African Spirituality and Christianity: Revisiting clashing worldviews

by

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Master of Theology in the Department of Systematic and Historical Theology

Faculty of Theology and Religion

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

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30 September 2023

Acknowledgements

Declaration

I declare that the dissertation "African Spirituality and Christianity: Revisiting clashing worldviews" is my own work and that all sources I have used, mentioned and explored have been cited and acknowledged by means of complete reference according to the University of Pretoria plagiarism policy and guidelines.

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Abstract

Black people in Africa have practiced spirituality for a long time, years before colonialism took over Africa. The African people had a very special relationship with ancestors and relating to the worship of God with the acknowledgment of ancestors. When missionaries came to Africa with the movement of colonial Christianity, they abolished African spirituality and its practices as this was seen as worshipping idols and disregarding "God". As a result, many Africans abandoned their spiritual practices and adopted the Christian faith. This research aims to explore the similarities and differences between African spirituality and Christianity. Often African spirituality is misunderstood and demonized by the Christian faith, however, comparing the two will expose the similarities that occur between the two movements, and investigating its origins and practices will shed some light on why both can co-exist. As such, this research aims to compare clashing worldviews of Christianity and African spirituality, with an attempt to clarify any misconceptions that exist when it comes to African spirituality.

Keywords: Black Consciousness (BCM), slavery, imperialism, African Theology, eschatology, African Initiated Churches (AIC), African spirituality, colonialism, land, Independent Electoral Committee (IEC)

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Before the Christianization of Africans and a conversion of their spirituality, Africans always had a means of worshiping God. If one compares African spirituality and religion to the Christian bible, one may even conclude that Christianity is inspired by African spirituality and religion. The connectedness to the land, creation and everything in the universe has always been a part of African spirituality. Africans have, in a sense, always thought that God and the universe are in some sense 'one' or have a very close intricate relationship beyond just mere immanence. However, when Western Christianity was imposed in Africa, a growing number of our customs were forgotten or abandoned. The arrival of the Christian Bible brought about the development of new practices and a foreign culture attached to the new religion. Although the African spiritual identity was demonized, the more we study the Bible, the more difficult it is to deny the parallels between Christian scripture and African spiritual practices. For the purpose of this study African Spirituality encompasses the practices of African people at large though in some instances I will be particular to Nguni tribes in the Southern part of Africa.

The aim of this study is to prove how African spirituality and Jewish Christianity especially from a biblical context of the Old Testament share similar characteristics, which today are important when there are discussion about decoloniality, indigenization and Africanization of religion, education etc.The investigation of the following question will bring clarity to the case that is being explored for this dissertation : what are the correlation between African Spirituality and Christianity? What are the dangers of the two? Why has Africa abandoned its beliefs in favour of the latter even post-apartheid? How did imperialism and colonisation infiltrate and indoctrinate Africa and how is the indoctrination maintained? It is important to note that this paper will be explored through the lens of a South African Tswana Christian woman.

In this research I put emphasis on the identity of African people under the banner of African Spirituality, as identity is a crucial part for any nation to understand itself, therefore, I speak from both the African and Christian perspective concurrently. I do acknowledge that the causal relation between African Spirituality and Christianity is essentially controversial. As such, a lot of the information is predominantly from the South African context. However, the general African landscape will be utilised as well since there are many similarities when it comes to practices. Similarly, the term Christianity will be utilised to include a diverse range of Christian faith practices from several denominations to further justify the course of this dissertation.

As such, this study will attempt to further illustrate the beauty behind the mystery of African spirituality, while also acknowledging the existence of Christianity in the African traditional spaces. In essence, Africans practice a somewhat pandeism. The connection to ancestors as well as the universe though ancestors, divinity and the world are somewhat different.

1.1. Methodology

A qualitative methodology will be utilised in an attempt to substantiate the assumptions and additional findings of - the contents of this dissertation. The literature review methodology will highlight the issue that comes with Christianity is the supposed assumption that Africans had their own cosmologies, ethics and religion, which in other aspects seems to suggest parallel between Christianity and African religion. This assertion can be substantiated by the view that Africans have always known everything Christianity claims to have taught them especially about the Divine, creation and ethics—granted the story of Jesus was relatively new in the Southern parts of Africa, however, in the North i.e., Egypt had creator and saviour gods. The problem is that Westerners have looked at things from a solely Western gaze that stretch for an extended period of time coupled with the epistemicides of Indigenous knowledge systems. As such, neglecting the beauty behind the existence of African theism. In order to understand African spirituality, one must look through an ontological viewpoint that will be investigated in the existing literature about Africa religious ontology and divinity from the works of Mbiti & Idowu (see Bediako 1989 & Setiloane 1978 & 1986).

The literature will assist in examining the parallels between Christianity and African spirituality as well as their negative aspects. The investigation and focused literature will be on ancestors, God, kinship or lineage and totems, birth right and inheritance of land, rites of passage, *Ubungoma* and healing, demons and evil spirits, *Ubuntu*, acceptable alternative forms of worship or appeasement, animal sacrifice and the atonement of sin, nature and relation to humanity—medicine, clothing, communicating with the dead, and the significance of bones in both spirituality and religious leadership—all these will all be examined in greater detail of course within the limitation of the dissertation and research topic. It is also crucial to keep in mind that in order to restore the African identity, African Spirituality must undergo a shift from the persisting Westernization to Africanization. To be able to embrace African spirituality openly and freely without worrying about being marginalized or alienated. This dissertation

seeks to demonstrate how Christianity and spirituality can coexist, particularly in light of their shared characteristics.

Before dwelling fully in the concept of spirituality and religion, we must first understand the cause behind the demonization of African spirituality which came with colonization and imperialism. In an attempt to dismantle this, we ought to take a look at colonization and imperialism as separate entities that are mutually inclusive. Coloniality and imperiality are what uprooted Africans from their beliefs and forcefully converted Africans to Christianity (see Biko 1978, Boesak 1977, Fanon 1963 & De Gruchy 2004). Imperialism as well as colonization played a significant role in the displacement of African people, the disregard of African cultures and ideologies consequently leading Africans to be without land, resources and be victims of exploitation and an identity crisis. These all occurred as per the indoctrination of Black people.

1.2. Problem Statement: Imperialism, colonialism, and the AIC Churches

African customs and rituals have been deserted due to the idea that Christianity and African Spirituality cannot co-exist. On the main there is need to argue that this Christianity, which cannot be reconciled with is western Christianity. Biko (1987: 59) asserts:

> It has been said by many a Black church man, that whites are in power within the Churches, because the Churches are modelled on Western lines which white people know best. In order to be able therefore to change the Churches, we first have to gain ascendance over them in that white model, then thereafter turn that model into one we cherish, we love, we understand, and one that is relevant to us.

Based on Biko's assertion one can deduce that the church as we have it, has been modelled by a culture and tradition that is not biblical but based on geopolitical factors i.e., western society, her development, interpretation and practice of Christianity and white racism. This study wants that clarity/distinction to first be made between the Christianity and western Christianity as it is to relate to African spirituality and religion. The former provides grounds for the compatibility as Christianity in its early years emerges from Judaism.

Biko (1987: 93) further argued:

> The religion they brought was quite foreign to the Black indigenous people. African religion in its essence was not radically different from Christianity. We also believed in one God, we had our own community of saints through whom we related to our God, and we did not find it

compatible with our way of life to worship God in isolation from the various aspects of our lives. Hence worship was not a specialised function that found expression once a week in a secluded building, but rather it featured in our wars, our beer-drinking, our dances and our customs in general. Whenever Africans drank they would first relate to God by giving a portion of their beer away as a token of thanks. When anything went wrong at home they would offer sacrifice to God to appease him and atone for their sins. There was no hell in our religion. We believed in the inherent goodness of man---hence we took it for granted that all people at death joined the community of saints and therefore merited our respect.

Therefore, the supremacy given by force to western Christianity has made many African people reject their African ways of worship in an attempt to fit the narrative that western Christianity imposed on African people. This has led to a crisis as far as worship is concerned for African people. Hence the importance of making the comparison between African Spirituality and the Christian religion is one that is fundamental and fits in with the prerogative of decolonization, which is an urgent call for our times. The beginning of the problem can be seen through the investigation of imperialism and colonialism as well as other subsections.

According to Bonn (1993): "imperialism is a policy which aims at creating, organizing, and maintaining an empire; that is, a state of vast size composed of various more or less distinct national units and subject to a single centralised will". Fisher (2022:2519) also asserts.

> The motives and techniques of modern imperialism were enormously varied and complex. The leading motives appear to have the following: Economic Gain: this includes conquest for the sake of loot, the quest for competition- free markets and services of raw materials, the search for virgin fields of investment for the capitalists of imperial powers, and the urge to secure certain strategic raw materials. At times imperialism may have provided goods that could not be obtained otherwise; at other times it merely made it possible to get them at a lower price or with less likelihood of interruption by war.

There is a considerable disagreement among historians and social scientists about the causes of the colonisation of Africa and other lands in this period. It would be crude to reduce colonialism to a single motive because several factors contributed to it, but economic factors played the central role (see Fisher 2022:2521). Colonialism and imperialism share the same sentiments with the Doctrine of Discovery 1493. According to The Gilder Lehrman Collection (2012: 1) "The Papal Bull 'Inter Caetera,' issued by Pope Alexander VI on May 4, 1493, played a

significant role in the Spanish conquest of the New World. The paper backed Spain's plan to secure its ownership of the territories that Columbus had 'discovered' the year before. It created a demarcation line one hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde Islands and granted Spain the sole right to annex and trade in all lands west of that line. Without a special permit from the Spanish except for monarchs, no one else was permitted to enter the regions west of the frontier. As a result, Spain had a legal monopoly over the lands in the New World.

The Bull commanded that "the Christian religion and the Catholic faith rise to prominence and everywhere multiplied and spread, that the health of souls be cared for, and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself." Additionally, it said that any territory not already inhabited by Christians was open for "discovery," possession, and exploitation by Christian tyrants. As the foundation for all European claims to the Americas and the US's westward expansion, this 'Doctrine of Discovery' evolved. The US Supreme Court heard Johnson v. McIntosh in 1823. In the majority verdict, Chief Justice John Marshall detailed "that the principle of discovery provided European nations with an absolute right to New World lands." In essence, American Indians merely held a right of occupation that was subject to abolition. In the 1990s and in 2000, the Bull Inter Caetera was once more in the news as some Catholics petitioned Pope John Paul II to formally withdraw it and recognize the human rights of indigenous "non-Christian peoples" (The Gilder Lehrman Collection 2012: 1).

The above information clearly reveals a plethora of problems, firstly, the statement 'the Christian religion and the Catholic faith rise to prominence and everywhere multiplied and spread, that the health of souls be cared for, and that barbarous nations be overthrown and brought to the faith itself' is problematic as this was not the mission of the Gospel but the Catholic church that saw nation and barbaric and their souls in need of caring for in the same vein while humiliating, dehumanising them and dispossession their land. Grosfoguel (2013: 81) noted that the move of the empire is linked to the development of modernity and begins with religious racism that predates colour racism. Grosfoguel (2013: 81) argues: "1) if you do not have religion, you do not have a God; 2) if you do not have a God, then you do not have a soul; and 3) if you do not have a soul, you are not human but animal-like." It is clear to see the move from claiming to preach the gospel to a full assault on the oppressed by the empire. Secondly, this line of reasoning fails to affirm even within the ranks of its theological anthropology in claiming that humans are Imago Dei.

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Thirdly, Grosfoguel (2013: 85-88) notes that other aspects to the conquest of conquests was to question the humanity of others and in fact move to commit acts of epistemicides against their ways, norms and worldview. Grosfoguel (2013: 86) speaking on epistemicides, oppression of women and witch hunts in Europe asserts that:

> Silvia Federici (2004) argues that this witch hunt intensified between 1550 and 1650. Her thesis is that the witch hunt against women in European territory was related to primitive accumulation during the early capitalist expansion in the formation of the labour reserve for global capitalism. She linked the African enslavement in the Americas with the witch hunt of Women in Europe as two sides of the same coin: capital accumulation at a world-scale in need of incorporating labour to the capitalist accumulation process. In order to achieve this, capitalist institutions used extreme forms of violence.

Therefore, the centrality of western worldview is by force and violence physically and epistemologically, this study will emphasise the linkages between the two aspects. But it is important to note that the destruction of the African worldview was not only cultural but for economic reasons that would crystalise in the future.

The first Industrial Revolution brings out more clearly the relations between the industrial revolution and international trade. It greatly enhanced the demand for manufactured goods and so encouraged expansion of production and specialisation. Foreign trade made the requisite raw materials available, at low prices. Trade enhances the purchasing power of foreign and less economically developed trading partners of Britain to the benefit of British industry. Trade generated the economic surplus which helped to finance the industrial revolution. The institutional base of the industrial revolution was in part created under the stimulus of foreign trade (Fisher 2022:251).

The relationship between industrial revolution and colonialism sheds some light on what happened in the period 1875-1914 in which a new and virulent wave of colonialism engulfed Africa. The vigour and fury of the new wave of imperialism was remarkable further equipped by a colonial Gospel that disempowered Africans and is responsible for land repossession. Biko (1987: 93-94) asserts:

> While I do not wish to question the basic truth at the heart of the Christian message, there is a strong case for a re-examination of Christianity. It has proved a very adaptable religion which does not seek to supplement existing orders but---like any universal truth---to find application

within a particular situation. More than anyone else, the missionaries knew that not all they did was essential to the spread of the message.

