black proletarianization. It is argued that this process occurred differentially in the various regions of South Africa, and consequently a variety of religious-cultural innovations are to be found. In the Transvaal and Natal, the prototype Zion City appears to have centred on a church colony with a messianic leader; while in the Cape the dynamic took on a millenarian form. A schematic overview of the period will be undertaken in this chapter.

## 4.1. SOUTH AFRICA IN THE FIRST THREE DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the previous chapter the conditions up to the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 and the passing of the 1913 Land Act were outlined.

Lacey <sup>1</sup> has suggested that in the first two decades of the century, the state had to deal with four major issues:

- a) how to inhibit the growth of an independent African peasantry
- b) where to settle African share-croppers and tenants claimed to be squatting illegally on white-owned farms
- c) what to do with African townsmen and
- d) how to deal with the build-up of untrained, unskilled whites.

Different fractions of capital, mining and farming differed as to the solution. "For the State, the insistent theme of successive policies was how to share labour evenly between these two sectors, the aim being to enserf an adequate number of independent peasants to the farmers while ensuring that enough Africans still had a subsistence base so that a good supply could be kept oscillating between the reserves and the mine compounds."<sup>2</sup>

With the coming to power in 1924 of Hertzog's government, the National Party's "politically powerful electorate got the upper hand in labour matters."<sup>3</sup> 'Squatters,' instead of being resettled to the Reserves as provided for in the South African Party policy, were to be enserfed to meet the White farm labour shortage. Only 7% of the land scheduled under the 1913 Land Act were retained as reserves, and these were concentrated in Natal and the Cape. Outside these areas Africans were forbidden to own or hire land. In a similar vein, Lacey explains the disenfranchisement of Cape African voters as a means to ensure that "all Africans could be reduced to a super-exploitable condition,"<sup>4</sup> and to impose a uniform system of administrative control. In the Cape, direct rule had been imposed in the reserves; in the Transvaal and O F S a blatant master-servant system prevailed; and in Natal there were "vestiges of 'tribalism' left,"<sup>5</sup> an effect of the indirect rule policy. Thus, 'squatters' were to be enserfed to farmers as labour tenants; and mine recruitment was to be from the Cape and supplemented by workers from Mozambique. A consequence of this policy was the increasing 'collapse of the reserves', which declined

to "the point where people fled from them to survive."<sup>6</sup> In the urban areas on the other hand, the state's white labour preference policy meant 'uplifting' the proportionately small group of white workers but in finding a way to keep the entire African working class down."<sup>7</sup> Thus Lacey demonstrates how Africans were isolated at every level - in locations, denied trade union rights, inadequate education, sub-sistence wages and control over labour allocation. Lacey argues that by 1932 whites "stood united before the mass of the African population."<sup>8</sup>

The Cape Reserve policy was extended to the Transvaal and O F S and legal segregation was implemented in the Cape - uniformity and control had been achieved throughout the Union.

The "mass of the African population" responded to this and 1918 - 1924 saw a wave of urban protest. In the rural areas "there was not only an increased level of resistance, but also a search for new and appropriate forms of resistance amongst farm workers, labour-tenants, reserve peasants and peasant-migrants."<sup>9</sup>

Clearly, conditions for black people were deteriorating in this period. In the urban areas, most black workers lived in mine compounds or overcrowded locations and slumyards. The living conditions of the period have been documented in recent years by a number of social historians.<sup>10</sup> However, the majority of black people still lived in the rural areas with various types of limited access to land for peasant production, ranging from share-cropping to wage-labour, on white-owned farms, on communal land in reserves or on mission stations. Thus the census statistics for 1936 reveal that 17,3% of the population lived in urban areas while 82,7% were in rural areas.<sup>11</sup> The 1913 Land Act was significant in limiting the amount of land that could be owned by blacks - but it did not immediately transform the countryside. The complex process whereby Africans "were first deprived of

their lands; then deprived of independent productive opportunities on white-owned land; and finally concentrated in grotesquely small, overcrowded and impoverished reserves"<sup>12</sup> has been the subject of much empirical research and theoretical debate.<sup>13</sup> In short, the twenties and thirties was a period of intense rural struggle as the capitalization of the land intensified and black South Africans attempted to resist proletarianization. In the process, a number of political and religious organizations arose to express and channel these struggles. The African National Congress and the Industrial and Commercial Union were the strongest and most influential political movements.<sup>14</sup>

It was in this period that religious organizations with the name 'Zion' in their titles arose. It will be argued that although these churches display many of the features of Zionism, they belong to a different historical period than the indigenous churches commonly known as Zionist - the small, urban-based bands centred on healing and emotional forms of worship. In a transitional period, a period of intense resistance, a form of religion arose which expressed and articulated the material conditions and experience of black peasants. These Zion City churches were primarily focused on founding a self-supporting religious community on the land. This assertion does not ignore differences in form of worship or doctrine between churches, particularly as found regionally. Nor does it deny that typically Zionist features such as healing were not present already in this period. Further, Ethiopian churches continued to be influential amongst the petty-bourgeoisie, and in fact some significant breakaways occurred in this period, most notably the Bantu Methodist Church (1932). For the process of history takes place only very slowly - "the various stages and interests are never completely overcome, but only subordinated to the prevailing interest and trail along beside the latter for centuries afterwards".<sup>15</sup> To argue

otherwise would be reductionistic - to assume a one-to-one correspondence of religious and material life. Clearly this is not what Marx and Engels meant when they outlined the materialist conception of history:

"starting out from the material production of life itself and to comprehend the form of intercourse connected with this and created by this mode of production (i.e. civil society in its various stages), as the basis of all history; and to show it in its action as State, to explain all the different theoretical products and forms of consciousness, religion, philosophy, ethics, etc., etc., and trace their origins and growth from that basis; by which means of course, the whole thing can be depicted in its totality and therefore, too, the reciprocal action of these various sides on one another".<sup>16</sup>

It is thus necessary to analyse Zion City churches in the historical period in which they arose and were the most fitting religious form - the inter-war years. The following analysis is preliminary in that it merely attempts to outline the major features, interconnections and relations of this period. This reveals it to be a potentially fruitful and exciting period to research in greater depth.

#### 4.2. A ZION MISSION

Many of the early founders of Zion churches in this period were influenced by missionaries bringing a different message to that of mainline Christianity - a doctrine of faith healing, baptism and pentecost. The Christian Catholic Church in Zion, founded in 1896 by John Alexander Dowie in Chicago, U.S.A., with its publication "Leaves of Healing" had already made contacts in South Africa by 1897.<sup>17</sup> Men like J. Buchler, F.K. Le Roux and E. Mahon spread the work of "Zion's Little White Dove" amongst their African congregations in the early 1900's. Buchler was active in Johannesburg, Le Roux, from his base at Wakkerstroom, had a profound influence in Zululand and Natal, and Mahon

established centres at Mooiigelegen, Harrismith and Kalkoenfontein in the Orange Free State, extending his missionary work to Lesotho and even Northern Transkei during the 1918 Influenza epidemic.<sup>10</sup> The American Negro Baptists were also influential in these years, the key figure being Rev. Leshega<sup>17</sup> on the Rand.

It is extremely difficult to gain a coherent impression of indigenous churches in the cities, particularly the Rand, at this stage, due to the lack of statistics, church records or fieldwork. Furthermore it was a turbulent period in which a number of religious forms co-existed. Freund<sup>20</sup> has shown that the black township population came predominantly from the rural Transvaal and Natal, while these areas provided relatively few gold mine migrants. The female population grew after World War 1, and women worked by taking in laundry or brewing beer, combined with child rearing. Until World War 2 the largest labour sector was domestic service, while some became relatively skilled carpenters, busdrivers or clerical labour. Soudien has analysed Johannesburg in the period 1917 - 1930 and described a number of boycotts and strikes organised by the black working class.<sup>21</sup> Koch, writing on the black working class in Doornfontein, the centre of 'Marabi' culture, from 1914 - 1935, noted three large indigenous churches in the Doornfontein slumyards: the African Catholic Church formed in 1910 after a breakaway from the Anglicans led by Rev. Rampedi; the Molefe Church, established by Rev. Molefe, a corrugated iron church on a leased stand; and the Zulu Congregational Church which split from the American Board Mission in 1917 and attracted a huge following in the slums in the 1920's.<sup>22</sup> The church names reveal that these were Ethiopian Churches; but Koch makes the important point that these churches "gained mass support more because the conventional churches were not responding to the forces that went into the making of slumyard culture".<sup>23</sup> As an African observer at the time complained "The Church does not

seek to prove Christ in the Monday struggles of the people".<sup>24</sup> Rev. Taylor, writing in 1926 argued that Africans on the Rand "are literally an industrial army living very much under army conditions."<sup>25</sup> One of the features he noted of the religious situation was the large number of churches, for example, in Benoni location fifty-seven varieties were found - seven mission churches and fifty indigenous churches. Bridgman too, has chronicled social conditions in Johannesburg in 1926 and noted that "the Churches are failing to grapple successfully with the distressing social conditions."<sup>26</sup> . These ideas will be taken up in the next section when Zionist churches are discussed.

An important source for understanding the religious forms at this period was the Native Churches Commission. Evidence of some 65 churches was presented and are preserved in the Roberts Papers, on which the following discussion is based.<sup>27</sup> The first distinct category which can be isolated is a small group of churches whose members were predominantly mineworkers from "Portugese East Africa." For example, the African Gaza Church was founded by Benjamin John Mavundla in 1907 with headquarters in Xinavane Station, Portugese East Africa. The founder belonged to the A M E originally, but left to form his own church, adopting Wesleyan doctrine, because "They treated us Shangaans badly so we decided to start our own church which is not confined to non-Union Natives."<sup>28</sup> The majority of churches found in the urban areas at that stage were Ethiopian type churches, stating that they adopted mission church doctrine, most commonly Church of England or Wesleyan, focused on educational work and having left the mission church because they "preferred a church controlled by one of own race and colour."

However, a new form of church was to be found in the urban areas. It was brought to the city from the rural areas of Natal and Transvaal, and particularly from the first Zion group around Le Roux at Wakkerstroom. Most of these churches had come under the influence of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion. A typical example is the African Christian Apostolic Church in Zion. The founder Amos. L. Vilakazi left the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion in 1920 in Standerton. A witness to the Commission, Jonathan Dambuza Mngoma of Alexandra Township, claimed he had left the Zulu Congregational Church because he had a vision that it was right to be baptised in a river. The doctrine of the church "almost the same as the Zulu Congregational Church, but they baptise like the Baptists, and don't believe in medicines."<sup>29</sup>

Rev Zungu had left the Christian Catholic Apostolic in 1907 to form his own church, because they would not at that time have native ministers or evangelists. This was attributed to Le Roux who had seceded from the D R C which was strongly opposed to ordaining native ministers. A number of churches had seceded from the African Native Baptist church, for example Christian Congregational Baptist Mission of Thomas Makanda in 1921 in Alexandra township or the National Baptist Church of South Africa founded by John Mtselu in Marabastad 1918. In general then, it appears that these churches can be described as "pentecostal Ethiopians" - their founders broke away from a pentecostal, rather than a protestant European church. Thus Martin - "While at the outset, and especially through Eerw. le Roux's preaching, it was a Christian movement of the pentecostal type, and very much remained so in the European section, it became more and more 'African' amongst the Africans...."<sup>30</sup>

<u>Key Figures in Pentecostal 'Zion'</u>			
Paulo Mabilitsa	Daniel Nkonyane	Elias Mahlanqu	Elijah Mdlalose
Christian Apostolic Church in Zion	Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion	Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa	Christian Apostolic Church in Zion
1920	(1911) 1922	1911	
Alexandra, Johannesburg	Charlestown	Johannesburg	Vryheid district
Born son of Bakxatla chief, Rustenburg. Educated by Berlin Lutheran Society. Worked in Johannesburg and became a Baptist under Leshega 1901. Met Büchler. Worked with Mahon in Basutoland.	Member of DRC Mission with Le Roux from the start.	Ndeble royalty born near Oogies, dispossessed by Boer War. Looked after Le Roux's cattle. Baptized DRC.	Born Anglican - Nqutu area. Went to Johannesburg as hospital orderly - drink problem, cured by Zionists. Joined 1910. Controversy over ordination.
1909 arrested for unorthodox preaching. 1920 established own church on Rand. Education important focus of church. Shared Le Roux aversion to outward display of Zion piety. Intellectuals.	One of Le Roux's main leaders at Wakkerstroom. Took control when Le Roux in Johannesburg. Introduced changes - eg. bare feet, white gowns. Therefore broke away in 1911. Mahon found site for church at Charlestown (freehold area). Concerned to influence Swazi royalty. Changed name of church 1922.	Key figure. Influenced other leaders, Shembe, Lekganyane, Job Chiliza. Biblical emphasis - apocalyptic. Joined African National Congress. Special interest in Swaziland. Serious splits and break-aways - notably Mbonambi mid 1920s.	Through him, Mabilitsa's Zion had important position in Zulu royal centre. Officially member of this church; but influenced by Nkonyane. Healer - relied on spirit. 1953 became Bishop of Mabilitsa's church.

Thus, Paulo Mabilitsa, founder of the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion (1920) was of a similar background to Ethiopian leaders - the son of a Bakxatla chief from Rustenburg, educated by the Berlin Lutheran Society, going to work in Johannesburg (see Chart 3). Elliot Mahlangu, founder of the Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa (+/- 1914) was a member of the Ndebele Royal family. Mabilitsa was influenced by Leshega, Buchler and later Mahon in the then Basutoland, where he was arrested for unorthodox preaching. He shared Le Roux's aversion to the outward displays of Zion piety which were emerging in other churches.

Mahlangu had in fact worked for Le Roux, and been baptised as part of the original group at Wakkerstroom. His church had a strong nationalistic element - he himself was a member of the African National Congress. His evangelical activities were directed towards "winning Swaziland for Zion",<sup>31</sup> and extended as far as Rhodesia in the 1920's. Mabilitsa, described as the intellectual of the first leaders, shared the Ethiopian concern for education. The school set up by his church in Alexandra became one of the few secondary schools for Africans, in 1932. It is of interest to note the number of indigenous churches in Alexandra township, which was one of the few areas where African freehold existed in the cities - the National Church of Christ in Africa, the African Orthodox Church, and the Jerusalem Sabbath Church, to name a few.

In the rural areas of Natal, Daniel Nkonyane was a leading figure in the early years. In contrast to Mabilitsa (and Sundkler poses them as representing two Zion traditions) Nkonyane was illiterate. He was originally a member of Le Roux's Dutch Reformed congregation, and the Zion community at Wakkerstroom was left in his charge while Le Roux was in Johannesburg working for the Apostolic Faith Mission. At this time, inspired by visions, a number of new forms of worship were introduced into the community, which reportedly horrified Le Roux on his return - white robes, bare feet,

staves, emotionalism, and Old Testament symbolism became more significant. In 1911, Nkonyane was thus evicted from Wakkerstroom, and Mahon found a site for him and his followers in the Christian Catholic Church in Zion at Charlestown - their Zion City. Charlestown was an important railway junction on the then border of the Transvaal and Natal, and it was only in 1911 that approximately 300 freehold stands were sold to blacks. From these headquarters they spread throughout the union, changing their name in 1922 to the Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Church in Zion. Nkonyane's Zion is a prototype of many Zion City churches in this period.

When the origins of Zionist churches are examined chronologically, the striking feature is that the largest, most controversial churches were established in this period. Scholars have debated their true nature, and they are often studied as unique, 'exotic' phenomenon. However, alongside the Zion Christian Church and Church of the Nazarites are a number of smaller, lesser-known churches which share their characteristic features and origins.

It is necessary to outline their form, the regions in which they arose, and to hypothesize why this was so. In demonstrating common features and relating the churches to their material base, much of the mystery is clarified.

#### 4.3. ZION CITY - THE NEW JERUSALEM

The Zion churches formed in this period had their primary focus on the land, on establishing their Zion City. They were basically a rural phenomenon. The ideal of a Zion City was not without precedent, both in other countries - and John Alexander Dowie's Zion City was of direct importance here - and in South Africa.

Key Leaders of Zion City Churches

Edward Lion	John Hamatta Zama	Timothy Cekwane	Isiah Shembe
Zion Apostolic Faith Mission	Alkoli Church New Jerusalem of Africa	Church of the Light	Church of Nazarites
1917	1920	1910	1911
Basutoland	Lydenburg and Lady Selbourne	Ekukhanyeni, near Drakensburg, Natal	Ekhupakamani
Born Mo <u>tau</u> ng - tau = lion. Converted by Mahon. 1910 encountered Apostolic Faith in Johannesburg. 1912 joined and worked for AFM in Basutoland	Educated evangelist from AME.	Born Himeville - myth of origin. Local preacher in Mzimbas Presbyterian Church of Africa	Born old Hlubi family, Harrismith District OFS. Joined Wesleyans; educated at night school. Visions. Baptised William Leshega African Native Baptist Church and worked with him. Vision to go to Mt Inhlangakozi - spiritual transformation
Strong desire to establish own Zion City. Claimed to pose as the "Christ Himself returned in the form of a Native" (Van Wyk, p.852). Politically active - imprisoned. Intention to create own tribe so as to be able to buy own farm. Influenced Le kganyane ordained him 1920.	Claimed to be Messiah - Ritual of going into grave on Good Friday and arising on Sunday as the Saviour (Umsindisi), Claimed to have burned bible and substituted own writings; and changed hymn Nanku Jesus to Nanku Zama. Message - come to Zama, you will be saved. Imprisoned for activities.	Halley's Comet - message from God, his inspiration to form church. Headquarters = their Zion City - whole church assembles for annual festival, from Durban especially and also Johannesburg. Own property, cattle and horses. Large percentage men. Red garments - blood symbolism.	Powers of a chief - regarded as Father of his people, semi-divine being. Vast property - farms and mission stations. Won over Chiefs - links with Zulu Royalty. Zion City - Ekhupakamani. Holy Mountain where Festivals held. Great Healer and Prophet. Composed Hymns, religious dances, innovations. Black Christ.

Paulo Nzuzza	George Khambule	James Limba	Engenas Lekganyane
Church of the Spirit	Church of the Saints	Church of Christ	Zion Christian Church
1916	1919	1910	1914/1925
Hammersdale, near Himeville	Telezini, Nqutu district	Port Elizabeth	Boyne, near Pietersburg
Born of Zulu royal blood. Father servant to Bridgman. Schooling with Salvation Army - preacher	Khambule - well known Wesleyan family, literacy in Johannesburg night school. John Mtanti - teacher at Anglican Primary School. Uncle Job Mtanti - Zion Free Church Impumalanga. Gospel of SA 1910 Halleys Comet.	Born Ngqele, Middledrift. Elementary schooling. Worked on Railways. Methodist Preacher. Joined Church of Christ 1914.	Born Pietersburg - grandson of famous ngaka, Mer obathoto Raphela. Baptized Free Church of Scotland. Contact with Zion Apostolic Church of Letoabe at Thabagone. Worked in Johannesburg, baptised Holy Spirit, joined E Mahlangu. 1920 joined E Lion in Lesotho.
At Stanger, near Shaka's grave - visit led to founding. Links with Zulu royalty. Live at Headquarters enterprising business. Mainly men - wear black. Unique and highly complex Biblical teaching - Church of the Holy Ghost. Initiator, like Moses of New Community. They alone possess key to Scriptures.	Mtanti had vision - needed more prominent prophet to interpret - wrote after dream to Khambule to return. He in turn after death-life experience had vision and returned to lead church. Influenza epidemic. Later split. Bible of missionaries wrong - search for true Revelation - Holy Stones, secret language, Heavenly Telephone. Apocalyptic. Later settled near Dundee, bought plot for Zion City at Spookmill, after Khambule forced out of Nqutu district.	Church founded 1910 Cape Town, W. Oliphant. Limba became head 1927, established headquarters in P.E. Built church New Brighton Temple and Mission House. Church owns farms and businesses - property. Evangelical. Limba is Father (Tata) of congregation - challenged authority. Baptism central. Mainly men - control affairs, wear black. Bishop plays almost same role as Christ in other churches.	Ordained. Eventually established his Zion City Moria at Boyne and desire to live in accord with early apostolic thinking. Healing by prayer. Ignatius - healing and prophetic gifts. Visions, prayed in mountains, filled with Holy Spirit. Until Second World War, remained confined to Pietersburg area.

Most missions established a community where the faithful lived and supported themselves, usually as peasant farmers, but also skilled artisans. Many Ethiopian churches had been concerned to acquire land which could be used for agricultural production by church members.

In fact, as shown above, many of the founders and leaders of Zion City churches were of similar class background to Ethiopian leaders, in that they were descendants of the ruling classes of the pre-capitalist social formation; but few were very well educated. An example was George Khambule, from a well-known Wesleyan family at Telezini, who learnt literacy at night school while working as a mine foreman in Johannesburg (see Chart 4). Paulo Nzuza was said to be of Zulu royal blood, while Shembe came from an old Hlubi family and Lekganyane was the grandson of a famous Pedi diviner. Many had been born into mainline mission churches and then gone over to pentecostal churches like Apostolic Church in Zion, before forming their own churches. Their identification with the ruling classes of the pre-capitalist formations is evident in the high desirability of links with traditional royalty, and the close links that are forged even to the present day. Elija Mdlalose became powerful in Mabilitsa's church because, as its representative in Zululand, he developed strong links with Zulu royalty. During King Solomon and King Mshiyeni ka Dinuzulu's reigns he was regarded as a kind of Royal chaplain. Shembe too, has won over the Zulu chiefs, and according to Sundkler in 1972,<sup>32</sup> some 15 chiefs are known to be Nazarites. The links were strengthened when Shembe gave his daughter to King Solomon as one of his queens. The involvement of Zion with Swazi royalty is well-documented.<sup>33</sup>

However, as pointed to above, conditions for Africans were very different to that in which the Ethiopian movement arose. It was argued that these churches can be explained in relation to the progressive capitalisation of agriculture

after the 1913 Land Act. Fewer opportunities for independent production outside the reserves existed, and the 1920's in particular saw a mass influx of blacks into the towns. However, the majority of the black population remained rurally based.

The key symbol expressing the ethos of these churches is Zion City, the establishment of a New Jerusalem, preferably on a Holy Mountain which is connected with the founding vision of the church.

Most of the central forms of worship and belief of these churches were revealed in visions. Isaiah Shembe's call was typical - following a vision he went to Mount Inhlankazsi, like Moses, where he underwent a spiritual transformation, leading to the formation of the Church of the Nazarites. This site remains holy, and an annual pilgrimage of members - known as the feast of Tabernacles - is held on this Holy Mountain. Similarly, Timothy Cekwane received his message from God through Halleys Comet (1910) on the mountain, Ekukhanyeni, which is the Zion where the whole Church of the Light assemble every August. Paulo Nzuza received his visitation near the grave of King Shaka at Stanger - "there descended upon one Paulo Nzuza the Blessed Spirit of the Holy Ghost, who declared through this the chosen leader of his followers that according to the Scriptures he and they should be the elected family of Jehova God according to the texture of their skin and hair".<sup>34</sup>

There is a strong black nationalistic element reflected in this, and generally expressed in the emphasis on and use of Old Testament symbolism, and in the biblical fundamentalism of Zion City churches. The implication is that white mission churches have "gone wrong" and their Church is revealing the true biblical message and revelation. Paulo Nzuza developed a unique and highly complex biblical teaching to explain "where in the history of Salvation, do blacks come in."<sup>35</sup> There are three churches, the Church of the Jews,

the Church of the Gentiles and the Church of the Canaanites or Holy Ghost, founded by Nzuza, who alone possess the Holy Ghost in his fullness.

The Church of Christ held that it alone was in a direct line of descent from the Church of the Apostles and therefore Christ, while other churches are Apostate. Bishop Limba stands between their God and the people. One of the most elaborate interpretations was evolved by George Khambule and Job Mtanti, founders of the Church of the Saints. A whole set of secret signs and symbols bound the group together. A secret angelic language was believed to be inscribed on sacred stones, a new source of revelation which could only be interpreted by their leader, a prophet who was in direct contact to the Throne of Heaven through a Heavenly Telephone.

The beliefs or faith of these churches is a very real expression of human activity. The human subject is "at once a subject who is a product of society and of a subject who acts to make society."<sup>34</sup> While the material conditions act to determine what form a religious expression can take, at the same time the subjects determine the precise form it takes historically. Clearly, the leaders played an essential role in shaping the faith of each Zion City church and in articulating the position of their members. Bearing this in mind, Zion City churches can be explained as one means of resisting proletarianization by African peasants, in a social formation progressively dominated by capitalist social relations. The movement primarily had its support base amongst disaffected semi-educated Christians. There is a tendency for capitalism to dominate, but not totally destroy, pre-capitalist modes of production and their politico-ideological conditions of existence within a social formation - particularly in a social formation like South Africa, in a period of transition to capitalist domination. Moss has argued that this means that "classes of the pre-capitalist social formations, including their ideological forms, maintain a distorted presence within the capitalist

social formation. These groups are referred to as social strata, to distinguish them from the actual classes and social categories of capitalism".<sup>37</sup> In peripheral capitalist social formations, such as South Africa, these strata are maintained to a greater extent and play a particularly important role by reacting to their progressive erosion and distortion. "Ideological forms accompanying the opposition of a social stratum to its underdetermination characteristically include populist and millenarian responses, and these aspects of ideological struggles are the common hall-mark of peasant opposition to encroaching capitalism in South Africa".<sup>38</sup>

This is evident in the attempt of Zion City churches to re-create ideologically a form of tributary mode of production, in which the leader provides for all, materially and spiritually. Figures like Shembe and Lekanyane are theological versions of the pre-capitalist ruling class - the "chief" of their religious "tribe". They are held explicable in terms of who they are - their spiritual success is inextricably linked with material success. This has been well expressed by Mqotsi and Mkele - "The spiritual and material prosperity of each individual member is bound up with the spiritual and material prosperity of the others, collectively finding concrete expression in the spiritual and material prosperity of the Bishop".<sup>39</sup> In pre-capitalist social formations, the prosperity of the community was reflected in the prosperity of the chief; in these Zion City churches it is reflected in the prosperity of the messianic leader.

The controversy over "messianic" type churches has been pointed out above. However, it is proposed that in certain key respects, the leaders may be described as messianic. The leader promises his members what Jesus promises in other churches. This is both in terms of the material and spiritual prosperity outlined above, and in terms of the

leader as an intermediary between God and his people, as the sole receiver of the true revelation on behalf of his church.

There is of course the additional aspect of the material benefits, particularly for the leader. This was most forthrightly expressed by Edward Lion who wrote to the Government that his intention of founding a City of Zion was "to create (my) own tribe so as to be able to buy (a) farm".<sup>40</sup> For those who live at Zion City, it represents a means of engaging in production independent of white mines or farms.

The most well-known Zion City is that of Lekganyane's Zion Christian Church at Moria near Pietersburg, a community with farmlands and shops, all the private property of the Bishop, and schools and dwelling for the members. According to Hanekom, members, under the pressure of increased blessings and status, are encouraged to contribute, and funds are used to buy farms, help businessmen with loans, and to buy presents for chiefs.<sup>41</sup> Limba's Church of Christ in Fort Elizabeth appears to have provided most effectively and thoroughly for its members.<sup>42</sup> Mqotsi and Mkele claim that members are encouraged, and will undertake, any sort of business enterprise "so long as it can assure them a livelihood without having to go and work for wages"<sup>43</sup> More significantly, every church member is expected to render free service to the Bishop, on the farms and guarding the Church and girl's quarters.

Nzuza's Zion City is not rurally based, but instead had a strong financial basis in their bus company, garage and tea room at Hammarsdale, which attracts particularly younger men. This is an important feature of Zion City churches - the leaders, and the majority of members are men. Timothy Cekwane's Zion at Ekukhanyeni consists of 60% men. Their black clothes serve to underline the difference with Zionist Churches, in their white robes. Indeed, many of these churches themselves stress that they are not Zionist, and are

highly critical. Job Chiliza in his youth was a member of Ezra Mbonambi's Zion group "one of the most uMoya charged groups"<sup>44</sup> but later he laid more emphasis on biblical aspects and became a leader of African congregations in white pentecostal churches, until the formation of the African Gospel Church. Their annual festival is held at their small farm, Faschadale, south of Durban, now a 'black spot'.<sup>45</sup>

Clearly, there are variations within this group, but there are sufficient common characteristics for them to be explained in this way. In this period, when Zion City churches were established, it appears that the group of followers who settled with the leader on the land was most significant. Some churches such as the Zion Christian Church and the Church of Nazarites went on to attract 'a mass following' spread over the country, which will be discussed below. Thus, the Zion City Church was a religious response or expression of peasant opposition to the threat of proletarianization, predominantly found in the Transvaal and Natal rural areas.

#### 4.4. A MILLENARIAN ZION

In the Eastern Cape, besides Limba's Church, there were few such Zion colonies. Here religious protest was expressed in millenarian terms, although arising out of the same basic contradictions in the South African social formation. This underlines the importance of using a regional perspective, as well as examining local variations.

Millenarian protest in the Cape had far reaching consequences, when the Xhosa cattle-killing of 1857 hastened the subjugation and proletarianization of the Xhosa.<sup>46</sup> In the inter-war period two significant millenarian movements were active. The first was centred around a specific group, the Israelites under Enoch Mgijsma, ending in the Bulhoek

massacre 1921. The second was a broad, loosely-defined movement with local variations, centring on the Garveyite-inspired Wellington Euthelazi movement, but intertwined with the activities of the Industrial and Commercial Union, and a generalized consciousness of 'Ama Melika Ayeza' - the 'Americans are coming.'

Enoch Mgijima began to have millennial visions in 1907 and to attract a large personal following. Born into a wealthy peasant Mfengu family, he was not well-educated and remained at Ntabelanga as a small landowner, hunter and Wesleyan evangelist. He joined the Afro-American inspired Church of God and Saints of Christ, and became Bishop in 1913 after the death of the founder John Msikinya. According to Edgar,<sup>47</sup> this gave him an organizational base for his prophetic visions, most of his early converts being Christians from mission churches.

In common with Zion City churches in the Transvaal and Natal, Mgijima proclaimed, on the occasion of Halley's Comet that "Jehovah is angry...unless men turn to their ancient religion the earth will meet some great disaster ....we must worship on the model of the Israelite patriarchs who in their day were liberated by Jehovah from, the yokes of oppressive rulers".<sup>48</sup>(own emphasis)

He preached that when the final judgement came, his followers, as the direct descendants of two of the Israelite tribes - Judah and Benjamin - would be the elect who would achieve salvation and redemption. The failure of the millennium to materialize as predicted for Christmas 1912 <sup>49</sup> did not deter his followers; but his "visions of a violent disruptive millennium" led to the Church of God and Saints of Christs eventually "discommunicating"<sup>50</sup> him.

In addition to the deteriorating political and economic conditions experienced by blacks over the whole country, by 1919 black peasants in the Transkei had suffered a series of

natural disasters - East Coast fever in 1912 destroyed cattle, the Influenza epidemic of 1918 killed thousands, and severe drought was still unbroken in 1919. Thus, when Mgiijima gave out the call to his followers to gather at Ntabelanga, their Zion City on the commonage at Bulhoek location, to await the final day, he received a mass response.

On the one level, the major difference between the movement and a Zion City church like Shembe's is that Mgiijima illegally occupied Crown lands to establish his New Jerusalem. However, there is a significant difference in the millennial content of Mgiijima's teaching, which reflected the extent to which the followers were prepared to resist violently to protest and improve their conditions. Their belief in the power of their prophet and the black Americans who would come to their aid in ~~air~~ <sup>0</sup>planes is evident in their attitude towards the institutions of authority -

"During the evening a deputation of the Israelites visited the police camp and informed the officer in charge (Captain Whittaker) that their prophet had ordered the police to leave the Bulhoek location. After this warning the Israelites became so aggressive and hostile that Captain Whittaker withdrew his men to the adjoining farm, Welcome, leaving his tents standing and all supplies behind".<sup>51</sup>

The Israelites remained adamant, despite all attempts to persuade them to disperse, that "They wished to obey the law of the land, but Jehovah was more powerful than the law and they feared to offend Him by disregarding His wishes and obeying the laws of men."<sup>52</sup>

Their determination was further reflected in the "occurrences in May 1921," as in the telegram from the Commissioner, South African Police. "The rushes by the natives were so determined that even the wounded after falling were observed to get up and rush forward again, many of them being killed by the bayonet and revolvers".<sup>53</sup> The movement was unique

in its violent confrontation with the State and police, motivated by the strong millenarian preachings of the leader, but arising out of intolerable political and economic conditions experienced in Transkei specifically and for black peasants/rural dwellers in general in South Africa.