But the basic intention went much further than merely spreading the word. Their arrogance and their monopoly on truth, beauty and moral judgment taught them to despise native customs and traditions and to seek to infuse their own new values into these societies.

Biko (1987: 94-93) further asserts:

Thus, we can immediately see the logic of placing the missionaries in the forefront of the colonisation process. A man who succeeds in making a group of people accept a foreign concept in which he is expert makes them perpetual students whose progress in the particular field can only be evaluated by him; the student must constantly turn to him for guidance and promotion. In being forced to accept the Anglo-Boer culture, the blacks have allowed themselves to be at the mercy of the white man and to have him as their eternal supervisor. Only he can tell us how good our performance is and instinctively each of us is at pains to please this powerful, all-knowing master. This is what Black Consciousness seeks to eradicate.

This new vigour in the pursuit of colonies is reflected in the fact that the rate of new territorial acquisitions of the new imperialism was almost three times than of the earlier period. Thus, the increase in new territories claimed in the first seventy-five years of the nineteenth century averaged about 83,000 square miles – a year (see Ake 1981:34).

The European nations that followed Britain into the industrial revolution were keen to lessen the damaging impact of Britain's economic dominance on their own. They attempted to grow their fledgling businesses behind protective tariff barriers and restricted the flow of British goods into their country. Britain steadfastly promoted laissez-faire in the face of rising protectionism, but to little effect; as a result, Britain's export market shrank and countries such as America, France, Germany, Russia, and Austro-Hungary began to discriminate against its commodities. According to Ake (1981:35), there was an economic downturn. In response to these challenges, Britain became extremely eager to advance free trade, explore for new investment opportunities, and, above all, protect her empire and the trade advantages that came with being associated with it.

At the same time Britain's competitors were also in an aggressive and expansionist mood. They were convinced that British commercial and industrial power was a consequence of the existence of a British Empire. Thus, Germany jumped into the race for colonies. Bismarck,

who had rejected the ideas of colonies, reversed policy, arguing that colonies were necessary for winning new markets for German industries, the expansion of trade and a new field for German activity, civilisation and capital. In 1867 Lother Bucher, who was a colleague of Bismarck, had argued that 'colonies are the best means of developing manufactured export and import trade, and finally a respectable navy' (Ake 1981:35).

By the 1880s, it was evident that this was a concept whose turn had arrived, as stated by Ake (1981:35). The sentiment was similar in France, where propagandists like Jules Ferry and Leroy-Beaulien, backed by business interest groups, claimed that colonies were essential to the growth of French industry and power. Italy also became enamored with expansionism and went on to conquer Ethiopia. Belgium entered the conflict as well and quickly annexed the Congo. The hunt for Africa started when action replaced propaganda and Africa found itself at the center of it. In order to establish trade and research outposts throughout Africa between Zanzibar and the Atlantic, King Leopold II of Belgium established the African International Association in 1876. Shortly after, he invaded the Congo basin and dubbed it the Congo Free State. The British seized Egypt in 1882. This incensed the French, who increased and cemented their possessions in West Africa.

Ake continues - fearing the repercussions of Germany and France's colonial victories, Germany annexed Cameroons, Togoland, and Southwest Africa between 1883 and 1885. Britain explored Eastern, Southern, and Central Africa in an effort to strengthen its grip on the Gambia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and the Gold Coast. There, she quickly secured control over Bechuanaland, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Zanzibar, Kenya, and Uganda. Shortly after King Leopold ignited the race for Africa in 1876, the continent was partitioned and settled by European nations. A people's culture is severely harmed by colonialism and the effects of imperialism. An area is forcefully conquered and occupied by foreigners (Ake 1981:36).

They appoint their own citizens to work in their new administration. The colonists' language, cultural customs, and educational system are imposed onto the locals, who also attend schools under their direction. The locals are informed that the foreigners are of a higher rate than them. The primary effect of colonialism was the underdevelopment of African territory in a variety of ways. According to Biko (1987: 95):

As one black writer says, colonialism is never satisfied with having the native in its grip but, by some strange logic, it must turn to his past and disfigure and distort it. Hence the history of the black man in this country is most disappointing to read. It is presented merely as a long succession of defeats. The Xhosas were thieves who went to war for stolen property; the Boers never provoked the Xhosas but merely went on 'punitive expeditions' to teach the thieves a lesson. Heroes like Makana who were essentially revolutionaries are painted as superstitious trouble-makers who lied to the people about bullets turning into water. Great nation-builders like Shaka are cruel tyrants who frequently attacked smaller tribes for no reason but for some sadistic purpose. Not only is there no objectivity in the history taught us but there is frequently an appalling misrepresentation of facts that sicken even the uninformed student.

The case for colonization is typically made that the positive developments it brought about exceed the drawbacks for Africa. They only made investments in what and where they had to, according to the capitalist logic of least input for maximum output. Unsurprisingly, as Ake correctly pointed out, the locations where colonialism encouraged some development were in areas that were handy for gathering commodities, like Kano; locations from which the supplies could be shipped overseas, like Lagos, Mombasa, and Dar es Salaam; locations where the climate was agreeable to Europeans and could be utilized as administrative base of operations, like Nairobi (Ake, 1981:36).

With time, these cities began to take on a personality that was very distinct from that of the surrounding area. A rigorous examination of the argument in favor of colonial education exposes its emptiness and hollowness. Due to its lack of African cultural roots, colonial education was unable to promote any significant growth within the African environment, psychology, soul, or spirit since it lacked an organic connection to the people, culture, etc. (Atakpa and others, 2012). Colonial education also lacked a technological foundation and was mostly literary, which made it incompatible with actual or industrial progress. In a colonial culture, learning is designed to benefit the colonialist. Education was only one institution used to shape slaves within a system of slavery (Fisher 2022: 2523). Accordingly, the purported advantages of colonialism are known as its unintended advantages (see Rodney & Reipurth, 2008).

The inadequate educational foundation established by the colonialists is the primary cause of the underdevelopment of most modern African republics and their low technical basis. The primary goal of colonial education was to prepare people to work as clerks, interpreters, produce inspectors, craftspeople, etc., to aid in the exploitative use of Africa's abundant resources. The industrialization of African territory or the advancement of technology inside the continent were not the goals of colonial education. African indigenous educational patterns, which had their roots in African technology, were distorted and disarticulated by colonial education. For example, Africans were good sculptors, carvers, cloth weavers, miners, blacksmiths, etc. Another major effect was the disarticulation of the African economy. The colonial economy was characterised by disarticulation or incoherence (Fisher 2022:2524). By 1885, when Africa was politically and juridically partitioned, the peoples and polities had already lost a great deal of freedom. In its relations with the external world, Africa had lost a considerable amount of control over its own economy, ever since the 15th century (see Fisher 2022:2524).

Because of the resources available to them, colonialists were able to transfer power and influence toward the African people. The development of more sophisticated technology exposed Africans to new ideas and experiences. The advent of the media is one example. It is becoming clear, according to Hoover (2011: 27), that understanding media and how different religions interact with modern media is necessary to understand religion in the twenty-first century. Up until the middle of the 20th century, there seemed to be some stability between the media and religion, with a few major media and a relatively small number of religions at the center of society.

Additionally, it was common to think about religion in terms of "secularization," a notion that is today recognized to be too simple. There was a perception that religion was becoming less powerful not only in its own circles but also in the fields of politics, economics, and employment. This image began to shift after two very notable shifts in the second half of the 20th century.

Hoover (2011:27) asserts that the first of them was the Iranian Islamic Revolution, which led to the establishment of a theocracy in a country with a predominantly Muslim population that had previously been secular and a Middle Eastern bulwark for the West (and the US in particular). This was especially noteworthy because it came as a complete surprise. The

Western world was unprepared for it. Religion could play a role that neither our journalists nor our foreign affairs experts expected. The emergence of what are now known as 'neo-Evangelicalism' and "neo-Pentecostalism" movements, which began in the US and eventually extended to other parts of the world, including Europe, was another significant development. Conservative Protestantism, associated with the early 20th-century fundamentalism, had been in decline before to the 1970s.

Evangelicalism in the US started to have a bigger impact on politics, which was something completely new. Evangelical leaders aimed to regain lost position in the public domain while also reforming society and politics. Pentecostalism gained popularity in part due to its growth and influence as well as the simplicity with which it incorporated media and capitalism into its rituals, including worship. With the 9/11 attacks in New York and the bombings in Bali, Madrid, and London, the twenty-first century officially began. These fundamentally altered how religion was perceived in domestic and foreign affairs and gave religion and religious responses whole new potential manifestations in the world's discourse. Longstanding social realities, such as immigration and ethnic diversity in Europe and North America, are now seen in new ways (Hoover 2011: 27).

Nürnberger (1990:149) asserts that 'South Africa is a legacy of colonialism, both in terms of its social structures, it's economic atmosphere and its political ideologies.' According to Crane (2020:339) although researchers frequently differ on the specifics of how Christian doctrine has influenced the current international economic order, historically speaking, there is little doubt that some components of it have had a considerable impact. Christianity acted as a spur for technological and scientific advancement throughout Western Europe by emphasizing theological abstraction and reason and recognizing property and contract rights. The rise of Protestantism after the Reformation had a considerable economic impact on human capital, economic development, media market rivalry, and political economics, according to empirical research. As such, the rise of economic or profitable gain grew in the church. Many church leaders ended up being driven by the notorious 'prosperity gospel' which then trickled down to many African people especially during the colonialism and evangelisation, which is restricted to whiteness and post-apartheid as seen in most Third world countries.

The mentality today in most prosperity Gospels that are not only market driven but on the subconscious playing the same game between colonialism and evangelism is 'give more, so you can gain more' which is very prominent in churches around South Africa, especially modern-day charismatic churches. The charismatic church usually consists of a zealous pastor or preacher who convinces the congregants that the Holy spirit is available to those who are generous, in other words, when you give (money), you will receive (blessings).

According to Crane (2020:339) this is largely influenced by the impact of colonialisation and the looting of resources of Africans by the westerners and the current stage of global capitalism. The colonial Christians needed land to build the church. They further needed money for the maintenance and running of the church as such the stripped Africans of their land, culture, custom, being and religion. As per Desmond Tutu's famous quote "When the missionaries came to Africa they had the Bible, and we had the land. They said, 'Let us pray.' We closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had the Bible, and they had the land." In an attempt to eradicate the exploitation of African resources and land by the missionaries or Christians, African people found a way to identify themselves within the Christian context from an African perspective, that is where the emergence of AIC Churches became prominent. This is how African people were able to build a legacy of their own by ensuring they have a voice in the functioning of the church and benefit on the distribution of resources.

The abovementioned have attempted to explain colonialism and imperialism economic logic that the claim to preach the gospel came with the expansion of Europe and exploitation of the resources of indigenous people. But equally so is the fact that the European way of life has been imposed successfully because of economic power and western norms. While the African personality suffers the same fate as the land i.e., exploitation and oppression. But in having to unveil the layers of the colonial project it must be asked then whether what was presented as the Gospel is in fact Gospel? The qualitative experience based on history suggest that the colonial project and its Christianity is not the truth. Mdingi (2016: 106) argues:

> The Biblical narrative points to the origins of disobedience as being learnt from the snake, the modern world, as it relates to God, because Westernisation and whiteness have been constructed under deceit, violence, greed, hatred, disobedience to God, and the betrayal of truth. The disobedience on the part of Whites is that of appointing themselves as God's mouthpiece and a navigator for all of humanity.

Mdingi (2016: 100) asserted:

> The catalyst of Christianity is the Gospel: an articulation of God's dealing with human sin in the world and the final aspect of that being the brutal, violent and dehumanisation of the body Christ on the cross. It is the declaration of this message that was given approval and a seal upon the resurrection and ascension of Christ to be declared among the nations (Matthew 28:19) and not only for the exclusivity of Whites. The violence and dehumanisation of the body of Christ is the same body that will build the body of Christ on earth. One will not dwell on the obvious that Africa was Christian before Europe, but rather locate the Gospel as being at the hands of a race- guilty of violence, dehumanisation, deceit, decadence, and global oppression through White supremacy.

Therefore, the Gospel of Christ while radically different in some respects as it pertains to special revelation of God, or the uniqueness of Christ is in most respect an affirmation of God who is revealed in all of creation. It is this God whom African also know about. Motlhabi (2008: 32) argues:

> "In the early stages of development of an African Theology, African theologians identified several sources which were considered necessary for gaining a better understanding of it. At the top of the list were said to be the Bible and the Christian heritage. Other sources named included 'African anthropology, African traditional religions, African indigenous churches, other African realities, for example, experiences of cultural forms of life and arts, extended family, hospitality, communal life', among others" (Motlhabi: 2008: 32).

Motlhabi (2008: 32) further adds:

> "In reality, however, and logically, those 'African realities' in their totality would have to have been in existence before the Bible and the Christian message could be delivered to the African people. Consequently, as sources of African Theology they are naturally precursors to the sources derived from the Christian teaching. The entire Christian teaching may thus be said to represent an 'added reality' to African life and its context. It is only through the process of inculturation that it became a part of the African religious experience, and thus of African Theology".