Conditions in the Transkei further worsened in the 1920's with renewed droughts of 1926 - 1928 and more significantly, the segregationist ideology and measures of Hertzog's Pact Government. The most immediate effects were felt through the Native Development and Taxation Act of 1927 which raised taxes for all adult males, and became a focus of resistance. The Garveyite ideology spread from industrial centres to the rural reserves by labour migrants - "wherever Africans gathered, Garveyism was often a topic of conversation".<sup>54</sup> Bradford has provided an incisive analysis of this period, demonstrating how organisations like the Industrial and Commercial Workers Union, the Wellington Buthelezi movement, Garveyite ideas and separatist churches were connected.<sup>55</sup>

The general ethos was expressed in the slogan "Ama Melika Ayeza" - the Americans are coming. She argues that the millenarian language transcended class and regional boundaries. "At one level, the various symbols were rooted in a distinctive rural consciousness, derived from the specificities of living in precolonial polities transformed into reserves".<sup>56</sup> Transkeians were attracted to militant separatist programmes, which to attract support had to be phrased in the idioms of popular culture, and offer support to those resisting proletarianization. Clearly, Enoch Mgijima succeeded in this. Bradford demonstrates that even the Industrial and Commercial Union had to reinterpret its usual platform of higher wages, nonracialism or incorporation into the white man's parliament, in terms suited to peasants resisting proletarianization. Its message too became millenarian and closely linked with leaders of separatist churches. Planes, uprisings, pig-killing and the creation

of a black government, together with promises that the Americans would end taxation and dipping, could and did appeal to a broad spectrum of rural Transkeians. It was with this message that Wellington Buthelezi gathered a mass following.

Buthelezi travelled throughout Transkei from his base around Matatiele, but his strongest concentration of followers was Griqualand East - Mount Fletcher, Mount Ayliff, Qumbu and Tsolo - where the percentage of migrant labour was highest according to Edgar. Bundy and Beinart pointed out that some of the leaders in this area were educated men; while in Pondoland the response was from the most traditionalist areas, led by amaqaba.<sup>97</sup> This supports Bradford's assertion of the broad appeal of millenarian movements. However, she argues that the class content of Wellington's Africanism had a bias towards a particular social stratum, in that the new world envisaged African factory owners and traders, and receiving goods such as wagons and houses. The beliefs surrounding a unique revelation for the black people reflect opposition to their unequal incorporation into a racially oppressive society. Wellingtonite hymns reflected their nationalism:

"Africa is the land of our fathers  
The foreigners are claiming it  
They will never have it  
Because it is ours"

"The Lord unites us  
We the African nation  
That we may be one with Africa  
Lord accompany our friends from America  
Give them enough strength  
That with your grace we may see each  
other".<sup>98</sup>

White cultural domination was combated by the setting up of some 50 independent Wellington schools, and encouraging Africans to join indigenous churches. Followers were also incorporated into the secret organization "Amafela Ndawaonye" ("those who die together"). As Bradford phrased it "It was national oppression not class exploitation that

moved Transkeian peasants to action in this period, and their prime concern was to find ways of defeating a mighty white enemy".<sup>59</sup> Even after Wellington Buthelezi was deported, his sub-leaders continued the movement and incidents of resistance to dipping or taxes organized by Wellingtonites continued into the 30's.

There were other lesser-known and relatively unresearched movements in this period. One example is the prophetess Nonteta near King Williams's Town, one of whose imprisoned followers recalled:

"We used to dream in the hope that the Americans were coming to release us. It was just a rumour, but what you hear as rumour you always dream about...As oppressed people we always had hope we would be released".<sup>60</sup>

The millenarian mood of the Transkei and Eastern Cape articulated a desire for liberation of peasants "being dragged into a capitalizing and racially oppressive world at an accelerating pace".<sup>61</sup>

Regional conditions and the influence of Garveyism, of Americans as liberators, meant that in the Cape, protest took a millenarian form, directly confronting the state - militarily as the Israelites, and through resistance to taxes, dipping and symbolic acts like killing pigs and painting houses black, like the Wellingtonites. In contrast, in rural Natal and Transvaal, where conditions made it possible for Africans to still acquire limited access to independent means of production, protest took the form of rebuilding a self-supporting community under a messianic leader.

The underlying contradictions and social relations, and the focus around the hope of a New Jerusalem, the Zion City, was common to most of the religious forms found in this period, one of immense religious-cultural innovation.

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## CHAPTER 5.

ZIONIST-APOSTOLIC CHURCHES -  
THE CHURCH OF THE BLACK WORKING CLASS

Thus far an attempt has been made to demonstrate how social consciousness corresponds with social being - that is, how the dominant capitalist mode of production and the class forces of the South African social formation act to limit and shape the religio-cultural forms of Ethiopian and Zion City churches. This has been done in a schematic manner, to demonstrate historical differences in form and class base between different types of indigenous churches which have arisen in different historical periods.

The following chapters will attempt to analyse Zionist Apostolic churches in greater depth, to examine not only how they are related to the material conditions in which they arose, but also how religio-cultural conflicts act to determine the form of Zionist-Apostolic churches, and how Zionist-Apostolic churches in turn serve to legitimate or resist the existing structure of class forces and so reproduce or transform the social formation.

Most authors explain Zionist churches as a blend of old (African traditional religion) and new (Christianity) for African people, coming from traditional rural, small-scale society trying to adapt to a modern Western cultural urban situation. The primary explanatory dynamic is summed up in the concept of acculturation. It has been argued that this is an inadequate explanation and an attempt has been made to point to more fruitful methods of analysis using a different theoretical framework.

In a class society such as South Africa, "every religious

activity is an activity carried out within class conflicts, and as such is an activity permeated, limited and orientated by these conflicts".<sup>1</sup> Thus the objective position of an individual or group within a class structure disposes them to perceive reality in a manner corresponding to their social condition, and opposed to that of other class positions within the social framework.

That is "the leaders and members of any religion in a class society objectively occupy determinate positions in its class structure",<sup>2</sup> which implies needs, interests, expectations, customs, thought, categories, traditional forms of expression and behaviour patterns. Hence the variations in the character of religious activity between social classes within the same social formation - and within different historical social formations. ✓

### 5.1. ZIONIST-APOSTOLIC AS A CHURCH OF THE BLACK WORKING CLASS

The most distinctive feature of Zionist-Apostolic churches, of Churches of the Spirit,<sup>3</sup> is that their members are drawn solely from the black working class in South Africa.

"The members of our churches are the poorest of the poor, the people with the lowest jobs or no jobs at all.

We are what they call the 'working class'. When people become highly educated and begin to earn big salaries they usually leave our Churches".<sup>4</sup>

That "Zionists stand out as poorer than poor"<sup>5</sup> has been recognised by many researchers. West found that the followers of some 250 of the approximately 900 indigenous churches in Soweto tended to be middle-aged people with little education (average level was standard 2 - 3), the majority in unskilled jobs providing low salaries, and of largely rural background. An in-depth survey of 60 members of three churches revealed 67% to be in full time employment,

2,7% housewives and 6% unemployed or retired. Only 16% were self-employed or in a skilled occupation. The majority of active membership was women. The majority had joined their church in Johannesburg - in 1971, the members had been in Johannesburg for an average of 24 years, which suggests 1947 as a key period in the rise of these churches. In general, members "constantly identified themselves as consisting of, and being concerned with, poorer people".<sup>6</sup>

In Natal, Kiernan researched 22 Zionist bands in Kwa Mashu, a dormitory township of Durban. A survey of 120 families revealed that 84,1% of the population earned less than R80, while the (inadequate) poverty datum line was then set at R90 per month. In Langa in the Cape, Mafeje and Wilson isolated a number of Zionist churches which were known as 'fake' churches, having neither educated ministers, church buildings nor financial status. "As unskilled black labourers these represent the poorest in society and according to perceived categories, represent those least acculturated into white Christian civilisation".<sup>7</sup>

Although not theorised in any systematic way, current research reveals Zionist-Apostolic churches to be churches whose members are drawn from the black working class in South Africa. It is necessary to first demonstrate that this is an accurate assumption, and then to consider why they emerged amongst that particular class.

Zionist-Apostolic churches appear to have arisen as a definite religio-cultural movement only after the Second World War. It will be argued that only then, with developments in the social formation, does a significant black working class come into being - and only then are the conditions out of which Zionist-Apostolic churches could arise maturing. "...An objectively conflictive structure of social dominance - which is the presiding structure in class societies - will condition in a particular manner which

religious activities are impossible in it, which are possible but undesirable, which are tolerable and to what point, which are acceptable but only secondarily, which are suitable, and which are primary or urgent. And it will do this independently of the awareness and will of those who perform the religious activities".<sup>9</sup> It establishes "the limits within which any religion can function in it, and the tendencies that will permeate and orientate the activity of this religion in this society".<sup>7</sup>

## 5.2. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL FORMATION POST 1933

The incorporation of African pastoralists as alienated wage labour in a capitalist mode of production was a gradual process, initially as cheap labour on the mines, with the reserves partially preserved and intended to provide a means of subsistence.<sup>10</sup>

In the 1920's a small working class had developed, particularly on the Rand. This period was characterised as one in which there was intense rural struggle and resistance to proletarianization. From at least World War 1, a structural tension had begun to develop between a capitalist industrial sector and monopoly mining capital. By the mid 1930's, however, after South Africa had left the Gold Standard in 1933, a boom period began in the economy, which lasted until the end of World War 2. Freund characterizes these years as the real dividing line in the history of South African secondary industry, arguing that they brought about change of sufficient depth that one can talk of the start of a structural transformation.<sup>11</sup> Thus the second phase in the South African social formation, as outlined by Brown, began - the period of the expanded reproduction of capital, in which the contradictions arising out of capitalism itself are fundamental.

Under the demands of wartime production, the economy expanded

to a high level of industrialisation, accompanied by technical advances and increased capital intensity. The engineering industry became central in the industrial structure of South Africa, with the development of machinery and transport equipment for military production, and more sophisticated forms of import substitution. Imports themselves began to shift from consumer goods to intermediate and machine goods. The Witwatersrand acquired a national economic dominance.

This resulted in a dramatic expansion of the industrial work force - a 99% growth in the seven years from 1932/3 to 1939/40.<sup>12</sup> With a large portion of the white labour force in the army, the size of the urban black labour force almost doubled between 1933 and 1939, and women were employed in large numbers. This development coincided with the declining productivity and increasing impoverishment of the reserves, deteriorating conditions on white farms and the proletarianisation of labour tenants and squatters - in short, the process outlined in the previous chapter was intensifying to force large numbers of Africans off the land. The impoverishment of the reserves is further reflected in that the black labour force on the mines, which was recruited primarily from amongst the landless in the reserves, increased, although real wages fell and conditions for mineworkers deteriorated. Peasants and rural residents were increasingly denied access to the means of production, and even those with access to land were forced to sell their labour power to subsist.

With the industrialisation of the war years came the need for an expanded labour force. Between 1940 and 1946 a further 115 000 Africans joined the industrial labour force. The increasing importance of industrial/manufacturing capital is reflected in the ratio of employment in mining to manufacturing, construction and electricity - in 1932, 316 (mining): 87 (manufacture) but by 1946, 328 (mining): 321

(manufacture). In line with the needs of manufacturing capital for a stable, urbanised and relatively well-educated industrial labour force, the migrant proportion was both small and decreasing. Influx control regulations were briefly suspended and the state "allowed a virtually uninhibited flow of African families into Johannesburg throughout the 1930's and early 1940's".<sup>13</sup> Thus by 1946, one in four Africans were living permanently in urban areas. Between 1939 and 1952 the African urban population nearly doubled, with whole families moving to town. The permanence of the move is reflected in the ratio of women to men in the towns - in 1921, 1:5 and by 1946, 1:3.<sup>14</sup>

O'Meara argues that the development did not produce a sizeable African petty bourgeoisie - in 1946 only 1,2% consisted of professional, administrative and clerical workers, and a small trading petty bourgeoisie emerged in the rural areas. This meant that they were "in effect lumped together with the proletariat as politically rightless and economically exploitable",<sup>15</sup> particularly after the abolition of the qualified Cape Franchise in 1936.

Thus, an urban-based-proletariat, dependent solely on the sale of their labour power, emerged and grew in South Africa, a process which further intensified over the next decades. However, far from relieving rural impoverishment, the move to the urban areas brought intense and widespread poverty amongst the African population, as the decreasing amount of necessary product provided by reserve production was not replaced by significantly higher wages in the capitalist mode of production. Unskilled urban workers rarely earned enough to cover the costs of essential food, shelter, fuel and clothing. Capitalist development thus, "generated conflict not only over wages but over all facets of urban and rural life".<sup>16</sup> Reverend Mvusi reflected the problems experienced when he claimed "To the African men and their families, migrant labour entails sacrifice of human life for the profits of the industrialist".<sup>17</sup> He went on to call

for a new approach on the part of the Christian churches, because "The very atmosphere is choking the spiritual life of the people. The growing number of people who are doubting Christianity as a way of life for Africans is casting yet another shadow".<sup>17</sup>

Thus the 1940's and 50's saw a number of spontaneous and organized acts of resistance, as communities attempted either to resist increased subsistence costs, or to reduce the price of survival in the urban areas. One significant site of struggle on the Rand was housing, there being an extreme housing shortage in Johannesburg's municipal housing schemes, coupled to the fact that the wages of unskilled labourers could not cover family subsistence, and in particular high rentals. Between 1944 and 1947 a squatter movement arose around Orlando, Alexandra, Alberton and Newclare.<sup>18</sup> One of the most famous squatter leaders in Orlando, James Mpanza, leader of the Sofasonke party, had been converted to Christianity in prison, and inspired his followers thus:

"The position of chieftainship is given to me like Jesus. Many people thought I was arrested, yet I was not. The same as with Jesus. Many thought he was dead and yet he was not"<sup>19</sup>

It appears then, that the religious ideas which characterised Zion City churches were 'in the air'. However, the conflict between squatters and local authorities ended in the destruction of squatter communities and their absorption into the massive complex of housing estates found today.<sup>20</sup> One of the most well-documented urban removals was the destruction of Sophiatown.<sup>21</sup> Van Wyk argues that "die plakkerskampe, beginnende 1947 en die hervestiging van Bantoes uit Sophiatown, e.s.m., beginnende 1955, besondere momente vir die separatisme daargestel".<sup>22</sup>

At the same time labour began to organise in trade unions - by 1945, the most important black trade unions were affiliated to Council of Non-European Trade Unions, representing 40% of black employees in manufacture and commerce. However, the 1946 African Mineworkers strike by migrants led to the virtual collapse of the trade union movement.<sup>23</sup>

These are merely two examples of the escalation of organization and militancy, which together with the growth of the urbanized African population, led to a structural crisis of the state by the late 1940's. Fractions of capital differed over the precise nature of the labour force, and the distribution of surplus within and between classes. Industrial or manufacturing capital desired a stabilized and semi-skilled labour force, while mining capital preferred the retention of the existing migrant labour system. The Nationalist Party represented a local aspirant bourgeoisie which attempted to use Afrikaner ideology as a strategy of accumulation to undermine "imperial" fractions of capital.<sup>24</sup> In this crisis conjuncture, the National Party played on the "swart gevaar" panic of white workers, farmers and Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie and won the 1948 election. The policy of Segregation was replaced by Apartheid, the 'hard' option, which instead of the vague reforms considered by the Smuts Government, aimed to strengthen existing mechanisms of extra-economic coercion.<sup>25</sup>

Legassick has argued that what is remarkable about the first decade of Nationalist rule is the lack of large scale social change in comparison with the 60's.<sup>26</sup> Immediate changes were the Group Areas Act, and legislation to restrict African urbanization - most significantly, the amendment of Section 10 of the Urban Areas Act which defined conditions for urban residence.

Rural protest was fueled by the beginning of the state's attempt to create Bantustans and reshape rural societies. Chiefs were propped up, made into paid state functionaries and given limited powers, particularly over welfare and areas more immediate to people's daily lives. The economic decline of the reserves meant that they could not provide realistic alternatives. The state's attempt at rehabilitation and Betterment Schemes met with sustained resistance, as has been documented by Bundy amongst others.<sup>27</sup> Lodge has documented a number of peasant revolts that occurred in this period. He argues that although their economic foundations as peasants had long been subverted, the contribution of homestead output to subsistence was still important enough to determine subjective responses. He further stresses the essential understanding that while each revolt took a different form, influenced by the degree of social differentiation and ideological disintegration brought about by the demands of the wider economic and political system, they were all "the result of a single historical process emanating from the centre"<sup>28</sup> - the contradictions arising within the dominant capitalist mode of production.

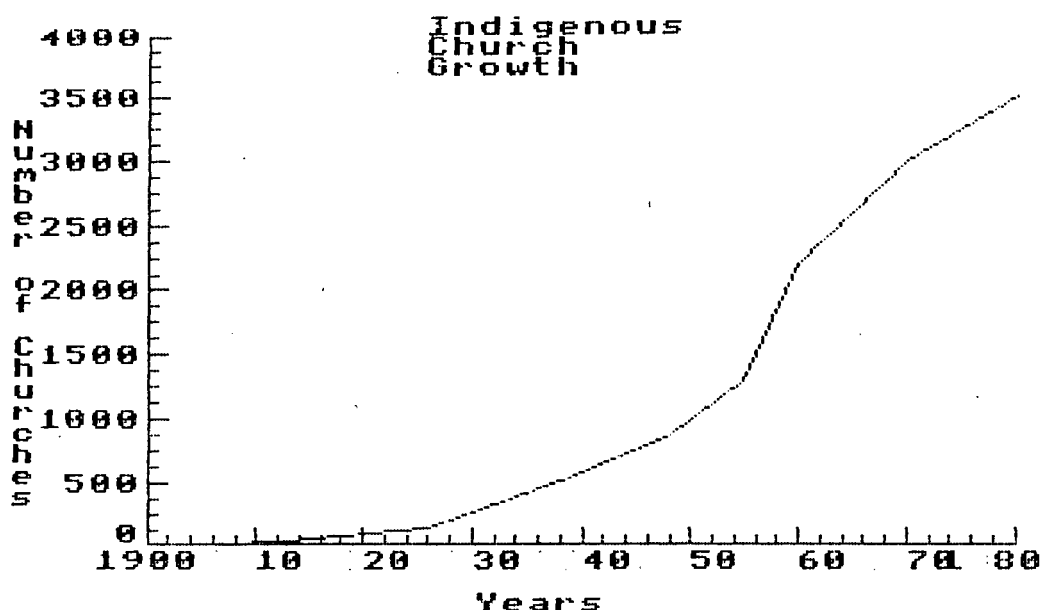
The same historical process gave rise to an increasingly militant phase of mass political campaigning under the organisation of the African National Congress and the alliance of the Congress Movement, largely concentrated in the cities.<sup>29</sup> The Defiance Campaign, the Freedom Charter drawn up at the Congress of the People and the Anti-Pass campaigns are well-known moments in the political activity of the period.<sup>30</sup>

The state, however, was determined to maintain the high rate of capital accumulation, and to suppress or shift the contradictions in the system of exploitation through repression. This was graphically evident in the declaration of a state of emergency in 1960 and the banning and attempted

crushing of all African political organization. Before going on to briefly examine the massive social engineering that followed, it is necessary to consider religious developments, specifically the growth of indigenous churches in this period.

### 5.3. THE EMERGENCE OF ZIONIST-APOSTOLIC CHURCHES AS A DISTINCT RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL FORM

A second glance at the graph of the growth of indigenous churches reveals a sharp upward curve beginning in the period 1932 - 1948.



In this 16 year period, the number of indigenous churches increased by 27,5%; in the 13 year period following, 1948 - 1960, there was a further 27,5% increase.<sup>31</sup> The dramatic increase is reflected in the statistic that between 1906 and

1932, there was an approximate 21,5% increase in the number of churches, but from 1932 - 1960 there was a 680% increase. Kiernan noted that in the period 1946 - 1960, while the total black population increased by 50%, the total number of black Christians by 80%, the indigenous churches trebled their membership.<sup>32</sup>

It is significant that indigenous churches began to grow on a large scale in the phase when industrialization and its concomitant processes of African proletarianization and urbanization began to intensify and reshape social relations in South Africa; and that they have continued to grow in the period of the expanded reproduction of capital.

It is hypothesized that a large number of these churches are Zionist-Apostolics, and take a different form to indigenous churches that are found in earlier periods. It is impossible to neatly delineate absolute periods, as it was shown above, that Ethiopian churches continued to be formed in the second period, but that Zion City churches were the most fitting form of religio-cultural expression for a particular class grouping. Similarly, both Ethiopian and Zion City type churches continued in this period. Furthermore, many churches formed in this period directly traced their institutional roots back to Dowie and Mahon's Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, and Le Roux's Wakkerstroom church and the Apostolic Faith Mission. For example, in 1938 Rev. G. Radebe left the Apostolic Faith Mission in which he had been raised to found the Bantu Bethlehem Christian Apostolic Church of South Africa, in Johannesburg. On the other hand, Helena Ramalekana left the N.G. Sendingkerk to found the Apostolic Church of God in Zion of South Africa in Lady Selbourne, Pretoria in 1947.

Becken has delineated three periods in the organisational structure of Zionist churches, since 1951.<sup>33</sup> The first period, until 1958 was a period in which a large amount of

energy was expended in preventing the separation of urban congregations from rural centres. The post-war industrial boom meant that thousands of 'independent Christians' also left the reserves and farms, and formed new congregations in the cities. Becken argues that as a result, while membership figures doubled from 1947 - 1951, the increase from 1951 - 1960 amounted to only 10%, as a battle for control over the city congregations ensued. The solution was found in "major groups" in the reserves and rural areas, which exercised a degree of control over "minor groups" in the cities. The minor groups contributed funds to the major group and received regular visitations of overseers, but otherwise "adapted forms of organisation and worship suited to urban conditions".<sup>34</sup> In Durban for example, three major groups operated minor groups. The Church of the Holy Ghost founded in 1939, was under the spiritual authority of the prophet of a group which referred to the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion as 'our father' and the Zion Kingdom of God as 'our mother'. The minor groups usually preserve the name, but one is known as the Apostolic Holy Church in Zion, claiming a membership of 25 000 in the whole of Natal.

It can be noted that this was the period of which Sundkler wrote, and much of his data must be interpreted as specific to the period. However, it is evident that Zion City churches were becoming transformed, as their members moved to the cities as a proletariat with only its labour power to sell. A new religious-cultural form, which may be characterised as Zionist-Apostolic was emerging.

The production of new religious forms continued in the second period 1959 - 1964, which Becken characterised as "consolidation in the city through affiliations for administrative purposes".<sup>35</sup> Minor groups could not obtain any legal rights in the city, particularly church sites, without government recognition; thus, smaller groups

Some Zionist-Apostolic Church Leaders

Helena Ramalekana	Johannes and Martha Ramoipone	Christina Nku
Apostolic Church of God in Zion of S.A.	Melchizedek Venus Apostolic Church of Christ	St Johns Apostolic Faith Mission
1950	1950s	1939
Lady Selbourne, Pretoria	Mamelodi	Evaton
Helena moved from Marabastad, belonged to NGK. Dispute over Christian Womens Association Conference. Joseph (husband) literate, correspondence course, unable to work due to accident, poverty, large family.	Johannes Ramoipone left St Paul Apostolic Faith Morning Star Church of S.A. of his uncle Elias Ramoipone and joined with the followers of King Solomon Melchizedek whose bishop had died, as their leader.	Born Viljoensdrift 1894 to farm labourers. Raised in Heilbron NG Sending. Ill health and visitations all through youth.
Broke away from NGK - took no followers. Husband and son Ephraim followed her. Members - mainly women, less sophisticated. Moved 1963 to Winterveld. Helena - prophetic healer.	Complicated series of secession leading back to Dowie-Le Roux congregations and AFM. Joined other churches and gave rise to a number of new churches. Headquarters at Mamelodi - healing centre and clinic. Ornate Liturgy.	Healed 1923 by Zionists, joined AFM, worked for them as healer. Formed own church, big building with 12 doors. Healer. Followers spread widely since 1950. Influence over heterogenous population, of Rand.

Hezekiya Ndlovu	Emmanuel Ngema
New Church Step to Jesus Christ Zion in S.A.	Zion Jerusalem Church of the 12 Apostles in S.A.
1962	+ - 1960
Johannesburg and Msinga	Mapumulo district, Natal
Ndlovu - the prophet has no education, correspondence course with Sweetwaters Bible school. Works 6 months of year in Johannesburg to supplement income from membership fees.	Prophet - member of local Lutheran parish. Wife - member of a Zionist congregation.
Church founded in Moroka, under Bishop Mdakana - headquarters in Johannesburg. Healing home in Hlonga, Msinga district, Natal. Women predominant. Members often away on migrant labour.	Started New Zionist congregation with wife and number of followers, because he diminished the healing power of the leader of the old congregation. Most members joined the small congregation because of healing (20-30 faithful members).

amalgated in an attempt to achieve it. Becken argues that the older major groups faded because merger groups held a much stronger grip on minor groups in terms of administration and organisation. One such early effort was iZionkaBaba, organised by Grace Tshabalala who united 32 Zion churches in Natal, appealing to them as a woman and a mother.

Sundkler<sup>36</sup> notes that she retained links with Zionists at Charlestown, where she had lived before moving to the slums of Durban in 1930. Another well known federation was the Federation of Bantu Churches organised by Walter Dimba in Johannesburg, 1943.

Churches which had merged remained independent in forms of worship and choice of names. The head office became located in the city, under the administrative leader, while the group's spiritual leader usually resided in the countryside. For example, the Zulu Holy Church in Zion of South Africa, a minor group under a General Overseer, affiliated with a merger group named the Zion Church of South Africa, which is itself the amalgamation Zion-Apostolic-New Jerusalem Abantu Churches, established 1960. Becken describes the case of the Zion Congregation Church under Bishop Zeblon Shange in the Mapumulo District, which is basically a dying church after suffering splits in 1930, 1945 and 1960, but which affiliated to the Zion Congregation Church in order to obtain Government recognition.<sup>37</sup>

Becken argues that the abolition of the government recognition system in 1963 led to an increase in groups and membership, by about 50% between 1964 and 1968. A feature of this period was the formation of large representative summit organisations, like the Assembly of Zionist and Apostolic churches which was accepted into the Christian Council of South Africa in 1966. The African Independent Churches Association, assisted by the Christian Institute, was typical in its emphasis on the importance of theological training.<sup>38</sup> Two contemporary such organisations are

Christ the Rock Independent Church Association and the African Spiritual Churches Association.<sup>37</sup>

A minor point to note then, is that while indigenous churches are usually characterised by their "fissiparous tendencies", there is a strong trend to work together, on both a formal and informal level. West has shown how different churches congregate together for special occasions like fund raising and especially the consecration of Bishops.<sup>40</sup> Becken described a ceremony at KwaLinda, the headquarters of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, in which a memorial stone to Chief Mtiyawne, who had given land for the church and its buildings, was to have been unveiled by J.G. Shembe, the "patron of the African Independent Churches".<sup>41</sup> There is a strong degree of co-operation between groups on specific rituals or projects.

However, to return to the hypothesis that after World War 2, not only did the number of indigenous churches increase, but the form taken was changing. One other supporting piece of evidence can be carefully gleaned from the official lists of names of 'Native Separatist Churches' released by the Native Affairs Department<sup>42</sup> (See Appendix 1). One can only derive approximate figures, because an examination of the lists reveal names that appear to be repetitions due to spelling mistakes or other official misunderstandings. Also, a comparison of the 1938 and 1948 lists reveals almost all the 1938 churches to have remained on the 1948 list, which suggests that lists were merely added to, and that when a church was no longer operative, it was not necessarily removed from official lists.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, the evidence clearly points to the trend of an increase in Zionist-Apostolic churches.

In 1938 there are a number of churches with names like 'African Holy Baptist Church in the Zion of South Africa, or Ethiopian Holy Baptist Church in Zion, or National Church of

God Apostolic in Jerusalem Church or Zion Apostolic Wesleyterian Catholic Church of South Africa; besides the more Ethiopian type like African Native Catholic Church, Ethiopian National Theocracy Restitution of South Africa, Independent and United National Church, Transvaal Basuto Lutheran Church and so on.

On the 1948 list 271 new names may be broadly categorised as Zionist Apostolic, and approximately 70 had names including 'African', 'Ethiopian' or an ethnic group or mainline denomination identification. The majority of new names then, at this early phase when transformations were beginning to occur, were for example, Zion Apostolic Church of God of South Africa, The Poor Christ Church, Pentecost Christian Church of Zion of South Africa, New Christian Apostolic Church Heaven in Zion Home, Holy Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa, African Christ Holy Apostolic Prophets Church of God and so on. The impact of the war is reflected in the Great George 5 National Church and the Apostolic Church of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

If these lists are compared with West's 1970 list of the 292 churches surveyed, this trend is confirmed. A few of the oldest Ethiopian churches are stil to be found, such as Ethiopian Church of South Africa and African Bantu Methodist Church; but a host of new names with largely 'Zion' or 'Apostolic' in their titles appear - Israel Apostolic Sons of Zion, Church of Christ Faith Healing, Apostolic Nazareth Corinthian Jerusalem Church in Zion, First Jerusalem Church of Christ and Apostolic in Bethesda, New St. Peters Healing Church in South Africa. Compared with the earlier lists, particularly 1938, few churches have 'Baptist' in their title. In line with West's finding that the Zionist/Ethiopian division is not clear cut, there are churches such as Ethiopian Salvation Light Church of South Africa, Ethiopian Holy Baptist Church in Zion, Bantu Church of God in Zion and African Methodist Apostolic Church of

South Africa. As an aside, the analysis of Ethiopian churches in chapter two concerned only their origins; it is necessary to trace their subsequent history and analyse for example, whether these churches are the same or different to earlier Ethiopian type churches, and how and why this is so. The evidence suggests that even these churches tend to adopt Zionist-Apostolic features, and it would be illuminating to determine why.

In general, a comparison of lists of churches suggests that the trend was towards the establishment of Zionist-Apostolic churches after 1945. The characteristic religious form differs from Ethiopian and from Zion City churches. In contrast with Ethiopian churches they display religious and doctrinal innovation, expressed in distinctive worship services and ritual objects such as uniforms and staves, and the belief in healing through the power of the Holy Spirit. In contrast with Zion City churches, they meet in small bands with a leader drawn from amongst them, the black working class. Not only do they not have a church colony or land, but they often do not have their own church building and meet in garages, front rooms or open fields. It is useful to briefly consider the history of the formation of churches in this period. Once again, historical analysis is hampered by the paucity of information on when, where and how churches were established. One large church which has been documented is the St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission, founded by Christina Nku in 1939.

Ma Nku, as she is popularly known, was born to farm labourers in the Viljoensdrif district, Heilbron, and baptised in the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk. From an early age she was troubled by ill health and experienced visions. In her constant search for health she joined the Apostolic Faith Mission and was in contact with other Zionist leaders who had been part of the original Dowie-Le Roux congregation, in the 1920's.

It was only in 1933 that

"A group of people who had been healed by prayer started gathering at my two-roomed house in Prospect Township, Johannesburg. Thus the Church was started that was later recognised and registered in South Africa as St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission. It was named after my first son John".<sup>44</sup>

Van Wyk claims that the final break with the Apostolic Faith Mission came in 1939

"...die Gees het reeds lank terug vir my gese dat ek sal die nagmaal kan bedien. Die saak het my verbaas (want) hoe sou ek die nagmaal kan bedien terwyl daar tog nog leeraars is".<sup>45</sup>

In 1936 she had moved to Evaton, 30 miles from Johannesburg, near Vereeniging. Evaton was an unusual community in that it was declared an African freehold area in 1936 and developed organically with few controls and little administration. Initially it had accommodated farm labourers, but between 1936 and 1946 the population trebled to 30 000, with the development of manufacturing industry. A small percentage commuted to Johannesburg, because the population was prevented from finding work in the Vereeniging-Vanderbiljpark area. The majority worked as farm labourers, domestic servants, service workers, in the informal sectors of Evaton location or in crime. There was also a high unemployment rate, particularly of Basotho migrants who had worked out their contracts.<sup>46</sup> In sum, according to Lodge "Because of its unusual status and freedom from external controls, Evaton was most attractive for people who might have found it difficult to live legally in any other location ...."<sup>47</sup> Van Wyk noted that Evaton had an extremely high concentration of indigenous churches and forms a base for evangelisation.

In 1924 Christina Nku had a vision in which a voice instructed her "Christinah, take those bricks, go to the West and build God a Church with twelve doors".<sup>48</sup> In 1937 the site was revealed to her to be in Evaton - then a grazing field. In 1952 this church was eventually built. Mrs. Nku

operated as a famous healer, using blessed water and attracting a large membership on the Rand and other parts of South Africa, especially since 1950. <sup>49</sup> The important factor to note is the nature of the community at Evaton amongst which she began her work - the proletarianized, struggling to find a means of subsistence. Although she was involved in Apostolic Faith Mission and Zion City type churches, it was only after the transformations caused by industrialisation that she established her own church and became successful. In some ways her church is unusual, in its size and prosperity, and it has consequently been well researched.<sup>50</sup> However, to reiterate, this kind of information is necessary for a large number of churches, so that more conclusive analyses can be attempted. Further examples are the Galatians, founded by an N G K member, driven to the Apostolics by illness, a commonly stated reason for leaving to join or establish a Zionist-Apostolic church. The St. Paul's Melchizedek Apostolic Church was founded in Atteridgeville in 1961, seceding from St. Paul's Melchizedek Venus Apostolic Church of South Africa, itself a split from St. Paul's Faith Mission, Evaton, which had originally left the Apostolic Faith Mission.

Similar dynamics are evident in the personal histories of leaders and members of churches in this period. Thus J.E.Makgalemele was a member of the N G K in Afrika in the Orange Free State before moving to Johannesburg in 1937. He joined the Apostolic Full Gospel Mission of South Africa in 1938, became a preacher and rose to become Bishop in 1968. Lydia Tsukulu was born into a family of farm labourers near the Frankfort district and later lived in Alexandra township, where she began to work with the prophetess Mmaletswai. Both these areas have been shown to be key areas in the formation of, and with high concentrations of, Zionist-Apostolic Churches. When she became seriously ill, she was healed by Rev. Elias Ramoipone of St. Paul Apostolic Faith Morning Star Church of South Africa, and became a form of

apprentice to him. In 1958 she began her own church, St. Peters Morning Star Church based in Wintersveld and the surrounding areas. It is not merely the move to an urban area that defines the class position of these church people; rather it is the move to the urban areas as dependent wage labour.