Motlhabi's points then locates where the comparison of the study fits in, a discussion between God, the Christian and African life. Biko (1987: 93) spoke on the issue of the varying approach of the African in approaching the deity but more importantly that there is an acceptance of the Christian Gospel. It must be argued in this research that the comparison between African Spirituality and Christianity is rooted first in the world of the Bible, its history and context. To

this end the Old Testament becomes the cardinal pillar, as it prepares the Hebrews and world for the coming of Christ. Similarly, before that coming there are practices and beliefs found among the Hebrews, which are not only shared by the indigenous cultures of Africa but other non-European culture. It is important to begin there, in order to affirm that Hebrew-ness of Jesus and their spiritual practice that is part of his formation before the Gospel. As such, the study will begin firstly with comparing the world of Jesus and that of Africans though the study will be specific to the South African culture among the Nguni people, namely, among the Zulu. The literature review will give a road map and somewhat navigational tool of the comparison though this will be clearly indicated in the dissertation as a whole. This literature review is linked to the problem statement and affirms a point of convergence between African Spirituality and Christianity.

1.2.1. AIC Churches

As African Spiritually transitioned into Christianity, the need for the expression of African Religious beliefs and practices within Western Christianity became apparent. This gave the rise of African Independent churches. According to Kelotswe (2014:229) "by the middle of the 20th century, the AIC established themselves as not only a protestant movement but as genuine theological expression of the Christian faith from an African perspective. According to Molobi (2013:1) The African Independent Churches (AIC's) endured previous events that were forced upon them by Western justifications, theories, and explanations. They were required to establish their identities, religious beliefs, and cultural practices in accordance with Western ideals. Any native African custom that didn't conform to Western standards was considered undeveloped and primitive. The AIC's spent most of their time defending themselves to those who upheld Western principles rather than putting their practices into actuality. The AICs were at first perceived as sects and as being less than totally Christian. They had to defend their Christian faith to Western ideologies. It is intriguing to note, however, that in spite of this, the AICs never gave in to pressures that would have forced them to abandon their belief system in favour of alternative, western self-identities. Molobi (2013:1) asserts:

It has also become evident that the AIC's in their incoherence and sporadic developments since 1994, have shown very little progress in their development. The blame could however be placed on the need for a new roadmap towards standing for themselves. A lot of time was waisted by trying to explain themselves to the Western values instead of focussing on doing their theology from their own perspective.

Adedibu (2018:1) argues:

> The concept of religious mobility, ethnicity, and identity, as well as the redefinition of religious movements and various forms of religious extremism, have all been altered by the fluidity of religious movements across diverse cultural frontiers around the world. A religious community of sentiments far removed from the original home context of many religious movements has emerged as a result of the forces of globalization and technological advancement, which scholars have recently examined and are largely referred to as religious transnationalism

A cultural revolt against the missionaries' institutionalization of Christianity served as the inspiration for the AlC movement. An African protest movement that was able to save Christianity from Western cultural imperialism and restore African identity for the church in Africa was born from the outburst of African spirituality that had been latent in the missionary churches (see Akrong 1998:61). The missionaries were so engulfed in Western culture that they were unable to see anything but the differences that exists between Christianity and African culture, not the similarities. The African autonomous church movement was quick to highlight the parallels between African culture and Christianity that make African culture a respectable and legal vehicle for communicating the gospel to African society. The ramifications of this limited interpretation of Christianity are that an African must eventually transform into a Western European in order to be considered a Christian. The soteriological ramifications of this limited missionary interpretation of African culture meant that, for missionary Christianity, salvation included emancipation from African culture and religion and assimilation into the western culture, the only one in which it is believed that the salvation of God is effective (Akrong 1991a: 18).

According to Akrong (1998:62) the integrity of the Christian message as a universal message for all humans was compromised by the soteriological ramifications of the missionary theology of salvation. As for the spiritual queries and worries that Africans brought to the Christian message of redemption, it delegitimized them., it offered a patronizing, dehumanizing theology that attempted to outline for African Christians what issues, difficulties, and questions they may justifiably bring to Christianity for resolution. Additionally, missionary theology was only effective in making Africans doubt the impact of Christianity as a religion of salvation by delegitimizing the sincere worries and ambitions of African Christians. Even more so, the majority of Africans noticed the central soteriological concerns of missionary theology to be unrelated to their worries and experiences, especially when it came to the subjects of sin and

guilt, which are the primary salvation concerns of Western industrial civilization. However, African Christians do not view the Christian message with the same significance because they view salvation primarily in terms of issues related to ordinary fortitude. The main concerns of salvation for many African Christians are on deliverance from demonic powers, restoration, and the reshaping of socio-political institutions that will result in happiness and fulfilment in life (see Akrong 1998:63).

The modification of Christianity in light of Scripture served as the foundation for the theology of the independent African churches. And it is precisely this theological upheaval that has made it possible for Christianity to flourish in Africa with a distinctively African flavour. As the begotten Son of God who entered the world for the benefit of Africans as well, this has made it feasible for Africans to bestow on Jesus an African identity and a place to call home. The truth about the message of Christ, which is directed to humanity in any setting in accordance with the concerns and queries that each cultural group presents from their diverse cultural origins, was discovered as a result of this protest, which was made in the name of African culture (Barret, 1968: 127). But more importantly the AIC's also present an ambience were African spirituality as linked to tradition, ontology, identity and culture and Christianity can exclusively and mutually exist at the same time.

Western Christianity presented simultaneity of both identity and religions as pure western and white, Christianity was seen as white despite it being of Hebrew origin. However, the AIC present independence, which is a practice of African culture separate from Christianity while at the same time alluding to Christian practice. In a sense, where one has a shortfall the other can play a role, of course accepting the ambience of spirituality and the divine as presented in both Christianity and African spirituality and religion. But is important is an insistence on African spirituality as it relates to identity, divinity, society and values. Here the AIC should not simply present an indigenization or Africanisation of Christianity but accept the genius and values of Africa that are further complemented in Christianity. In sense a discovery of the African past in the Christian present.

At the same time the dissertation observes that even the AIC's are seen as exotic and not serious ecclesiastical structure worthy of being part of church history. The study proposes a discussion

on African religious and spiritual concepts and practice. Secondly, how these practices exist in the AIC's, a blending of African spirituality and Christianity. Lastly, the AIC plays two roles the African independence, that contributes epistemologically and ontological to African, the world and Christianity as well as a platform of mutual coexistence between Christianity and African Spirituality. To this end there is a deepening of the notion of spirituality at least beginning with African spirituality and Christianity. The following section is a literature review of African concepts of spirituality with brief comparison with the Hebrew scripture and Christianity.

1.3. Literature review:

The problem with Christianity is that it is assumes that Africans have their own cosmologies, ethics, and religions; however, there are similarities between African Spirituality and Christianity. This is what the literature review will emphasize by exploring African Spirituality and Christianity extensively.

1.3.1 The concept of African Spirituality and Christianity

According to Kotze (2019:1):

> African spirituality is a holistic concept that stemmed from the historical, cultural and religious heritage of Africa, and includes among others, folktales, beliefs, rituals and culture. African spiritualities must be understood as originating from Africa's soil, but also developed through contact with people from other countries and continents. The African independent or indigenous churches play an important role in the establishing of African Christian spiritualities. Firstly, African spiritualities find itself in and are related to the oral African tradition. It is also conveyed to children by different family members, including grandparents, parents, extended family members and siblings.

African spirituality varies from Western religion in that "Spirituality is not always religious but is always concerned with the quest for meaning of life. When such a quest involves an explicit reference to God or the Divine, then that spirituality is religious (Amanze 2011; Wellman, Perkins & Wellman 2009:1): 'Spirituality' then is not characterized by a clear and unambiguous set of religious beliefs or practices. In contrast, spirituality does not at all require religion to describe itself. Therefore, spirituality is more concerned with how people understand themselves, the world, interact with others, and implement choices."

Based on Paris (1993:114) notes Africans, who readily assimilate spiritual phenomena into their philosophy and practice, are unmatched in their admiration for and dedication to them. Thus, disregarding the spirituality of the populace will prevent any meaningful study of African cultural life. However, it's noteworthy to mention that while considering all of life to be sacred, many African languages lack a word for religion in actuality, Africans are unable to imagine human life separate from its connection to ethereal spirits. They hold the view that everlasting spirits wield greater authority than human beings and that neither nature nor humans exist in isolation. Thus, for them, the spheres of nature, humanity, and spirit make up a cosmological totality; as a result, it is impossible for Africans to think about humanity without considering how it is connected to the bigger picture of the world.

The African idea of *Ubuntu* is closely related to spirituality. "*Ubuntu* is understood as 'I am because you are,' or *'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'*. Thus, it is clear that a person only exists due to other people in terms of maintaining the existence of the ancestors. African spirituality is beautiful because it encompasses everything. It's brilliantly said by Knoetze: "I am, and you are, because He (God) is" (Knoetze 2017:1). However, "globalization has influenced the make-up and dynamics of African families in a variety of ways, such as making them more independent and abandoning traditionally accepted social responsibilities set out by their culture. Globalization has diminished the crucial function of community, or if you prefer, *Ubuntu*. For instance, in South Africa, 5% of the population has a high prevalence of pathological internet use" (Ogachi, Karega & Oteyo 2018:202).

"Globalisation also contributed to the migration of Africa families and individual parents from rural areas to cities where many of them ended up in informal settlements, living in poverty with little or no support system" (Ogachi, Karega & Oteyo 2018:203). As such Africans' attitudes on spirituality have changed as a result of modernization. Thus, it has become more challenging to define African spirituality in its whole due to widespread urbanization. The rapid loss of African culture and its understanding of spirituality is a result of the world's ongoing evolution. It is getting harder and harder to define what African spirituality is because the identity of the African person has evolved over time. The spirituality of Africa has also been tainted by the Christian religion. This idea is as a result of the demonization of African ancestral acknowledgment which they refer to as 'worshipping idols or other gods'.

Most African households have transformed their African spiritual traditions into something morbid and grotesque, while Christianity is perceived as sacred and pure. This is due to the misunderstanding of appeasing one's ancestors. It is crucial to emphasize how Christian religion and African spirituality are comparable.

1.3.2 Ancestors and God

Africans "think that there is a need to interact with individuals who have left this world and gone to the spiritual realm," according to Olifile et al. (2019:11695). Even after death, this contact continues to be a connection. According to African philosophy, people move from the human stage to the spiritual stage, where they might be contacted during happy and tragic occasions. Ancestors have a big impact on how Africans live their lives on a daily basis. African spirituality is impacted by a person's ideologies, which are based on self-consciousness. The African person's viewpoint is shaped by this. Africans think your philosophy and spirituality should be tailored to that circumstance if you want to live in harmony or in a reciprocal partnership.

Cosmology is important in spirituality because Africans think everything is interconnected. *Amathwasa*, loosely translated as "initiates" or "novices," is a term used by ancestors to communicate with the world of the living. *Amathwasa* become "*sangomas*" after completing their initiation. There are several ways to link or communicate with the living, including through water, dreams, music, and trances. *Izangoma* are sometimes requested by the ancestors to do tasks or deliver instructions and warnings. In order to guide "*isangoma*" to their mission, illness or disease will develop if they do not answer the Ancestral calling. Among other warning indications, these diseases can cause headaches, scorching feet, soreness, and other symptoms. Africans consult their ancestors for direction and defence. In times of crisis, they ask them for help and relief. Then the African people will conduct rituals to honour the ancestors. The acceptance of sacrifices for the atonement of sin and the use of a priest as a channel for divine communication in the Old Testament can thus be compared to this. They will select either an "*ithwasa* or a *sangoma*,", to speak with the living.

Edwards et al. (2009:6) Africans firmly believe in maintaining a relationship with our ancestors that is characterized by an awareness of their origins (roots experience). There is always a

connection between the living and the "living dead" [*abaphansi*], according to traditional Nguni culture. The names "*ukufihlwa*" and "*ukutshalwa*," which are used to describe the burial of the dead, make this clear. Burial of a regular citizen is known as *ukufihlwa*, whereas burial of a royal family member is known as *ukutshalwa*. *Ukufihla* and *Ukutshalwa* are metaphorical words meaning rebirth. A new life as an ancestor who will always be present to guide the living is symbolized by the actual burial service/process known as "*umsebenzi wokubuyisa*." These ideas offer clear explanations of the continuity of life in the Nguni culture, which is comparable to planting a corn seed in the ground and feeding it water. When fully grown, this seed will yield plenty of maize to feed both the family and the neighbourhood.

 Traditional Nguni culture mandates that the departed have a dignified send-off. The process of being sent off involves the slaughter of a cow. A unique kind of twig called "*ihlahla*" from the "*umlahlankosi*" tree is used to establish connection between the living and the deceased. An elder relative who is familiar with the family tradition is given the responsibility of carrying the twig and conversing with the deceased. As the old person carries the corpse from the scene of an accident to their home, they converse with the deceased and invite him or her to return home while dragging the twig on a small cotton-like string. The Nguni culture views this as respect for the fulfilment of a process that joins the living and the dead, but the West may reject this idea and/or negatively characterize it as mental illness (Edwards et al. 2009:6).

The Holy Trinity and God are the primary subjects of the Christian Bible. It depicts God as the world's creator and as the supreme being. Similar to how African Spirituality appeases ancestors, God is worshipped and given praise. It is well known that God is a triune Godhead. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all manifestations of him. Given that God the Son, Jesus Christ, is frequently seen as the ancestor of the Davidic lineage, his connection to African spirituality is all the clearer. It's crucial to remember that God and the existence of ancestors are both acknowledged in spirituality. We can even go so far as to say that just as God communicates via the Holy Spirit, so do ancestors, through a spirit.

Driscoll (2015: 22–23) asserts: "To argue that God exists as a trinity does not mean that there are three Gods, or that one God only shows Himself at different times as either Father, Son, or Holy Spirit," It actually means that there is only one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who manifests Himself in three distinct yet equal personalities. God is referred to as a person who 'thinks, feels, acts, and speaks.'

Trinitarianism acknowledges the biblical doctrine that the Father, Son, and Spirit are each eternally God. The Father is clearly referred to as God throughout the Scriptures. The Scriptures repeatedly refer to Jesus Christ as God. It is also stated that the Holy Spirit is God. God the Holy Spirit can also be angered, opposed, and insulted; He is not only an impersonal force.

Many people in African spirituality see God as an incomprehensible, this can be seen in words such as '*Unkulunkulu*' in IsiZulu which means 'the Great one" or '*Somandla*' which means "the one who yields great power" . This is to show how African Spirituality denotes God in characteristics and not necessarily in being. God's actions describe him and not necessarily his nature. Christianity simplifies how people identify God, by likening it to human image, whereas African people relate to God through his deeds because they believe God's magnitude cannot be quantified or it is beyond human understanding.

1.3.3 Animal sacrifices

African spirituality, and Judaism both involve animal sacrifices as a medium to appease or communicate with the media. The first animal sacrifice can be seen in the Old Testament when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac but instead supplied a ram in Isaac's place (Genesis 22:1-19). In the African context a goat will be sacrificed by an "*isangoma*" to appease the ancestors as a means of communication to the Divine. According to Marbaniang (2018:2) in the Old Testament, humans gave animal sacrifices to make atonement with God. The Bible shows how sacrifices have been made from the dawn of time. In fact, it says that after Adam and Eve committed transgression and attempted to hide their nakedness with fig leaves, God "created tunics of skin, and covered them" (Gen 3:21). It goes without saying that an animal was murdered to serve as a covering for them. It means that only God's own work of eternal sacrifice can remove the guilt and shame caused by man's sin. Then, as we see in (Hebrews 11:4 and Genesis 4:4), Abel offered a sacrifice by faith, and God was impressed with it.

1.3.4 *Indumba* and the altar

After completing their initiation, "*ithwasa*" becomes "*isangoma*," who are then expected to construct a shrine to communicate with the living dead by tossing bones in a certain location known as "*indumba*." Goats would be sacrificed, and the *sangoma* would get entrance to the spiritual world through the ancestors as a result. They will then be able to explain to the

individual who came to consult them what the bones have to say about the situation's history, present, or future.

The Old Testament also records the sacrifice of Cain and Abel on an altar, a place of worship (Genesis 4). The atonement for sins is no different. According to Marbaniang (2018:2), in biblical language, "atonement" refers to the rapprochement of God and humans. Sin is an immeasurable barrier separating humans from God. As a result, a sacrifice was offered for the forgiveness of sin. Numerous sacrifices, including the Red Heifer Offering (Exodus 12), the Sin Offerings (Lev. 4, 6), and the Passover Lamb (Num.19). The Day of Atonement was to be observed according to Old Testament law on the tenth day of the seventh month. Some notable characteristics of this feast include the following: The Most Holy Place is closed to visitors the rest of the year and is only open to the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev.16:2). On this day alone, the High Priest was permitted to enter the Most Holy Place behind the veil (Lev.16:3).

 In contrast to the priests of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ did not enter any manmade building with the blood of animals, but entered the true Most Holy Place in heaven with His own blood, procuring eternal redemption for us. The High Priest had to first offer a sin offering for himself before he could offer a sin offering to atone for the sins of the people. The curtain separating God and humanity was broken in His body while He was dying on the cross, giving us access to the Most Holy Place Marbaniang 2018:3) .

Bones reveal additional parallels between African spirituality and the Bible. In "*Ubungoma*," bones are blown into and thrown to the ground, where they serve as a navigator to help the person counselling understand what the ancestors wish to say. Whereas in the Bible (Ezekiel 37:1-10) the story of the bones and spirit is retold in a different way:

> the hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know. "Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.' So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a

rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and
flesh appeared on them, and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.
Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it,
'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and
breathe into these slain, that they may live.' "So, I prophesied as he commanded me,
and breath entered them; they came to life"

Both times, bones are utilized to symbolize something bigger but more importantly
communication concerning the beyond, life, death and the present. Both Christianity and
spirituality place a lot of importance on breathing. The spirit is what gives the bones life. Both
times, the bones receive instructions to accomplish marvels, which they do. Hence
demonstrating the connection between the Bible and spirituality. In the end, both rely greatly
on faith and belief in the unseen.

1.3.5 Healing

The spirituality of Africa, according to Edwards et al (2009:5) notes that healing from an
African-centric viewpoint points to ancestors as occasionally honoured and asked for advice
through ritualistic practices that vary from group to group. Ancestors are thought to know more
than anyone alive, to have superhuman abilities, and to be anywhere at any time because they
are dead. If they are delighted or angry, they can bring good luck or bad luck. The way in which
our ancestors heal us is by giving us a feeling of our roots, heightening knowledge of the
medicinal aspects of nature (roots), anchoring us, and reaffirming who we are. If human
consciousness is seen of as nature's capacity for self-awareness, or the ability to recognize that
we are living things who will eventually pass away, then it becomes clear why humans need to
know both their starting points and their last resting places. These come from ancestors.

So, if one views healing in a broad epistemic and praxis as the act of making oneself well, one
could argue that nothing cures a person more than understanding who they are, their lineage,
their purpose, and their future. Giving their successors a feeling of closure and direction in
times of uncertainty is one of the ancestors' roles in healing (see Edwards et al., 2009:6). It is
through knowing, in a manner akin to African spirituality, that you are anchored in Christ that
you experience healing in Christianity. Christ is the True Lord and Saviour and offers healing
to even the sickest of patients (Philippians 4:13) "In Jesus Christ, who strengthens me, I can do
all things." According to (Case 1923:241), Jews commonly believed that ailment was God's
punishment for something. The curse on mortals was said to have been brought about by Adam

and Eve's misdeeds. It was claimed that when the Egyptians offended Jehovah, they were struck by plagues.

On the other hand, he assured the Hebrews that if they obeyed, he would spare them from such plagues and instead, would cure them of all their illnesses (Exod 15:26) Demon possession is another source of illness and one that is highlighted most in the New Testament. Case (1923:239) asserts: This reason is attributed to both physical and mental illnesses, with mental dysfunction instances being particularly identified. People who are in this condition are frequently mentioned in the first three gospels, and the disciples are ready to encounter this phenomenon in their own missionary effort. They reportedly told Jesus, "You have a demon, you are going crazy," when he displayed eerie insight into the plans of his opponents or made statements that looked ludicrous to them.

1.3.6 Dreams

Old Testament dreams are mentioned by Buhrmann (1978:17) as being considered to be very important messages for the person or the community. She also points out that the Aryans of ancient India, Greece, Egypt, and the Middle East were among the groups who used dreams the most effectively to treat physical and/or mental disorders in ancient times. In the context of South Africa specifically, many take dreams seriously as a kind of ancestor communication. Similar from a Hebrew/Christian perspective, Jacob's brothers' sheaves stood in a field with his sheaves bowing down in Genesis 37:5–9, where Joseph, who was despised by them, recounts them a dream he had previously dreamed, which is "that the sun and moon and stars will worship him".

The meaning of dreams is so important for these three religions Hebrews, Christianity and African spirituality. In the African household, the dream message must be followed once it has been made apparent and specifies what is expected of the person, the family, or the clan in order to avoid major disease or bad luck. It is commonly known (Thwala, Pillay, and Sargent, 2000; Mfusi and Edwards, 1985) that the living dead use dreams as a means of communication to inform Africans' rural and urban ways of life with regard to significant topics including warnings, providing direction, and designating someone for divinity.

1.3.7 The symbolism of Blood

Blood is a vital symbol in both African Spirituality and Christianity. In the Old Testament which mainly was a Hebrew religion, blood was significant when it came to rituals. As such many of the Old testament sacrifices were fulfilled in the New Testament, most times being used as lessons in the parables. In Christianity, the ultimate blood sacrifice can be seen when Christ shares the last supper with his disciples ahead of the crucifixion. Luke 22: 19-20 says 'And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." 20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. Allison (2016: 46) argues: "Sacrifice does not appear to be foreign to Israel, because the surrounding nations practiced it.

Undoubtedly, therefore, blood sacrifice in the Old Testament could be traced to Babylonian, Canaanite or Ancient Nomadic rituals and fellowship meals. The most significant covenant in human history is the blood covenant. Even in the Old Testament, when the Angel of Death came to take the Egyptians' firstborn boys, blood is the source of all life. 12:23 in Exodus According to God's instructions, Moses was to urge the Israelites to kill a lamb and apply its blood on their doorposts so that the angel of death would pass over their home. This is a clear indication of life, brought about by blood, the life-giving fluid. Blood sacrifices involve taking a victim's life and pouring their blood onto the altar. These were restricted to the herd, the flock, and all clean birds, according to MacLean (1952:135).

Israelite worship included blood sacrifice, which involved the killing of the victim with the goal of repairing and/or upholding a just relationship with God. Apart from its obvious dependence on and gratitude for God, this form of sacrifice in Israel may not be unrelated with God's revelatory act. With this action, Walter Eichrodt (1961:38) notes in reference to blood-related sacrifice that men knew exactly where they stood, and an atmosphere of trust and security was established, in which they find both the strength for a willing surrender to God's will and joyful courage to face the challenges of life. The primary goal of blood sacrifice could be anything from giving a gift, participating in communion, determining atonement, redemption, cleansing, or preventing errors or failures to serve Yahweh, on the one hand, and as it impacts man, on the other.

In contrast, and as it relates to God, following the sovereign God who is concerned for our well-being. Therefore, Old Testament blood sacrifice is of paramount importance because it was forbidden to utilize any wild or unclean animals in the ritual. According to Allison (2016: 50), before the victim is killed and the blood is administered for atonement of the benefactor's sin, the offeror, in a sense, aligns himself with the victim, showing a symbol of surrender, dedication, and substitution.

According to Maclean (1952, p. 137), the priest was supposed to collect the blood in a cup and smother it on the altar, while the benefactor was expected to bring their sacrifice to the altar, lay a hand upon it, and kill it. Therefore, the burnt offering, the peace offering, the sin or trespass offering, and the personal or group offering were first among the blood sacrifices. The book of Genesis makes a point of mentioning blood sacrifices, whether individual or communal. For instance, an animal was killed when God dressed Adam and Eve in animal skins after their fall (Genesis 3:11). Another gory sacrifice occurred when Abel offered a substitute that was covered in blood instead of offering the first fruit of the earth.

According to Trumbull (1975: 21) the Lord felt regard for Abel and his offering, but not for Cain and his sacrifice because it bore no symbol of any kind,. This serves as further evidence that "life destroyed" refers to the loss of blood and that life is in the blood. The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the earth, and now you are cursed from the earth, which had opened her mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand (Genesis 4:10, 11), there is a unique reason for this. It is stated in the grievances to the fountain of life-God Himself. Bloodshed was therefore prohibited at this point unless it was done as an act of sacrifice to God.

Second, the particular significance of blood in Noah's post-flood animal sacrifice inspired God to reiterate His Sovereign and final attitude regarding humanity claimed relationship to life— God Himself being the author of life. The Holy Scriptures clearly indicate that "Everything that moveth that liveth shall be food for you; I have given you all things as the green herbs." But you must not eat any flesh that has the life-giving substance, which is its blood. As was previously stated, the significance of blood cannot be minimized from an Old Testament perspective. Blood was crucial to Israel's bond with God, from sacrifices to individual and national covenants.

Blood as a life principle is endowed with the sacredness it deserves and claims because of the risk associated to it. Blood is viewed as God's symbol in the solidifying of bonds, agreements, regimes, heavenly directives, and judicial decisions. Furthermore, blood possessed the validity bestowed upon it by its creator to the point where it had a voice pleading with its source, God, for a just punishment of the one who disobeyed its prohibition against being spilled and/or consumed. Therefore, it was possible to understand the significance of blood sacrifice in the Old Testament through its oneness with God, from whom man had separated himself as a result of disobedience to established rules. Because sin's punishment cannot be avoided, this union ultimately results in substitution. The idea of substitution refers to substituting oneself for the real offender.

The fact that blood sacrifice produced a bond or relationship, such as a covenant between two people, is as significant. Such a link was maintained, so to speak, by a blood covenant. Although, according to Abe (2004:110), the Israelites did not view the victim sacrifice as a communion offering or as mystically dining with Yahweh, they did feel that the ritual eating of the slaughtered victim improved their covenantal relationship with Yahweh. The topic of propitiation or coverage associated with the Old Testament blood sacrifice is also crucial.