It is evident that in this period vast transformations were taking place at every level of the social formation. Further research is needed so that changes at the religio-cultural level can be traced historically. It appears that this was a period of great religio-cultural innovation and creativity among the African working class. Zionist-Apostolic churches are explained as a religio-cultural response to a particular class position - the black working class in the South African capitalist social formation. They may have been forming over a period of time; but prior to the structural changes following World War 2, class pressures were not yet of such an effect, as to give rise to Zionist-Apostolic churches. Until then, the majority of Africans had access to some means of subsistence in the Reserves and only a very small working class existed, primarily on the Rand. Zionist-Apostolic churches increased in numbers and membership over the next decades as the alienating effect of working class life broadened and intensified. It will be hypothesized in the next chapter that it is partly in response and in protest to the alienation of the black working class that their faith, centred on healing, can be explained.

"Therefore the relationship of each social class with the religious field at any given historical moment will be determined not only by the structural position of this class in the social division of labour ..... but likewise by the process that has brought this particular group to its particular position....."<sup>51</sup> These processes are thus essential in understanding the faith of Zionist-Apostolic

churches, for without understanding their origins in a period of capital intensification and the growth of the black working class, a vital aspect of their nature is obscured.

#### 5.4. ZIONIST-APOSTOLIC CHURCHES AFTER 1960 - THE EFFECTS OF RELOCATION

Saul and Gelb have argued that the 'hard' option of apartheid in the long run merely repressed the structural problems of the declining reserves and the urban African.<sup>52</sup> In the short term, however, the state's repressive actions in the 1960's, the disorganisation of the working class and the reinforcement of the exploitation colour bar was effective and meant rising profits. On this basis the South African economy settled into a long term expansion and a boom in the 1960's until the crisis once again erupted in the 1970's (and continues to the present).

Legassick argues that the authoritarianism of the South African government in the 1960's is characteristic of capital accumulation under conditions of capital intensification - that the pursuit of economic growth and separate development have been and continue to be, compatible.<sup>53</sup> Freund has argued similarly that the policy of separate development has to do with the changing needs of the different fractions of capital on the one hand, and the need to react politically to the growing black resistance, linked to an often unfavourable international conjuncture.<sup>54</sup> While in the first half of the century the goal was to force the worker off the land and onto the mines, farms and factories that provided the mechanisms of accumulation, now with the collapse of the reserves and "the stream of Africans flowing into the towns", claiming new rights and making new demands, 'separate development' has come to rely on resettlement as a "weapon to fight this flood and prevent its consequences".<sup>55</sup>

"What resettlement does then is to reproduce the South African social formation as a whole, and at its very heart, to replace certain forms of control over labour".<sup>56</sup>

The final stages of proletarianisation were now being played out. The key legislation was the 1959 Promotion of Bantu Self Government Act which provided for the political transformation of the Reserves into Bantustans, which were intended to provide a solution to both the 'superfluous' population in the cities and to provide political rights for Africans, and so long term security. Legislation was introduced to abolish labour tenancy, accomplished in the Orange Free State and Transvaal by 1969 and in Natal as late as 1980. "Squatters" were evicted from white farms, into relocation camps or merely left to find their own means of subsistence. The consolidation of Bantustans from the early 1960's led to further removals to ensure ethnic homogeneity, with priority given to black spots. The bitter irony of the situation is illustrated by the fact that some of the first black spots moved were in the coal rich areas of Natal, one of them being Dannhauser, where Job Chiliza had established his Zion City. Similarly, Charlestown was earmarked for removal.

The Surplus People Project has aptly characterized the process of relocation in 1960's and 1970's as the ultimate dispossession.<sup>57</sup> Bantustans have become enlarged relocation camps where the ex-labour tenants, unwanted farmworkers and the growing numbers of urban unemployed are dumped with virtually no access to either land or wage labour. Further, a number of African townships have been relocated across bantustan boundaries, making their inhabitants commuters, losing their 'permanent urban rights', and safely removed from white areas once they have disposed of their labour power. 670 000 have been forced to move in this manner between 1968 and 1980. The most well-known and largest areas are Mdantsane outside East London, GaRankuwa

outside Pretoria and KwaMashu outside Durban. Research has indicated that the latter two areas are characterised by a high percentage of Zionist-Apostolic churches, and it would be fruitful to undertake research in Mdantsane to determine the distribution of churches there.

It is useful to examine the case of GaRankuwa, a border industry area now located in Bophutatswana, comprising the township of Atteridgeville<sup>58</sup>, Mamelodi area, and Saulsville. The inhabitants of the old Pretoria locations - Marabastad, Bantule and Lady Selbourne were relocated there.

Lady Selbourne for example, was declared a white area in 1961 and the approximately 80 000 black people then living there were eventually forced to move. Van Wyk documents the case of the Apostolic Church of God in Zion of South Africa, founded in 1947 in Lady Selbourne by Helena Ramalekana, and at the time of research (1963) headed by her son Ephraim<sup>59</sup> (see Chart 5). The Ramalekana family was moved to Winterveld in 1963 where a small congregation of ten members was established. The congregation in Lady Selbourne continued under Rev. Mashiane, who had grown up in the 'Five Mission' (Faith Mission) and been trained by Ephraim Ramalekana. The organisation had membership in Pretoria (100 members), Makapan (120), Mamelodi (10) and Bochum at Pietersburg (100). Presumably after Lady Selbourne was finally 'cleared' the church would die out there.

This illustrates the process of dispersal and the kinds of forces at work, on church organisation directly, and limiting and shaping the faith of the churches. The influence of resettlement on the process of indigenous church formation is illustrated by the Table 2.<sup>60</sup>

The most striking feature is that not only has the Christian group decreased by 13,6% to the advantage of the "Separatists", but the non-Christian grouping has decreased

by some 18%, again to the advantage of the "Separatists", who increased by 31,4%, in the period of industrialisation since 1946.

Table 2: Church Membership in the Pretoria District

		Christians	Seperatists	Non-Christian	Total
Whole Region	: 1946	55,37	17,40	27,49	100
Urban Area	: 1951	55,00	23,37	20,63	100
Rural Area	: 1951	54,16	26,36	19,48	100
Economic region:	1960	55,40	30,68	13,88	100
Ga-rankuwa	: 1964	41,77	48,84	9,39	100

Figures in the cells denote percentages

However, the most striking leap is between 1960 and 1964, when the major relocations occurred. The table further confirms the assertion that "separatists" are the fastest growing churches, but also disconfirms the early missionary cry of "sheep-stealing - as Van Wyk phrased it, 'heathens' joined 'separatists' rather than mainline churches. In 1980 Freund claimed that 'commuter agglomerations' in the Bophutatswana area northwest of Pretoria contained approximately 500 000 people, with squatters predominating over those living in state built housing.<sup>61</sup> One would hypothesize that the number of Zionist-Apostolic churches have correspondingly increased.

Freund has made the essential connection that historically it may be that African unemployment and its effect on wages was a key condition for the growth of South African secondary industry. Most of the 'surplus population' removed to the rural areas will continue to seek South African jobs, and are

expected to do just that. As capitalism develops it requires some workers who have skills and freedom of movement and others who do not. Migrant labour is still highly desirable in some sectors, because of their cheapness, dependence and difficulty to organise. The process of forced relocation and influx control represent a continual threat by the state over the poor and dependent.

Thus, far from the African worker experiencing and attempting to reconcile "two worlds" or "two cultures", they are incorporated into a single system - "a complexly structured social formation". Writing on plural societies in the Caribbean, Hall has expressed this succinctly when he argues "...the differentiation between the cultural institutions which arise within slave society is a differentiation of slave society itself".<sup>62</sup> The 'world' of the slave house and the village, and the 'world' of the plantation great house "are two socio-cultural 'worlds' which form differentiated parts of a single socio-economic system; they are not plural segments of parallel but distinct cultures".<sup>63</sup>

In South Africa, as is evident from the above analyses, the "traditional rural world" and the "modern world" are locked into single, complexly-structured capitalist social formation. Furthermore, the material basis of the "traditional rural world" has been progressively eroded, to the point where "Africans have been expelled to bleak and isolated but essentially urban and proletarian settlements where no farming or stock-herding is possible. Half the 'homeland' population is now effectively urban. The worst areas of black urban life have passed into these settlements".<sup>64</sup>

Freund claims that forced resettlement often involves the dispossession of those with herds. The result is a process of forced urbanization on a large scale and not a "return to

the land", as presented in state ideology. In 1980 17,1% of homeland population lived in urban communities, but it is estimated that 41,6% live in virtually agriculture-less 'close settlements'. Thus Freund concludes that "resettlement projects involve people in essentially urban settings, however deficient they may be in the necessities of urban life"<sup>49</sup> - it has intensified the basic economic problems of the working class.

In a similar vein, Saul and Gelb have attempted an analysis of the impact of the migrant labour system on the process of black class formation. A number of strata or a "continuum of social locations"<sup>50</sup> were isolated. At the one end of the continuum are those most firmly settled as workers in the urban areas, with Section 10 rights and/or moving up the ladder of skilled labour; and those who despite living in Bantustans are most permanently employed as commuters or on white farms. These unequivocally form a proletariat. At the other end of the continuum are those most rooted in the rural areas, especially women. Saul and Gelb argue that to some degree they may be regarded as a peasantry, but with the underdevelopment of the reserves, there has been a shift where wages subsidize rural production instead of the other way round. Except in the bantustans where "Betterment schemes" have allowed agribusiness and the petty bourgeoisie of the Bantustans to undertake viable agricultural products, there has been an (at least partial) collapse of this pole. Many migrants in effect work permanently in the cities, living in single sex-hostels, returning home for three weeks a year when their contract is renewed. Migrant labourers comprise a significant proportion of the urban labour force. For example, half the African workers in Durban at the time of the 1973 strikes were permanent migrants. Historically, many miners have been migrants, drawn from the landless in the Reserves, particularly from the Eastern Cape region. There are many, however, for whom even this is impossible and their only choice is to move to the cities without passes to

seek work "illegally", regardless of the risk of fines and imprisonment. Saul and Gelb argue that these two groups have more firmly proletarian credentials. Furthermore, they argue that those unemployed who have been expelled by mechanisation of agriculture from white farms and from the cities to 'resettlement villages' in the rural areas, along with the former residents of black spots and 'squatters' moved in the campaign against "die beswaring van die platteland"<sup>47</sup>, may be regarded as members of the proletariat - or at worst as members of the 'industrial reserve army'. The latter strata are as much de-proletarianized as depeasantized; but their enforced displacement to rural areas does make a difference, especially at the level of political and ideological practice, as people experience capitalist exploitation differently.

In general, they argue that the continuing repressive role of the state against all Africans and their reluctance to improve housing, education etc. means that black South Africans in the towns or countryside have certain shared effects on their living standards and thus a common interest, expressed in the form of African nationalism or black consciousness. Proctor has argued that class formation within the black population took place within limits rigidly defined by white class interests. Thus, while differentiation exists, particularly in bantustan areas, "class formation among the African population took place under conditions which structurally differentiated it from the white population, subjecting the aspirant black petty bourgeoisie to legal and economic restrictions on capital accumulation, and the much larger black working class to extreme repressive control".<sup>48</sup>

It can be concluded that black South Africans are incorporated into a complexly-articulated social formation dominated by a capitalist mode of production. Historically

internal differentiation has depended on the economic location - on the relationship to the means of production and the mode in which surplus labour is appropriated - and on the political and ideological determinants of each class fraction. An attempt has been made here to indicate the trends in the process of African class formation, but research remains to be done on this level as well, especially in terms of regional and local variations. This has been done at length, because it is important for explaining the distribution of Zionist-Apostolic churches and the nature of their membership. For it will become evident, Zionist-Apostolic churches are not merely to be found in the urban areas. Thus it is argued that they can not be explained as urban phenomena, but as a black working class response. ✓

##### 5.5. THE DISTRIBUTION OF ZIONIST-APOSTOLIC CHURCHES POST 1960

The very size of the Zionist Apostolic movement makes it extremely difficult for the researcher to obtain an accurate overview of the regional and local distribution, aggravated by the paucity of research on this level. Nevertheless, an attempt will be made, if somewhat patchy, to construct a global picture of Zionist-Apostolic churches in South Africa in the period after 1960.

To begin, census data may be analysed. The difficulties in interpreting this data have been pointed to in Chapter 2. A major problem is that categories within tables, and the type of table drawn from census returns, differ over the years. Thus all the data are not comparable. For example, the 1970 census does not provide a provincial breakdown, but instead provides a breakdown of the "ethnic group" of black religion. As some "ethnic groups", for example, Tswana, are distributed over more than one province, it is impossible to compute

provincial figures comparable with previous years.

Similarly, a decrease in indigenous churches as in 1946 can partly be explained by a change in the categorisation of religious groups. For example, the category of 'Apostolic Faith Mission' increased from 13 003 in 1936 to 177 298 in 1946; the category 'Various Christian Sects' increased from 5 315 in 1936 to 77 877 in 1946 and the category 'other beliefs' increased from 575 in 1936 to 18 190 in 1946. This suggests that churches classified as "Bantu Separatist" were placed in different categories in those years, because all other available evidence points to an increase in the number of churches in this period.

In the tables below, the figure for indigenous churches has been interpreted strictly, to include only that for "Bantu Independent" or "Separatist" churches. However the figure would increase if categories such as "Other Apostolic" were included, and we do not know how many churches classified as "Other Christian" could in fact be grouped as indigenous churches.

Table 3 shows comparative figures for the percentage of black members of indigenous churches in each province.<sup>69</sup>

Two features stand out clearly - firstly, the overall increase in percentage of indigenous church members; and secondly the rank order of concentrations of indigenous churches. Thus the Transvaal remains consistently the area with the highest concentration, followed closely by Natal and with the Orange Free State higher than the Cape Province, since 1936.

Table 3: Provincial Distribution of Indigenous Churches: 1936-1980

	S.Africa	Cape	Natal	Transvaal	O.F.S
1936	1089479 16,5	234373 11,5 3,6	294042 18,9 4,4	445339 18,2 6,8	115725 20,9 1,8
1946	758810 9,7	150503 6,4 1,9	177946 10,4 2,3	364517 11,7 4,7	65844 9,9 0,8
1951	1593939 18,6	301249 12,1 3,5	391020 21,6 4,6	745850 21,4 8,7	155820 20,1 1,8
1960	2313309 21,2	470068 15,6 4,3	496409 22,6 4,5	1140759 24,6 10,4	206073 19,0 1,9
1970	2716019 17,7	Figures only available for ethnic groups, not for geographical areas.			
1980	5124566 30,1	548042 24,4 3,2	1524578 31,6 9,0	2698821 32,7 15,9	353125 20,6 2,1

The first row of cells gives absolute numbers; the second the proportion in each province; the third, the proportion of the Black population.

Table 4 shows that there is a consistently greater membership in rural than in urban areas. In the Transvaal the percentage of urban as opposed to rural 'separatists' has increased most definitely from 1936 to 1960 (36,6% to 48,3%). This general trend is contrary to the impression created in the literature and will need to be explained.

Table 4: Urban and Rural Distribution of Indigenous Churches

		S.Africa	Cape	Natal	Transvaal	O.F.S
1946	Urban	31,5	34,8	16,9	36,6	35,1
	Rural	68,5	65,2	83,1	63,4	64,9
	Total	100	100	100	100	100
1951	Urban	32,9	26,0	16,8	45,1	28,7
	Rural	67,1	74,0	83,2	54,9	71,3
	Total	100	100	100	100	100
1960	Urban	37,9	31,0	19,5	48,3	40,6
	Rural	62,1	69,0	80,5	51,7	59,4
	Total	100	100	100	100	100
1970	Urban	36,7	Figures not available			
	Rural	63,3	for geographical areas			
	Total	100				
1980	Urban	38,0	Figures not available			
	Rural	62,0	for geographical areas			
	Total	100				

The proportion of women to men appears to be fairly even, with women slightly higher - Table 5. However, it must be born in mind that census figures reflect people's stated affiliation and not the extent of active involvement in church activities. Most studies have revealed the women to be the most active in the running of the church and in regular attendance at worship services.

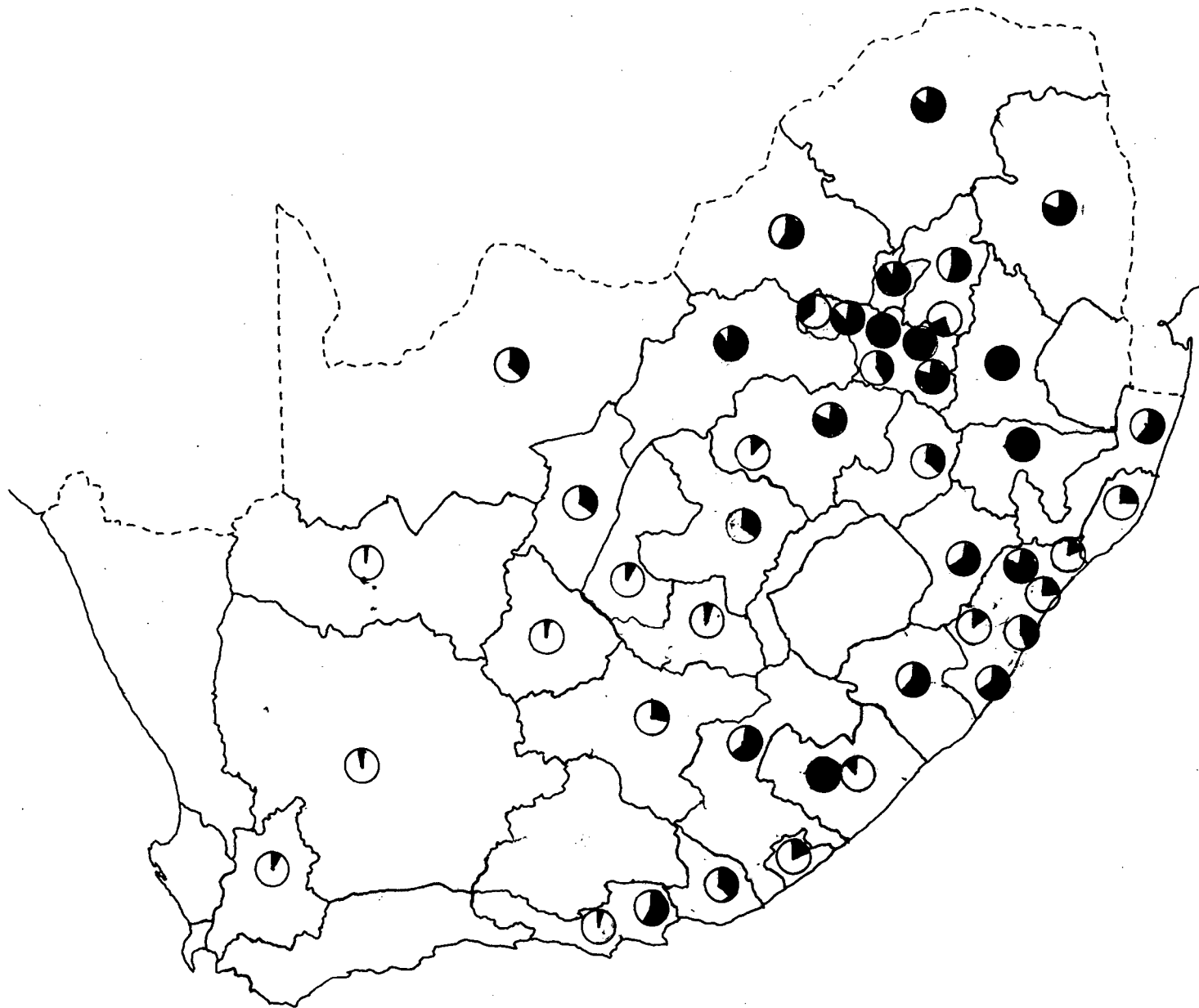
Table 5: Indigenous Churches: Sexual distribution - 1936-1980

	Male	Female	Total
1936	533560 48	555919 52	1089479 100
1946	367892 48	390918 52	758810 100
1951	781610 49	812329 51	1593939 100
1960	1119182 48	1194183 52	2313365 100
1970	1274382 47	1441637 53	2716019 100
1980	2516480 49	2608086 51	5124566 100

The first cell gives absolute numbers, the second percentage

How do these trends compare with the findings of other scholars?

Van Zyl compiled a graphic presentation of the distribution of indigenous churches as at 1967.<sup>70</sup> Map 1 represents the numerical strength of the churches. Clearly, the strongest concentrations are in the industrial areas of the Witwatersrand, particularly centered on Johannesburg, and the East Rand areas of Benoni, Brakpan, Boksburg and Springs - the areas in which the engineering and heavy industry is particularly strong - and Pretoria. A second area of strong concentration is the district of Amersfoort and Vryheid, the neighbouring district in Natal. Viewed as a percentage of the total black population (Map 2), these districts are particularly strong.



MAP 1

DISTRIBUTION IN-  
DIGENOUS\_CHURCH  
(MEMBERSHIP ACC-  
ORDING TO NUMER-  
ICAL STRENGTH

● full circle rep-  
resents  
100 000  
adherents )

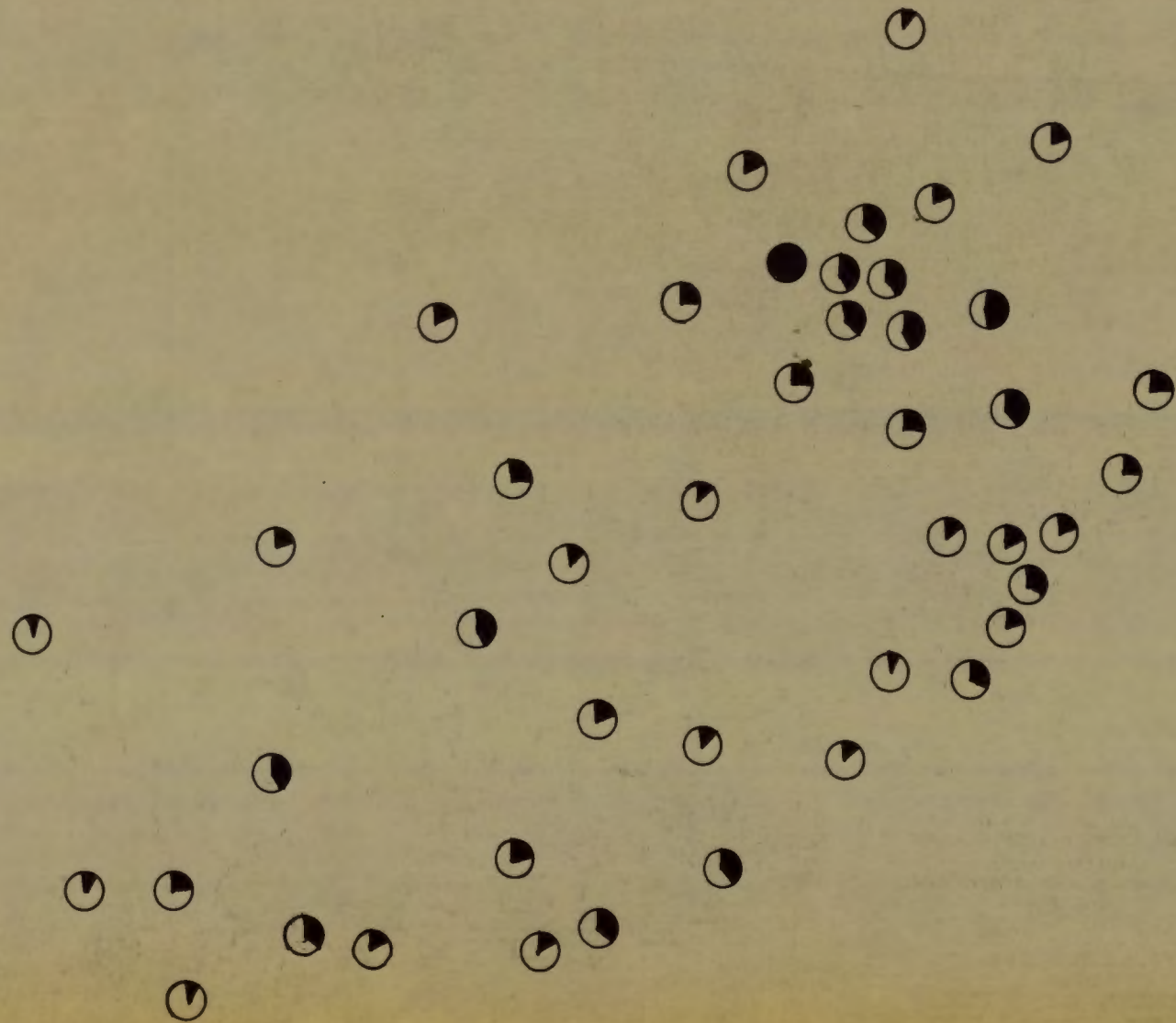


MAP 1

DISTRIBUTION IN-  
DIGENOUS\_CHURCH  
(MEMBERSHIP ACC-  
ORDING TO NUMER-  
ICAL STRENGTH

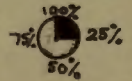
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resents  
100 000  
adherents )

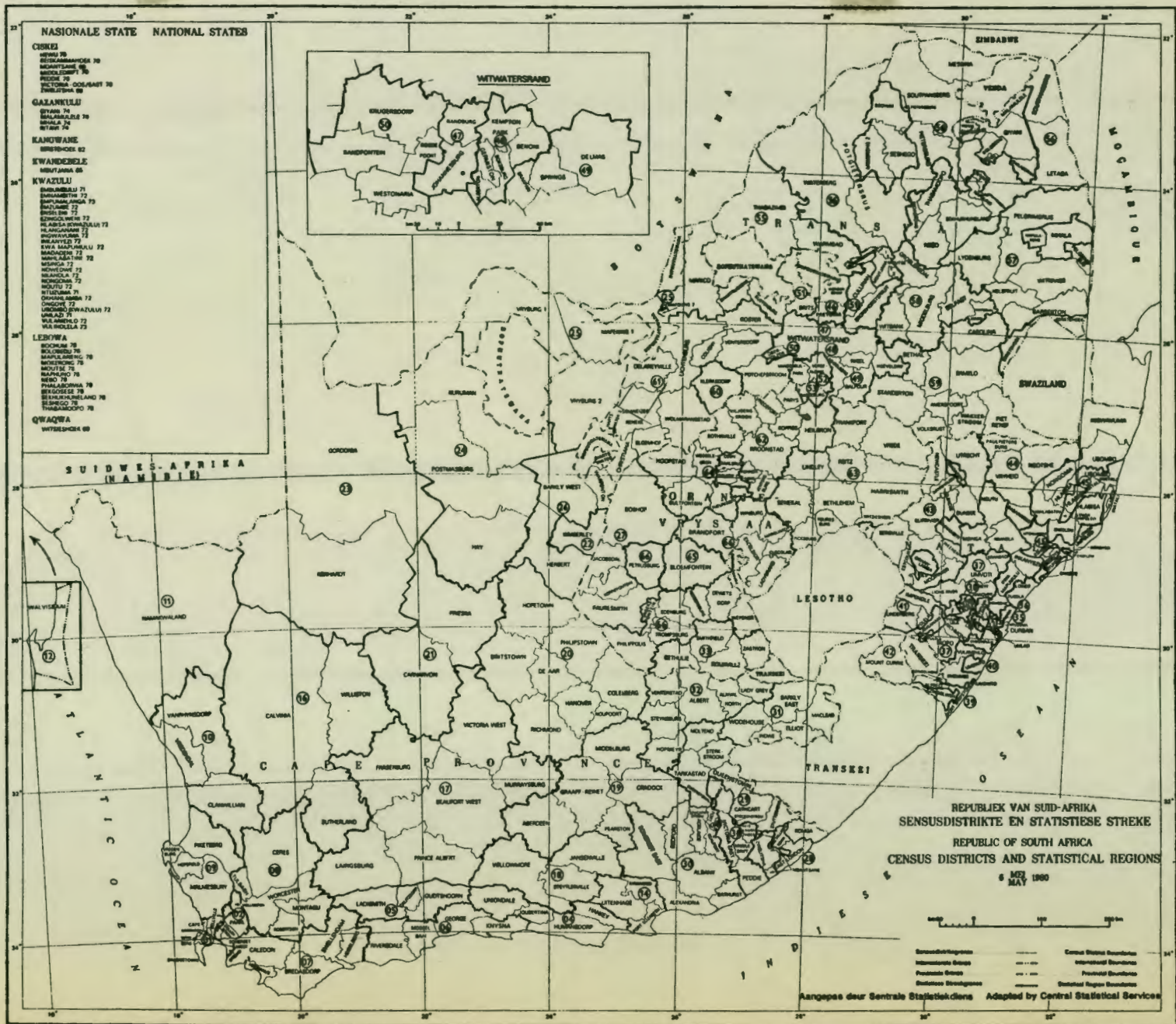




MAP 2

INFLUENCE OF IN-  
 DIGENOUS CHURCHES (MEMBERSHIP  
 EXPRESSED AS PER  
 CENTAGE OF TOTAL  
 AFRICAN POPULA-  
 TION.)





Republiek van Suid-Afrika 1980  
 Department of Statistics, 1981 Revised 1980  
 © Phosphorizing 1980 Beta Geograf

Historically, they have been important in that Wakkerstroom, Le Roux's original base, is in this district, and a number of Zion City churches had headquarters in this area. The strength of 'Zulu Zion' as a whole is reflected in the general cluster in Zululand and Natal, an area where Shembe has been influential and succeeded in attracting a wide following, largely rooted in the shared cultural and political traditions of regional Zulu origin.

Indigenous churches in the Transkei appear to be stronger than in other regions of the Cape. Only a small group is concentrated in the Eastern Cape, particularly in the Queenstown district, around East London and in the Albany (Grahamstown) district. It is interesting to note that in the Western Cape, although there is a small absolute number of members, these form a large percentage of the total black population, particularly striking in the Fraserburg district.

It is noticeable that in the Orange Free State churches tend to cluster in the North, particularly in the Kroonstad district, where the Free State goldfields are found. The concentration in the Northern Transvaal area reflects the domination of Zion Christian Church, which has its headquarters there.

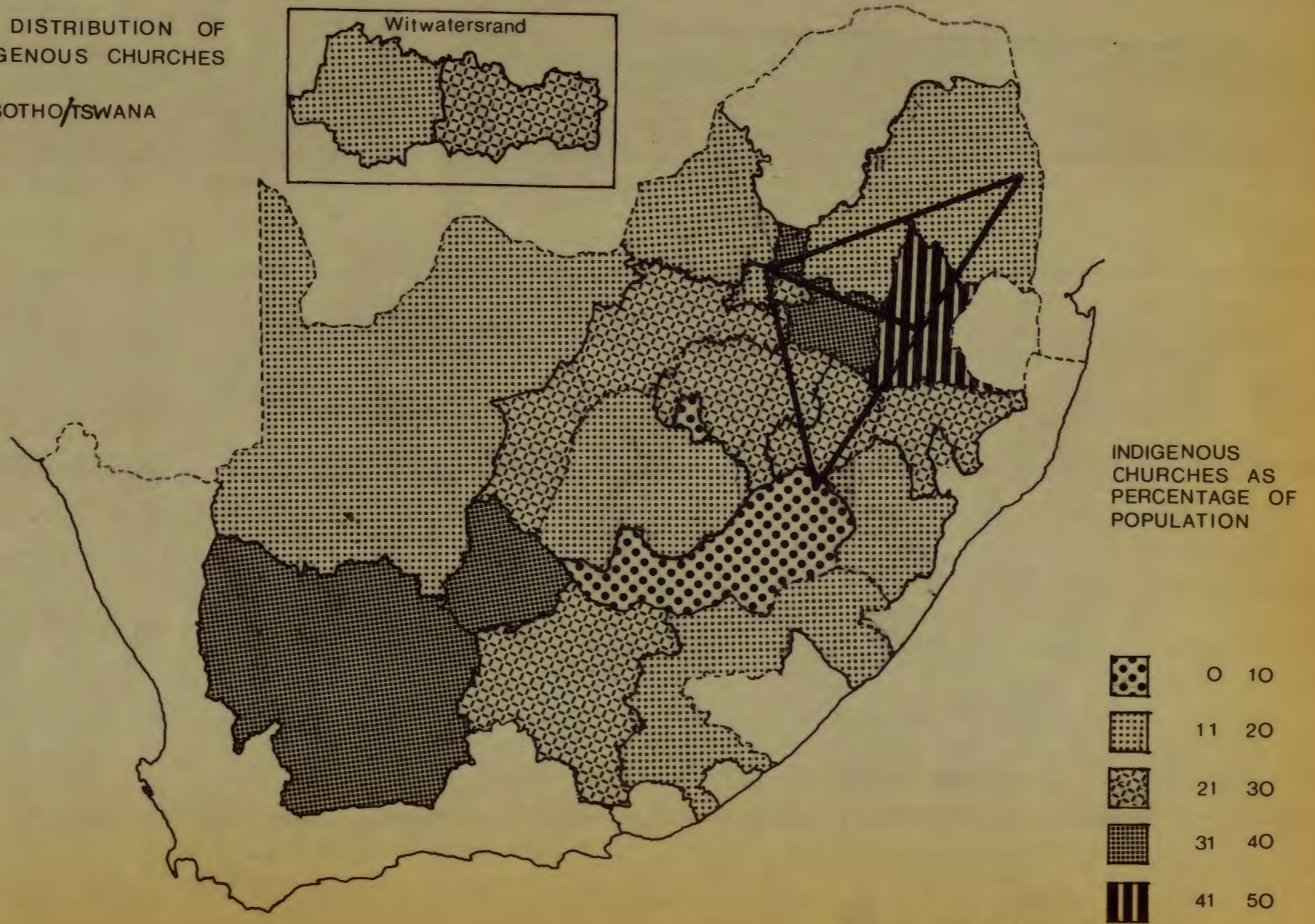
These trends are confirmed by Van Wyk, who researched indigenous churches among the Sotho Tswana.<sup>71</sup> In as much as Sundkler focused predominantly on Zulu Zion, his research provides a crucial component in reconstructing a global distribution. However it is somewhat marred by his ethnic framework and the constant division of data into the three language groups, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho and Tswana, as defined by the state ethnographer, N. J. Van Warmelo.

Van Wyk has placed a triangle over the concentration of indigenous churches of the Sotho-Tswana (Map 3).

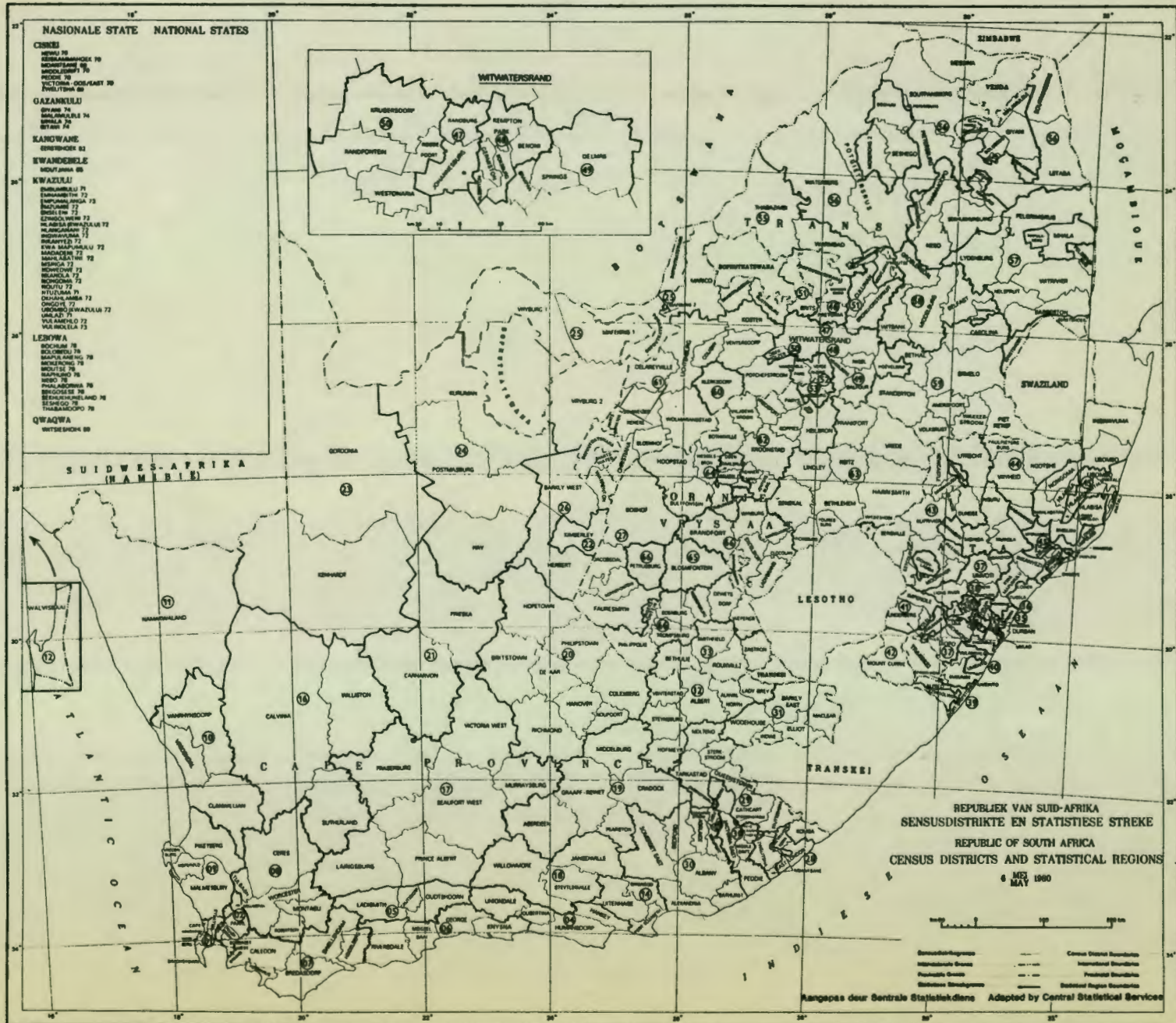
MAP 3

THE DISTRIBUTION OF  
INDIGENOUS CHURCHES

SOTHO/TSWANA







Statistiekdiens 1981 Revisie 1980  
 Republiek van Suid-Afrika 1981 Revisie 1980  
 © Statistiekdiens 1980 Revisie 1980

To the North-east the point falls in the Pilgrims Rest area, to the West at Krugersdorp and to the South at Witzieshoek. The latter area was one in which Mahon and the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion was most active. The Amersfoort district, which Van Zyl also found to be an extremely strong area of concentration, falls within the triangle, and there is a lively exchange between this area and the Rand. In addition, he isolated a corridor which appears to be related to the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and the surrounding area, running east towards the Rand and gold. Van Wyk suggests that the Xhosa were a medium of dispersal in this corridor. Van Zyl's map of the percentage of indigenous church members in the total population also revealed the importance of the Hopetown and Kimberley districts. No research has been undertaken into indigenous churches in this area, and these figures point to a potentially rich area waiting to be explored.

Representing indigenous churches as a proportion of the total population in each district again reveals the strongest concentration to be in the Amersfoort district, and the adjacent Balfour district which includes Standerton; and the Pretoria area. The strong concentration in the Fraserburg district confirmed the pattern found by Van Zyl and it can be similarly explained. Running from Kimberley north through Bloemhof and Schweizer-Reinecke districts and then east across the Rand, through Heilbron and Frankfort into Northern Natal, particularly in the Vryheid district is a large area in which 21% - 30% of the Sotho-Tswana population belong to indigenous churches. The Schweizer-Reinecke district adjacent to Bloemhof, the Fouriesburg district near the Witzieshoek point and Pilgrims Rest also display a greater proportion of Christians in indigenous churches than in mainline or mission churches.

From further in-depth field work, Van Wyk noted a continual interplay between Soweto and the rural areas. In line with

West's finding of some 900 churches in Soweto, he found it to be a "special breeding ground" for Zionist-Apostolic churches. It is interesting to note that in a second sample in Soweto he found a strong presence of well-established Ethiopian churches (16,4% of the total sample) especially in the older parts, and formed over a definite period, although they were still not numerically stronger than Zionist-Apostolics (17,82% of the total sample).<sup>72</sup> In Thabong, a township of Welkom on the Free State Goldfields, he found a higher percentage of indigenous churches than expected - 28,31% of the sample, of which 15,9% were Zionist-Apostolics. Some churches had been established in Thabong, but there is a clear indication of the manner in which the movement spreads, in that many are branches of churches brought to the area - for example, Ma Nku's St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission.

Bloemfontein was the weakest area of indigenous churches, and the only place where a single church group, the Methodists, exceeded the number of indigenous church members. Further, there were no non-Christians found in the sample in this area. Many leaders of the Zionist-Apostolic churches were found to be full time workers. Van Wyk has attempted to explain this historically in that following Thaba Nchu, the Methodist base, Bloemfontein was a concentration point in the "corridor of christianization" running from West to East, of missionary evangelization. Significantly, Bloemfontein grew in a more measured and balanced way than other urban areas. The male-female ratio is quite equal and a high percentage have lived as families over the years.

Khutsong, a township of the mining area near Carletonville, had a high percentage of Ethiopian-type churches (17,86%). The percentage of Zionists (21,5%) was the third highest, after Soweto (27,4%) and Ga Rankuwa (25,5%). Van Wyk noted a strong interchange between Johannesburg and the Amersfoort district, and Johannesburg and Bloemhof, which weakens by the time it reaches Oberholzer, the district in which

Carletonville falls.

It must be remembered, in evaluating this data, that the samples were only drawn from the Sotho-Tswana population. Nevertheless, the findings corroborate Van Zyl's and others in the field. Furthermore, they suggest a number of interconnections, particularly between Zionist-Apostolic Churches and the most industrialised areas, and the surrounding rural areas.

These studies were completed in the late 1960's using available records. Kritzinger has analysed the 1980 census returns on religion<sup>73</sup>. Perhaps the most striking conclusion is that one out of five South Africans belong to indigenous churches, and that some 30% of all blacks belong. A list has been compiled of some 3 500 church names found on census forms.

From an examination of Map 4 it is evident that some changes have occurred through the creation of bantustans and the process of relocation. Many district boundaries have been changed. Strongest areas remain the Rand, Pretoria and Amersfoort/Northern Natal. The concentration in Natal appears to have strengthened and spread throughout the Province, particularly around Durban.

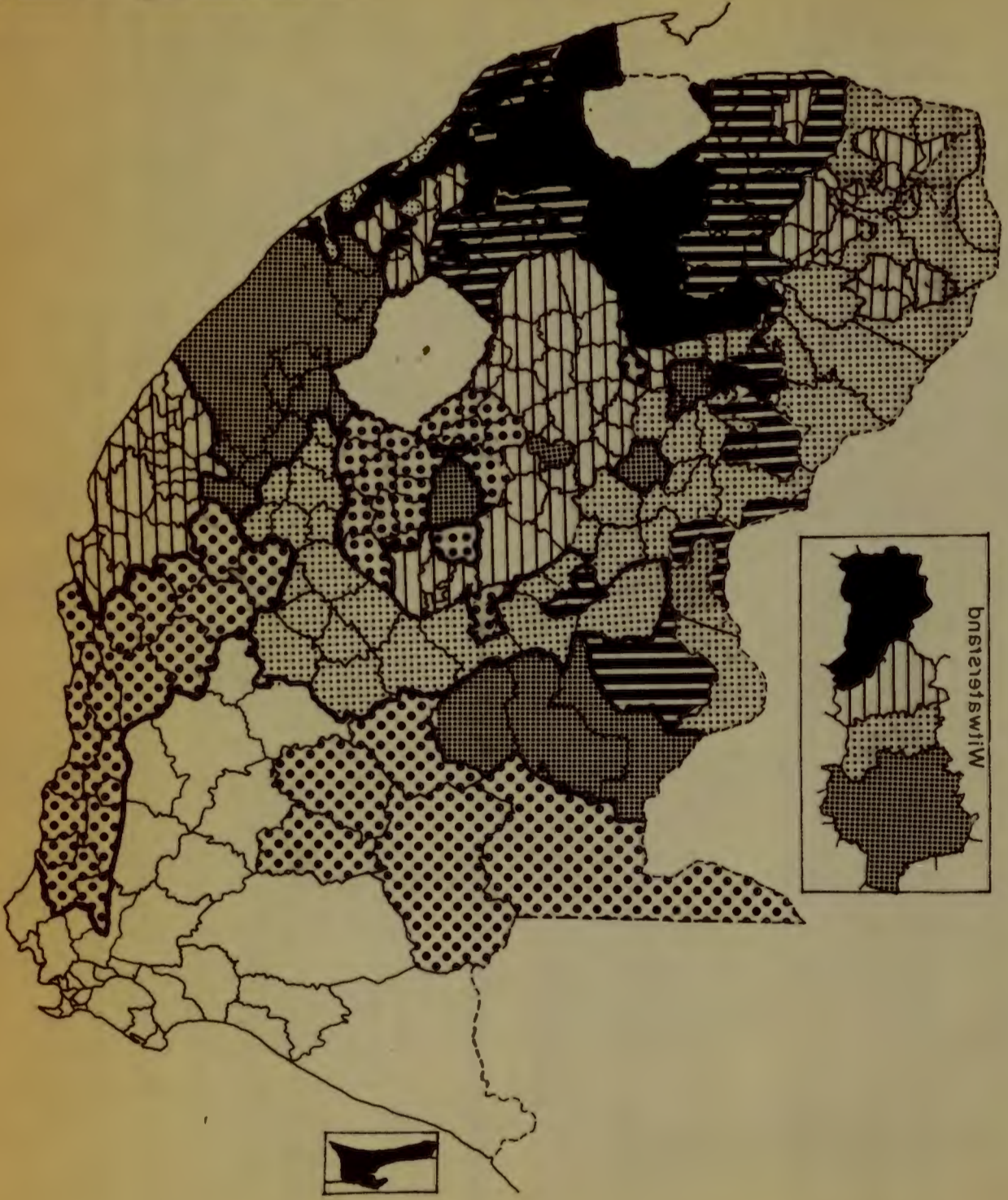
KwaMashu it was noted, is a large dormitory "commuter" town outside Durban, established in 1958 after protracted and violent opposition to removals from Cato Manor, and incorporated into KwaZulu in 1977.<sup>74</sup> In 1981 it was estimated by township officials that the total population is about 200 000, with close to 12 persons per house in the family section, supplied with water but less than 10% with electricity. The hostel area is cordoned off from the married section of the township. KwaMashu has a strongly working class nature and it is claimed the black elite prefer to live in Umlazi.

52  
 52-30  
 50-52  
 12-50  
 10-12  
 2-10  
 0-2

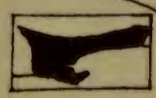


total percentages and  
 percentages  
 CHURCHES  
 INDIGENOUS

А ПАМ



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Nearby Kwa Mashu is the "squatter" area of Inanda, classified as a mission reserve in the middle of the 19th century. It became densely settled in the 1950's with the decline in production in the reserves. There is little planning or infrastructural development and no adequate water supply or sanitation service, leading to severe typhoid epidemics. Between Kwa Mashu and Inanda is Ekuphakameni, Shembe's Zion City. The Church of the Nazarites has a strong following in the area. Only the area around Pietermaritzburg (a university and theological seminary centre) appears to have between 5 - 10% indigenous churches, the rest of Natal from 20% upwards and a large portion over 25%. The Pilgrims Rest and Nelspruit districts are still strong, but have extended westward to include much of the Eastern Transval. The Witbank/Middelburg coal mining district has become far stronger with greater than 25%.

One immediately noticeable change is the Eastern Cape areas around Uitenhage, Albany, Queenstown and King Williamstown districts, including East London (and its commuter township, Mdantsane) and parts of what is now the Ciskei, with from 20 - 25% of the population belonging to indigenous churches. The Transkei area in contrast has from 10 - 15%. Pretorius has noted that Zionism as a movement only grew conspicuously in Transkei since the 1950's.<sup>79</sup> 20% of the Zionist Apostolic churches in his sample were established in the 1950's, 36% in the 1960's and 24% in the 1970's. Furthermore 60% of the churches originated directly or indirectly from Natal and the Witwatersrand, 20% from Cape Town and 12% from the Orange Free State. Pretorius concludes that while it has steadily grown, Zionism in the Transkei has not had the same impact as in the other areas of the country. It is also important to note that 36% of the churches were brought to the Transkei by returning migrants, who had been members of Zionist-Apostolic churches at their place of work.

To return to Kritizinger's findings. The Northern Free

state displays a similar pattern to the previous surveys, with particularly the eastern areas, close to the concentration points, displaying 20-25%. One area which has increased is around Thaba Nchu, which has experienced the effects of separate development since the 1970's.<sup>76</sup> In the 1970's there has been a massive influx of Basotho refugees into the area which has been placed under the Barolong Tribal Authority. The acute pressure on resources and services intensified and manifested as ethnic conflict, leading to the formation of the "vast new rural slum of Onverwacht/Botshabelo",<sup>77</sup> for Basotho residents under the control of Qwaqwa authorities, after the independence of Bophutatswana. (Qwa Qwa, the official Sotho homeland had 24 000 inhabitants in 1975 and by 1980 there were between 200 000 and 300 000 residents, mainly people off white farms in the Free State.) Murray has described the modern Thaba Nchu district as comprising the two original reserves bought in 1885, land bought in 'released' areas from white and black owners by the S.A. Native Trust after 1936, a fragmentary patchwork of black freehold farms in which rights of ownership have been successively subdivided down the family line, and two additional blocks of land added since 'independence' in 1977. The Trust villages are 'stagnant backwaters', dependent on the wages of daily commuters working in Thaba Nchu or Bloemfontein, and of migrants in Bloemfontein or the mining towns of Virginia and Welkom (where Thabong is to be found). Unemployment is very high and for many, pensions form an essential, though inadequate source of income.

The position outlined by Freund, and Saul and Gelb, of in effect, a proletariat based in the rural areas, is clearly illustrated and it is amongst these people as well as the working class in the urban areas, that Zionist-Apostolic churches are to be found. A similar phenomenon is to be found in areas in the Northern Cape bordering on the Free State. Kimberley's significance has been noted. A new area is

Taung, bordering the Schweizer-Reinecke and Bloemhof districts which had strong concentrations in the 1960's, as well as areas in the old Vryburg, Mafeking, Marico and Rustenburg areas - all areas that have been incorporated into the bantustans, and Bophutatswana specifically.

Kritizinger, using the dominant ideological ethnic categories, has calculated that in KaNgwane and Kwa Ndebele, indigenous churches comprise 74% and 63% of the Christians respectively, and in KwaZulu and Lebowa 44% and 47% of the Christians respectively.<sup>78</sup> De Beer has pointed out that KaNgwane was only 'discovered' as a Swazi homeland in the 1970's, for those Swazi-speaking South Africans "who had been endorsed out of the towns, or forced off the farms in the area, or made to move in the government's attempt to unscramble the ethnic egg in the Northern and Eastern Transvaal where five different 'ethnic groups' live, intermingled and intermarried".<sup>79</sup> The population of KwaNdebele grew from 50 000 in 1975 to an estimated 250 000 in 1981. Both these areas have appalling conditions, high unemployment rates, poor educational facilities, inadequate health services and problems with the water-supply. At Mamabola in Lebowa, in 1951 it was estimated that the land could support 200 families on a sub-economic basis; but in 1984 there were 25 000 - 30 000 people living there. Similarly, the Nqutu district of Kwa Zulu, where many churches are concentrated, in 1979 had 200 000 people living in an area the Tomlinson commission estimated could support 13 000 people in subsistence agriculture.<sup>80</sup>

On the one hand, these church membership figures are misleading, in that they are calculated for the total population, black and white. Zionist Apostolic churches only occur amongst black South Africans<sup>81</sup>; therefore in a district with a predominantly black population, there is a far higher likelihood or statistical chance that an individual could be a member of a Zionist church than for

example in an area like the Western Cape, where the coloured labour preference policy has excluded large numbers of blacks from working and living in the area.

On the other hand, these trends, and the nature of the areas in which they are found, raise a number of issues and point to significant factors for the explanation of Zionist-Apostolic churches. Since the 1970's, there has been a strong tendency in scholarship to view Zionist-Apostolic churches as urban phenomena, to explain them as a means of adaptation to the problems of urban life-settings and culture. It has been argued that juxtaposing traditional rural and modern urban cultures leads to dualism, instead of a recognition of the complex articulation into a single unitary social formation. It is unhelpful to polarize urban features or rural features as explanatory variables, precisely because urban and rural areas are inextricably linked in the process of labour allocation and the distribution of resources in South Africa. This link was reflected in the history of the churches' organisational structure outlined by Becken above; by the evidence that churches in the Transkei were established by returning migrants and by the interchange between the Rand and the Amersfoort district, to mention a few of the means of dispersal and communication.

If it is accepted as a basis that many of the ordinary bantustan and resettlement camp residents form a rurally based proletariat, then there is a fit with the major hypothesis that Zionist-Apostolic churches are a religio-cultural response of the black working class. What does remain to be investigated is how the fact that people are in a rural location and have a different experience to people in an urban location, particularly on an ideological and cultural level, shapes their consciousness and determines the form of Zionist-Apostolic Church. The need for historically and regionally based research has been noted throughout this

work. For example, an area like Taung could be analysed in terms of the number and form of indigenous church; when churches originated and how this affected their development; their class base; the power structures and ideological practices current in the area, and how these have evolved, and how these various levels and practices are articulated into a complex unity.

While Zion City churches could be characterised as predominantly rural-based, Zionist-Apostolic churches cannot be categorically defined as either urban or rural based. They are predominantly a church of the black proletariat, whether found at the point of production as an active member of the labour force, or whether relegated as a member of the "reserve army of unemployed" to the bantustans and resettlement camps. In sum, Zionist-Apostolic churches are focused around the industrial centres of South Africa, particularly the Rand, and a continual interchange with the rural areas takes place, structured by the demands of capital and regulated by influx control and migrant labour.

As one Sowetan Zionist-Apostolic leader phrased it, when addressing a largely white, mainline church group

"people are moaning and crying and sorrowful, day in and day out. We who live in Johannesburg see this kind of thing happening daily - people being loaded into pickup vans for pass offences and kept in jails for times unspecified"<sup>2</sup>

#### 5.6. THE BANTUSTAN LINK - ZION CITY TYPE CHURCHES ?

One aspect must be briefly considered (and that is, are all the indigenous churches increasingly to be found in bantustans Zionist-Apostolics? Secondly, how does ethnic nationalism interact or influence these churches, and what kind of alliances would they have with Bantustan governments and bureaucracy?

There is ample evidence of Zion City type churches working

with traditional ruling classes, one of the best known examples being Daniel Nkonyane and Swazi royalty. Two of these churches particularly have survived and succeeded in attracting mass followings. Shembe's Church of the Nazarites has been studied for its creative liturgy and hymnal.<sup>93</sup> Coplan has argued that "Shembe, proudly acknowledging his lack of Western education, styled himself a deliverer of his people, but set about revitalising Zulu cultural identity and creating the broad structure of a national religious community ...."<sup>94</sup> Further, "he attracted 1 000's to his movement by the use of traditional dances and music in worship and by his message of cultural and spiritual autonomy."<sup>95</sup> Coplan claims the Nazarites provide the "wider fellowship of a national ethnic religious community" but rooted in the "shared cultural and political traditions of regional Zulu origin,"<sup>96</sup> therefore not attaining significance as a broadly-based South African movement. The movement's link with Zulu chiefs throughout its history has been noted.<sup>97</sup>

However, the movement which has attracted the most attention is the Zion Christian Church of which a thorough historical-sociological analysis is long overdue. An attempt was made to demonstrate how it had its roots directly in a period of peasant resistance, with a messianic leader drawn from the pre-capitalist ruling classes who offers his followers material and spiritual prosperity. It is numerically the strongest indigenous church today, being the most numerous single church among Africans in some thirty districts in the Northern and Eastern Transvaal.

It appears that the Zion Christian Church differs from the typical Zionist-Apostolic church in many respects. There are indications of close links between the Z C C leadership and the Bantustan authorities, and further, that their support comes strongly from Bantustan areas. Kritzinger, for example, cites a Z C C membership of 11% of all blacks in Lebowa.<sup>98</sup> Van Wyk has asserted that "Lekganyane het met

Bantoestuislande en by name Sekhukhuniland te doen..."<sup>89</sup>  
and that women play far less of a central role than they do  
in other Zionist-Apostolic churches.

Freund has pointed out how forced resettlement and separate  
development policy in general, aims to "drive a wedge though  
the oppressed by giving a minority a stake in the system  
and through pressing forward with ethnic identification as  
the essence of nationality and nationalism in South  
Africa."<sup>90</sup> Tensions and divisions have arisen between  
ethnically differentiated and differentially privileged  
Africans in the bantustans. The instruments of force and  
patronage given to Bantustan authorities are becoming more  
and more effective, for example the level of repression in  
the Ciskei.

However, it appears that the leadership of the Z C C  
strongly identifies with these Bantustan elites and the  
policy of separate development. "The acceptance of the  
separate development policy has further shown that the Zion  
Christian Church wants to be a national church built up along  
its own lines."<sup>91</sup> Haselbarth points out that the Z C C  
is recognised by the state because of its size and out of  
political motives. The "alliance with the government"<sup>92</sup>  
began with the visit of the then minister of Bantu Affairs,  
Dr. De Wet Nel on Good Friday 1965. Lekganyane likened him  
to the new Moses leading the African people and the Z C C out  
of the land of bondage and into the land of freedom. This  
has continued over the years through, for example loans from  
the Bantu Investment Corporation, and the acceptance of  
Edward Lekganyane as a student at the N G K seminary at  
Turffloop. The most recent expression of the association has  
been the visit of the State President, P.W. Botha to Moriah  
over Easter 1985, the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the  
church, when he was granted the Freedom of Moriah - "City of  
Peace and Love."<sup>93</sup> On this occasion he proclaimed,  
"Members of the Zion Christian Church, you

have a strong allegiance to your faith ....  
 You have a sincere and healthy lifestyle.  
 You respect law, order and authority. I  
 have come to tell you that we see this. We  
 respect you for this. It is a spirit that  
 is present in your belief and your  
 attitude."<sup>74</sup>

The links with the chiefs has been noted earlier. Part of the funds collected are used for buying presents for chiefs, who are also honoured guests at the Easter Festival. Haselbarth also notes that office-bearers and members of the council benefit from the wealth of the church.

However, Haselbarth claims that "Not all Zionists are happy about this direction and it may create difficulties or even splits within the church in future, but are today still concealed under the appeal of status and progress."<sup>75</sup>

The Z C C has a large following in the urban areas, particularly amongst domestic servants. It certainly does succeed in attracting a working class following. Haselbarth claims that their members are mostly of heathen background with little or no education; a very small number of teachers and a large number of businessmen, as well as a number of 'youth of low-class.' "In the emerging class structure among Africans in South Africa, the Z C C stands and falls with the lower classes, while traditional churches are more or less middle class with some contact with the intellectuals."<sup>76</sup> The majority of members are attracted to the churches for reasons similar to other Zionist-Apostolic Churches. Haselbarth claims that the Z C C gives heathens a certain status by the fact of belonging to a church and no longer being regarded as 'pagan'. The most important reason however is the healing and therapeutic role, including protection from witchcraft and the achievement of prosperity in work and business. Van der Merwe, in a study of 90 Z C C members who had belonged for an average of 11,9 years, found that the most important need fulfilled by the church was therapeutic (39,2%). This was followed by pragmatic reasons (21,1%), which included attending

festivals, the search for prosperity and blessings, for example, of taxi businesses. 46,7% had joined the Z C C for therapeutic reasons initially.<sup>77</sup>

It would appear as if there is a large amount of separation between the leadership and the base, the mass of followers, both ideologically and in terms of class position. Separation on an organisational level is not without precedent. Many Zionist churches, as noted by Becken and Kiernan, are branches or congregations of a larger church organisation but in effect, operate completely autonomously, even to the extent of different names and changes in ritual and form of worship. In the Transkei, for example, Pretorius found that half the churches were completely autonomous as far as parent bodies are concerned. The churches had an average of 8,4 local congregations.

The Z C C itself appears to be controlled only loosely from the centre. The church as a whole congregates at Easter in a major expression of solidarity. At other times of the year, there is little direct influence on local congregations besides the need to submit funds, and occasional visits from a central delegation sent to tour parts of the country. If the leadership and hierarchy of the Z C C are being identified with and acting to legitimate Bantustan and state power, it cannot be assumed that 764 300 Z C C members do the same in any meaningful way.<sup>78</sup> This needs to be researched, analysed and explained - a task that can only be pointed to in this work. There are, however, strong indications of links between indigenous churches of the Zion City type, with strong messianic leaders and bureaucracy drawn from the petty bourgeoisie, and Bantustan power structures. The extent to which this shapes and limits the faith and activity of membership, which is largely working class, remains to be researched.

However, a note of caution must be sounded here. The fact

that some indigenous churches in the bantustans and rural areas may be characterised as Zion City type churches and have direct links with bantustan petty bourgeoisie and hierarchy, does not mean that all indigenous churches in rural areas take this form. Many scholars view Z C C as typical of Zionist churches; and an attempt has been made here to point to some of the differences between this church and the typical Zionist-Apostolic band. Many Zionist-Apostolic churches are to be found in the rural areas, some branches of larger city-based churches, others comprising a single congregation. One example is the 'New Church Step to Jesus Christ Zion in South Africa', founded in Moroka, Johannesburg in 1962 (see Chart 2). At Hlonga in the Msinga district, Zululand, Rev. H. Ndlovu conducts a healing ministry for his congregation of 86 members, some away on migrant labour in Pietermaritzburg. The church has a few smaller congregations under part-time local ministers in other villages of Natal. Occasionally the entire congregation is called together, when on Saturday night, after the washing of the feet, Holy Communion is celebrated in the healing centre. The church has a healing home on the mountain top where the sick live for varying periods of time and are healed by prayer, blessed water and cleansing in the Tugela River.

In recognising the growth of Zionist-Apostolic churches in rural ghettos and slums, sight must not be lost of the fact that a large majority of Zionist-Apostolics are to be found in the urban areas, in the black townships and in the backyard domain of domestic servants.

As Rev. Makhubu of Soweto phrased it

"We also care for the lonely, for migrant labourers who live in hostels, they find freedom when they come to our churches. The tension which has built up through the week, through months away from home, it is eased, they let off steam when they get to these churches."??

It appears then, that mineworkers who belong to Zionist

churches leave the mine compounds and go to the township churches. Leatt, in a study on religion and values on the mines, found that contrary to the expectation that Zionist churches would flourish in mine hostels, only 15,9% of Christians who belong to a church on the mines were Zionists, Apostolics or Nazarites.<sup>100</sup> Only 31% said Zionism was popular among mine workers. Of 18 black social worker interviewers, eight said Zionism was not popular, seven believed it was popular because of the concentration on healing and because "in South Africa Zionism is practised by less educated people who populate the mines,"<sup>101</sup> and the rest were not sure. This is in line with the general findings of Leatt's study, in that while 96% of the Christians belonged to a church prior to the mines, only 49% belonged to a church on the mine.

Another study found that while there was general opposition to the church, there was support for the Zionist church. The church was viewed as "a stooge sent by mine management to encourage them to pray, because the more they pray, the more they become quiet."<sup>102</sup> Support for Zionists was because they are "most cultural and more African since they sing and do African dances without any limitations or restrictions by ministers or priests who judge that way of worship as being paganism."<sup>103</sup>

It would be interesting to trace Zionist-Apostolic church history on the mines, and to determine, for example, the course taken by the African United Gaza Church or the East African Gaza Church which had membership drawn predominantly from 'Portuguese East Africa' in the 1920's, during the period under review.

Bearing in mind the difficulties of research on mine compounds, a comprehensive distribution pattern of Zionist-Apostolic churches would be extremely useful in historical sociological analysis. Similarly, we need to know more about another important sphere of operation - Zionist-Apostolic churches amongst domestic servants in white

suburbs. This is particularly amongst the women, and often the manyano will meet weekly in the servants quarters, a garage or even outdoors in an isolated spot. According to West "These meetings provide useful intelligence about employment opportunities and conditions in the particular area, and often an attempt is made to get a fellow church member employment in the same area."<sup>104</sup>

### 5.7. ZIONIST-APOSTOLIC CHURCHES - TOWARDS A NEW EXPLANATION

To sum up thus far. An attempt has been made to demonstrate that Zionist-Apostolic churches are a church of the working class, based on firstly, the available information on the nature of their membership.

Secondly, it is evident that they emerged as a significant movement only in the period when a large black working class was forming in South Africa.

It is useful here to consider the work of Hall once again, writing on Marx's elaboration of the economic and political levels in 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.' It is argued that the crisis in France in 1851 was fundamentally over-determined by the objective development of French capitalism, which establishes "the outer limits, the determinations, the horizon within which the forms of the political arise and appear."<sup>105</sup> However, the French social formation was still at an early stage of capitalist development, the bourgeoisie being fully formed, but its historical role not yet completed. It had not yet attained hegemony and succeeded in moulding French civilian political structures to the needs of the developing capitalist mode. Moreover "The Proletariat, with its slogans and demands, is already 'onstage'; but it cannot as yet play the decisive role, and above all, it cannot play an autonomous role."<sup>106</sup>

Similarly, prior to the intensified capitalist developments after the Second World War in South Africa, the proletariat was "onstage" but not yet fully formed. Zionist-Apostolic churches did not arise as a significant movement in the earlier period when the reserves were still available for subsistence production, because they were not a fitting religio-cultural form for struggling rural peasants retaining some access to agricultural production and continuing to draw on traditional African cultural-ideological forms.

Nevertheless, the process of class formation in South Africa and the historical role of the reserves and bantustans in the articulation of modes of production has meant that some traditional culturo-ideological forms have survived, and must be born in mind in analysis. Thus, when the proletariat began to play an autonomous role, Zionist-Apostolic churches appear - and this must be explained. Why were Zionist-Apostolic churches the most 'fitting form' of religion? An attempt will be made to address this question in the following chapter.