This idea underlies the attempt to placate God's wrath and indignation. It may be said that the blood offerings momentarily atoned for Israel's sins, thus appeasing God's holiness. In terms of importance, this idea is analogous to African spirituality. Nabofa (1985:391) states that "in most African concepts of being or existence, it is held that when the vital life force ceases to vibrate in man or animal, the functioning of the heart, and consequently, the circulation of blood, will come to a standstill and the life of such a creature will terminate." Any relationship with the world of the ancestors in African spirituality requires the use of a goat. A goat is killed, and the blood is spilled on the ritual grounds as a sign of respect for people who represent the "living past." The ancestors are placated through this conduct.

In addition to using blood to administer oaths, Bernard (2020:21) claims that Africans also use it to exact revenge, feed witches, wizards, and sorcerers, and promote healing and rebirth of life. Similar to the wine that Christ shared with his apostles at the Last Supper, alcohol is used

today. that wine is symbolic of the blood which is the lifegiving source. This idea will be discussed in further detail in under the section of blood sacrifices.

1.3.8 Incense

When warmed or burned, incense, which is made up of aromatic spices, herbs, and oils, releases its potent aroma. Any other blend was not to be used for worship, and this particular mixture was not to be used for any other cause. Stacte, frankincense, galbanum and onycha were the components of the incense burned in the sanctuary. The high priest placed some incense on the warm coals from the altar as soon as he entered the Holy of Holies. In order to distract the priest from gazing at the mercy seat, the incense instantly permeated the space with a pleasant perfume and covered the throne of God on the ark of the covenant in mist. Through the burning of incense, his perceptions of scent and sight had become a part of the worship. The significance of incense in worshiping Yahweh throughout the Old Testament is demonstrated by the harsh punishment meted out to those who burned it in an improper manner (2 Chronicles 26:16–21). The incense fog stands for purification, and the incense's beautiful aroma alludes to Christ's robe of virtue, which covers our sin. The main emblems of the liturgy, holy things and holy persons, are occasionally honoured with incense.

Incense was a symbol that alluded to a more important reality, as was the case with other components of Old Testament worship. A physical representation of the prayers of God's people ascending to heaven was the perfume of incense: "Let my petition be accepted as sweet-smelling incense in your presence. Let my hands raised in prayer receive acceptance as an evening sacrifice. offering (Psalm 141:2). The aroma of burning sacrifices and incense together represents the blending of devotional and repentant prayers. The mix of incense's physical actuality and the prayers of God's people is also depicted in the book of Revelation: "The smoke from the incense went up from the angle's hand to God along with the prayers of God's people."

Incense serves as a sensory metaphor for the internal reality of lives dedicated in reverence to God in the eternal praise of God. Why the Israelites' burning incense to idols was so repulsive is explained by the significance of incense in worship and its connection to prayer: "It is because their people did wrong, and they made me angry. They went to worship other gods that neither you nor your ancestors had heard of while burning incense, according to Jer 44:3. Incense was

a symbol of pure worship, but those who offered it to idols were altering it to worship false gods.

Burning '*impepho*' incense is utilized in African spirituality to communicate with the dead. Ntshangase (2012:iv) claims that "*Impepho* is well-known to the majority of SubSaharan Africans as it is utilized by traditional healers to connect with the departed and is also used by them to contact with their ancestors. When offering chickens, goats, or cows to the ancestors as part of ritual feasts or other rites, it is employed. These rituals and traditional feasts include funerals, thanksgiving celebrations, *ukubuyisa* (the coming home of the spirit of a deceased relative), and *umemulo* (the ceremonial honoring females' right to enter puberty). The claim made by Nyawose (2000:41) that "during the ceremony of *ukubuyiswa* -the upper part of the floor is marked of an inch-high ridge, which forms a semi-circle known as '*umsamo*' (sacred shrine)" provides evidence in support of this. No outsider is allowed past a certain point into the *umsamo* region, where *impepho* is burned as an offering to the ancestors. Here, the sacrificed meat is left to hang overnight together with the sorghum beer saved for the ancestors. The meat and beer are thought to have been licked or eaten by local ancestors.

1.3.9 Ancestors vs Saints

In Christianity, the word "saint" in everyday speech has associations with patience, self-denial, and selfless devotion to others. Ancestors are accorded the same prominence in African spirituality. The strong belief that saints can be instructive in efforts to live the Christian life is shared by those Christians who worship the saints. A Saint Francis can teach us to love the earth and its inhabitants, martyrs can teach us to be courageous in the face of an unreceptive world, and great mystics can teach us how to pray more effectively (Cunningham 2008:10). The saints have a range of essential roles in the historical Christian church, but when considered collectively, they are a very complex phenomenon. Saint Paul frequently used the Greek word *agios* in reference to members of the earliest Christian churches. The Rome-based society, which is "called to be saints" (Rom. 1:7), is welcomed by him. He uses identical wording in both his second letter and his greeting to the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 1:2). What does Paul mean by this terminology? It is clear that Paul believes the community's members to be holy and saints in this broad meaning. In this sense, defining a saint as a "holy person" would be an option. (Cunningham 2008:10).

According to the biblical tradition, God is essentially described as being holy. God is pure. Everything else, including individuals, locations, possessions, deeds, rites, homes, books, and so forth, turns holy to the extent that it is connected to or associated with the sacredness of God. When Paul refers to the "holy ones" (also known as the saints) of the early Christian communities, he is referring to those who have become related to and identified with God via the atoning act of Christ. In this regard, they are saints. Therefore, a person may only be considered holy to the extent that they have some connection with God, who is the basis of all sanctity. The Christian community has continued to use this common definition of "saint" or "holy one" today. According to Cunningham (2008:10):

> While other church organizations with roots in the sixteenth-century Reformation either disregard or actively work against any special class of people who are referred to as "saints" in the restricting reason in which we will use the term, the place of saints is a conspicuous part of Anglican, Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Orthodox life.

Mvunabandi (2008:102) asserts that members of the founding bloodline "give an array of offerings on the ancestral altar (gandjelo)," as stated by Mvunabandi (the veneration of ancestors is at the heart of their religious life, much like it is for the Zulu people. The officiator is the senior brother of the relevant familial group, which makes up the category of sacrifice (mhamba). However, no one is permitted to make an offering "precedent to the death of his parents". Hahla means "to sanctify" in Arabic. Anything or person utilized to create a connection between ancestor-gods and their followers is referred to as mhamba.

The term "mhamba" refers to the entire world of magic and religion (De Heusch, 1985:66). Ancestors reside in subterranean communities and receive mhamba offerings. Additionally, they can be found in human culture as harmless blue snakes (dendrophis subcarinatus). The most illustrious ancestors are said to reside in sacred areas that are exclusively accessible to priests. Tsonga people's beliefs holds that human's universe is completely different from that of the forefathers. Offerings and sacrifices are unbalanced in nature as well. Offerings relieve tension, prayers calm the ancestors' wrath, and they summon away ill luck or sickness.

The ancestors' supplication is symbolized by the terms khongota (to begrudge) and bula-bulela (to chastise). According to Junod (1927:421-423): "the petition is either prompted or accompanied by the slanders hurled at gods" in the case of tragedies." Mvunabandi (2008:103)

asserts that in the course of ancestor worship, silence is carefully followed in Zulu sacrificial ceremonies. Raw flesh and coagulated blood are permissible for consumption by ancestors. They must burn to ashes any meat set aside for them. Its placement on the fire opens a line for interactions with the ancestors.

1.3.10 Spiritual significance of water and Baptism

According to Groenewald (2006: 169), "The first baptism is a significant ceremony in the Christian religion. Like all symbolic rites, it has significance because it is carried out with intention and enriches people's lives. Jesus-followers were admitted into a brand-new movement known as the "family of God" through the ceremony of baptism.' This suggested a change in status, which in turn gave the baptized additional obligations (cf. Turner 1987:380–383, 386). It appears that the early followers of Jesus thought that by partaking in the baptismal process, they were symbolically buried and raised with him, sharing in his work of salvation.

Similar to how Jesus likely did while he was on earth (see Stevenson 1989:66), they likewise encountered the Holy Spirit following their baptism by way of altered states of consciousness. Since regular language was unable to adequately convey this "extraordinary" status transition or the acquisition of a new social identity, they articulated their experience through anti-language. I'll talk about the Eucharist, which is the integrating ceremony, in the subsequent chapter. These new positions and obligations were affirmed by participating in the Eucharist.

In African Spirituality Representations of water are embedded in religion, spirituality, myths, legends and rituals. According to Tounouga & Brock (2003:283) 'three models for the representation of water are found in Black-African traditions: water as a source of life, as an instrument of purification and as a locus of regeneration.' As per Tounouga & Brock (2003:283) "Water—fascinating water—has been essential to the fertility of fields and the fecundity of people and things throughout Africa since the time of the Pharaohs. Additionally, each type of water—rain, river, spring, pond, lake, sea, water cupped in a tree hollow, dew—is endowed with special meaning.

The Bantu people believe that a large water whirlpool or reed bed, which they place in the Orient, is the site of birth, or creation. Water is a natural element that the Fali people of Cameroon relate with fish." In western Cameroon, among the Bamileke people, a father blesses his daughter on her wedding day with water that has been infused with fefe leaves (fefe is a spinach-like plant that represents sweetness and peace) (see Tounouga & Brock 2003:283).

Inextricably linked to initiation, purification removes internal impurities, fends against evil spirits, and safeguards the initiated. As a result, Bambara proselytes are doused with water at the conclusion of their initiation by the leader of the kore, the community of the initiated. Then, an elder initiate draws water from the village's sacred pond to wash them twice: once within the kore and once at the latter location (Tounouga & Brock 2003:283).

The spiritual realm of water has a special role in the voodoo rituals of Benin, Togo, and Nigeria; thus, springs, rivers, and waterfalls are said to have magical properties. As a result, it is also customary to sprinkle water on altars before every ceremony to call the spirits of the afterlife. According to Tounouga and Brock (2003:283), "Water can also be the source of temporal and spiritual power for groups of initiates, typically developing into secret societies that use supernatural means to appropriate the enchanted abilities of aquatic genies."

 Water is a valuable resource, and its scarcity is a genuine natural disaster. The livelihoods of peasant farmers practically depend on the rain; whether it doesn't come, arrives too late, or comes too hard, they must continue the rites and invocations that have formed the foundation of their rural culture. The origins of these behaviours are explained by a number of mythologies. Thus, Amontong, the deity of drought, and Montogari, the god of rain, were the original deities of the Diola people of West Africa (Tounouga & Brock 2003:283).

1.3.11 Priests vs healers

Priests and healers carry out comparable duties in terms of healing and cleansing. When people experience a wide range of worries or misfortunes, such as illness, bad luck, poor finances, fertility problems, including but not limited to depression, the flu, joint pain, unhappiness, discontentment with the direction of life, or spiritual stagnancy, they consult healers in the

African traditional context in the hopes of finding a solution. Humans are solution-focused, which in turn causes them to anticipate quick results or fixes.

Traditional African healing has been practiced for many generations, but according to Mokgobi (2014:25), "many people still seem to not understand how it relates to God and religion/spirituality." Some individuals appear to think that traditional healers don't worship God, but rather the ancestors. Traditional healers offer much more than just using herbs to treat bodily ailments. Traditional healers play a variety of functions, including as guardians of traditional African religion and practices, cultural educators, advisors, social workers, and psychotherapists, among others. The majority of healers are herbalists, not *Izangoma*.

Herbalists (*izinyanga*), according to Ngubane & De Gama (2023:35), receive no spiritual training but instead gain experience with wildlife products from a traditional healer who serves as a family elder or by being instructed in visions and dreams on how to use umuthi. Herbalists often aren't allowed to consult with their ancestors when making diagnoses, but after the patient's condition is understood, they might be shown how to give the right medication. due to the 'bridging' qualities of ancestral spirits between ethnic groupings and traditions of behaviours'. The usage of herbal remedies derives from traditional medicine, which is a body of skills, information, and convictions based on comprehensible or incomprehensible notions that are unique to each culture and used for the treatment, diagnosis, and prevention of physical and mental illnesses.

These customs are passed down from one lineage to the next either spiritually through ancestors or acquired through prior knowledge, observations, and experience. Medicinal plants serve as the cornerstone of treating illnesses in traditional medicine, along with additional substances such as minerals, animal parts, incantations, and other procedures. Because they felt that unauthorized exposure of such knowledge could cause the treatment to lose its efficacy, indigenous healers over time perceived their medical knowledge as personal property that must be maintained in absolute confidentiality (Sodi et al., 2011:104). The power to heal is bestowed by the ancestors, and they have the authority to revoke the ability from any healer who commits malpractice, according to Sodi et al. (2011) and Mokgobi (2014). According to Denbow and

Thebe (2006), there is also a second category of healers who have no particular calling but who learn how to employ medicines and can treat patients without the aid of their forefathers.

1.3.12 The dark side of Spirituality and Christianity

Both spirituality and religion can develop into perilous pursuits, just like everything else. Ellerbe (1995:2) asserts that the Christian church has left behind a heritage and a worldview that permeate both the secular and religious spheres of Western civilization. It is a legacy that encourages racism, intolerance for diversity, misogyny, and destruction of the natural environment. The Church has shown a contempt for human freedom, dignity, and self-determination for a significant portion of its history. It has tried to limit, contain, and regulate spirituality—the interaction between a person and God. As a result, Christianity has contributed to the development of a society in which individuals are cut off from both the divine and one another.