Thirdly, Zionist-Apostolic churches tend to be found in areas where the African working class is most concentrated - in the urban areas, and in relocation camps and bantustans where conditions may be characterized as rural slums, and Africans form, to all intents and purposes, a rural proletariat.

Thus it is that the Rand, the major industrial centre, has the greatest concentration of churches, while the larger part of the Cape Province has very few churches. Significantly, in the Eastern Cape and Transkei areas, there has been a marked increase in recent years. The Natal and Transvaal rural areas have close links with the Rand, and this is an important means of dispersal of churches. A new branch or congregation may be formed by a few members of the family or relatives, of a church leader or member in the urban area, for example. The Orange Free State has become a more important concentration point with the effects of forced

relocation. A further feature is the large number of churches found in bantustan commuter townships like Kwa Mashu and Ga Rankuwa.

#### 5.8. ZIONIST APOSTOLIC CHURCHES AS A FORM OF RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL RESISTANCE

A correspondence has thus emerged between Zionist-Apostolic churches and a particular set of material conditions. It is for these reasons that it is argued that the origins and existence of Zionist-Apostolic churches are not adequately explained as simply an 'adaptation' to urban phenomenon, to modern Western culture and Christianity.

The point has been stressed above that it is not merely a case of all Africans experiencing an alien modern culture and an alien urban environment. Rather, if one begins with "the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity",<sup>107</sup> then analysis of Zionist-Apostolic churches must begin with the African working class - dispossessed of their land and incorporated as alienated wage labour into a capitalist mode of production, with the dominant social relations structured on racial lines.

A further theoretical problem with the dominant functionalist explanatory framework is that the needs have been defined in a universalised, ahistorical manner - a need for security, a place to feel at home, a need for belonging, 'alternatives to

the stress arising out of fragmented, disrupted and disintegrating social structures' and so on. Budd has argued that although functional explanations may refer to links between particular religions and social structures, the implicit reference is always to the needs which all religions are held to satisfy for human beings.<sup>100</sup>

O'Meara has taken this further in a more practical fashion when he argues that "all ideologies provide some sort of 'psychological security' and emotional anchorage to those who believe in them. This tells us nothing and begs precisely the most important question - why and under what conditions do differentiated collectivities come to be organised in terms of one ideology rather than another?"<sup>101</sup>

Furthermore it can be argued that these needs are conceptualised in terms of middle class values - a need for ordering chaos, for overcoming anomie - related to the ideological position of functionalist theoreticians. The concept of 'adaptation' employed implies a standard of normality, or development towards a standard ideal, which human beings should comply with to cope adequately with their life conditions - in this case, acquiring modern western Christian culture. This displaces the focus from the actual conditions themselves, which may need to be changed and which are not only being adapted to but resisted in a variety of ways.

These problems are most evident in the 'relative deprivation' theory so common in the current literature. The classic formulation is Monica Wilson's assertion quoted earlier that "The basic insecurity of men comes, not from poverty, but from a feeling that no-one cares for them." Only an intellectual who has not experienced the effects of black working class life and the very real 'insecurity' of 'poverty' in South Africa could make such a theoretical claim. The real needs arise out of the real historical conditions in which people produce and reproduce their lives.

That is, people do not have an innate need for security or belonging - they have been made insecure. The emphasis must be on analysing the forces that have made people 'insecure', and furthermore, to change them. To quote Marx

"Man is the world of man, the state, society. This state, this society produce religion, a reversed world consciousness, because they are a reversed world ....Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress.... The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions." <sup>110</sup>

However, these formulations, and the most well-known and widely quoted phrase that religion "...is the opium of the people", <sup>111</sup> as Kersevan has pointed out, can be seen at best as "reasoned abstractions". <sup>112</sup> It is impossible to simply deduce the character and functions of a concrete religion within a global and concrete society from the common definition of religions' functions in society, or for man in general. "Religion in general" is only a theoretical abstraction summarizing the ordinary definitions without which we could not imagine any religion, but which do not enable us to grasp any real historical religion whatsoever." <sup>113</sup>

An attempt must thus be made to examine how the assertion that Zionist-Apostolic churches arose and exist as a church of the black working class in South Africa illuminates and adds to explanation. A note of caution must be sounded here - the hypothesis is not that all black working class people belong to Zionist-Apostolic churches, or that there are no working class members of mainline churches; but simply that the majority of members of Zionist Apostolic Churches are proletarian. Thus, no class other than the working class belongs to Zionist-Apostolics. They are thoroughly working class in ethos, and in control. There is evidence that black elites do not belong to Zionist-Apostolics but prefer

mainline or mission churches. Mainline churches in contrast, are comprised of many classes; but dominated, religiously and ideologically, and fully controlled by the ruling classes. Although black working class people do belong to mainline churches, (and may in fact form the majority of the membership) they are clearly the church of the white ruling class in South Africa. The basic premise is that "any religion operates first and foremost in the midst of concrete social classes, with their different degrees of power, their mutual relationship arising from dominance and their objectively opposing interests."<sup>114</sup> The difference between Zionist-Apostolic and mainline churches will be considered more fully in the following chapter. What must be borne in mind is that this thesis only focuses on Zionist-Apostolics as the church of the black working class, and not on the religious life of black South Africans.

According to Thetele, Zionist churches are "in many ways both pre-revolutionary and actively revolutionary at the same time."<sup>115</sup> They are pre-revolutionary in the sense that they do not have a set strategy in terms of moving society towards a set goal, and are often characterised as being apolitical. However, she argues that "they are revolutionary in their impact on the fabric of the society, creating a change that provides the dispossessed people with a sense of hope and a vision for the future."<sup>116</sup>

Thetele is here pointing to a crucial dimension in the explanation of Zionist-Apostolic churches which is missing from other attempts - their creative role as a means of survival, a form of religio-cultural resistance in the struggle of the black working class. Zionist Apostolic churches do not merely "play an adaptive role in the process of urbanisation"<sup>117</sup> nor are they a "logical reply to the white policy of segregation and separation."<sup>118</sup> They do not merely provide "old securities", the "undercurrent of

traditional religion and culture"<sup>119</sup> in the face of "the onslaught of the contact culture"<sup>120</sup> - that is, arising out of the "acculturation process."<sup>121</sup> They are not merely a genuine contextualisation of the gospel, communicating in a way suited to African needs and world view, providing a dialogue between Christianity and traditional religion. On the other hand, Zionist-Apostolic churches cannot merely be dismissed as "the opium of the people," nor, it will be argued, can they be decisively rejected in that "they have not only reduced to a dangerous point their own sense of reality but are also fostering general false consciousness among their followers."<sup>122</sup>

Zionist-Apostolic churches must be explained as simultaneously the expression of and the protest against the exploitation, political oppression and cultural domination of the black proletariat in South Africa. That is, they are the faith of a faithless people, and the faith of a people who will not give up faith.<sup>123</sup>

"The importance of culture and ideology as agents in the maintenance and reproduction of capitalist and imperialist relationships cannot be denied or simplified."<sup>124</sup> Thus far, the analysis of the South African social formation may have appeared somewhat economic and mechanistic. However, a social formation consists of many levels and practices, defined by the dominant mode of production, but each with its own "efficacy, its own forms, its specific conditions of existence, its own momentum, tempo and direction, its own contradictions internal to it, its peculiar outcomes and results."<sup>125</sup> For example, once class forces appear as political class forces, they have consequent political results which cannot be translated back into their original terms, and which also have consequences for the manner in which the forces and relations of the material conditions of existence themselves develop. Similarly, religio-cultural and ideological conflicts display

a relative autonomy.

It has been made clear above, and recent research has focused on this, that black South Africans were not passive figures swept aside in the process of primitive accumulation.

"Black South Africans have fought for control over numerous aspects of their lives and culture, in the face of proletarianisation, loss of land, security and social cohesion, with varying degrees of success."<sup>126</sup> There has been extensive debate over the relationship of class consciousness to class position, and the economic and political levels of class formations. In this work, however, this theoretical debate cannot be fully entered into. The basic and fundamental assertion that is being made is that religio-cultural forms are tied inextricably to "the conflict between classes, to the attempts by some to dominate others and to the responses of the subordinated to those attempts."<sup>127</sup>

Class struggle in South Africa has taken many forms, both spontaneous and organized. Gandy points to Marx's distinction by arguing that,

"Economic conditions create for a mass of people a common situation, common culture and common interests. This mass is only a class-in-itself .... Only through struggle with another class can it become a class-for-itself, unified, organized and conscious of its interests."<sup>128</sup>

Thus class antagonisms exist in a latent form but open class struggle occurs when there is a fight for political power. Much academic research has been done into the open forms of class struggle, which predominantly take place at the economic and political level. There is a growing move to analyse the more latent forms of resistance and struggle of the dominated classes, at the cultural and ideological levels.

Cohen has pointed to the importance of analysing the "silent,

unorganised overt responses of African workers"<sup>129</sup> and not merely focussing on more easily accessible and measureable overt worker militancy, such as strikes, unionisation and political militance. He argues the importance of examining how "local cultural influences and social pressures can shape the workers' perceptions of their own exploitation"<sup>130</sup>; and how these individualistic forms of protest can contribute to the overall process of determining worker consciousness at both an economic and political level. The dominant forms of resistance possible in tightly controlled situations are informal, or 'hidden' forms of resistance. From an analysis of the features of the capitalist labour process, Cohen isolates characteristic worker responses, or means of resisting incorporation into capitalist production. One set of responses isolated are characterised as 'psychological adjustment' and Cohen argues that, while these forms of behaviour or responses are normally conceived of as having little relation to the labour process itself, or being extraneous to the relations of production, they do constitute forms of worker resistance and adaptation. "A common form of psychological resistance to work is the adoption of religion, or other-worldly beliefs, particularly those that stress relief from suffering in the next world."<sup>131</sup> Further, religious belief and practice may also provide some elements in the construction of a worker ideology - that is consciousness of a class-for-itself - and some practical experience of organisation. Cohen points to the suspicion of employers leading to the initial outlawing of all indigenous churches on Rhodesian mine compounds.<sup>132</sup> The central aspect is the "capacity of workers to create some private domains and psychological 'space' free of the insistent pressures of the capitalist labour process."<sup>133</sup>

Cohen's work is schematic and can be debated at length; but it points to a direction for explaining Zionist-Apostolic churches, and addressing the issue of their active socio-political role.

For example, in the period of capital expansion immediately after Second World War, the growth of Zionist Apostolic churches was simultaneous with a resurgence of political and trade union activity, particularly in the decade of the 1950's. The latter has been thoroughly researched and analysed, while insufficient attention has been paid to Zionist-Apostolic churches. To begin to extend Cohen's work historically, this period could be analysed to examine the articulation of political and religio-cultural forces. What was the formal and informal relationship between Zionist-Apostolic churches and organised political activity under the African National Congress movement? What accounts for the appeal of each? Were they appealing to the same base, and if not, what were the different bases of each? It is apparent that with the crushing of organized political resistance in the early 1960's, the State forged ahead with its Bantustan policy until the early 1970's, virtually unhampered by African resistance. There are indications of a further increase of Zionist-Apostolics in this period. Are these two movements structurally related? These are merely a few of the potential research hypotheses which arise with the adoption of a historical sociological approach.

Proctor has argued that, "In a situation of extreme labour repression as South Africa, it is a mistake to look only for formal expressions of working class consciousness, failing which to deny its existence."<sup>134</sup> His study of Sophiatown revealed that the black working class did develop characteristic responses and strategies to oppression - one example being crime and organised gangs. Koch analysed Marabi culture as a response of the early working class in Doornfontein. Proctor's important contribution is the point that:

"In a system which denies one meaningful identity and social existence, and against which one feels powerless to effect any changes, it is to alternative social cultural activities more than overt political action that one tends to look in order to regain some degree of one's humanity."<sup>135</sup>

Zionist-Apostolic churches can thus be explained in these terms:

"In this situation black people could be neither Africans nor capitalists, on the one hand because the material basis for their existence as independent Africans had been eroded by colonial capitalism, and on the other because the new society into which they were integrated related to them as exploitable commodities understood as labour power. In these circumstances the only available means of self-defence are cultural-ideological."<sup>136</sup>

Thus it can be argued that Zionist Apostolic churches are part of African working class culture in South Africa.

Harsh political repression in South Africa, has meant a greater reliance on cultural resources as a means of survival or self-defence. As Coplan argued, indigenous churches proliferated as "Africans tried to regain some control over the process of cultural change."<sup>137</sup>

However, it cannot be stressed enough that these cultural resources are not 'pure African culture' but shaped and conditioned by industrial capitalism. Bozzoli has made this point very well when she argues that while all subordinate cultures are fought for by their adherents, they are not free to form themselves at any point - "the effects of the dominant culture, the attempts at incorporation are not to be under-estimated."<sup>138</sup>

To quote, Marx and Engels

"  
The ideas of the ruling class are in every

epoch the ruling ideas; i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it."<sup>139</sup>

The ideas of the ruling class will be essential in determining the form taken by the culture of the dominated class - the working class in this case. Harvey has argued that "The working class is part of the capitalist mode of production, and shares in the one culture that serves this mode - capitalist culture."<sup>140</sup> He argues that the term working class culture can only be used to indicate working class practices that have been developed in full consciousness to challenge the dominant class. This links back to the discussion above, on class consciousness.

In this work a broader, looser conception of working class culture will be used, in terms of "the common sense or way of life of a particular class, group or social category, the complex of ideologies that are actually adopted as moral preferences or principles of life."<sup>141</sup> McKale similarly defines culture as "the forms with which human beings produce, reproduce and sustain their lives."<sup>142</sup> Culture does not merely have to do with leisure pursuits, or art or music. Moreover, historically culture has been fused with religion.

The forms of culture are all determined or influenced by the origins, development needs and history of the capitalist system. Johnson has expressed the contradiction thus - "It is a matter of historical record that working class culture has been built around the task of making fundamentally punishing conditions more inhabitable."<sup>143</sup> However, while working class culture does not have a simple functional

relation to capitals' needs for the reproduction of labour power, "capital certainly has a stake in the forms of working class culture."<sup>144</sup> Thus there is continual struggle and conflict - "Working class culture is formed in the struggle between capitals' demands for particular forms of labour power and the search for a secure location within the relation of dependency."<sup>145</sup>

It is thus argued that it is not acculturation which determines the faith of Zionist-Apostolic churches, but the unequal incorporation into a capitalist mode of production of a black working class. Bozzoli has argued that "the cultural resilience of those being subordinated has always been substantial and has continued to be so long after the era of military conquest has passed."<sup>146</sup>

The cultural resilience of Zionist-Apostolic churches is reflected in the insistence that they are indigenous churches, or Churches of the Spirit, and not independent churches. "African Independent Churches" implies the mainline churches, the ruling class religion, as the invisible norm, the ideal value system. As Mafeje found in Langa, in terms of social stratification patterns, the Zionists "appear at the bottom of the social heap, the educated from the established churches at the top...."<sup>147</sup> Domination does not only take political and economic forms - the capitalist social formation is reproduced and maintained by domination at the cultural and ideological levels - including religion. Consequently, as it has been argued, class conflict takes both a directly political form and a cultural-ideological form. This chapter has attempted to demonstrate how the material conditions and social relations act to shape Zionist-Apostolic Churches, i.e. why did Zionist-Apostolic churches arise? It is now necessary to go on to consider how religio-cultural conflict shapes the form and faith of Zionist-Apostolic churches, i.e. why do they take the form they do? Why is it that Zionist-Apostolic

churches are the most fitting form of religion for the black working class in South Africa since the 1940's?

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## CHAPTER 6

HEALING THROUGH "UMOYA" - THE FAITH OF ZIONIST-  
APOSTOLIC CHURCHES

In the previous chapter an attempt was made to examine the rise and existence of Zionist-Apostolic churches. They were explained as an expression and a protest of the distress of the African working class in South Africa. They arose in a period of expansion of capitalist social relations throughout the South African social formation, out of the dominant contradiction between 'white' capital and 'black' labour, and the mechanisms of domination and control this gave rise to. The regions in which they arose reflect the proletarian base - primarily in the industrial areas of South Africa, particularly the Rand - but there is evidence of a growing presence in the bantustans and forced relocation areas, with possibly different ideological functions. It was asserted that at the same time as a being a means of coping with the conditions of wage labour in apartheid society, Zionist-Apostolic churches employ conceptual weapons as a form of religio-cultural protest against subordination. An attempt has been to show that in the face of extreme repression, one of the forms of resistance remaining to the working class is religio-cultural creativity and self-assertion. As Bozzoli phrased it "Cultural expressions of alternatives to white bourgeoisie hegemony abound in this situation, probably in inverse proportion to the restriction upon open political activity."<sup>1</sup>

One Zionist leader claimed that Zionists are :

"A people who would like to identify themselves.

A people who are sick and tired of being used to uphold the German culture of the Lutheran Church, or the English Culture of the Church of the Province ...."<sup>2</sup>

It is suggested that the form of Zionist-Apostolic churches, that is their faith, also reflects the extent to which they offer cultural alternatives to white, bourgeois Christian culture.

#### 6.1. THE RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL TERRAIN AS RELATIVELY AUTONOMOUS

It was argued above that religio-cultural forms cannot be dismissed merely as an opiate, that whether a particular religion is a false consciousness has to be analytically determined. That is, historical religions are not "merely reflections of underlying economic and social forces, but have become part of the tissue of capitalist society."<sup>3</sup> Throughout this thesis an attempt has been made to avoid a concept of determination which would imply a one-to-one correspondence or uni-directional causation. 'Determination in the last instance' and 'relative autonomy' are concepts which have been widely debated.<sup>4</sup> It is argued in this thesis that the material conditions and social relations of production do not determine the religious forms in any rigid sense - they limit what is possible in that social formation. "In this way the objective conditions can be said to determine cultural responses in that they limit the range of human responses that are possible within them and they exert a pressure on people who share these conditions to respond to them in a particular (and often collective) way."<sup>5</sup>

Maduro has offered useful insights from his analysis of religion in Latin American social formations.

"The conflictive structure of dominance of any class society establishes... the limits within which any religion can function in it, and the tendencies that will permeate and orientate the activity of this religion in this society. Thus this class structure will condition the possibilities, the importance,

the meaning, the thought patterns, the practices, the organisation, the development, the propagation and the possible transformations that any religion can objectively expect (and actually achieve) within such a society."<sup>6</sup>

The religious-cultural field then, is shaped and limited by the class structure and material conditions out of which it arises, as has been hypothesized in Chapters 3, 4 and 5; but at the same time it operates relatively autonomous and partially independent, shaped by its own internal conflicts and dynamics.

Maduro postulates the basis for this relative autonomy to lie in three sociological factors. 1) In the subjective dimension, in that religio-cultural systems become interiorized for a social group of believers, giving it a certain psycho-social consistency. The group will resist transformation with every change in social conditions and relations. 2) In the objective dimension, in that the set of structured, socially-shared teachings and practices also gives a religio-cultural system a certain consistency. 3) The institutional dimension, a stable body of "organized functionaries" producing, reproducing and propagating the religious system, offers further microsocial consistency. These factors assure that a religio-cultural system won't change automatically as the social structure does - rather, it has a mediate and historically variable effect on religious faith and practices.

Thus it is important to examine the religio-cultural terrain as a relatively autonomous one, and to examine conflicts, forces and dynamics internal to the religious-cultural field which in turn shape the faith of Zionist-Apostolic churches.

## 6.2. CONFLICT BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS FORMS

It was demonstrated in Chapter 1 that the belief and ritual of Zionist-Apostolic Churches in the dominant literature are characterised as a "blend of old and new" at best, and at worst, a veneer of Christianity over a base of traditional African religion - a religious expression suited to African needs. It has been argued that the concept of 'African needs' employed is problematic. These needs are defined primarily at the cultural and psychological level and are assumed to be universal. However, it is hypothesized that aside from the need for the production and reproduction of material life, cultural, ideological and religious needs are historically variable, in different social formations and different class positions within those formations. Thus an attempt has been made to demonstrate that religion and culture are historically situated and shaped by the conditions out of which they arose.

African traditional religio-cultural forms, in being relatively autonomous, could and did not disappear entirely when traditional pre-capitalist modes of production were destroyed. However, neither could they persist in the same form and with the same functions, with the progressive destruction of their material base. It was hypothesized that in South Africa, the only partial dissolution of pre-capitalist modes of production, as a basis for reproduction of migrant labour in the reserves, has made it possible for these forms to persist over a long period - albeit in a changed form.

Thus, a major hypothesis is that the faith of Zionist-Apostolics is completely new and completely different to any other religio-cultural form that has existed historically.

To return to Hall's discussions of Caribbean cultural forms, and to reiterate a point made earlier, "the formative context for these institutions is not Africa, but slavery (even where African 'survivals' and influences remain profound)".<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the religio-cultural form, Zionist-Apostolic, has been formed and shaped in relation to dominant, white institutions, and the persistence of "African elements" can not be accounted for outside the "complex and differentiated 'unity' of the ... historical formation."<sup>8</sup>

It is not a blend or synthesis of two, distinct systems, nor is it a corruption of one discrete system by another, nor is it an addition of elements of different religio-cultural systems. Rather, it is hypothesized that the faith of Zionist Apostolic churches is a religio-cultural production, arising as a form of cultural resistance in an apartheid capitalist social formation in South Africa and shaped by struggles at the religio-cultural level between dominant Christianity and the traditional religious forms of the dominated.

Any production needs raw material to be worked on to produce the final product. Thus, in examining the faith of the Zionist-Apostolics, similarities may be found with traditional African religion - but these are in fact elements that have been transformed in the process of religio-cultural production. The apparent continuities and similarities are superficial. Not only do the symbols have "new meaning" but they are combined with different and new symbols and are arising out of and being shaped by a new set of conditions and relations. "They are African to the extent that they are historically rooted in African precapitalist social formation and are forced by their positions of alienation within contemporary capitalist social relations to draw, in the struggle for survival, from the cultural resources provided by that past."<sup>9</sup>

It is of interest to note that many writers are concerned to isolate or trace elements of traditional African religion, but the Christian influence is often inadequately considered. Initially, the Christian cultural resources available to would-be Zionists was of a particular form - pentecostal Christianity. Later, many churches were formed in breakaways from mainline, orthodox churches. The importance of pentecostal Christianity is reflected in the very symbol of Zion.

The process of religio-cultural production is illustrated in the story of a 90 year old Archbishop of the Christian National Apostolic Church in Zion :

"Le Roux came to Wakkerstroom with Dowie. They began to baptise the people by immersing them three times in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as it says in the gospel... After baptism Le Roux laid hands upon the people and the Holy Spirit manifested itself by prophecies and speaking in tongues.

There was a period when Le Roux left the congregation at Wakkerstroom and went to Johannesburg ... On his return he found the Zionists wearing uniforms and carrying staffs at their services. Le Roux was furious. But it was the Spirit who taught them to pray for those who do not conceive. It was the Spirit who revealed to some people that their sickness was caused by not adhering to certain customs. They were healed by the Spirit after doing as instructed.

This was against the teaching of Le Roux. He did not want people to have contact with their ancestors or to wear white garments or to carry staffs. His objection to our ancestors was based upon a decision that was taken overseas. When King Cetyswayo went overseas the British wanted to know about our God and our ancestors spirits. It was there a decision was taken against our ancestors in order to conquer us. Whoever forsakes his ancestors is also forsaken by his ancestors and he becomes an easy prey to diseases and to all his other enemies.

The missionaries used this objection to ancestors when preaching the gospel and

instead of introducing Christ as he really is, they coupled him with their own culture and told us to forget our culture. The results are clear today. Blacks have become the slaves of whites."<sup>10</sup>

The Archbishop is illustrating the conflicts between religious forms and representatives of social classes at the religio-cultural level. However, for a full explanation it is necessary to go back to the process of conquest and the incorporation of pre-capitalist modes of production into the capitalist mode.

Maduro has argued that a social group whose religious work has been undifferentiated will tend to protect this mode of religious production from any sudden transformation. Traditional African religion was such a religion, permeating all levels of society, not just a 'religious level', and without a body of functionaries acting in the religious interest of certain classes. "In traditional Africa we have seen how culture, as a mode of life, was intimately bound up with the social fabric, which was based on man's relationship to the land."<sup>11</sup> Thus, especially if it comes from without, a new mode of religio-cultural production will be resisted and rejected by the religious community. In South Africa, this has been found historically in the rejection of Christianity as brought by the missionaries, and the adherence to traditional religious practices, particularly in the early period. The missionary involvement as the "agents of imperialism" has been discussed above.

For a group interested in monopolizing religious production, it is necessary to overcome the collective resistance and tendencies to perpetuate the traditional religious mode of production - this is "the expropriation of the means of religious production."<sup>12</sup> Thus a struggle ensues, using various strategies and depending on extra-religious factors such as military power, economic, political and juridical support. This process in South Africa was

described in Part two above. Maduro gives examples of a number of strategies used by an emergent clergy - in this case, Western Protestant missionaries - to expropriate a traditional ritual. The missionaries work was initially aimed at the annihilation of African forms, with a substitution of Christianity. This is reflected in the Archbishops claim that "The missionaries used this objection to ancestors when preaching the gospel and instead of producing Christ as he really is, they coupled him with their own culture and told us to forget our own culture."<sup>13</sup> Another mechanism is disqualification - designating the traditional rite "sorcery". As Schoffeleers phrased it "the missionary church in Africa has routinely regarded the nganga as its principal enemy."<sup>14</sup> The traditional healer or medicine man was designated 'witchdoctor' or 'sorcerer', and his/her power was to be broken, and replaced with the power of Jesus.<sup>15</sup>

While the majority of missionaries from mainline denominations did not engage in faith healing, an attempt was made to replace the healing of the nganga, in the medical work of the missions, in their hospitals and clinics. One further strategy outlined by Maduro is competition - introducing a new rite - and in broad terms this encompasses the missionaries' offers of education and its attendant privileges as well as medical services established.

Once the traditional religious system has been expropriated to whatever degree, a division of religious work occurs, of a specialized body of religious functionaries and the laity, who are "objectively dispossessed of the principal legitimate means of religious production."<sup>16</sup> The white missionary clergy appropriated the religious means of production, in that they controlled the new form, Christianity, and denigrated traditional forms. Maduro argues that, in contrast, the laity have a religious interest in obtaining religious goods with minimal concessions to the clergy, or in

re-appropriating the means of religious production. There is an internal division of the clergy - the higher clergy retains proprietorship and the lower only the use of the religious means of production. This dynamic is evident in the formation of Ethiopian churches. Even as educated, civilised Christians the early founders were denied full admittance to the ranks of ruling class religion and culture. The higher clergy, white missionaries, were reluctant to ordain, and so give control over the religious means of production, to African preachers and evangelists. They could not allow equality in the church.

Furthermore, there is conflict arising out of the internal divisions of the laity, between the dominant class, whose interest is in religious legitimation of their dominant position; and the dominated class whose demand is for compensation and for the reversal of the established order.

Thus, the social structure acts upon the religious field through the mediation of religious demands corresponding to each social class or fraction. The dominant clerical category tends to identify with the socially dominant class, both because of their structural position and their social origins. Thus, white missionaries and clergy in the mainline churches in South Africa have tended to support and identify with the ruling class, and in general, to act in the interests of the legitimation of the dominant class. The Church is defined as a set of religious agents and institutions that has acquired a monopoly of the legitimate exercise of religious power - the capability to control religious production. The religious interest of the clergy lies in control over religious goods - that is, the means of salvation.

Thus, on the religio-cultural level, Zionist-Apostolic churches represent an attempt at reappropriating the religio-cultural means of production, of controlling the means of salvation, in the face of the attempt of white missionaries

to extend hegemonic control of Western Christianity over all black South Africans, while at the same time denying them full access to both the means of production and control over religious goods, which was to remain in the hands of the white clergy. Thus Rev Mvusi claimed that "The sects thrive on ancestor worship as a way out, because Christianity is the white man's religion."<sup>17</sup> Rev Maqina wrote thus "Leaders of the independent Churches are not accepted whilst having made phenomenal strides among the non-Christian blacks. This non-acceptance has caused the Independent Churches to form their own circle and muster, as it were, their own force."<sup>18</sup>

However, it is not only as Africans but as black workers that they are "deprived ... of access to the privileged areas of capitalist culture."<sup>19</sup>

It was noted that this expropriation is not achieved once and completely, that the subjective dimension ensures that the traditional religious system continues in a latent, but changed, form and that there is a constant struggle at the religious level over the production, consumption and control of religious goods. Zionist-Apostolic faith is a religious innovation, a new religious production aimed at regaining control over the means of salvation, drawing on the cultural resources of traditional religion and Pentecostal Christianity.

Maduro notes that a religio-cultural innovation is a transformation of religious goods traditionally proclaimed, and can be adaptive or prophetic. The success of an innovation depends on extra-religious factors such as a time of general crisis for a whole society, and intra-religious factors which will determine whether it remains within the church or is excluded from it. Ethiopian, Zion City and Zionist-Apostolic churches each arose as a religio-cultural innovation at a crisis period in the social formation, with rapid transformations taking place. Conflict at the religio-

cultural level was clearly too great for them to remain under missionary hegemony.

Nevertheless, the ideological force of Western Christianity must not be under-estimated. It was noted earlier that working class culture is strongly defined by capitalist culture, and this includes Zionist-Apostolics.

The dominant religious dynamic remains ruling class dominated. Thus the missionary disdain and harsh criticism of separatism, of nativistic tendencies and syncretism has had effect. The social and cultural status of Zionist-Apostolic churches in the township appears to be low. Pauw found that in the Eastern Cape and Transkei, church and "school" people are critical of Zionists because of their "deviant beliefs and behaviour."<sup>20</sup> Zionists themselves speak of being scorned and oppressed. Mafeje claimed that Zionists are at "the bottom of the social heap."<sup>21</sup>

Nyquist found that in Grahamstown, approximately two-thirds of the upper stratum belong to the Methodist Church or Church of the Province of South Africa, "rather formalistic churches closely affiliated with the major church hierarchies of the white English-speaking community, despite the fact that there are at least 29 churches in Grahamstown locations."<sup>22</sup> In contrast 1/3 of the adults in the total community belong to these "high status churches"<sup>23</sup> as they are known. Further, the "Ethiopian and Zionist churches generally are attracting an increasing number of adherents throughout South Africa among the rank and file."<sup>24</sup>

The Christian middle class ethic is thus central in status stratification. It is also evident in the concern of Zionist-Apostolic leaders to attain church recognition, and the attendant privileges, and in the adoption of episcopal titles, such as Archbishop and President. A further indication of the strength of Christian ideology is the concern for theological education and proper training for the ministers of Zionist-Apostolics, that they may not be scorned

and discounted. Thus Rev Makhubu called for assistance from the orthodox churches, "We want to be trained, we want to know the bible, but we don't have the means. Some of the seminaries have been open to us, but we have had no education." However, he then goes on to argue that "We may not be educated but we have the wisdom God has given us ... With you it may be intellectual, with us it is spiritual."<sup>25</sup>

This leads one to consider whether Zionist Apostolics are a prophetic innovation - "adequate to express a set of religious demands thus far unsatisfied and capable of mobilizing around itself a growing assemblage of forces, lay and clerical, set to transform the prevailing structure of the religious area."<sup>26</sup>

The faith of Zionist-Apostolics does appear to subvert the hegemony of the established white church. The shift in missionary and dominant clergy attitudes, to a positive appreciation of their healing ministry and "authentic expression of African needs" can be interpreted as a shift in the strategy of expropriation, of an attempt to co-opt and so extend hegemony over the religio-cultural forms of the working class which have been clearly successful. Zionist-Apostolic churches have removed large numbers of black South Africans out of the ideological control of the mission church - both ex-church members and traditional religion adherents. They offer a means of control over one aspect of people's lives, by offering salvation through healing. It is in this that it can be hypothesized that they are a means of religio-cultural resistance of the black working class - who need healing.

### 6.3. THE FAITH OF ZIONIST-APOSTOLICS - HEALING THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

"There are different rites like healing, exorcism, isiwasho (purification) baptism and activities like consulting the prophets about our problems and speaking in tongues or

prophesying ; but there is only one Spirit who does all these things. In a way all these things are healing or salvation."<sup>27</sup>

"There will be prayer at the house of Ntuli on Wednesday again, but without the prayers of the congregation I lose all the powers of healing. The wife of Ngema at Hlimbitwa' died, but she died because she took medicines instead of prayer - Peace be in the congregation ... Peace be in Zion."<sup>28</sup>

These quotes of Zionist-Apostolic leaders, the first in contemplation of the movement, and the second during prayer in a service, reflect the central importance of healing in their faith, and gives some indication of how healing is successfully achieved.

From the existing literature it can safely be concluded that the faith of Zionist-Apostolic Churches, if it is to be expressed in a single motif, can be symbolised by "Healing". Healing and worship can not be separated. One leader pointed out that "People are ill whether mentally, physically or spiritually, they want something to be done to them and I think that's where independent churches get to win people coming from the mainline churches."<sup>29</sup> West found that 100% of the churches surveyed held special healing services and 88% had prophet healers. Over 80% of the congregations of two churches studied in depth had joined their church because they had been healed in it. A study in the Transkei found that 50% of those surveyed attributed their conversion to Christianity to healing - "I was converted due to my health which was restored."<sup>30</sup> Becken similarly argued that the missionary attraction of the churches is "mainly due to the fame of certain charismatic leaders who achieved results bordering on the miracles of the New Testament."<sup>31</sup> Kieran has centred his analysis of Zionist-Apostolic rituals on the interpretation that the band forms "a healing and curing community."<sup>32</sup>

Healing is in terms of the wholeness of the person, and

encompasses not only physical and psychological healing, but diagnosis of the causes of an illness or problem and most important, protection against future evil in whatever form.

However, it is not sufficient to hypothesize that in providing salvation through healing, Zionist-Apostolics provide a means of resisting cultural domination and protesting their subordination in the capitalist mode of production. An attempt must be made to examine why healing is the central feature of their faith. On the one level, this can be explained by examining the religio-cultural resources drawn on in the production of Zionist-Apostolic faith - on the faith healing of pentecostal christianity, and the healing focus of traditional religious forms. However, religio-cultural innovation is also structured and determined by objective conditions, by the material conditions and class structure out of which they arise and upon which they act. Thus it is necessary to examine who is healed, what kind of healing is needed and why it is needed.

### 6.3.1. ALIENATION AND HEALING

Dube has gone some way toward indicating why healing is needed when he claims that people attracted to Zionist-Apostolic churches are "conscious of the fact that industrial Durban only requires their labour and not their persons or values. They therefore find themselves alienated. They find the city to be profane. Their refuge in Zionism is an attempt to recreate African life where the human person is of supreme worth."<sup>33</sup>

J.P. Brown has provided guidelines for examining why Zionist-Apostolic members need healing, from his analysis of how the social and psychic realities of the Gospel event are essential to understanding Jesus' teaching about the kingdom. There are many parallels to the South African situation. He argues that "Jesus and the Gospels embody an unprecedented

level both of alienation and hope of poor people on the land."<sup>34</sup>

The greatest cause of alienation was the heavy taxation and rule of the Herods. The Gospels reflect three social levels - the rich, who benefit from taxation or escape it ; the hardworking poor kept on subsistence by taxation ; and the destitute, who have given up the unequal struggle, becoming the poor, the maimed, lame and blind. The multiple levels of oppression had several consequences : 1) direct physical suffering in terms of the diseases of poverty and hunger, caused by an unequal distribution of wealth.<sup>35</sup>

2) psychosomatic diseases, psychosis and demon possession which are interpreted as concrete physical symptoms generated by oppression. Here Jesus was essential as a healer, especially in casting out demons. 3) resistance movements, specifically the Zealots in Galilee. This poverty and psychic alienation in the North had "its compliment in the naked oppression and cultural-linguistic dislocation in the South"<sup>36</sup>- that is, in Jerusalem, a city under foreign military occupation.

This kind of analysis can be usefully applied to show why the faith of the Zionist-Apostolic churches with its membership based in the black working class, the victims of the capitalist mode of production, should be centred on healing.

In biblical Palestine, the greatest cause of alienation was the burden of taxation, or exaction of tribute to such an extent that people could barely subsist. In present day South Africa, alienation arises out of the exploitation of wage labour and the distribution of surplus, out of the very nature of the capitalist mode of production itself. What constitutes the alienation of labour ?

"First, the fact that labour is external to the worker, ie it does not belong to his intrinsic nature ; that in his work therefore he does not affirm himself but

denies himself, does not feel content, but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work and in his work feels outside himself. He feels at home when he is not working, and when he is working he does not feel at home. His labour is therefore not voluntary, but coerced ; it is forced labour. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need, it is merely the means to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labour is shunned like the plague."<sup>37</sup>

The following quotes from workers in metal works factories reflect how the work experience is seen as a form of slavery and an injury to the dignity of the workers, and some of the mechanisms used to cope with this.

"Working in a factory then was bad. It was an insult to dignity. I have come to hate bosses, the whites there ... you worked in the metal firm knowing that you will work for a short time and then run away to another one. I was married to my wife not to the metal firm."

M Mahlatji

"God, or if you want, your ancestors, never came with you to work. In the factory, you are alone, so your whole day's job is to get away with the least of trouble by doing less and less work. They paid 4 pence an hour, I think, those days, and you expect to work for that ?

NKadimeng<sup>38</sup>

Thus, in South Africa the black working class is alienated, as all labour in all capitalist modes of production, from its product, from its productive activity, from its human nature and from other men.<sup>39</sup> Healing can be interpreted in this theoretical sense as de-alienating activity, as curing the ills of dominated life in capitalist society. However, it is necessary to move beyond "reasoned abstractions" to historical specificities.

The conditions under which the African working class live in South Africa have been outlined in Chapter Five. In day-to-day terms this means low wages, if not unemployment, a struggle for subsistence in the face of high prices of basic commodities such as food, transport and rent, of overcrowded and unhealthy living conditions in townships - all of which give rise to widespread physical disease and suffering.

De Beer has catalogued the South African disease. The most obvious health hazard facing workers is work itself, where safety standards are low and workers are exposed to many toxic substances. "Workers go home to their overcrowded homes and dangerous streets, to costly food and all the stresses of living in a ghetto."<sup>40</sup> A measure of the health of a community is its infant mortality rate. Kiernan demonstrated that of 120 Zionist families surveyed, 71% had experienced one or more infant deaths. In Grahamstown which has one of the highest rates of unemployment of any urban area in South Africa, in a 1981 survey, 300 out of 1 000 African babies were found to have died before they were a year old.<sup>41</sup> In the bantustans, overcrowding is chronic and people cannot live by farming, nor can bantustans provide jobs for their citizens. For example, the Thomlinson commission estimated that the Nqutu district in KwaZulu, an area in which a large number of Zionist Apostolic churches are found, could support 13 000 people in subsistence agriculture, but by 1979 there were already 200 000 people living in the area. 70% of the families had incomes of less than R40 per month. General physical conditions such as lack of a water supply, sanitation and waste disposal, and the social conditions induced by migrancy, such as illegitimacy, the collapse of the family structure and violent battles over scarce resources, have "created a situation that is life-threatening."<sup>42</sup> De Beer points out that in Bantustans hunger is an overriding factor in the pattern of disease that is killing people and leads to a further cycle of hunger,

malnutrition, infection, disease and death.

Thus, in both urban areas and bantustans, the basic necessities for health - water, food, sewerage and housing - are not provided and health services are inadequate. The situation is aggravated by the state's attempt to devolve responsibility onto various homeland authorities or local authorities, administration boards or the private sector.<sup>43</sup> De Beer claims that "As black people carry the major burden of ill health, and as very few can afford private medical treatment, their situation is more serious."<sup>44</sup> In the profile of ill health and disease then, there is a very real basis for the appeal of healing. In sum, "In any society where the state of health is not high, ... people will continually endeavour to find and eliminate the cause of illness. They will be in constant search for help."<sup>45</sup>

However, besides the ill health the working class suffers due to their physical conditions of existence, J.P. Brown indicated diseases generated by oppression; and the work of healing of Zionist-Apostolic bands is centered on forms of ill health generated by psychic and cultural alienation. This is evident from their distinction between different categories of illness.

Natural diseases, those with a primarily physical causation, may be referred to medical doctors or hospitals, or treated with various home remedies, depending on their severity. Members of the Moriaans Episcopal Apostolic Church in Zion isolated minor ailments caused when one's health is neglected, for example living unhygienically, drinking bad water or smoking. Folk remedies such as ointments, patent-medicines, hot water or home-made mixtures such as Cobra and methylated spirits, are used; but "it is proper to pray when using these cures."<sup>46</sup> A study of consulting prophets in Potchefstroom revealed illnesses which had "just happened".<sup>47</sup> A typical representative case is swollen

legs, which were diagnosed as caused by standing too much at work. Other complaints were typical of work-related stress-headaches, backaches, dizziness, fatigued knees, stomach and chest ache and so on. Three consulting prophets in Soweto isolated illnesses into two categories - those with a physical problem, and those with a "less physical nature".<sup>40</sup> It was suggested, nevertheless that many problems may be expressed in physical terms, but have a social-psychological origin.

The work of Zionist-Apostolic prophets and healing communities is geared to the cure, diagnosis and prevention of diseases of a less physical nature, generated by oppression in South Africa.

To return to Mosala, "In these circumstances the only available means of self defence are culturo-ideological. Belief in God or gods becomes not a choice, it is a necessity."<sup>47</sup>

Thus, in Zionist Apostolic churches, the most important "cure" is the power of the Holy Spirit; and the most important "cause" of illness or problems is explained as either the ancestors, but more likely the main culprit is sorcery or witchcraft. Kiernan for example, argued that Zionists "spend a great deal of time and effort in waging a continuous battle against sorcery"<sup>50</sup> and are dependent on it as a device to explain illness. The conception of healing is best expressed by Bishop Ngada:

"Healing is performed in the same way as the initiator of Christianity did it. In fact, it is the Holy Spirit that reveals ways and means of healing people. People are not just healed because someone is sick with some sort of disease and then you just have to lay hands on the person; but the disease is diagnosed by the Holy Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit that gives the description of how it can be healed. There are so many diseases - some people get possessed by an evil spirit and it becomes a sickness and needs to be healed - there is no way you can diagnose if the Holy Spirit is not within you."<sup>51</sup>

In the Moriaans church, if a non-member is made ill by ancestral spirits, faith and prayer at the homestead of the sick person will be used to cure the illness. The aim is to convince the whole family that God or the Holy Spirit can protect against illness, and that the patient should join the church to remain healthy through their powers. In the Zion Jerusalem Church of the Twelve Apostles in South Africa, a woman suffering from an inability to conceive was diagnosed as having a snake in the womb sent by a past lover who had bewitched her. She needed repeated treatment by the prophet at the healing service, to conceive. Consulting prophets, after praying for patients and the laying on of hands and blessing with a healing stick, usually prescribe blessed water with various additives. An elderly man who had been a cook but had been unemployed for some time because of trouble with his feet, visited a Soweto prophet 22 times in five months. A typical diagnosis was that "He used to have Holy Spirit and sorefeet and head-ache and stomach-ache and sore back." The treatment on this occasion was "prayer, holy water, steam, bath with seven candles, enema."<sup>52</sup> He subsequently joined the prophet's church, was made a preacher, and was later found to have exceptional powers and was becoming a prophet himself. This illustrates the intertwined nature of diseases with a definite physical causation and those caused by psychic and cultural alienation, both arising out of the conditions of the black working class.

Most writers isolate newly emerging diseases related to "the problems of the modern settings of life in the mines, factories, townships and business life of the cities"<sup>53</sup> - such as unemployment, bad relationships with employers, separation of families and luck in domestic lives, court cases, success in exams and so on. Zionist-Apostolics believe that witchcraft and sorcery bedevil one's luck and success in these spheres. One author classifies these

problems as a "search for prosperity"<sup>24</sup> which the prophet can aid by means of preventative prayer or other protective remedies. For example, one prophet treats unemployment by washing, giving holy water to drink and chords of blue, green and red wool to be worn at all times. It is significant that these problems are all related to the work situation and dealing with authority, in which the black working class is in a subordinate, unequal position.

It is evident that the supernatural forces which explain disease (as demons in New Testament times) although drawn from traditional African and pentecostal Christian religious-cultural resources, have both a different form and content. The diagnosis and treatment of ill health is completely different. The clearest evidence is the absolute ban on the use of medicines, and the belief that all healing comes through the Holy Spirit. As Jesus cast out demons and healed in Galilee, so the Zionist-Apostolic prophet and her/his band heal. This link is drawn at the conceptual level by churches themselves, and adds to their powers. Further evidence of the unique form of healing is the manner in which the whole congregation is invested with healing power. Members with full status form a healing circle, surround the patient and through their prayer, dance and worship, bring down the power of the Holy Spirit to heal. This is evident in the prophet's admonition quoted earlier - "... without the prayers of the congregation I lose all powers of healing."<sup>25</sup> It can be suggested that this is one means whereby people regain control over salvation.

Thus, the kind of disease or ill health reflects on why healing is the central feature of Zionist Apostolic worship. To the sufferer, a "psychosomatic" or "psychological" disease is not any less real or painful than for example a broken leg. They reflect either directly or symbolically the alienation at various levels of the black working class. Zionist-Apostolic churches offer healing of the ill-health

incurred through their members' position in the social relations of production. Just as it was argued that Zionist-Apostolics do not have an innate need for security, it cannot be argued that they have an innate need for healing. It is held that only by examining the conditions which create a need for healing, can their faith be explained. •

Similarly, under the conditions of subordination in capitalist relations, Zionist-Apostolics, as all workers, are alienated from their species-being, from their own human nature. It is in this respect that the stress on the Zionist-Apostolic offer of "wholeness", of a sense of identity or even security, can be understood. To quote M Mahlatji - "It was an insult to our dignity."<sup>54</sup>

Becken has argued that in Zionist-Apostolic churches, the concern of the congregation is directed to the "the entire person with all his needs."<sup>57</sup> The Moriaans' total activity was interpreted as being aimed at 'impilo' - fullness of life, well being and harmony. Similarly, Dube argues that healing is "an attempt to restore man's balance with nature, the environment, his fellows and the invisible world."<sup>58</sup> He outlines their "life-enhancing activities" and "life-affirming symbolism."<sup>59</sup> However, this is placed firmly in the South African context by pointing out that "instant status is offered to persons who live under the humiliation of being regarded as non-persons and 'boys' and 'girls'."<sup>60</sup> The caring community, in which each person is important and has their specific place and role, thus also offers 'healing'.

### 6.3.2. ALIENATION AND HOPE

Jesus and the Gospels were interpreted as embodying both the alienation and hope of the poor people on the land. Zionist-Apostolic faith, at the same time as reflecting the alienation of the black working class, is an expression of

hope, of a struggle for Zion, for a better world.

Healing is the attempt of Zionist-Apostolics to gain control over salvation, as opposed to the salvation offered in the dominant white orthodox church. Salvation as preached in the mission church is centred on eternal reward or punishment in the hereafter; but Zionist-Apostolics, in their healing ministry, emphasize immediate rewards in the present. "Here in these churches we have been able to experience the healing and salvation of the Spirit now and not only in the after life."<sup>61</sup> Dube argues that the significance of the Zion ideology lies in "encouraging the participant to anticipate the future by doing something positive now."<sup>62</sup> The churches are therefore pre-occupied with life-affirming activities which seek to restore human dignity. In short, "Zionist work in Durban is a living 'No' to all life-denying forces."<sup>63</sup> It is in this that it is argued the faith of Zionist-Apostolics reflects resistance to the cultural domination of the dominant church ideology, and a protest at the material conditions of its membership.

Hope is expressed through healing, which has the promise of the transformation of present realities. Many healing practices are experienced by the members as salvation, as evidence of the Holy Spirit at work within the band for the benefit of its members. To recall the Zionist Apostolic leader who described the various rites as "in a way, all ... healing and salvation."<sup>64</sup> Everytime the cause of an evil or illness is identified by the prophet, a cure prescribed, and blessed by the Holy Spirit called down through the prayers of the congregation, the healing community, then the individual Zionist has been saved. The 'life-enhancing' activities of Zionist-Apostolic faith and ritual is aimed at wholeness and hope in the material and spiritual realm of this world - not merely in Heaven or the afterlife. This is reflected in the symbolism of Zion - "their yearning for a

return to Zion and their expectation of independence and restoration."<sup>65</sup> Dube claims that an analysis of prayers, especially those of domestics reveals "the deep felt hope that the God who delivered Israel from Egypt will one day free Africans from oppression."<sup>66</sup> The focus is on the earthly Zion, not the heavenly Zion.

Once you are a true Christian...you know what kind of life you are leading while you are living on earth, you don't wait to die....I don't say anything about death to anybody when I preach the gospel of Christ, I speak about life, because Christ himself says those who die believing in him do not die."<sup>67</sup>

In Zionist christology, the paradigm for Jesus is Healer. Zionist bands are largely leaderless, in the sense that they do not rely on a historical leader-figure (as for example Legkanyane in the Zion Christian Church and Shembe in the Church of the Nazarites.) The leaders are men and women of the people. In Soweto, West found that only 37% of leaders were full time ministers. 63% were in full-time employment - 39% in unskilled employment and 24% self-employed, for example as a shop-keeper or builder. Most had an average of five and a half years schooling - between standard 3 and 4. This echoes Sundkler's finding that leaders had an average of two to four years of school, and a job with a certain amount of responsibility, such as mine foreman, messenger and shopkeepers in the townships. Zionist-Apostolic Churches thus rely on the ideological leadership of Jesus, the Messiah. An ex-diviner member of the Moriaans Church explained the difference between diviners and prophet healers thus:

"The diviner discovers these things through dancing and dreaming. Revelations are through the ancestral spirits who work with the authority of the Evil One (Ongendawol). The ancestors are under the spirit of their world (umoya wehlabathi). The believer has his revelations through worship. Now the authority is that of Jesus. People no longer live in fear or have to pay money for their healing as in the case of diviners." (own emphasis)<sup>68</sup>

Schoffeleers has suggested that "the medicine-man has provided the major African Christological paradigm virtually from the moment Christianity was implanted."<sup>69</sup> He hypothesized that Zionism represents a direct transformation of traditional religion in the sense that it negates one part - ancestor veneration - and affirms another part - nganga activities. He isolated three different solutions found in Central Africa to the problem of witchcraft, leading to three different christologies - Christ as the slaying nganga, Christ as the slain nganga and Christ as the curing or healing nganga.

For Zionist-Apostolics, witches or sorcerers are always outsiders, non-Zionist, and are usually not specifically identified but hidden in a set of representative relationships, such as neighbour, co-worker or fellow traveller. Kiernan suggests this is because, rather than neutralising the sorcerer as such, the object is to use the power of the Holy Spirit and prayer to erect a protective boundary against witchcraft. The healing nganga of Schoffeleers paradigm makes it possible even for witches to live and function as social beings, and holds out the hope of once again returning to normality. Witches are not contained within Zionist-Apostolic bands, but it is believed, according to Kiernan, that even sorcerers act according to God's plan.

Thus, the paradigm of Christ as the curing or healing nganga seems to be paramount in the faith of Zionist-Apostolics. This is reflected in the central focus of Easter in the ritual life of the churches. "We believe in Resurrection, that is a paramount part of our Christianity."<sup>70</sup> It is ironic that many missionary writers question the Christocentricity of Zionist Apostolics, while writing so extensively on the importance of and describing minutely, the Easter festivals. All the members and all congregations assemble for the annual festival at 'headquarters', to

"commemorate the death and resurrection of our saviour Jesus Christ. This is the most important activity of our church life. Here we remember that Jesus, who is God made flesh, suffered as we also suffer. We remember that he conquered sin and suffering and rose again from the dead. And finally we remember that it is through him that we have the gift of the Holy Spirit today. It is a happy occasion for us, a great festival - much more than Christmas. We get very excited and it all makes a deep impression on us."<sup>71</sup>

The festivals are where the most important healings and renewal of the church takes place.

A name which Zionist-Apostolic churches prefer is Churches of the Spirit, because uMoya, Holy Spirit, is the force or power behind all healing - "if there is no Holy Spirit, the person is like an empty drum."<sup>72</sup>

Leaders have asserted that

"if our theology has one central focal point, then it is the Holy Spirit ...It is the Spirit who assures us the Bible comes from God. It is the Spirit who instructed our founders to found a new church. It is the Spirit who inspired our prophets, and calls our leaders to service in the Church. It is the Spirit who heals us when we are ill. We know that there are evil spirits or demons and that they can take possession of the person and that they can cause illnesses. But we believe that the Spirit of God is more powerful than any other spirit. And that is why so many of our people have demons cast out of them and are healed of their illness in exactly the same way as we read about it in the gospels."<sup>73</sup>

This strong faith reflects, and at the same time gives rise to the hope of the members of Zionist Apostolic churches.

The organizational features of Zionist Apostolic churches also serves to create hope. The congregation, as mentioned, plays a far greater part in worship and ritual than in mainline orthodox churches, especially in healing services.

Kiernan describes how in a typical worship service, the thandazo or healers trot around the 'patients', led by a prophet if there is one present, empowered to lay hands on the sick, to pray over them and bless them. These powers reside in most of the initiated and healthy members of the congregation. Healing usually takes place in a specially marked holy place, with various healing signs and symbols revealed by the Holy Spirit in dreams and visions. In the Zion Jerusalem Church of the Twelve Apostles in South Africa, for example, the leader and prophet leads the congregation in the hymn "They are saved, those of Jerusalem," while the sick and suffering enter the circle, the rest of the congregation running around them with their staffs raised, first clockwise, then anti-clockwise. This is believed to build up spiritual reserves and make the prophets healing more successful. In this manner, people take part and control the healing activity themselves. An oft-cited reason for indigenous churches is the desire for leadership. In an extended sense, this is operative here, in that people are able to take control over their own religio-cultural production. It is not only that the bishops and prophets are finding an outlet for their 'leadership drive.' Nevertheless, the bishop and prophet (whether separate people or one person) are central to the healing services, the prophet, as has become apparent because of their powers of divination, of diagnosing the cause of illness; and the bishop because of the power of holding the healing community together, as well as the important task of praying over healing remedies.

It was argued that under capitalism, people become alienated from each other. The Zionist-Apostolic band is a caring community, and its members provide material, emotional and spiritual support for each other.<sup>74</sup> Berglund, after attending a service, was impressed by the "love and concern for each others' health and prosperity"<sup>75</sup> that he experienced in the community.

To quote one leader:

"We care. If a member is ill, it is not only the priest or the leader who goes to pray there. It is the church, the whole church...they all go there and pray there. They don't only pray, we don't say 'God bless you and see to your needs,' we dip into our pockets. If rent has not been paid, we pay it. If there is no food, we see that there is food in the home. If the mother of the home is ill, we see that the women must go back and do the curing, by gathering the laundry, cleaning the house ... and the very act, whatever you do, is a healing process in itself."<sup>76</sup>

The weapons of Zion - their unique uniforms, staves, colours and symbols - can similarly be understood in relation to their contribution to the healing process. These phenomena best reflect religio-cultural innovation. As Becken phrased it "Healing is expressed in their gowns."<sup>77</sup> One leader claimed that "...olive oil, girdles, sashes, everything you see a man wearing, whether there is a moon or a star on him or nothing, there is a reason ... there is every explanation and that can be quoted by the different people from the bible."<sup>78</sup> The analysis of symbols, it is suggested, would be more fruitful if it were not in relation to differences and similarities with traditional forms, but to the present conditions of the African working class members. One example is a family who erected protective flags on their house - against being endorsed out of the urban area. These can be understood as the symbolic elements of a religio-cultural form focussed on healing, which expresses both the alienation and hope of its adherents.

#### 6.4. WOMEN IN ZIONIST-APOSTOLIC CHURCHES

Historically, the Christian church has been patriarchal and male-dominated. Zionist-Apostolic bands are unique in that

women constitute two thirds of the active membership and furthermore, a large majority of prophet leaders and healers are women. In Soweto, West found a strong pattern of the Lady Bishop, the person with the charismatic powers, being the real power behind the church. However, the Bishop was important in the formal structures of power and especially in dealing with official and public matters. It is tentatively hypothesized that women's social oppression makes the Zionist-Apostolic faith centered on healing, particularly important to them, that their involvement is an attempt to overcome the male domination experienced in every other sphere of life.

Women often bear the brunt of the material conditions which have been found to shape the need for healing of the African working class. In the rural areas particularly, women are often left behind to cope as best they can. It could be that this is one aspect that accounts for the high membership in the bantustan areas. In the urban areas, contradiction arises out of the traditional 'mother and home-maker' role, which cannot be fulfilled by women who are forced to work in order for the family to survive. "We must go out to work all day long because our men do not earn enough or cannot get any work. We must leave our small children alone at home."<sup>79</sup> Many women are forced to live in the backyards of white suburban houses where they are employed as domestic workers. Their involvement in the Zionist-Apostolic church, and especially in the manyanos, is a means of resisting or coping with this alienation.

This is clearly illustrated by the case of the Women's Association of the African Independent Churches, founded in 1967, which "represents initial efforts to break out of traditional functions in order to confront difficult issues in a more revolutionary way."<sup>80</sup> A focus of their work was literacy - and in this respect Van Wyk noted that many women leaders in Zionist Apostolic churches would not have been

able to attain similar positions in mainline churches "vanwee 'n agterstand in geletterdheid."<sup>81</sup> Thus, "The Women of the African Independent Churches have given notice that they are no longer prepared to live in poverty and ignorance."<sup>82</sup>

"The Church is one of the institutions that exploit women without shame. They do all the work ... They do fund-raising, keep the church clean, teach Sunday School, do social activities etc., but when it comes to decision making, they are excluded, it is the men who do it."<sup>83</sup> This was said by a woman involved in the mainline church. It is noticeable that the higher the status of an indigenous church, the more 'respectable' it is, the more property and wealth it has - the more marginal the role of women. For example, in Bhengu's church and Zion Christian Church, the administrative hierarchy, leadership and positions of power are all male-dominated. In Limba's Church of Christ this was taken to the extent that all unmarried girls lived in special quarters guarded by church officials.

In Zionist-Apostolic churches, not only do women take leadership with their prophetic powers, but as the majority of the healing community, they share actively in worship and ritual. One of the most common problems healed is infertility, which reflects the kinds of social and cultural pressures on women specifically, dealt with in Zionist-Apostolic churches.<sup>84</sup> This is by no means to suggest that Zionist-Apostolics are at the forefront of the women's liberation movement. It is merely posited that here black working class women, particularly, find a faith that expresses and protests their distress, that embodies their alienation and hope.

## 6.5. ZIONIST-APOSTOLICS AND THE MAINLINE MISSION CHURCH - SOME CONTRADICTIONS

In sum, healing is the central feature of the faith of Zionist-Apostolic churches, because it overcomes the physical, psychic and cultural alienation arising out of the conditions of the black working class, and in providing control over the means of salvation, offers hope.

How has religious conflict been played out? It was noted that historically, mission churches regarded the nganga as their principal enemy and attempted to eradicate witchcraft beliefs and superstitions. Healing in terms of Western scientific medicine - focused on curative hospital-based treatment of physical ailments - was an important feature of missionary ideology. The mission hospital, usually located in remote rural areas where no other such alternatives existed, was a focus of the mission station and its outreach. Gaitskell has chronicled the history of women missionary medical work among black women and babies, on the Rand between the wars, and the kind of values imparted in the stress on educating African women for motherhood.<sup>65</sup> Zwi similarly argued that missions favoured female patients and concentrated on providing an attractive service for childbirth, "so as to deliver as many new candidates as possible for baptism."<sup>66</sup> The extent to which missionaries misunderstood indigenous African approaches to disease is evident in the comments of one hospital visitor - "some of the Christians are so dear and innocent, they even say grace devoutly over medicine."<sup>67</sup> Gaitskell found in the Methodist and Anglican manyanos "... a persistence of traditional cosmology alongside its apparently slight manifestation in faith-healing and witchcraft repudiation of the 'Zionist' sort."<sup>68</sup>

It is interesting to note that after the Second World War, there was a growth of missions, and according to Zwi, by the mid-1960's, over 100 mission hospitals around the country provided more than 50% of the total number of hospital beds available to Africans in South Africa. (Many of these hospitals have since been handed over to bantustan governments for administration.) However, this growth in mission health services accompanied the shift in mission attitudes towards viewing Zionist-Apostolic churches as authentic African Christianity. Schoffeleers has also noted "the massive pastoral, liturgical and theological efforts at indigenizing missionary Christianity and the growing engagement in faith-healing."<sup>87</sup> As it was explained above, this is the established churches attempt to prevent the religio-cultural forms of the subordinated classes from becoming autonomous, from subverting their hegemony.

Many African members of mission or orthodox mainline churches are attracted to the Zionist-Apostolic healing ministry.

Archbishop Ngada was amused to claim that

"...some people have got these little ropes around their waists. They are Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists during the day, but they go nicodemiously to the African indigenous churches, during the night....Because he is sick, his church cannot help him, but the African indigenous churches can help that person, during the night. We know of witches who go during the night, we don't know of normal people doing such business in the night .... The African indigenous churches are no witches, they are the people of God, the spirit of God is helping them to help the children of God to overcome their sicknesses ... Some of these people from these other churches do leave their churches, because there is not only the healing, there is also the Christian Gospel, which is being preached without any strings attached."<sup>88</sup>

This illustrates the pervasiveness of dominant white Western Christian ideology and values, through black and white

culture. For members of mainline churches, or perhaps no church at all, Zionist-Apostolic churches are to be publically avoided. They are believed to display shades of "heathenism", of the pagan past and thus are not "proper", "respectable" Christian churches.

An example of this dynamic is Ma Radebe, the faith healer of Cancele, who left the Methodist Church, when she discovered her healing powers, to form her own church. However "after she had been made to believe it was wrong"<sup>91</sup> to establish her own church, she joined the Anglicans. The Anglican church initially accepted her as a faith healer within their fold, but later became disturbed by her methods and preachings, and attempted to curtail her influence and "suspect practices." Similarly, a consulting prophet in Soweto had been a practising healer in the Anglican church, but was forced to leave because of her healing activities. She has retained many of her patients from the Anglican church, some following her to join her church, and others consulting her from within the Anglican church. This prophet was successful in resisting cultural domination, though some of her patients clearly have "divided loyalties." The importance of healing is reflected in the case of Bhengu's Church, which flourished in the 1950's in East London, particularly among men, and those identified culturally as 'Red', but who were already proletarianized. Waite claims that "After he stopped healing the rate of his conversions dropped."<sup>92</sup>

The cultural domination of Christian ideology extends right through social relations. Farrand concluded that there is a clear trend away from reliance on traditional healers due to Western condemnation.<sup>93</sup> From a comparison of indigenous healers and Zionist-Apostolic prophets, she concluded that prophets are preferred by "semi-urbanized" miners, because their healing has a higher status and social respectability, as Christian healing. On a more practical level, extremely

significant for the working class, this is also because there are no charges. The ex-diviner quoted above reiterated this - "People no longer have to pay money for their healing as in the case of diviners. They are free to give presents if they wish."<sup>74</sup> The Zionist link with Christianity, perceived as the powerful ideology of the white ruling class, also attracts non-Christians. Booyens found that in Potchefstroom people choose to visit a prophet rather than indigenous healers, particularly when prosperity and luck in the context of relations with whites as employers and officials are at stake. He postulates that the prophet's claim to be "in more or less direct relationship with the powerful Holy Spirit, being also part of the religious claims made by Whites"<sup>75</sup> plays a role in the choice. However, Rev. Makhubu explained it thus -

"we care for the lonely, for migrant labourers who live in hostels, they find freedom when they come to our churches. The tension which has built up through the week, through the months away from home, it is eased, they let off steam when they get to these churches."<sup>76</sup>

"The Government doesn't seem to bother so much about that, as a matter of fact they agree, they say "yes, separate!"<sup>77</sup> It is suggested that Zionist-Apostolic churches have grown so rapidly at the expense of both dominant mission churches and those maintaining traditional religio-cultural forms, because they are a religious innovation of the black working class, a form of reappropriating control over the religious means of production from the ruling-class religio-cultural forms. This conflict is by no means played out, as evidenced by the contradictions outlined above.

It is hypothesized that in a creative, consistent manner the faith of Zionist-Apostolics, centred on healing, relieves the alienation of the black working class; and provides hope by resisting or posing an alternative to the cultural domination of Western Christianity. In this way, they offer a

religious means of control over people's lives - in an extremely repressive capitalist social formation.

As Rev. Xulu phrased it "In South Africa, there is freedom of worship, and perhaps it is the only area of life that is free to a black man."<sup>90</sup> The question remains to what extent Zionist-Apostolics can translate this religio-cultural control or resistance into real control over their own lives.

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9. Mosala, I.J. op. cit., p7
10. Speaking for Ourselves p17-18
11. Ngugi wa Thiongo "Towards a National Culture" Homecoming, Heinemann, 1978, p11
12. Maduro, O. op. cit., p89
13. see note 10
14. Schoffeleers, M. "African Christology" unpublished paper Afrika Studicentrum, Leiden 16/1/1981, p13
15. See the Archbishops claim that the missionaries acted against the ancestors "in order to conquer us."
16. Maduro, O. op. cit., p92
17. Mvusi, J. op. cit., p180
18. Maquina, op. cit., p7
19. Mosala, I.J. op. cit., p8
20. Pauw, B. A. Christianity and the Xhosa Tradition, Oxford University Press 1975, p300
21. Mafeje, A. op. cit., p182
22. Nyquist, T. "African Middle Class Elite" Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1969-1970, p210
23. Nyquist, T. ibid., p208
24. Nyquist, T. ibid., p206
25. Makhubu, R. Panel of Independent Church Leaders at Christianity in the Southern African Context, Grahamstown 28/1/85 to 1/2/85
26. Maduro, O. op. cit., p108
27. Speaking for ourselves, p28
28. Berglund, A. I. "Rituals of an African Zionist Church," p2
29. Panel of Independent Church Leaders Grahamstown, Jan. 1985
30. Pretorius, H. "Some beliefs and related practices in a Transkeian Zionist Church," p12
31. Becken, H. J. "Healing in the AIC'S," p239
32. Kiernan, J. P. "The Work of Zion ..." p350
33. Dube, S. W. D. "The African Concept of Life as reflected in the Zionist Church movements with special reference to Zionist Churches in the Durban urban and peri-urban areas", unpublished M. Litt. thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1984,

p40

34. Brown, J.P. "Techniques of Imperial Control: The background to the Gospel Event" Radical Religion, II (2&3), 1975, p73

35. It makes an interesting comparison to note that one of the most common diseases was trachoma, a blinding eye disease which occurs where hygiene and sanitation are poor - which De Beer found to be rampant in Gazankulu, for example

36. Brown, J.P. op. cit., p82

37. Marx, K. Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Progress Publishers, Moscow and Lawrence and Wishart. London 1977, p66

38. Quoted in Sitas, A. "From Reluctant Slavery to a Black Flood" unpublished paper, African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, 2/8/1982, p19

39. Estranged labour, according to Marx, has a number of aspects - the relation of the worker to the product of labour as an alien object, which is at the same time the relation to the external world as an alien world opposed to him; the relation of labour to the act of production within the labour process, which entails a self-estrangement as the worker relates to his own activity as an alien activity not belonging to him; man's species being is thus turned into a being alien to him - it estranges from man his own body, as well as external nature and his spiritual aspect, his human aspect; a consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labour, from his life activity, from his species-being is the estrangement of man from man. Alienation is thus always self-alienation. ["The alienation of man (his self) from himself (from his human possibilities) through himself (through his own activity)" A Dictionary of Marxist thought, p10] It is also an appeal for de-alienation, for a revolutionary change of the world. Marx, K. Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts.