This form of Christianity, which we will refer to as "orthodox Christianity," is based on the idea that there is a single, exclusively masculine, authoritarian deity who requires blind allegiance and ruthlessly punishes dissension. Orthodox Christians think that terror is necessary to maintain what they see as a divinely ordered hierarchy, where a celestial God rules alone at the top, far from the earth and all of humanity. . Even while orthodox Christianity was initially just one of several early Christian religious systems, it was these Christians who eventually came to hold political power. They gained unheard-of power and privilege by modifying their Christianity to appeal to the Roman rulers. Their congregation then adopted the name Church. In Ellerbe (1995), they were able to compel adherence to their procedures thanks to their newly obtained power. However, in order to punish those who disobeyed, the Church had to make clear its own theology and ideology and specify precisely what was and was not blasphemy.

In doing so, Ellerbe (1995:4) asserts that the Church consistently chose tenets and ideologies that best supported its control over the individual and society. As it took over leadership in Europe and the Roman Empire collapsed, the Church wiped out education, technology, science, medicine, history, art and commerce. The Church amassed enormous wealth as the rest of society languished in the dark ages. When dramatic social changes after the turn of the millennium brought an end to the isolation of the era, the Church fought to maintain its supremacy and control. It rallied an increasingly dissident society against perceived enemies, instigating attacks upon Muslims, Eastern Orthodox Christians, and Jews (see Ellerbe 1995: 4)

In terms of colonialism and imperialism which is present in Christianity, No radical endeavour today, according to Grosfoguel (2011:28), can be successful without tearing down these colonial/racial structures. The underappreciation of the coloniality issue has played a significant role in the public's dissatisfaction with 'leftist' ideas. If colonial/racist dynamics preserve a sizable section or, in some situations, the majority of the population as second-class citizens, democracy (liberal or radical) cannot be fully achieved. The viewpoint presented here does not support "identity politics." A radical criticism of Eurocentric paradigms and methods of thinking could begin with a discussion of subaltern identities as an epistemic starting point. But "identity politics" are not the same as alterity in epistemology. The reach of "identity politics" is constrained, and it is unable to bring about a fundamental change in the system and its colonial power structure. In light of the fact that all contemporary identities are products of the coloniality of power in the contemporary colonial world, their defence is not as subversive as it might initially appear to be. The concepts of "Black," "Indian," "African," or national identities like "Colombian," "Kenyan," or "French" are colonial inventions.

According to Grosfoguel (2011:28), depending on what is at stake in particular settings, defending these identities may serve some progressive purposes. These identities, for instance, can serve to unite the oppressed people over a common foe in the fight against an imperialist invasion or in anti-racist movements against white supremacy. However, identity politics does not generate a radical anti-systemic battle against the systemic and global Western-centric civilization; rather, it primarily targets the aims of a single group and calls for equality inside the system. The exploitation system is an important area for intervention and calls for wider coalitions across racial, gender, and class divides as well as among a variety of oppressed groups around the radicalization of the idea of social equality (Grosfoguel 2011:29).

Eguweye & Umeanolue (2015:54) suggest that:

> there has also been a rise in the number of false prophets. The human individual has faced numerous evils throughout history, including social, religious, economic, political, and psychological issues. Humans worry about these issues; thus, it makes sense to have inquiries about what is happening in one's life. Humans therefore look for solutions to these existential mysteries. Religious people need charismatic individuals to interpret the divine mind in order to receive answers or solutions. As a result, just like the Israelites in Jeremiah's day, modern Christians have turned to prophets to solve their issues and meet their needs. In the Christian

faith, violence and false prophecy are particularly troublesome. Extorsion through exorbitant tithing has also been a result of false prophets. These prophets use the bible as a vehicle to drive their selfish pursuits, under the guise of prosperity gospel, "give more so you can get more."

Ancestry is mostly associated with witchcraft in African spirituality because an increasing number of people advertise how they utilize their spiritual gifts to harm others. When it comes to Sangomas, there are even more trends emerging. Many people assert that they have an ancestral calling, yet it may just be mental health conditions. Motoyoshi (1966:41) asserts: "Each of these religious beliefs shares in the same functions as follows: explanation of varied misfortunes; moral sanction; and maintenance of a social structure,". In addition, each of them stands in a complementary relationship to the other in terms of the roles they play. Witches, who are frequently used interchangeably with "Sangomas," are believed to be the cause of unexpected death or serious illnesses in many communities. While ancestors bestow less severe disasters, they only hurting their descendants when they violate their obligations to their forebears or kinsmen. This allows the descendants to make amends for their wrongdoing.

Witches are typically thought of as having a negative influence on interpersonal relationships. By doing this, people are able to reject and exclude members of their community who are overly envious, competitive, or unyielding. Many people also engage in dark magic as a means of bringing wealth through the murder of people. The most sought-after individuals for traditional medicine, or "*muthi*," are albino people. In South Africa, a new practice known as *"Ukuthwala nge nyoka"* (gaining wealth through harbouring a snake) has gained popularity in recent years. In this practice, people visit "sangomas" to seek wealth by owning a snake that periodically requires copulation with an unaware human. Due to the act of *"Ukuthwala nge nyoka,"* vulnerable persons have become the target of strange disappearances as a result. I will continue the discussion of the parallels between the two in the following chapter to avoid deviating from the goal of this study.

1.3.13 The Oppression of women

In African culture, women expected to 'submit' to their husbands. This is done through oppressive measures. Women are not expected to have a voice or argue with their husbands as this can be seen as disobedience. The same goes for Christians. Husbands are somewhat

prioritised and made to seem more significant than women. In Ephesians 5:33 (AMPC version) reads, "Let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband [that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates, and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly." The only instruction for the man is to 'love' his wife. This is an evident unequal regard for the woman than the man.

According to Balogun (2010:22), cultural vehicles like proverbial folklore encourage the subjugation of women throughout Africa and, in fact, throughout the world. Though the application of proverbs may vary from society to society, all proverbs share the trait that they cover a broad range of human issues and activities. In the collective thought and communication processes of Africans, proverbs hold a high value. Generally speaking, folklore study has done a good job of documenting the societal roles that proverbs play in African civilizations. However, little focus has been placed on how proverbs relate to women's oppression and, particularly, how proverbs, as a discussion in which females are portrayed based on conventional gender roles and impressions, continue to thwart the present attempts towards gender sensitization and the concomitant empowerment of women in the continent. The exaltation of men seems to be in great demand.

According to Balogun (2010:28), a lady is expected to get married by a certain age in African cultures, particularly Yoruba cultures. If this expectation is not met, she may start to lose respect and may even be referred to as a witch. Balogun (2010:22) argues: This is also the case when a woman gives birth to female children without having male offspring: she and the girls will be referred to as witches. The stereotypes that women have to fight through are many."

1.3.14 Dangers of blood sacrifices
As per Hubert &Mauss (1968): "sacrifice is a "mediated communication between the profane and the sacred world": the sacrificial animal, which must first be made sacred, is a means of communication, and the sacrifice itself is a rite of passage between the worlds. "Rites of entry and exit, or sanctification and de-sanctification, place a framework around the actual sacrificial act which climaxed in the slaying of the animal with which the sacred and dangerous 'energies' have been released, which now flow out both to the holy and to the persons performing the sacrifice". (Hubert & Mauss 1968: 98)

Blood sacrifices in particular are quite a dangerous pursuit. In some ritualistic practices in African Culture, people are abducted, killed and dismembered for the creation of 'muthi'. In the Old Testament God says to Abraham, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about." This suggests a type of mutilation which is grotesque and unjust to the affected individual. The other pressing issue is the deceit and manipulation which formed part of the intention to sacrifice. Africans will use a goat as an exorcist.

Mvunabandi (2008:98) suggests that this is carried out violently. The exorcism of the deranged is connected to the strongest religious practice of blood sacrifice. The diseased spirit, which originates from beyond the maternal or paternal bloodline, is expulsed in this situation by the sacrifice. Spirit possessions brought on by the ancestors' rage call for a healing ritual centred around prayer and offering. Most Africans view mental illness as foreign, while endogenous illnesses are those that are passed down from ancestors. In each of these situations, divining bones identify the illness's type as well as its specific cause, location, and course of treatment.

The patient is put into a trance by musicians and loud choruses, which forces the spirit to identify itself and reveal its name. Mvunabandi (2008:98) claims that what comes next is violent dancing, which typically lasts for several days. The ill person's head is placed in a basin during the second stage in order to force open his eyes. In order to ensure that the diseased spirit is expelled from the body and transferred to an altar, the third step involves appeasing by blood, which includes blood and violent sacrifice (De Heusch, 1985:83 The gall bladder is tied to the exorcised patient's hair, after which strings from a tree with a nice odour are affixed to the strips cut from the victim, and ritual cooking is performed using the sacrificed animal's remnants (De Heusch, 1985:83). The patient actually loses it during the sacrifice and ingests the animal's raw blood, wholly associating with the spirit. The possessed person must be made to vomit in order to drive the spirit out, after which he must put on the animal hide and start the ritual jogging in order to effectively converse with all spirits. Before performing the ceremonies of cleansing, he wears the strips for his entire recuperating year (De Heusch, 1985:84).

1.4 Chapter outline

Chapter 1 focused on the introduction, methodology, problem statement and the literature review. There was an extensive discussion on the Colonialism, Imperialism as well as the AIC churches and a detailed literature review.

In Chapter 2, the discussion will be about the emergence of Christianity and its practices to understand the origin and how it came about that the colonisers influenced Africa.

Chapter 3 will look at African spirituality and how it began, we will also look at some ritual and practices that are native to African people.

Chapter 4 will focus on the comparison between the two, it will further explore the similarities between African spirituality and Christianity. This includes false prophets and witchcraft, inheritance (Land and livestock), rites of passage (circumcision), totems and lineage / naming rites, traditional beer and wine.

Chapter 5 is the final chapter which will discuss eschatology and reinstate the purpose of African Spirituality and reiterate its importance.

Chapter 2: The Emergence of Christianity

2.1. A brief history of Palestine

To properly discuss the subject of this research a historical orientation is critical in setting out the reasons of this study properly. This will set the scene for pedagogical reasons and the hermeneutical turn this study seeks to address itself to. The history of Christianity, which has now become a "world" religion in fact does not begin with a universal acceptance of the faith though its message is a such but begin in a context of peripherality, provincially, ethnic, cultural, and religious group. Jewish people were the first Christians. In order to comprehend this subject, we must look into the history of the Jews which will shed some light on the complicated beginning of Christianity. According to Teeple (1992:3):

> Hebrew people arrived in Palestine in (ca. 2000-1500 BC). These Hebrews came to settle amongst the Semites who were already natives of the land. Around the 1500 and 1300 B.C. some of the Hebrews arrived in Egypt. These migrations are documented in the story of Abraham (Gen 11: 31; 12:4-5). Egypt defeated Syria around 1470 and took control of Palestine. In the book of Exodus, it is noted that Moses led the Israelites which are the Hebrews in Egypt to Canaan. The control of the land was gained through military conquest.

The land was then divided into 12 portions which belonged to the twelve tribes of Israel. As per Gowan (1980:1) it had been approximately 600 years that the Israelites had been living in Palestine when Jerusalem became conquered by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. The twelve tribes of Israel became consolidated into a monarchy by King David. A governmental and religious center was built under his son, Solomon. The alliance between the ten Northern tribes and the two (Judah and Benjamin) Southern tribes was uneasy, which led to the separation of the Palestinian Land into two Kingdoms after the death of Solomon in 922 B.C.E. The two regions became known as Israel in the North and Judah in the South (Gowan 1980:2).

Palestine's economy was mostly made up of agriculture during the period of the monarchy. As per Gowan (1980:2) "although Solomon took initiative and began extensive trading activities during his tenure, such as taking advantage of his country's location on the trade routes between Egypt and Asia, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, the impact did not last long in the lives of the Israelites." There was not much of value that they could export, as the majority of the exports were crops such as Wheat and barley, grapes, and olives. Which all counted as food supply, livestock were raised mainly for Milk supply and not necessarily for consumption.

Governance during this time was different between the Kingdoms, Judah was more stable as it was under King David's dynasty, whereas the north had no strong leadership which led to a lot of instability. This led to its capital moving from city to city until Omri constructed it in Samaria until it fell in 722 B.C to Assyrian King Sargon II (see Gowan 1980:3).

King Nebuchadnezzar II took over Jerusalem in 587 B.C.E. According to Teeple (1994:40) "Nebuchadnezzar took Priests and other Jewish leaders into Captivity to Babylon, which is known as the exilic period. After Cyrus II conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.E, he let go of the captives, in which some decided to go back to Jerusalem, while others remained because of prosperity. Between the Exodus and the Exile, the people are referred to as Israelites, whereas after this period they are referred to as Jews. The control of Palestine kept changing under different kings; Alexander the Great defeated Darius III in 332 B.C.E, whereas after Alexander the Great's death, Palestine was controlled by Ptolemy I, who happens to be Greek not Egyptian. They ended up being defeated by the Seleucid King, Antiochus the Great in 198 BCE."

Teeple (1994:40) further states that in 166 B.C.E Antiochus IV Epiphanes ruled Palestine until Pompey changed Judea into a vassal state in 63 B.C.E. A few years later, Herod the Great was made King by the Roman Senate in 40 B.C.E even though he was not Jewish. After his death in4 B.C.E, the senate gave three of his sons the kingdom and divided it Judea, Samaria and Idumea; Galilee and Perea; as well as the northeast region of the Sea of Galilee respectively. In 6 A.D Augustus banned one of the sons Archelaus and took the territory to make it the Roman province of Judea. The governor was Pontius Pilate; however, he was removed in A.D. 26 due to the ill-treatment of Jewish people and the Samaritans. Claudius then bestowed Herod Agrippa I as King of Palestine in A.D. 41. The Jewish revolt which led to the distraction of Jerusalem and it's Temple in A.D 66-70 (see Teeple 1994:40).

2.2. The formation of Religion

According to Wand (1937:3) individuals, societies do not exist just for themselves; rather, both depend heavily on their environments for character development. Christianity emerged where the Graeco-Roman and Semitic, the Gentile and the Jew met. For Jewish people, Nationalism was a huge contributing factor to Religion starting with the Exodus. The worship of tribal god

(Yahweh) can be attributed to Moses, which he acquired while working for a Midian Priest which happened to be his Father -in-law. According to Teeple (1994:41) there are late traditions that suggest that the worship of Yahweh can be acclaimed to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, archaeologists found some Palestinian writings which date back to the Exodus, which is an indication that worshipping Yahweh began after the Exodus. Judaism was largely impacted by the belief that Yahweh led the Israelites to Canaan. This also led to belief of doctrine of election where the Israelites started to see themselves as a chosen nation, specifically selected by Yahweh (Deut 7:6) as such, the Israelites kept the special worship for Yahweh.

Gowan (1980:3) suggests that the worship of Yahweh was mainly in sanctuaries which could be seen in many communities, or in open-air and even temples. Due to the belief that Yahweh led them out of bondage, the Israelite prophets emphasized the worship of Yahweh exclusively (henotheism), due to the favor he had bestowed upon them even though at the time, there were many other gods worshipped. The emphasis of the selection of a special nation can be seen in (Jer 30:22). In order to protect the places of worship, a priesthood was set in place. They were the preservers of holiness and sacred traditions. Animals sacrifices as well as the first harvest of crops was brought to the sanctuaries to be offered to Yahweh.

The idea of nationalism also bought into the idea that Yahweh had helped the ancestors of the Israelites to conquer Canaan, which led to a practice of taking the 'Ark of God' along whenever they went to war and to their dismay when the Philistines took it. (1 Sam 4:17-22). A few centuries later as per Teeple (1994:42) the Deuteronomist also proposed that Yahweh was the commander of the holocaust on non-Jewish people, in an attempt to eradicate their abominable practices of worship to foreign gods. Centuries later after the Exodus, the Israelite believed that God would deliver them to the promised land of Canaan (Deut 34:4). This covenant was very important to the Israelites which was made apparent through the Sinaitic covenant. Gowan (1980: 5) asserts: "The tradition became preserved by the telling of old stories about ancestors who lived in Canaan as well as the captivity in Egypt" . Thus, oral tradition kept the history of the Israelites alive, even though there might have been some written accounts of the history, a lot of the reading was specifically kept for specialists.

The Sinai covenant was more so sacred law and therefore ceremonies would be performed to re-affirm the allegiance to Yahweh, (Josh 24). According to Gowan (1980:415) law and worship became one. The priesthood was tasked with the responsibility to teach or give instruction with regards to the law (Deut 33:8-10). This led to many areas being mediated on basis of the Exodus (21-23) as per Yahweh's covenant. The promise of rewarding the children of Israel for obedience and punishment for rebellion meant the Sinai covenant maintained its importance. In Lev (17-26) the Holiness Code was assembled into its final form which then became known as the Priestly document which had an effect on the eventual compilation of Genesis through to Deuteronomy as 'The Law'. Prophetic writings also made emphasis to the Law and the belief in Yahweh. This Torah became the center of Jewish religion (see Gowan 1980:419).

2.3. The arrival of the Messiah

Christianity can be distinguished by the fact that there were a small number of people who patiently and eagerly waited for the Messiah. While there is truth to this assertion the Hebrew faith has always had a place for the anointed of God who could and would deliver them from the Roman occupation or any other colonialists. However, these small people as per Wand (1937:3) were mainly Galilean residents. The start of the Christian era meant the Galilee residents known as 'People of the Land' were liable for the great reformation which was initiated by John the Baptist. The movement was the final resort of Hebrew prophecy to root out the corruption which had befallen the Hebrew people, to remind them of the sense of their distinctiveness.

According to Teeple (1994:45) the Hebrew word *Meshiach*- means 'Anointed One', which in English is referred to as Messiah. Borg (1987: 39) suggests that as per Jewish tradition, Moses led the people of Israel for forty years. During this period, a king would be anointed by having oil poured on his head. As per Teeple (1994:45) asserts:

> An example can be seen in (1 Sam 16:13) Yahweh gave a command to Samuel to make David King by anointing his head with oil. Due to the nature of David being an ideal King, it was an expectation that the Messiah would be of David's lineage. This is where the reference of Son of David originated from.

The Israelites were a nation that was disobedient to Yahweh on many occasions and as such, what could have been an eleven-day journey to the promised land, ended up being a forty-year pilgrimage see (Deut 1:2). Therefore, a need for deliverance was necessary. At first it must be clarified that the deliverance meant here was in fact a plethora of facts i.e., socio-economic, political, religious, and cultural. The idea of messianism was central to the thinking of those of the social context and God's working in the world. In thinking about the plethora of roles that the idea of messianism entail from the Exodus deliverance and even today, Mdingi (2022: 2) argues:

> Western biblical interpretation, hermeneutics and praxis as it relates to colonialism, conversion and the system of white supremacy have witnessed the important role played by the Bible in Africa. The Gospel is a bittersweet taste in the history of black people. The 'bitterness' expresses the cost of its acceptance, while 'sweet' expresses the sublime effect of responding to the bitterness caused by oppression through a change of interpretation and praxis. One important outcome from the change of interpretation and praxis is how biblical concepts, such as that of a messiah, take root in the very presence of their oppression. Renate (1974:38) notes that concepts such as messianism have been associated with groups in Africa, Asia and Latin America that used messianism as a tool of 'nascent' nationalism against colonialism while simultaneously deforming Christianity. Such is an example of reconstructing faith within a historic paradigm and giving faith existential agency. The author of the Black Messiah and Uncle Toms: Social and Literary Manipulations of a Religious Myth, Wilson Jeremiah Moses (1982) explains the importance of messianism in black life beginning from its Hebrew origin. He (Moses 1982:5) asserts that 'divinely inspired rebellion against the social order is, of course, a traditional aspect of Judeo-Christian messianism'.

While there is case to be made about the idea of messianism the deep understanding of the messiah also highlights the development of the theology attached to the messiah particularly in the New Testament and the early life of the church. The Messiah was also known as the Son of Man, Son of God, and Jesus Christ (see Borg 1987:2), it must be noted that this view is definitive of how Christian interpretation interprets the Old Testament texts among other texts to validate Christian theology's point on God revelation.

As per Christian theology, -Jesus Christ was God's only begotten son who was given up for the deliverance of the children of Israel due to their disobedience—this does not preclude the rest of the world's deliverance. The mission of Jesus was to reconcile God and his people, to

restore God's order into the fallen world. Jesus was birthed by the virgin Mary and was raised by her and Joseph. According to Borg (1994:40), we may deduce that Jesus grew up in a Jewish household and was exposed to Jewish culture and tradition. He most probably went to the synagogue and recited Scripture and Prayer to Yahweh.

It is presumable that he went to Jewish Festivals and took pilgrimage to Jerusalem just as the other Jews would. Jesus' mission began with a vision from another world which prompted him to seek counsel from a preacher Known as John the Baptist. John was known for preaching about repentance. This was what drew people to him, as such this was also the time in which Jesus got baptized. Jesus ended up with a vision of a Spirit descending on him like a dove from heaven. This revelation was also accompanied by a voice which proclaimed that Jesus was the beloved Son (Borg 1994:41).

The beginning of Jesus' ministry was fuelled by the encounter with the Holy Spirit which also allowed him to interact with the other world. These encounters led him to the wilderness, as per Borg (1994:42) these records are in Mark and also the inspiration behind the tradition of Matthew and Luke. Jesus' stay in the wilderness also brought about significant difficulty, in that temptation from Satan was a constant occurrence (see Matt 4:1-11). Jesus was fasting for forty days and nights when he had visions of temptation from Satan ; He tempted Jesus to turn stone into bread to help get rid of hunger, Satan also said Jesus should pledge allegiance to him so that the kingdoms of the earth could belong to Jesus and he also told Jesus to jump off the mountain as the angels would catch him however, Jesus defeated Satan by not falling for his temptations.

For more miracles that occurred during the time of Jesus, there are many other stories in the synoptic Gospels (see Teeple 1994:70). These books also contain notes of the early Christian communities, which alludes to Christian origin. Due to the many miracles Jesus performed, he amassed a large following. Teeple (1994) further suggests that the name Christ was a title and not a personal name, however the name Jesus Christ came about as a result of the Gentiles who were converted not being able to differentiate between name and title.

Jesus prayed to God to give him the wisdom to select the people that would carry on the mission of spreading the Gospel, as such he selected twelve apostles to carry on spreading the Good

News. He began by teaching people who were on a boat see Luke 5:1–3. Twelve apostles were chosen by Jesus to guide His church. He spent the entire night in prayer so that He could pick the best men. The following morning, He picked twelve men and gave them the priesthood and the power to serve as apostles (see Mark 3:14; Luke 6:12–16; John 15:16). These men travelled along cities and began preaching and healing people. As per Johnson (1976:6) the Apostle Paul travelled from Antioch to Jerusalem somewhere in the middle of the first century AD, most likely around the year 49, when he encountered the remaining disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, who had been slain about sixteen years earlier.

2.4. The establishment of the church

The Apostolic Conference, also known as the Council of Jerusalem, is the first political event in the history of Christianity. It serves as the foundation from which we might attempt to reassemble the content of Jesus's teachings as well as the beginnings of the faith and church he established. As per Johnson (1976:6) two almost contemporaneous accounts of this Council exist. One was written by Paul himself in his epistle to the Christian congregations of Galatia in Asia Minor and dates from the next decade. The second is later and is based on multiple sources or eyewitness testimonies that Luke's Acts of the Apostles has compiled. It is a dull, feigned official report of a church conflict and its successful resolution.

 Let's start with this second iteration. It relates that 'fierce animosity and controversy' had arisen in Antioch due to 'certain individuals', from Jerusalem and Judea, in disagreement with the teaching of Paul, had been advising converts to Christianity that they could not be saved except if they went through the Jewish ritual of circumcision. According to McBirnie (2008: 13) After Luke and the other Biblical authors—like St. Paul, who gave us a wealth of information on early Apostolic activities—there is a period of quietness. It seems as though the Christian movement was active but concealed for a while. Apostles were not clergy; rather, they were evangelists. Therefore, they are seldom discussed in history as often as tyrants. As a result, we know very little about their professional lives prior to or after the dispersal of the Jerusalem Church in A.D. 69, by which time the majority of them had already departed from Jerusalem for their different journeys and many had already passed away (McBirnie 2008: 13).

In first century AD, Judaism and the world had an interesting interaction. As per Johnson (1976:9) The Roman republic, which had been growing in size by the entire Mediterranean region. It had elements of a liberal empire and still showed signs of its ancestry. This was a novel, even unparalleled, confluence in the history of the world: an empire that imposed stability and so allowed for flexibility of trade and communications across a huge region but did not try to impose order or prevent the exchange and spread of ideas.

Roman law was sometimes harsh and unyielding, yet it still only applied to a relatively small portion of human behavior. Unless violations came to its attention by the outward manifestations of chaos, Roman law tended to disregard many things. Rome was especially accepting of the two major philosophical and religious traditions that it encountered in the eastern and central Mediterranean: Hellenism and Judaism. Rome's own republican faith was old, but crude and juvenile. It was a state-sponsored religion that stressed civility and outward observance. It was run by paid government employees, and both its goals and manner of operation were identical to those of the State. It didn't appeal to the soul or test a human faith.

Johnson (1976:10) further asserts that Being a state religion, Rome changed as governmental structures evolved. When the republic fell, the new emperor assumed the title of Pontifex Maximus ex officio. The concept of quasi-divine attributes invested in the monarch was a characteristic of imperialism, which originated in the East. As a result, upon Caesar's passing, the Roman senate frequently approved his deification. Due to its liberal nature, it was easy for every and any man to practice whatever religion he chose without any obstructions. Hence all those who became part of the Roman culture had their own gods and goddesses to worship.

Greek was the primary vernacular of the empire and was especially the language of commerce, learning, and pursuing the truth. Additionally, the Greek language and culture were altering the Romans' conception of religion (Johnson 1976:11). Like Roman religion, Greek religion had its roots in a number of city-cults, which were open displays of awe, reverence, and appreciation for the local deities of the citystate. The city-states had been turned into a massive territorial entity known as the Hellenic empire by Alexander, where the free citizen was no longer typically directly involved in governance. In agreement with Johnson, Wand (1937:69) states that the foundation of Alexander's city was intellect. It was a place where Hellenic

thought greatly affected Judaism. Noble religion and widest learning became synonymous with it. One may argue that the world-empire itself liberated countless people from the weight of civic duty and provided them time to contemplate their innermost thoughts. The emphasis on moral instruction, primarily of Stoic provenance, in schools has grown. The obligations of fathers to children, husbands to spouses, and masters to slaves—and vice versa—were listed along with vices and virtues (Johnson 1987:10). Civilization was becoming more and more mature, as such the world was prepared to accept Christianity cognitively. God was in the waiting. Johnson 1987 further states:

> however, it seems improbable that the Hellenic world could have developed such a system using only its own resources. Its arsenal of intellectual weapons was extensive and potent. It had a sort of cosmos and a theory of nature. It had logical and mathematical concepts, which are the foundations of an empirical science. It could develop strategies. However, it lacked the creativity to connect fact and fiction and to create the astonishing fusion of reality and ideality that is the religious dynamic.