40. De Beer, C. op. cit., p35

41. It is not surprising that Edwards has found a high incidence of amafufunya possession and healing specialists in the Grahamstown area - see Edwards, F. "Amafufunyana spirit possession: A report on some current developments." Religion in South Africa, 5 (2) July 1984, pp32-16

42. De Beer, C. op. cit., p54

43. See Zwi, A. "Fragmenting Health in the Homelands," 'Homeland' Tragedy - function and farce, DSG/SARS Information Publication 6, 1982

44. De Beer, C. op. cit., p37

45. Pretorius, H. "Some beliefs," p1

46. Pretorius, H. ibid., p13

47. Booyens, J.H. "The etiological framework and the diagnosis of illness by prophets and sangomas: A comparison" unpublished paper presented at Symposium New Religious Movements and Independent Churches in Southern Africa, University of Zululand, South Africa Feb.1985.

48. West, M. Bishops and Prophets, p105

49. Mosala, I.J. op. cit., p8

50. Kiernan, J.P. "The Role of the Adversary in Zulu Zionist

Churches" unpublished paper to Symposium, New Religious Movements and Independent Churches, University of Zululand, South Africa, Feb. 1985, p3

51. Rev. Ngada Panel of Independent Church leaders - Chrisitanity in the Southern African Context, Grahamstown 28/1/85 - 7/2/85

52. West, M. Bishops and Prophets, p 110-111

53. Becken, H.J. op. cit., p241

54. Booyens, J.H. op. cit., p12

55. See note 27

56. See note 38

57. Becken, H.J. "Healing . . . .," p237

58. Dube, S. op. cit., p47

59. Dube, S. op. cit., p47

60. Dube, S. op. cit., p65

61. Speaking for ourselves, p28

62. Dube, S. op. cit., p99

63. Dube, S. op. cit., p99

64. See note 27

65. Dube, S. op. cit., p33

66. Dube, S. op. cit., p33

67. Rev. T. Ntongana Panel of Independent Church Leaders

68. Pretorius, H. op. cit., 15

69. Schoffeleers, M. op. cit., p1

70. Speaking for ourselves, p30

71. Speaking for ourselves, p30

72. Panel of Independent Church Leaders

73. Speaking for ourselves, p27

74. For a comparison with umgalelo societies within the Anglican Church, see Kokoali, C. and Hodgson, J. "Mutual Aid Societies, Independency and the Church," Symposium, New Religious Movements and Independent Churches, University of Zululand, South Africa, 1985

75. Berglund, A.I. op. cit., p5

76. Rev. Makubu, Panel of Independent Church Leaders

77. Becken, H. op. cit., 238

78. Panel on Independent Church Leaders

79. Te Siepe, E. "AIC Women hit their Stride" Pro Veritate 15/2/1970, p13

80. See for example a study of Apostolic churches in Botswana in which women play a central role. L. Lagerwerf, "They Pray for You . . . ." Independent Churches and Women in Botswana. IIMO Research Pamphlet no. 6 Beugelsdijk, Leiden 1979/1980

81. Thetele, C.B. op. cit., p151

82. Van Wyk, J. op. cit., p972

83. Te Siepe, E. op. cit., p13; see also Brandel-Syrier, M. "The Role of Women in African Independent Churches" Missionalia (13) 1983, pp13-18

84. Makhene, C "The Oppressive Nature of Social Structures and Aspects of Culture, Tradition and Customs," Report on Women's Struggle in South Africa. Feminist Theology Conference 31/8 - 2/9/1984 Hammanskraal, Institutue for Contextual Theology.

85. Gaitskell, D. "Women, Religion and Medicine in

Johannesburg between the Wars." African Studies Institute, University of Witwatersrand 19/8/1982

86. Zwi, A. op. cit., p33

87. Gaitskell, D. op. cit., p5

88. Gaitskell, D. op. cit., p9

89. Schoffleers, M. op. cit., p15; see also an attempt at pointing to the Church's task in healing, Msomi Rev. V V. "Illness and Health in Zulu Thinking" Credo, 18 (2) 1971, pp10-13

90. Bishop Ngada Panel of Independent Church Leaders

91. Hodgson, J. "The Faithhealer of Cancele: Some Problems in Analysing Religious Experience among Black People" Religion in Southern Africa 4 (1), 1983, pp19-33

92. Waite, G. "The Socio-political role of healing churches in South Africa," Ufahamu, 6 (3), 1976, p63. For further information on Bhengu's Church, see Dubb, A. A. Community of the Saved. An African Revivalist Church in the Eastern Cape Witwatersrand University Press, Johannesburg, 1976

93. Farrand, D. "Traditional Healing Practices and the role of the 'umprofeti' in the AIC" unpublished paper to Symposium on New Religious Movements and Independent Churches in Southern Africa, University of Zululand, South Africa, Feb. 1985.

94. Pretorius, H. op. cit., p15

95. Booyens, J.H. op. cit., p15

96. Rev. Makhubu Panel of Independent Church Leaders

97. Rev. Xulu Panel of Independent Church Leaders

98. Rev. Xulu Panel of Independent Church Leaders

PART III : ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION

CHAPTER 7

RELIGION, CLASS AND CULTURE : SOME CONCLUSIONS

Before drawing conclusions, the essential point must be stressed that the work in the preceding chapters is an initial exploration of indigenous churches, particularly Zionist-Apostolic churches, in South Africa, using a historical sociological perspective.

It is primarily an attempt to establish a new framework. Therefore, the work is schematic and attempts to isolate broad trends. Generalisations, sometimes very broad, have been made, perhaps overlooking finer distinctions. It was not possible to examine all areas in sufficient depth, and some could merely be pointed to. In contrast, scholars working from within the dominant functionalist framework can assume a shared explanation for indigenous churches and can rely on an existing body of research. It is thus possible for them to concentrate on a specific issue, for example, the symbolism of healing rituals, and tease out finer distinctions and details.

The work in this thesis is of a different order.

A completely new problematic was brought to bear on the existing data, collected from within another problematic. Historical sociological relationships and interconnections had first to be established, to create order out of the web of causes, reason, issues, typologies and concepts that have come to surround indigenous churches. This work is based on an awareness that outlining the contradictions and underlying

economic forces is not sufficient explanation for their expression in different forms of human action, in religious form - it is rather a necessary condition for building up an explanation.<sup>1</sup> The scope of this thesis - spanning approximately one hundred years, encompassing varied religious forms and differing class bases at differing points in the development of the South African social formation - meant that it was only possible to attempt a preliminary explanation of Ethiopian and Zion City churches.

Essentially, a separate analysis in the manner of the attempted explanation and analysis of Zionist Apostolic churches in chapters four and five, should be undertaken for each period and type of church isolated.

Bearing this limitation in mind, how have indigenous churches been illuminated by using a historical materialist perspective?

Religion and culture, it is held, are tied "inextricably to the conflict between classes, to the attempts by some to dominate others, and to the response of the subordinated to these attempts."<sup>2</sup> In the most general terms, it is hypothesized that Ethiopian churches, Zion City churches and Zionist-Apostolic churches are each the religious response - the expression and the protest - of a specific group of Africans, in different historical periods, as the process of colonial conquest and the articulation of the capitalist mode of production and pre-capitalist mode of production entailed their progressive dispossession of the means of production, their proletarianization and incorporation as alienated wage labour into capitalist social relations, and the dominant Western Christian culture and ideology.

## 7.1 MAJOR INSIGHTS

The first major insight arising from the use of a historical perspective, therefore, is that Ethiopian and Zionist

churches are not only different religiously, but they differ in terms of their historical origins and class base. Ethiopian churches, it was hypothesized in chapter three, arose at the turn of the century when the dominant contradiction was between pre-capitalist modes of production and a nascent capitalist mode of production. Their leadership represented an emergent African petty bourgeoisie and wealthy peasantry, directly linked to the ruling classes of the pre-capitalist social formation (the chiefs), who had been able to respond favourably to mercantile capital relations, and in the process had adopted the dominant ideology of 'Christianity and Civilisation'. It is argued that the contradiction between the experience of mining capital - in which Africans were incorporated as unequal labour on the mines or in domestic service - and mercantile social relations - in which Africans could be equal citizens once educated, christianised and civilised into white western values and ways - gave rise to Ethiopian churches. Ethiopian churches may be described as proto-nationalist, in that they were an assertion of African pride and the equality of Africans with European colonisers. They took on a religious form because the dominant ideological instrument of colonialism was the mission church, which served to reproduce unequal social relations, both in the social formation and within the church itself. This is in line with Engels' formulation that where religious thought styles dominate an epoch, protest will be phrased in religious terms.<sup>3</sup> Africans were denied control over the religious means of production. Most were evangelists and were ordained only after many years, if at all, even though they were responsible for the majority of new converts. They had minimal power in church structures and hierarchy, and no control over church funds collected through their own efforts. Thus we find missionaries at that time complaining that African ministers and evangelists left the church because they would not be subject to discipline. In this way, the 'causes' of Ethiopianism advanced in the

literature, such as a desire for leadership, can be understood, not merely as unconnected facts listed or lumped together, but within a total explanation, which attempts to demonstrate, for example, why there was a desire for leadership.

Only the period in which Ethiopian churches arose and in which they were the most fitting form of religion, was discussed. In subsequent periods, Ethiopian type churches continued to be formed and to function; but as a religious movement, it had ceased to be the "best or only available reaction". The question remains as to the development of Ethiopian churches after this period. How, if at all, has their form changed? What is the class base of their members - who do they attract? What kind of impact do they have on social relations? How has this been influenced by their historical origins?

These questions fall outside our scope, but clearly require investigation.

The second major finding is that Zionism itself is not a static cultural form, but developed with the process of proletarianization, taking different forms in different regions and periods as the capitalist social formation developed.

Thus, in chapter four the period between the early 1900's and the 1930's is identified as a key period in which religious-cultural innovations occurred, as the process of proletarianization intensified.

The origins of 'Zionist' churches are to be found in this period, but it was argued that Zionist-Apostolic churches, as small healing bands, were not yet the 'best reaction' or most fitting form of religion'. In the cities, amongst the small proletariat, a number of churches, characterized as Pentecostal Ethiopians were found, in which secession occurred from faith-healing pentecostal churches, such as the

Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion and the Apostolic Faith Mission.

The differing regional experiences of conquest, dispossession and articulation with the dominant capitalist mode of production shaped the various forms taken by Zion City churches, hypothesized to be the dominant religious-cultural reaction of peasants attempting to resist proletarianization. In some cases, the cultural resources of pre-capitalist modes of production have been drawn on extensively. One example is Shembe's church of the Nazarites in Zululand and Natal, where there was a stronger tendency to conserve African pre-capitalist social formations than in other regions, and where the Zulu royal family retained a powerful grip on the popular imagination.

In the Transvaal and Natal there was a powerful, latent cultural nationalism in the creation of elaborate Bible teachings, which asserted that God had made a special revelation to black people alone, through the prophet of the church. This was interpreted as an attempt to retain or re-appropriate control over the religious means of production, by peasants who were increasingly being forced off the land and losing access to their means of production, and at the same time a reaction to the cultural domination of the mission church. The leaders of these churches were strong messianic figures, whose material and spiritual prosperity reflected the prosperity of the church and its members, as did the chief in the tributary mode of production.

The key motif of the period was identified as 'Land'. The form taken in the Cape was millenarian, and influenced particularly by Garveyite ideology. These different regional manifestations of the dominant religious process were outlined and presented schematically, revealing this to be a particularly important period for future research, and highlighting the importance of regionally-based research. As

Bozolli phrased it, the need is to "understand what is unique and what is not unique about those communities; to compare and contrast the class experience of the largest classes with those of the smallest; to understand how the massive processes of capital accumulation on a national and international scale may take on specific regional forms. If these kinds of factors are taken into account our understanding of the cultures which emerge from such communities will inevitably take a more sophisticated form".<sup>4</sup>

The third major finding is that Zionist-Apostolic churches have grown as the black working class has been formed and formed itself in South Africa, and it is hypothesized that this must be the **basis** for explaining their origins, their widespread support and the form taken by their faith.

In chapter five, it was demonstrated that Zionist Apostolic churches arose in their characteristic form in the period of expansion of capitalist social relations throughout the social formation, out of the dominant contradiction between white capital and black labour. In this regard, they are found where the African proletariat is found - not only as expected in the urban areas, but increasingly in the rural areas and bantustans, among those who, to all intents and purposes, form a rural proletariat - the unemployed, those in resettlement camps and those in overcrowded bantustans. The question remains whether and in what way, Zionist-Apostolics in the rural areas differ from those in the urban areas; but the available evidence suggests that the basic form of a small healing band is common, and that differences in ritual may be ascribed to individual innovation.

It was argued that it was essential to understand the mode of production and class conflict which acted to limit and shape the form taken by the faith of Zionist-Apostolics. In a situation such as South Africa with severe political

repression, often the primary means of self defence and resistance open to the working class are cultural and ideological - hence Zionist-Apostolic churches arise as an expression and protest of the distress of the African working class. However, class conflicts are also waged on the cultural-ideological domain. The faith of Zionist-Apostolics reflects the outcome of such a struggle (between the dominant religion of western Christian missionaries, and the traditional religious forms of the subordinated) over the religious means of production, over salvation. Their faith is a religious cultural innovation of the dominated, which succeeds in subverting the hegemony of Western Christianity, in reappropriating the means of salvation, in the form of their healing ministry.

Thus chapter six attempts to show why the faith of Zionist-Apostolics takes the form it does - why healing makes them the most fitting form of religion for the African working class in South Africa. Johnson is correct in arguing that "the conditions of existence of classes profoundly shape class cultures, less by specifying "interests", more by supplying a kind of agenda with which the culture must deal".<sup>5</sup> It was hypothesized that as opposed to the idea that this faith meets universalised needs of 'Africans' or facilitates adaptation to urban life, or acculturation, Zionist-Apostolic faith meets the need of the black working class for healing, created by the alienation of capitalist social relations, of life as the 'poorer than poor'. The form of Zionist-Apostolic healing was thus examined in relation to the "agenda" with which it has to deal to be meaningful and widely supported. It was suggested that at the same time the faith of Zionist-Apostolics offers hope for the present and future improvements of these alienating conditions. Directly or symbolically, they deal with people's problems and promise salvation here and now, through healing - in opposition to the faith of the dominant mission church and its Western Christian culture.

## 7.2 THE SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION DEBATE

How does this approach contribute to the sociology of religion in general?

Noting how the "ethnographer, the religious phenomenologist, and the student of comparative symbolics have discovered mines of new material in the minutiae of the artefacts and action patterns of participants in the new movements", Brian Wilson correctly claims that for the sociologist, these minute details are not ends in themselves. "Their full value is realised only if they contribute to the understanding of wider social process, which embrace, but which also transcend, specifically religious phenomena".<sup>6</sup>

With this kind of understanding, the functionalist theories of 'religion and social change', of 'modernisation' and central explanatory concepts such as 'deprivation theory' were criticised in chapter one. It was argued that they were inherently ahistorical with an idealist conception of culture and, in effect, served as bourgeois ideology. A complete theoretical break was thus suggested, in an attempt to renew the study of indigenous churches, and by extension, the study of religion in the Third World.

The extent to which this attempt succeeds or fails can not yet be conclusively determined. Research done from within the problematic which can serve to substantiate and furthermore, extend and refine the central hypotheses of this work, is needed. Engagement on the theoretical level, both within the Marxist problematic and with those scholars critical of its premises and explanatory concepts, is essential.

For the moment then, we may only give an indication of the

contribution of a historical sociological approach to an adequate explanation of religious forms.

Sociologists of religion like Wilson, Turner, Robertson and Yinger<sup>7</sup> (amongst others) have been concerned to investigate "what accounts for new religious groups in society". The focus has been to a large extent on religious forms which have emerged in the colonial and neo-colonial eras in the Third World. One strand of thought has been concerned to study millenarian movements, for example.<sup>8</sup> In the present context, the literature survey revealed the basic problematic to be phrased thus - "why have indigenous churches proliferated on so large a scale in South Africa?".

The key explanatory concepts however, derive from what may broadly be labelled church-sect theory. This originated from the work of Weber and Troeltsch,<sup>9</sup> who attempted to distinguish types of religious groups. Niebuhr<sup>10</sup> developed this distinction into a theory that sects, breaking away from the church, recruit their membership from the economically deprived and are a result of religious dissent and social unrest. In providing a channel through which members transcend their feelings of deprivation, by replacing them with feelings of religious privilege, sects function to contain incipient social protest. The built-in puritanical ethic of sects means that over time they transform themselves into churches. This in essence, subject to differing interpretations, reformulations and refinements, sums up dominant 'church-sect' and 'deprivation' theory.

One such variation has been developed by Glock and Stark, who propose that a necessary condition for the rise of new religious movements is a felt sense of deprivation - "any and all of the ways that an individual or group may be, or feel, disadvantaged in comparison either to other individuals or groups or to an internalized set of standards".<sup>11</sup> Five types of deprivation are analytically and empirically distinguished - economic, social, organismic, ethical and

psychic. While an individual or group may experience more than one type of deprivation, one type is likely to be dominant in particular situations. Various types of deprivation give rise to different organisational forms such as sects, cults, healing movements, churches etc, with differing expectations of success and longevity. How does this explanation as an example of explanations current in the sociology of religion compare with the explanations for Zionist-Apostolic churches offered above? Accepting their definition of a felt sense of deprivation for the moment, we can attempt to categorise Zionist-Apostolics. In terms of a single category or pure type, they would be classified as a healing movement, responding to an organismic deprivation, tending to become cult-like or to be destroyed by medical discoveries. They could however be characterised as a sect, responding to economic deprivation, tending to become extinct or transformed into a church as economic status improves; or a cult, responding to psychic deprivation, in which case total success would result in extinction through transformation, or failure due to extreme opposition.

Now although Glock and Stark point out that these are not pure types, they do not provide any guidelines for deciding which, if any, is the dominant form of 'deprivation' in such a case. More important, if a group is experiencing more than one form of 'deprivation', how are these 'deprivations' related to each other?

It is here that historical sociological analysis, with its emphasis on historical connections, has made a contribution. Rather than a one-dimensional blue-print or typology which is intended to encompass and explain all religious movements, but which logically and practically can not, a basic premise is that "we cannot prejudge the particular place, functions and traits of a particular religion within a specific social formation".<sup>12</sup> It was argued that a universal theory of

religion is not possible, that at best we may use "reasoned abstractions" without which we could not think religion, as a guide to the analysis of real historical religions.

Knowledge of the existing modes of production in a given social formation is essential to evaluate the place, influence and perspective of particular religious forms and contents. This enables us to focus on a specific period and type of church, and to analyse the dialectical relationship between the material conditions which set the possibilities and limits out of which a specific form of church can arise, and the functions of that church in the complex unity of the social formation.

Using this perspective, different "deprivations" can be clearly related to one another, and it becomes apparent how they interact in shaping the form of Zionist-Apostolics. Moving beyond classification and typologies, we can begin to analyse the process of religious innovation, the process which leads to new religious groups arising in society. The Zionist Apostolic churches can be explained as arising out of material conditions in which Africans, formerly organised into pre-capitalist social formations with religious forms centred on reciprocal relationships and the maintenance of community, after a long and painful process were incorporated into a single social formation dominated by capitalist relations of production. Here their members exist as politically rightless, racially oppressed, alienated wage-labour - in Glock and Stark's terms, economic deprivation - dominated by a western Christian culture and ideology - social deprivation and psychic deprivation. The conditions of life as the working class, both in terms of 'social being' and in terms of 'social consciousness', created a 'need' for healing - organismic deprivation. In this situation the only means of self defence and protest available was religious cultural. Religious cultural production, the innovation of the faith of Zionist-Apostolics, had to draw on available raw materials, on the

cultural resources of African traditional religion and pentecostal Christianity. Religious production always "transforms a previously given material: it is not creation *ex nihilo*."<sup>13</sup> As Engels argued "Religion, once formed, always contains traditional material, just as in all ideological domains traditions forms a great conservative force. But the transformations which this material undergoes spring from class relations, that is to say, out of the economic relations of the people who execute these transformations. And here that is sufficient."<sup>14</sup>

Thus a major advantage of historical sociological analysis is that in "searching out the roots of religion...not only in human nature but in society"<sup>15</sup> (own emphasis), it enable us to move beyond the confusing variety of religious forms, and beyond the difficulties of classifying and explaining each historical variant in terms of static **typologies**. By understanding historical interconnections and historical processes, and bringing them in as a central feature of explanations - not merely as a backdrop to a universal definition of religion - we are better equipped to postulate 'what accounts for new religious groups in society'.

Thrower has argued that the Marxist analysis of religion must be taken seriously by those seeking a naturalistic explanation of religion - "it offers the most thorough and consistent naturalistic account so far available of the phenomenon of religion".<sup>16</sup> It is hoped that the analysis of indigenous churches presented in this work has gone some way towards demonstrating this.

### 7.3 RELIGION AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Thrower went on to argue that while Marx's own writing on religion was characterised by "an attitude of positive empathy",<sup>17</sup> the same can not be said of much other Marxist

analysis of religion.

It must be stressed that this study has not engaged in theoretical debate over the strengths and weaknesses of the historical materialist paradigm itself. It has adopted the perspective in an attempt to move beyond the inadequacies of functionalist explanations.

However, within Marxist scholarship, religion has often not been treated as a phenomenon worthy of study, as a part of material reality. Formulations such as religion is the 'opium of the people', or assumptions that religion is a form of false consciousness, an inversion of the real world, have often lead to the complete dismissal of the importance of religious processes and conflicts in the social formation. Scholars have taken too literally Marx's statement that "for Germany the criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism".<sup>18</sup>

However, as shown in chapter one, this tendency is being overcome, and a number of scholars have attempted to work through a historical materialist analysis of religious-cultural forms. Thus, an attempt has been made to "ascribe specific religious forms of alienation to the specific forms of production, productive relations and man's relationship to nature, found in the successive stages of history".<sup>19</sup> Extending beyond the field of religion, there is an increasing focus on aspects of ideology, culture and consciousness.<sup>20</sup> It is argued that scholars working in this area would benefit from taking religious phenomena seriously into account. For the findings of this thesis point to and raise a number of questions which could add to the analysis of scholars using a historical materialist analysis.

Many scholars working within a Marxist problematic believe that "the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change its".<sup>21</sup> If

indigenous churches are studied as an integral element of the social formation, a new and vital focus in the analysis of the forms of class consciousness and their adaptive or revolutionary potential becomes evident. The very size of the Zionist-Apostolic movement indicates their significance. They are a religious-cultural form with which millions of black working class South Africans "produce, reproduce and sustain their daily lives".<sup>22</sup>

West, in analysing the contribution of Marxist analysis of culture and religion to black theology, articulates a typical plea for the need "to acknowledge the positive liberating aspects of popular culture and religion, and their potential for fostering structural social change",<sup>23</sup> and not only as instruments of domination, vehicles of pacification.<sup>24</sup>

This study, was not aimed specifically to answer questions as to how indigenous churches can provide "a basis for the growth and organisation of a counter-hegemony - a set of political attitudes and practices capable of challenging the structure of oppression in class society".<sup>25</sup>

Nevertheless, the work in the preceding chapters provides a basis, and suggests directions for future research.

At the most basic level, it clarifies historical forms of indigenous churches and their differing ideological position and varying functions in the social formation. It was argued that Ethiopian churches, Zion City churches and Zionist-Apostolic churches are all forms of religious-cultural protest, of resistance, at the same time as fulfilling "the task of making fundamentally punishing conditions more inhabitable".<sup>26</sup> Scholars analyse a historical period may add a new dimension to their work by considering, not only economic and political conditions and conflicts, but the religious-cultural forms which informs some people's daily action. It was argued that the analysis of religion "must be put back inside class relationships, which are also a

struggle between different conceptions of the world".<sup>27</sup> One cannot be studied without the other, if we wish to develop holistic analysis.

In a similar vein, Koch has argued that increasingly, working class and popular culture have become important areas of historical enquiry, because to understand political activities and organisation, "a conjoint examination of leadership, tactics of organizing and the network of cultural activities that shape the consciousness and behaviour of these classes"<sup>27</sup> is necessary.

The historical distinction of religious forms also provides a basis for beginning to assess which indigenous churches existing in the present would be more likely be adaptive and tend to reproduce the social relations, and which revolutionary, tending to transform existing social relations. It must be stressed again that examining the faith and nature of indigenous churches on their own cannot provide us with any answers. Recently, a great deal of attention has been focused on determining whether and how a religious or cultural form can be revolutionary. It is useful briefly to examine a few of these attempts, to clarify the kind of analysis that is needed and that can be done on the basis of the findings of this thesis.

Maduro has argued that for dominated social groups with a predominantly religious world view, the ability to transform their conditions depends on their ability to construct a religious world view independent of, different from and in opposition to the dominant world view in their society. This depends on three distinct and complimentary levels -the degree of class consciousness, of class organization and class mobilization. A minimal degree of class mobilisation, for example, consists in spontaneous and discontinuous actions of protest, such as the Israelite's defiance of the state's power at Bulhoek. A maximal degree however,

consists in systematic actions of a gradually accelerating offensive against domination. Maduro suggests that a religion can function as the active medium in a dominated class's development of autonomous consciousness, and autonomous organization. This is especially so if there is a religio-cultural system common to the dominated classes and distinct from and opposed to the religious system of the dominated class. We would need to assess to what extent this is true of each religious form isolated.

Bozzoli has made an important contribution. She argues that "When we use the word 'resistance' we refer to distinct actions which are directed at the avoidance, disturbance or destruction of one aspect or another of the system of domination. When we talk of 'culture' we refer to the background assumptions and values which may make those acts both possible and likely".<sup>29</sup> In other words, acts of resistance are **embedded** in culture; but they are not caused by culture. The question then, to use the same example, is not whether the faith of the Israelites caused their resistance to the state. Rather, we need to examine how the faith of the Israelites made it both possible and likely that their members could express their resistance to proletarianization in the millenarian and violent form they did - as opposed to the form of Zion City faith in the Transvaal or Natal.

What was the difference between their faith and Zionist-Apostolic's healing faith? Churches with Zion City origins like the Zion Christian Church or Church of the Nazarites have been seen to be involved with bantustans and government leaders. To what extent is this made possible by their particular form? While having their origins as a form of religious-cultural protest, they appear to have become increasingly incorporated into dominant culture. This illustrates the continual process of religious and cultural transformation. It is important to analyse not only the

forms themselves, but their position and function in social relations and class conflict. As Bozzoli phrased it, "Every real culture changes constantly with time, with changes in the material conditions of its adherents and of those who profit from or earn income from it, and in the process of interaction with other cultures."<sup>30</sup>

In contrast, it is unlikely that Ethiopianism could have made possible acts of resistance which could have had far-reaching effect. The agenda of Ethiopianism was achieving Equality - economically, politically and religiously - of primarily wealthy peasants and the educated petit-bourgeois Africans. In attempting to achieve this they accepted dominant Western Christian ideology - the mission church's definition of revelation and salvation. Only the origins of Ethiopianism were considered, and a full analysis of their contemporary position is imperative. How do they differ from other forms? How much does their form and ideology still conform to the mission church? How do they interact with, for example, Zionist-Apostolic churches?

Thus on the basis of the largely schematic overview presented in this thesis it is hypothesised that the form with the greatest revolutionary potential is Zionist-Apostolic churches - and it is to this that scholars must turn the greatest attention.

It was argued that the faith of Zionist Apostolic churches is a part of black working class culture in South Africa. As a religious-cultural innovation, they successfully subvert the hegemony of mission christianity. They are a definite form of resistance to cultural domination. Thus Rev. Maqina claimed

"Our African brothers in the historic churches are being seen as stooges who are used, as I have mentioned before, to uphold foreign cultures through Christianity. We would like to liberate them so that they join our fold."<sup>31</sup>

Further, they provide a religious means of control over black peoples' own lives. This is evident both in the extent to which the congregations are centrally involved in healing, and caring for one another; and in the way thousands of bishops and prophets, themselves part of the black working class, organise and administer the churches.

Dube has argued that while Zionist churches are generally believed to be apolitical, they do not necessarily have to be vocal in their yearning for a return to Zion and in their expectation of independence and restoration.<sup>32</sup> Thus he concluded that an analysis of their prayers reveals the hope that "the God who delivered Israel from Egypt will one day free Africans from oppression."<sup>33</sup>

These few trends point to the manner in which we can begin to evaluate the possibilities of resistance imbedded in the faith of Zionist-Apostolics.

As Rev Xulu argued,

"My belief is that it is a liberation struggle that is now engulfing us in South Africa, that has reminded even the organisers of this Forum to think of us as well. I believe because of our numbers that are growing every day.... My plea is that we should pray for the sin of the church, especially the white church which produces politicians who go to parliament and elect laws of influx control. Only the black people know the pain of this kind of thing."<sup>34</sup>

Clearly, extensive research remains to be done; and this is one of the most important and intriguing aspects for future study. A number of research questions and possible directions have become evident in the course of this work, and a number of suggestions have been made in this conclusion. It is held that, at the very least, this demonstrates that the explanatory potential of historical materialist theory must be taken seriously into account in the sociology of religion. However, the potential of Marxist theory to illuminate and explain religious forms is

only now being explored and worked through. Marxist theory does not consist of a single unified body of dogma. It is characterised by extensive debate, theoretical refinement and reformulation. An attempt must be made to discover which of these trends or tendencies would be most useful in the analysis of religion. Thus, a major recommendation of this thesis is the need for greater theoretical self-consciousness and debate. Functionalist social scientists need to make their theoretical assumptions explicit, and to engage in debate over the critique and challenge of their theory and method. They can no longer rely on assumptions of 'value free' research and theorisation. Again, there has been an attempt by a sizeable body of scholars to criticize historical materialist theory, and to propose syntheses of the strengths and weaknesses of functionalist and Marxist theory. The viability of eclectic solutions remains to be established, both in epistemological and theoretical debate, and through application in analysis.

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## APPENDIX A

LIST OF AFRICAN INDIGENOUS CHURCHES AS ON  
AUGUST 1, 1945

(Unmarked Churches appear for the first time on this list. )  
 (Those marked \* appear also on the 1938 list. )  
 (Those marked ° appear also on the 1922 list. )  
 (Only 10 Churches on the 1938 list no longer appear on this list.)

- The A1 Zion Elected Church  
 \* Abantu Independent Methodist Christian Church of South Africa  
 \* Abyssinian Baptist Church  
 \* Abyssinian Methodist Holy Church of Christ  
 \* The Acts of Apostolic in Jerusalem Church  
 \* Afrikaanse Matieve Evangelic Kerk  
 African Apostolic Catholic Church in Zion  
 African Apostle Church  
 \* The African Apostolic Church  
 \* African Apostolic Church in Sabbath  
 \* African Apostolic Church of Christ in Zion  
 \* African Apostolic Church in Sabbath South Africa  
 \* African Apostolic Church in Zion  
 \* African Apostolic Church of South Africa  
 \* African Apostolic Church Union of South Africa  
 \* African Bakgatla National Church  
 \* African Baptized Apostle Church  
 African Baptist Church  
 \* African Baptist Church of Christ  
 \* African Baptist Mission Church  
 \* African Baptist Church in Zion  
 \* African Baptist Sinoia Church  
 \* African Baptist Sinoai Apostolic Church Beira  
 The African Baptist Zion Church  
 \* African Bavenda Church  
 African Bechuana Church  
 \* African Bethal Mission  
 \* African Board Apostolic Church in South Africa  
 African Brethren Apostolic Bantu Church  
 \* African Casteroil Dead Church  
 ° African Cathedral Episcopal Church  
 African Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion  
 \* African Catholic Bantu Church  
 \* African Catholic Episcopal Church  
 \* African Catholic Church of Gaza  
 \* African Catholic Church of Christ  
 African Catholic Church of God  
 ° African Catholic Church of South Africa  
 \* African Catholic Mission  
 The African Christ Holy Apostolic Prophets Church of God  
 ° African Christian Apostolic Church (two churches)

- \* African Christian Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* African Christian Baptist Church of South Africa
- \* African Christian Catholic Baptist
- \* African Christian Christ Church
- \* African Christian Church
- \* African Christian Missionary Church
- \* African Christian Union Church of South Africa
- African Church
- \* African Congregational Ethiopian Church
- African Congregational Church
- \* African Congregational Church of the Colony of Mocambique
- \* African Congregational Church (Gardiner Mvuyana)
- \* African Congregational Methodist Church
- \* African Congress Catholic Church
- \* African Convent Catholic Church of Christ
- \* African Correctly Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion
- African Emmanuel Church
- \* African Empumulanga Mission
- \* African Ethiopian Apostolic Church of South Africa
- \* African Ethiopian Apostolic Kamazi Church of South Africa
- The African Ethiopian Bantu Church of South Africa
- African Ethiopian Church
- \* African Ethiopian National Church
- African Evangelistic Band
- \* African Faith Mission
- \* African Free Bapedi Church
- African Free Catholic Church
- \* African Free Congregation Church
- African Free Ethiopian Church
- African Free Presbyterian Church of South Africa
- \* African Heaven Baptist Church of South Africa
- \* African Holy Apostle Church in Zion
- \* African Holy Baptist Church of South Africa
- \* African Holy Baptist Church in the Zion of South Africa
- \* African Holy Catholic Church
- African Holy Independent Church
- \* African Holy Messenger Church in Zion
- \* African Independent Apostle Church
- \* African Independent Baptist Church
- \* African Independent Ethiopian Church
- \* African Independent Mission Church
- \* African Lutheran Church
- \* African Methodist Church of South Africa
- \* African Methodist Episcopal Church
- \* African Mission Catholic Church
- African Mission Church
- \* African Mission Home Church
- \* African Mission Society
- The African Mission Zion Apostolic Christian Church
- \* African National Baptist Church Association
- \* African National Church (Bethal Baptist)
- \* African National Church
- \* African National Ebenezer Church
- The African National Tembu Church

- \* African Native Apostolic Church
- \* African Native Catholic Church
- \* African Native Church
- \* African Native Free Church
- \* African Native Methodist Church
- African Native Mission Church
- \* African Native Ndebele Church No. 1
- \* African Natural Presbyterian Church
- \* African Orthodox Apostolic Church
- \* African Orthodox Church
- \* African Pentecostal Baptist Church
- African Pentecost Church of Christ in Zion
- African Pentecostal Church of Christ in Zion
- \* African Pentecostal Church
- \* African Pentecostal Faith Mission
- African Pentecostal Mission
- \* African Presbyterian Bafolisi Church
- African Presbyterian Natural Church
- \* African Province Ethiopian Catholic Church
- African Province Church
- \* African Reform Church
- \* African Sabbath Mission Church
- \* African Seventh Church of God
- \* African Seventh Church of God Laodicean Mission
- \* African Seventh-Day Adventists
- \* African Seventh Day Zulu Shaka Church of Christ
- The African Sixth Church of God Philadelphia
- African Two Church of Christ in Smirna
- African Zulu Congregational Church
- \* African United Brethren Church of St Moravian
- African United Church
- \* The African United Church of Christ
- African United Church of Christ in Zion South Africa
- African United Ethiopian Church
- African United Gaza Church
- \* African United Evangelists Church
- \* African United Zulu Congregational Church
- \* African Zion Baptist Jerusalem Apostolic Church
- \* African Zion Baptist Church
- The African Zion Native Ministers Association
- \* African Zulu Methodist Church
- \* African Zulu St John Baptising Church
- \* Afro-Athlican Constructive Gaathly
- \* Algemene Volks Kerk
- Alliance Nazareth Baptist Church of Christ
- \* Allmount Mount of Olives Baptist Church
- Almighty God Church
- \* Ama-Kushe
- \* Ama Yoyopiya
- Ama-Ziyone
- \* American Ethiopian Church
- \* Anglo-African Church
- \* Apostles Brethren Church
- \* Apostles and Christian Brethren Church
- \* Apostles Church of the Full Bible of South Africa

- \* Apostles Church
- \* Apostle Church in Zion
- \* Apostle Mission Church
  - Apostles and Symbol Brethren Church of South Africa
  - Apostle Zion City in Jerusalem
  - Apostle Zion Church
- \* Apostolic Acts Church of Africa
- \* Apostolic Assembly Faith Church of South Africa
- \* Apostolic Association of South Africa
- \* Apostolic Baptist Church in Zion
- \* Apostolic Belliel Ugarete Church in Zion
- \* Apostolic Bethal Ndebele United Church of South Africa
  - Apostolic Beth Peori Church in Zion of South Africa
  - Apostolic Bethlehem Church in Zion, Krugersdorp
  - Apostolic Brethren Church in Zion
  - Apostolic Christian Church in Zion of South Africa
  - Apostolic Christian National Zion Church of South Africa
  - St Apostolic Church of Christ in Zion
- \* Apostolic Church City in Zion
- \* Apostolic Church of Christ in Zion
  - Apostolic Church of Great Britain & Northern Ireland
  - Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ
- \* Apostolic Church Messenger in Zion
  - Apostolic Churches Ministers Association in Africa
- \* Apostolic Church of South Africa
- \* Apostolic Church in Zion of the New Jerusalem Mission in Basutoland
- \* Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* Apostolic Church in Zion Amen
- \* Apostolic Church of Zion in South Africa
- \* Apostolic Church in Zion in South Africa
  - Apostolic Church of Witness in Jerusalem
  - Apostolic City in Zion Church of South Africa
  - Apostolic Congregational Jerusalem Church of South Africa
  - Apostolic Ephesian Foundation Church
- o Apostolic Faith Assembly
- \* Apostolic Faith Church Association in Zion of South Africa
  - Apostolic Faith Nazareth of South Africa
- \* Apostolic Faith Church
  - Apostolic First Assembly of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Zion
  - Apostolic First Assembly of South Africa
  - Apostolic First Christian Church of South Africa
  - Apostolic Fountain Catholic Church
  - Apostolic Full Gospel Mission of South Africa
  - Apostolic Galelea Church of Christ in Zion, South Africa
- \* Apostle Gaunar Church Zion
  - Apostolic Great African Church
- \* Apostolic Heaven Church in Zion
  - Apostolic Holy Church in Zion
- \* Apostolic Holy Messenger Church in Zion
  - Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion of South Africa
- \* Apostolic Holy Zion Mission in South Africa
- \* Apostolic Jerusalem Christ Church of South Africa
- \* Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Sabbath
- \* Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion

- Apostolic in Jerusalem Church in Zion of South Africa
- \* Apostolic Jerusalem United Christ Church in Zion of South Africa
- \* Apostolic Messenger Light World Church in Zion
- \* Apostolic Mission Church
- Apostolic Native Baptist Church
- \* Apostolic Prophetic Church of South Africa
- Apostolic Society New Jerusalem Church
- Apostolic Temba Church
- Apostolic Tzaneen Church in Zion
- \* Apostolic South African Zulu Church
- \* Apostolic United African Church of South Africa
- Apostolic United Faith Coloured Church
- Apostolic United Faith Native Church of South Africa
- \* Apostolic Zion Church
- \* Apostolic Zion New Jerusalem Church
- \* Assemblies of God Church
- Assembly of God in Mozambique and South Africa
- Bakwena Lutheran Church
- \* Banner of Faith Mission
- \* Bantu African Church
- \* Bantu Apostolic Church of Africa
- \* Bantu Baptist Church
- The Bantu Baptist Nazareth Church of Christ
- \* Bantu Bible Holy Cross Church of South Africa
- Bantu Cathedral Episcopal Church of Kushe
- Bantu Christian Catholic Church
- \* Bantu Christian Church
- Bantu Church Apostolic Church of South Africa
- Bantu Church of Christ
- \* The Bantu Church of South Africa
- The Bantu Congregational Church of South Africa
- \* Bantu Constitutional Luther Church of Africa
- Bantu Customers Church to Almighty God
- \* Bantu Dependent Church
- Bantu Dutch Reformed Church
- \* Bantu Free Methodist Church
- Bantu Holy Cross Church of South Africa
- Bantu Methodist Episcopal Church of South Africa
- \* Bantu Methodist Church
- Bantu National Church of Christ (Lamula's)
- \* Bantu Ngqika-Ntsikana Church
- Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa
- Bantu Reform Church
- Bantu Reformed Apostolic Church
- Bantu Reformed Methodist Church under the Bantu Nation, South Africa
- Baptist Apostolic Church of South Africa
- Baptist Church of Christ
- \* Baptist Church of the Seventh-Day Adventists of Africa
- Baptist Gospel Apostolic Church of South Africa
- \* Baptist of the Seventh-Day Adventists
- \* Basuto Native Baptize Church of Christ
- \* Basuto Redemption Episcopal
- Batho Reformed Church of South Africa
- \* Bauenda in Zion Apostolic Church
- \* Bechuana Methodist Church
- \* Bechuana Methodist Church in Zion
- \* Berean Bible Readers Society
- \* Bethal Apostolic Baptist Church

- \* Bethal Church
- \* Bethal Methodist Ethiopian Church
- Bethal Native Church
- \* The Bethlehem Apostles in Zion of South Africa Church
- \* Bethlehem Christian Church of Central Africa
- Bethlehem Church of God in Zion
- Bethlehem Damascus Apostolic Church in South Africa
- \* Bethlehem Holy Apostolic Church in Zion
- The Bethlehem Holy Spirit Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa
- \* Bethlehem of Judia Church in South Africa
- The Bethlehem of Judea Church Apostolic Church in Zion, South Africa
- Bethesda Zion Apostolic Church of Africa
- \* Bible Standard Church of America
- \* Brethren Holy Apostolic Prophet Christ Church of God of South Africa
- Brethren Mission Church
- \* Catholic African Union
- \* Catholic Apostolic Church of Zion
- Catholic Apostolic Church of Witness in Zion of South Africa
- The Catholic Church of South Africa King George Win the War
- \* Catholic Evangelist Kingdom of God Apostolic Church in Zion
- C.C.A. St Sugustibe Church of South Africa
- Central African Church
- \* Christ Apostolic Holy Spout Church in Zion of South Africa
- Christ Apostolic Zion Church of South Africa
- Christ Assemblies of South Africa
- Christ Baptist Church of Africa
- Christ Divine Mission
- Christian African Catholic Church
- Christian African Catholic Church in Zion
- Christian Apostolic Faith Assembly Church in Zion of South Africa
- Christian Apostolic Faith Church in Zion
- Christian Apostolic Church
- \* Christian Apostolic Church of South Africa
- Christian Apostolic Church in Zion
- Christian Apostolic Church in Zion, America
- \* Christian Apostolic Heaven Church in Zion
- \* The Christian Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion of South Africa
- Christian Apostolic Indhlu ka Jacob Church in Zion South Africa
- \* Christian Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion
- Christian Apostolic Nationality Church in Zion
- The Christian Apostolic Stone Church in Zion of South Africa
- The Christian Apostolic Topian Church
- \* Christian Apostolic Zulu Church of Zion
- \* Christian Bavenda Church of South Africa
- \* Christian Bethlehem Church
- Christian Brethren
- \* Christian Brethren Baptism Church of South Africa
- The Christian Catholic Apostolic African Curch in Zion of South Africa
- Christian Catholic Apostolic of God Church in Zion of South Africa
- Christian Catholic Apostolic in Zion
- Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion
- Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa
- \* Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion
- Christian Catholic Apostolic Nazareth Church in Zion of South Africa

- Christian Catholic Church in Zion
- Christian Catholic Church in Zion of South Africa
- \* Christian Catholic National Church in Zion
- \* Christian Church
- \* Christian Church Mission of South Africa
- Christian Church Saturday
- \* Christian Church of South Africa
- o Christian Congregational Baptist Mission
- o Christian Evangelical Mission Church
- Christian Galilee Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* Christian Holiness Church
- Christian Holy Apostles Catholic Antioch Church in Zion of South Africa
- The Christian National Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa
- Christian Native Church of South Africa
- \* Christian Native Union Church of South Africa
- Christian Nissi Native African Church
- The Christian Pentecostal Church of Christ
- \* Christian Zion Apostolic Church
- \* Christian United Church
- \* Church of African Mission Homes
- \* Church of the Apostolic Jerusalem Christ Church of South Africa
- Church of Christ
- \* Church of Christ, South Africa
- \* Church of Christ for the Union of the Bantu
- Church of Christian Catholic Apostolic
- \* Church of the Christian Evangelist
- The Church Council of the Peace on Earth Mission of South Africa
- Church of Cush
- Church Emmanuel Full Gospel of Zion
- \* Church Ethiopian of Africa
- Church of God
- Church of God Apostolic Jerusalem in Zion
- Church of God Apostolic Zion in Jerusalem
- \* Church of God in Christ
- o Church of God and Saints of Christ
- Church of God in South Africa
- Church of the Holy Ghost
- \* Church of the Holy Kingdom of Christ the Saviour
- \* Church of Israel
- Church of Jehova under the Apostle Law
- \* Church of Native Independent Gatcon Congregationalists
- Church of the Nazarenes
- The Church of Pleasant Living Congregation in Zion South Africa
- \* Church of the Prophets
- \* Church of Zion Mission
- The City of Jerusalem Zion Church
- Congregation Evangelist Apostolic Church of South Africa
- Congregational Apostolic Evangelica Church
- \* Congregational Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa
- \* Congregational Church of Christ
- \* Congregational Church in Zion
- \* Congregational Gaza Church
- \* Congregational Union African Church
- The Corner Stone of the Apostle Church in Zion
- Corner Stone of Apostolic Bethlehem in Zion

- Corner Stone of Zion
- \* The Chronicles Church
- Cross of Jesus Church
- Demasek Apostolic Church in South Africa
- East African Church of Nyasaland in the Union
- \* East African Gaza Church
- \* East Heathlon Church
- \* East Pentecostal Mission Church
- ° East Star Baptist Church of Portuguese East Africa
- \* Eastern Star Nazareth Baptist Church of God
- \* Eden Lamb Mission of South Africa
- ° Emmanuel Mission
- \* Empumalanga Gospel Church
- Ephesian's Mission Church
- \* Epifania African Church
- Epifania Star Mission
- \* Episcopal Egraja Auzo Africana Church
- Estas Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* Ethiopian African Church of Zion in South Africa
- \* Ethiopian Apostolic Church of South Africa
- Ethiopian Apostolic Orthodox Church in Christ
- \* Ethiopian Baptist Church of South Africa
- Ethiopian Catholic Church
- \* Ethiopian Catholic Church in Christ
- Ethiopian Catholic Mathew's Church
- Ethiopian Catholic Church in Africa
- ° Ethiopian Catholic Church of South Africa
- ° Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion
- \* Ethiopian Catholic United Taperonakeel Church
- Ethiopian Christ Church of South Africa
- \* Ethiopian Church
- \* Ethiopian Church of Abbyssinia
- \* Ethiopian Church of Africa (Ethiopian Church African)
- \* Ethiopian Church of Basutoland
- Ethiopian Church of Christ in Africa
- \* Ethiopian Church of Christ by Religion
- \* Ethiopian Church of Christ in South Africa
- \* Ethiopian Church of God the Society of Paradise
- \* Ethiopian Church Lamentation of South Africa
- Ethiopian Church of St James
- \* Ethiopian Church in Zion
- The Ethiopian Congregation Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* Ethiopian Holy Baptist Church in Zion
- \* Ethiopian Holy Orthodox Church of South Africa
- \* Ethiopian Independent Church of Africa
- \* Ethiopian Messenger Catholic Church in South Africa
- \* Ethiopian Methodist Church of Africa
- Ethiopian Methodist Christian Church of South Africa
- \* Ethiopian Methodist United Church
- \* Ethiopian Mission of South Africa
- Ethiopian National Church
- \* Ethiopian National Theocracy Restitution of South Africa
- \* Ethiopian Ngcayupa Memoria Church
- \* Ethiopian Orthodox Catholic Church
- \* Ethiopian Reformed Salatuel Church in Zion

- Ethiopian Springfield Catholic Church  
 The Ethiopian Star Church of God
- \* Evangelic Apostolic Church in Christ
  - \* Evangelic Apostolic Church in Zion
  - Evangelic Mission Church of South Africa
  - \* Evangelist Catholic Church
  - Ezekiel Apostoli Church in Zion
  - \* Filadelfia Church of Africa
  - \* The Fire Baptized Holiness Church of God
  - First African Church of Christ
  - \* First Apostolic Church of God
  - The First Apostolic Church of Christ in Zion of South Africa
  - \* First Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion of South Africa
  - First Apostolic Zion Gaza Church of South Africa
  - \* First Catholic Apostolic Church Jerusalem in Zion of South Africa
  - \* The First Century Gospel Church
  - \* First Church of God, Asia in Efese Church in South Africa
  - First Jerusalem Holy Apostolic of Bethlehem Church in Zion
  - First Kappadocian Apostles of Jerusalem in Zion
  - \* The First Mission Apostolic Baptist Church
  - \* First Native Church of Christ
  - First New Church of Christ
  - First Public Apostolic Church in Zion
  - Followers of Christ
  - \* The Foundation Apostolic Church of South Africa
  - The Free Congregational Church of South Africa
  - \* Free Independent Bechuana Church of South Africa
  - \* Free Methodist Episcopal Church
  - Free Sabbatarian Mission of the Seventh-Day Observers Church of  
 United States of America in Southern Africa
  - The Free United Church of Christ in South Africa
  - Full Branch of Ethiopian Church Basutoland
  - Full Branch of Union Brethren Mission Church
  - \* Full Gospel Christian Mission
  - \* Full Gospel Church
  - Full Witness of Jehova Bible Students Apostolic Society Church of Africa
  - \* Gaza Church
  - \* Gaza Mission Church
  - o Gaza Zimbabwe Ethiopian Church
  - The General Apostolic Church in Zion
  - The General Church of New Jerusalem Apostolic
  - General Church of the New Jerusalem Mission of South Africa
  - \* General Convention Church of New Jerusalem
  - General Faith Assembly Church in Zion
  - \* General Faith Assembly Zion Church of the Innumerable Company
  - Genesis Apostolic Church in Zion
  - Glory Bantu Church
  - \* Gospel Catholic Church of South Africa
  - \* Gospel Messenger Church
  - Great George 5 National Church
  - \* Griqua Independent Church
  - \* Head Church of Gods Students Bible in Christ of Natives
  - \* Head Mountain of God Apostolic Church in Zion
  - \* Heaven Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion
  - \* Heaven Twelfth Apostle Church in Zion

- Hephzibah Faith Mission Association  
 Hill of Zion Apostolic Church  
 His Zion City Apostolic Church of South Africa  
 Holy African Apostolic Church in Zion  
 \* Holy Apostolic Church  
 \* Holy Apostolic Church of South Africa  
 \* Holy Apostolic Church in Zion  
 \* Holy Apostolic Bethlehem Church in Zion  
 \* Holy Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion  
 Holy Apostolic Mission Church in Zion of South Africa  
 \* Holy Baptist Church of Africa  
 Holy Baptist Church in Zion  
 \* Holy Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion  
 The Holy Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa  
 \* Holy Catholic Church in Zion  
 \* Holy Catholic Episcopal Church  
 The Holy Christ Church of Witness  
 Holy Christian Apostolic Church in Zion  
 \* Holy Christian Church of God in Sabbath South Africa  
 Holy Christian Church in Zion  
 Holy Church of Christ of South Africa  
 Holy Communion Jerusalem Church of South Africa  
 Holy Cross Apostolic Church Zion of South Africa  
 \* Holy Cross Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion  
 \* Holy Independent Batua National Church of South Africa  
 Holy Independent Catholic Church of South Africa  
 \* Holy Independent Church of South Africa  
 The Holy Jerusalem Christ Twelfth Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa  
 Africa
- The Holy Lamb Mission Church  
 \* Holy Messenger Apostolic Church of God  
 Holy Mission and Kingdom of Christ Evangelist Church  
 Holy Missionary Bethesda Church  
 ° Holy Missionary Evangelist Church  
 \* Holy National Church of South Africa  
 Holy National Church of Ethiopia in South Africa  
 Holy Native Apostolic Church of Africa  
 \* Holy Sabbath Church  
 \* Holy Sabbath of God's Church  
 \* Holy Spirit Jerusalem Church in Zion  
 \* Holy Trinity Church of God  
 The Holy Union Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa  
 Holy Zion Apostolic Zululand Church in South Africa  
 \* Home Natives Co-operative Society  
 Immanuel Missionary Church of United States America  
 \* Independent African Church  
 Independent Bantu Methodist Church  
 \* Independent Church of South Africa  
 Independent Church of Zion  
 \* Independent Congregational Church (Coloured)  
 \* Independent or Congregational Church  
 ° Independent Ethiopian Congress Mission  
 ° Independent Methodist Church of South Africa  
 \* Independent Native Presbyterian Church  
 \* Independent Presbyterian Church

- Independent Presbyterian Church of South Africa
- \* Independent and United National Church
- \* Inter-Communion Church of South Africa
- \* International Baptist Church of God
- \* International Foursquare Gospel
- International Holiness Church
- \* International Missionary Alliance
- International Missionary Society of Seventh-Day Adventist Reform Movement
- Jacob Mission Church (Apostolic) of South Africa
- \* St James Church of Ethiopia
- Jerusalem Apostolic Kuphiliswa Church in Zion
- \* Jerusalem Apostolic Church in Africa
- Jerusalem Apostolic of the Lamb Church
- \* Jerusalem Christ West Zulu Church Holy South African Apostolic
- \* Jerusalem Christian Church in Zion of South Africa
- The Jerusalem Christian Twelve Apostolic Church in Zion South Africa
- \* Jerusalem Meeting Apostolic of Jesus Christ Son of God
- Jesus Christ Church in Zion
- St John's Faith Mission
- St John's Fifth Mission
- ° King of Salom Melchezedek Church
- \* Klopiso Apostolic Faith Church
- Kopano Thatano Native Church
- \* Kush Apostolic Church
- Kushe Lamentation Church in Apostles
- \* Kush Nineveh Church
- \* Kushe Zulu Church
- Kereke ea Kopano ea Africa Church
- \* The Later Light Church in Zion
- League of African Bantu Churches of South Africa
- \* League of African Bantu Churches of South Africa
- \* Lott Carey Baptist Mission of South Africa
- \* Luso African Congregational Church
- \* Lutheran African Mission Church
- ° Lutheran Bapedi Church
- \* Lutheran Bapedi Church of South Africa
- Luz Episcopal Church (of Mozambique Colony)
- \* Mabboko Jerusalem Christ Church in Zion
- \* Magana National Church Association
- Matthews Apostolic Church in Zion in South Africa
- \* Mayen Church
- Medium Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion of Africa
- Melchizedek Ethiopian Catholic Church
- Messenger Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* Messenger Apostolic New Jerusalem in Zion
- \* The Messenger of the Covenant Church of Jerusalem
- \* Messenger Holy Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* Methodist African Church
- Methodist Church African Mission
- Methodist Episcopal Church
- Metropolitan Church Association
- Mission Church of Israel
- The Mission of Jehovah's Last Message to All Nations
- \* Modern Mission

- \* Moriana Episcopa Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* The Moriana Church of Homeland in Zion  
Moshesh Bereau Bible Readers Church
- \* Mount Zion A.M.E. Church
- \* Namagna Methodist Church of South Africa  
Die Namakwa Independente Kerk van Zuid-Afrika
- o National African Church of Salom
- o National Baptist Church of South Africa
- \* The National Church
- \* National Church of Africa  
National Church of Africa's Union
- o National Church of God of South Africa
- \* National Church of God Apostolic in Jerusalem Church
- \* National Church of Ethiopia in South Africa
- \* National Convention Church of the New Jerusalem
- \* National Coptic Church of Africa
- \* National Native Apostolic Church
- \* National Protestant Church in Zion
- \* National Swazi Native Apostolic Church of Africa
- \* The Nations Apostolic Nazareth Church in Zion  
The Nations Church of Christ in Africa
- \* Native African Christian Church  
Native Apostolic Nazareth Church  
The Native Branch Apostolic Church Zion of South Africa
- \* Native Catholic Episcopalian Church
- \* Native Christian Baptist Church of South Africa  
The Native Church of Christ
- \* Native Congregational Church
- \* Native Congregational Church of South Africa
- \* Native Congress Catholic Church
- \* Native Denomination Church of South Africa  
Native Methodist Church of South Africa
- \* Native Mission Church
- \* Native Modern Religious Society of East Africa
- \* Native Nation Independent Congregation
- \* Native Nation Union Church
- \* Native Nineveh Church  
Native United Ethiopian Church  
The Native Zulu Apostolic Church
- \* Nazaretha (or Shembeites)  
Nazareth Apostolic Church in Zion  
Nazareth Baptist Church of South Africa in Sabbath
- \* Nazareth Church
- \* Nazareth Ekukanyane Bantu Church of South Africa
- \* Nazareth Mission Apostolic Church of South Africa  
The New African Native Presbyterian Church
- \* New African Christian Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* New African Ethiopian Church  
New African Independent Ethiopian Church
- \* New African Jerusalem Church in Zion  
New African Pentecostal Baptist Church of South Africa
- \* New African Zion Apostolic Church  
New Apostolic African Church
- \* New Apostolic Church  
New Apostolic Christian Mission Church in Zion

- New Bantu Apostolic Church of Africa
- New Bantu Methodist Christian Church
- New Baptist Church in Christ
- \* New Baptist Mission Church
- New Bethlehem Church in Zion of Apostolic Faith in South Africa
- \* New Catholic Church
- The New-Christian Apostolic Church Heaven in Zion Home
- \* The New Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion
- The New Christian Dependent Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* New Church
- \* New Church Baptist Mission
- o New Church of Christ
- New Congregational Church of Christians of Africa
- \* New Creation Baptist Church Star of South Africa
- \* New Ethiopian Catholic Church of Africa
- The New Faith Gospel Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ
- New Full Gospel Apostolic Church
- The New Full Gospel Apostle Church of Christ
- New Galelic Holy Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* New Holy Gospel Christian Church of Africa
- New Independent Ethiopian Church
- \* New Jerusalem Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* New Jerusalem Church (or New Church of Christ)
- The New Jerusalem Church in Christ
- The New Jerusalem Eleventh Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa
- \* New Jerusalem Holy Trinity Church
- \* The New Jerusalem Sabbath Apostolic Church in Zion South Africa
- \* New Jerusalem Zion
- \* New National Church of Ethiopia
- New Native Church of Christ South Africa
- \* New Pentecost Church in Zion of South Africa
- \* New Progressive Baptist Church
- \* New Progressive Christian Church
- New Zion Temple Church
- \* Nomination Congregation Church of South Africa
- Nova Hierosolyma
- \* Ntsikena Memorial Church
- \* Nyassaland Church of South Africa
- The Old Apostolic Church of Africa
- Old Emmanuel Apostolic Church of God in Zion
- Only Church of Christ
- \* Order of Ethiopia
- The Pamphilia Tabernacle
- St Paul's Apostolic Faith Mission
- Pentecost Christ Church
- Pentecost Christian Church of Zion of South Africa
- Pentecost East Star Jerusalem Church in Sabbath
- Pentecost Holiness Bafolisi Church
- The Pentecostal Baptist Apostolic Church of South Africa
- Pentecostal Baptist Church
- \* Pentecostal Christian Church
- Pentecostal Christian Fellowship
- Pentecostal Church of Christ of South Africa
- \* Pentecostal Holiness Church
- \* Pentecostal Sabbath Mission
- \* St Peter's Apostolic Church

- St Peter's Covenant Church of Christ
- \* St Philip's Ethiopian Church of South Africa
- Pilgrim Holiness Church
- The Poor Christ Church
- \* Presbyterian Apostolic Church of South Africa
- \* Presbyterian Christian Apostolic Church of Christ in Zion
- Presbyterian Church of Africa
- \* Presbyterian National Church of South Africa
- \* Priest African Ethiopian Church
- \* Protestant Episcopal Church
- Refartion (Reformation) Mission Baptist Church
- \* Regular Baptist Christian Church of South Africa
- \* Regular Church of Christ of South Africa
- \* Remnant Church of God
- \* Return Church of Africa
- Revelation Baptist Mission Church
- The Rhodesia Mission
- Sabbath Church Zion Message of God to African and to Zulu Man
- The Sabbath Church in Zion of South Africa
- The Sabbath Christian Apostolic Church in Zion
- Saratile Church of South Africa (Mission of God)
- Sardis Five Church of God in South Africa
- o Seventh Church of God
- Seventh Church Sabbath
- \* Seventh-Day Baptist Church
- \* Seventh-Day Baptist Church of Christ
- \* Seventh-Day Baptist Church of London
- \* Shaka Zulu Church
- \* Shebanbiah Church
- South African Apostolic Native Church in Zion
- South African Baptist Church Mission
- South African Baptist Missionary Society
- \* South African Barolong Church
- \* South African Baroling Methodist Church
- \* South African Ethiopian Catholic Church
- South African Evangelical Mission Church
- \* South African Gaza Mission
- o South African Native Baptist Association
- South African Native Faith Healing Church
- \* South African Native Mission
- South African National Apostolic Church
- South African National Ethiopian Church
- South Africa National Ethiopian Church of Africa
- \* South African Seventh Church of God
- South Africa Zulu Church
- \* South African Zulu Native Baptist Church
- \* Star Baptist Church
- The Star Nazareta Church in Zion of Sabbath
- Sun Light Four Corners Apostolic for Witness of God Church
- Sun Light Four Corners Apostolic for Witnesses of God Jehova
- \* The Supreme Apostolic Church of South Africa
- \* Tembu Catholic Church of South Africa
- \* The Temple of God in Africa
- Temple of God of Africa
- \* The True (Truth) Zion Church of God

- \* Twelve Apostolic the New Jerusalem Zion Church of God  
Twelfth Apostolic Church in Zion
- \* Uhlanga or Church of the Race  
Ukuhlupeka Kuka Krestu Zinyana Apostol Zion
- \* Ukukanye Mission
- \* Union Apostolic Church of South Africa
- \* Union Brethren Mission Church
- o United African Apostolic Church
- \* United African Missionary Society  
United Apostolic Church
- o United Apostolic Church of South Africa
- \* United Apostolic Faith Church
- \* United Bantu Lutheran Church  
The United Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa
- \* United Catholic Church of Christ
- \* United Church of the Brethren in Zion
- \* United Church of Ethiopian in South Africa
- \* United Ethiopian Catholic Church of Africa  
United Ethiopian Church
- \* United Free Independent Church  
United Central African Church
- \* United Christian of Abyssinia of South Africa Church  
United Christian Church  
United Churches of Christ
- \* The United Church in Ethiopia in Zion
- \* United Independent National Church of God
- \* United National Catholic Church in Zion
- \* United National Church (Lutheran)
- \* United National Church in Africa
- \* United National Congress Church  
United Native Baptist Church  
United Sabbath Christian Apostolic Church in Zion  
Universal African Church
- o Universal Church of Christ
- \* Universal Mission Church
- \* Universal National Christian Union
- \* Unto The Church of God Apostolic Jerusalem in Zion
- \* Volks Kerk van Zuid-Afrika
- \* Vula Singene Yehova e-Zion
- \* Watch Tower Movement  
The Witness of Apostolic Church in Christ
- \* Zinyana Apostolic Zion  
Zion Apostle Jerusalem of God in South Africa
- \* Zion Apostolic Assembly Church  
Zion Apostolic Baena Church  
Zion Apostolic Brethren Church of South Africa  
Zion Apostolic Christ Church  
Zion Apostolic Church of Christ
- \* Zion Apostolic Church in Galali  
Zion Apostolic Church of God of South Africa  
Zion Apostolic Church in Jerusalem  
Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa  
Zion Apostolic City Church
- \* Zion Apostolic City of South Africa
- o Zion Apostolic Faith Mission
- \* Zion Apostolic Gaza Church of South Africa

- \* Zion Apostolic Jerusalem Church
- Zion Apostolic Jerusalem Church of God in South Africa
- Zion Apostolic New Jerusalem Government Church
- \* Zion Apostolic New Jerusalem in South Africa Church
- Zion Apostolic Old Mission Church of South Africa
- \* Zion Apostolic South African Church
- Zion Apostolic Swaziland Church of South Africa
- Zion Apostolic Union Church
- \* Zion Apostolic Wesleyterian Catholic Church of South Africa
- \* Zion Baptist Zinai Church in South Africa
- \* Zion Bethal Apostolic Church
- \* Zion Brethren Mission Apostolic Church in South Africa
- \* Zion of Christ Africa Apostolic Church
- \* Zion Christian Church
- \* Zion Church of Christ Apostle of South Africa
- The Zion Church of Christ in South Africa
- \* Zion Church of South Africa
- The Zion City Apostolic Church of South Africa
- \* Zion City Apostolic Paulus Church in South Africa
- Zion City Christian Church
- \* Zion Congregational Church of South Africa
- \* Zion Elected Church of South Africa
- Zion Free Church Impumalanga Gospel of South Africa
- \* Zion Gospel African Church
- \* Zion Holy Church of South Africa
- \* Zion Holy Church National of South Africa
- Zion Jerusalem Apostolic Church in South Africa in Transvaal
- Zion Kingdom of God
- \* Zion Kingdom of God Salvation in South Africa
- Zion Maboko Church of South Africa
- \* Zion Mission African Apostolic Church
- \* Zion Revelation Apostolic Church of South Africa
- Zi zi Apostolic Church in South Africa
- \* Zulu or African Ethiopian Church
- o Zulu Congregational Church
- \* Zulu Ethiopian Church

LIST OF AFRICAN INDIGENOUS CHURCHES WHICH HAVE RECEIVED  
GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION

- \* Ethiopian Church of South Africa
- Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa
- \* African Methodist Episcopal Church
- \* Lutheran Bapedi Church
- \* Lutheran Bapedi Church of South Africa
- \* African Congregational Church
- \* Independent Presbyterian Church
- \* African Orthodox Church

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