According to Johnson (1987:12) cults may have existed in hundreds or perhaps thousands by the time of Christ. There were cults for every trade and circumstance in life, as well as cults for various ethnicities, classes, and interests. For a moment in history, a new type of religious community emerged: one in which socioeconomic, racial, and national disparities were ignored and men and women gathered before their god in their true individuality, rather than as members of a nation celebrating its patriotic religion. Wand (1937:8) agrees by stating that "Hellenism had meant a fusion of the races, the endowing of them with a common language and a common government".

 Dunn (1985:82) in agreement with Johnson states that 'the Reformation, meant the emergence of different churches in Western Christianity. Although one may argue that the recognition of a true church order was not yet in full effect, hence the ecclesiologies in the New Testament was rather less threatening. The emergence of the churches meant that, each church believed in its doctrine being closest to that of the early church, as such, this meant the other churches had to maintain the same views in order for theirs to propel and grow. This can be seen in different denominations e.g., Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Anglican, and independent churches.

The Apostolic church was made up of the Twelve apostles who were fully aware of their mission, which was to recruit as many followers of Christ as possible. Each man was on a mission and as such the spreading of the gospel was essential in ensuring the growth of the church. According to Wand (1937:12) Jesus' divine authority became proven by his resurrection, and he would come again to reign righteousness and peace over his followers, as such those who wanted to share in on this privilege ought to accept him as the Messiah. This could be achieved through baptism, which meant that any difficulties one would experience, they would be saved as long as they have given their life over to the Messiah through baptism. There could be no room for doubt because even the Jewish scriptures pointed to that. This was the basis of the new Israel.

This disillusion is one of the most ridiculous features of the early church according to Wand (1937:12). Many conversions occurred which led to many oppositions. The diversity of the early church stemmed from the idea that each was the one true church, however, this can be argued by stating that as per Dunn (1985:82) each denomination's belief was justified because each church had different adoption of the doctrine of the New Testament, which were all valid. Therefore, all are but a mirror of the Old Testament since there was no exact template of the church, as it had just been developed.

2.5. Different types of Early Christianity

While not attempting to provide a dense picture of the histography of the Christian church certain brief factors must be considered around the idea of the church. The main one being the church as having deep Jewish roots and the gentile church. These inroads will definitely have compelling effects to the subject matter of this research. Jewish Christians which emerged in Jerusalem and Palestine saw the importance of region (Judah) and belief (Christianity) operating in unison. They saw this movement as per Dunn (1985:88) not as a sperate religion but as the Judaism of the new age, 'eschatological Judaism'. The Jews believed in the Messiah and as such required membership of the people of God which was necessary for salvation. Hence the importance of the covenant but also the movement which propelled it. Membership of God's people was marked by the obedience of the law of the Covenant. Therefore, circumcision was crucial in showing allegiance to God, as Genesis 17.9-14 illustrates this by proclaiming that any male not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people as he has broken the covenant. Other laws that determined the Christian lifestyle include

the observation of the Sabbath (Lev 11) which determined Christian conduct. However, a lot of disagreement occurred over other aspects such as dietary laws which can be seen in (Gal 2:11-15, 4.10). This led to a branch of Gentile Christians.

2.6. Gentile Christianity

The movement of Gentile Christianity emerged as a result of the faith in Jesus Christ moving beyond Palestine. This occurred in Antioch, specifically Syria which was the largest city of the Roman Empire. According to Dunn (1985:89) the Hellenist who had been identified with Stephen, preached to the Gentiles (Acts 11.20). This led to a large number of converts which formed a Christianity that was not very strict with the law. This movement can be described as a Christianity which was founded under the leadership of Paul whom he referred to himself as 'apostle of the Gentiles. The tradition of Judaism was a transformed Jewish heritage which the Gentiles adopted. This meant circumcision was not a necessity anymore which was greatly emphasized in (Gen. 17).

First century Judaism was far more complex in terms of being monothetic, however, it all stemmed from Israel being God's chosen people. As per Dunn (1985: 91) there were many groups that had interest in Judaism for different reasons, for instance Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and Zealots. According to Gowan (1980:181) the Sadducees were affluent and a group of aristocrats and were very conservative when it came to the bible, they strongly believed in the Torah alone being the only correct law. They applied and referred to the law very strictly and refused to accept resurrection of the dead which the Pharisees believed in, ultimately, they believed in human affairs being a result of human freedom. The Pharisees however, were the opposite of the Sadducees, they attempted to combine fate with free-will and believed in the resurrection as well as the interpretation of the written law since they felt that no law can be self-explanatory.

 The other group were the Essenes as per Gowan (1980:211) they were dedicated to God and looked down upon the owning of property, animal sacrifices, ownership of slaves, marriage as well as making weapons. They mainly believed in sharing and devoted themselves to studying the law and doing good deeds, while strictly observing the sabbath. The next group were the Zealots, according to Gowan, the Zealots believed that God is the Lord, and that giving reverence to other gods was a violation of the conscience which was intolerable and waged war on anyone who disagreed with them. As per Teeple (1994:298) both gentile Christians and

Jews that were not Christian inherited some of the disagreements, tension, and interpretations of the bible as a result of Jewish Christians and Pharisees and Sadducees not getting along. This became hostility that was preserved in the churches and synagogues alike. This tension already existed in the Greco-Roman world. When Alexander the Great united Greek and the Near Eastern region, Hellenist emperors motivated Jews to create colonies in major commerce centers. As such, the animosity between Greeks and Jews grew, Greek governments would suppress the activities of the Jews which led to many riots. Jews had special privileges due to their monotheistic belief.

2.7. Catholic Christianity

Catholic Christianity became heavily influenced by different forms of first century Christianity. According to Dunn (1985:94) Catholic Christianity ended up being the main influence of the Christian tradition and the church, which was the established religion of the Roman empire. This occurred due to a clearly defined 'rule of faith'. This assisted the Catholic Christians to differentiate the true faith from its corrupt and intolerable alternatives. Many claimed to be the heir to the legacy left by Jesus as well as the apostles. This is what is referred to as Christian 'orthodoxy' whereas the substitute is referred to as 'heresy'.

Catholic Christianity solidified itself by recognizing the importance of distinguishing which texts from the first generation carried authority and separated from others. Thus, the New Testament became divided from the others. This led to a selection of writings referred to as 'canon' which was a standard that the Catholic faith originated from. The church fathers took a vital step by canonizing the New Testament. It gave Christianity definition and set it apart from the counterfeits (Dunn 1985:94).

2.8. The Apostolic Fathers

Primitive authors known as the apostolic fathers flourished during the times of the apostles. According to Cross (1960 :7) Barnabas, Hermas, Polycarp, Ignatius, and Clement of Rome, are to be considered sub-apostolic writers. In the early church, the Didache which is a handbook of the discipline of the church, held the most reputation during Clements's time. It was included in some important church orders which later became spiritual canon. In essence, the Didache is separated into three, the 1. Christian moral code, 2. the rule on baptism and 3. the order of

the church. These parts all cover different aspects of the Christian faith such fasting and prayer, the Eucharist, how to distinguish false prophets amongst others. To understand the Didache to a great length we shall look briefly at the Apostolic fathers as per Cross (1960:7):

> Clement of Rome happened to succeed St. Peter who made him Bishop. Clement wrote the first Epistle to the Corinthians. He wrote to the church of Corinth to as a plea for love, patience, and obedience to those in power. He proves to have been familiar with the Epistles of St. Paul. The second Father is Ignatius who has seven genuine letters under his name. He was a Bishop of Antioch as per Cross. He wrote to the church in Rome in an attempt to discourage the Roman church from interfering with his sentence as he wants to receive the crown of a martyr. The first four letter give thanks to Ephesus, Trallers as well as Magnesia for sending envoys to acknowledge him on his voyage. The last three letters were written as an ode after the realization that Antioch had stopped with the persecutions.

As per Cross (1960:19) Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna which Ignatius had written some of his letters in. He was familiar with St. John. Polycarp won over many heretics for the Catholic faith. Barnabas who was referred to as 'son of consolation' spoke on the fall of the Temple and proclaimed that 'those who destroyed it, will have to rebuild it again', this can be translated as the rebuilding of the Spiritual relationship with God through the gospel.

The last Father is Hermas, who is responsible for the Muratorian part of the Canon. He wrote about the Shepherd, which was around the 2nd century. His task is to call everyone to repent. The Shepherd as per Cross is separated into 'twenty-seven tractates, twelve mandates and ten similitudes' which follow a similar form of development to the Old Testament. The most important for Hermas was to preach about repentance. Some scholars also include Diognetus as an Apostolic Father; however, he fits in mostly with the apologists. The apologists according to Cross (1960:43) were in charge of proving how their beliefs aligned with the greatest moral and intellectual standards of the secular world.

2.9. The early church Fathers in Africa

The fairly brief-lived African Church during the first five centuries of Christianity belongs to the African Church Fathers (Tertullian, Origen, , Athanasius, Augustine) amongst others. As per Djintcharadzé (2011:2) It was a soil heavily cultivated by persecution-related pain and nourished by heresies and potential schisms. In fact, the Latin patristic tradition, despite being

about a century younger than the Greek one, took hold and prospered in a quite specific way, being both linked to and distinct from the Greek view of Sacred Scripture as well as the way it ought to have been lived, in the midst of the chaos of this specific region, where the bravery of multiple martyrs shined most gloriously.

According to Nnatuanya (2023: 89) Father of the Church, St. Augustine is credited with having had a significant impact on the growth of Western Christianity and theology. He served as the bishop of Hippo Regius, which is now Annaba, Algeria, in the Roman province of Africa. Augustine wrote many books and letters; however, his most notable work includes the Confessions, The City of God, and On the Trinity. His writing covered mainly social and human life, where some aspects would touch on eschatology, creation, ecclesiology and many others.

As per Liftin (2019:81) The Latin word trinitas, which denotes an entity having a tripartite structure, is where we get the English word 'Trinity'. Tertullian of Carthage is the first recorded Christian to have referred to the biblical God in this way. Tertullian did make some significant contributions. His Stoic metaphysics-based trinitarian terminology of 'substance' and 'person' gave the church a fresh approach to monotheism while upholding the complete divinity and essence of the Word. Tertullian contributed much to the development of the idea of a divine oikonomia.

As per Meyer (1992:187) In the Patristic era, Athanasius of Alexandria is a pivotal figure, particularly in terms of Christology. His ground-breaking work arguing for Christ's divinity served as the foundation for a systematic body of doctrine on the mystery of Jesus Christ. The establishment of Trinitarian theology in the early church owed much to Athanasius. According to Edwards (2022) the meaning of the Greek name Origenes is – (born of Horus), an Egyptian god with a falcon on his head. This name refers to a Christian scholar who was an Alexandrian. The term homoousios (same in being), which describes the relationship between the second and first of these "hypostases" in the Trinity, was originally used by Origen, a first-century Christian, to describe the Trinity's three "hypostases." Although the Son is his dunamis or power and the Spirit is a reliant creature that only acts on the elect, the Father, or first person, is the only one who is authoritative, or God in the fullest sense. The Son is known as Wisdom in regard to the Father and as Logos (reason, speech) in reference to the world. All three are everlasting and incorporeal. These church fathers later influenced the works of the Reformers such as John Calvin and Martin Luther.

The study has attempted to tabulate some key events in the life of early Christianity from its early Jewish somewhat indigenous roots to Hellenization. The interesting point being how the early church as demonstrated by the Didache did not possess a high theology neither was it associated with the empire. Subsequent to that there is influence of Latin and Greek ideas which influence the church. It is perhaps prudent at this point as indicate in sections above that the Christianity that developed over the ages is in a pursuit, if truth is anything to consider epistemological or in praxis, to reflect the early Church. This is important as we branch into another section concerning a Christianity armed with modernity, the crown, lofty theology, and ill intents.

2.10. The arrival of Christianity in Africa and its current position

Within the first several centuries following Christ, Christianity had a stronghold in North Africa. Christianity spread further into the interior of the continent from a strong base in North Africa. The challenge posed by Islam and traditional African religions strengthened believers' faith. When Catholicism from Portugal swept throughout the continent in the fifteenth century, it marked a watershed in history. Baur (1994:17) asserts that the Christian Church flourished in North Africa for six centuries. The pillars upon which the worldwide Church was standing throughout those early decades of the Common Era were Athanasius, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and Augustine (Baur 1994:17). With the spread of Islam throughout Africa in the seventh century, the political landscape underwent a significant transformation. The expansion of Christianity was seriously impacted by this. The desire for political advancement and development took the place of the enthusiasm for gospel propagation. The rise and progress of Christianity came to an end when the Arabs began to conquer and occupy North Africa in 640 C.E.

Portuguese sailors who sailed over the African continent in the fifteenth century were the first to spread Christianity to West Africa (Baur 1994:42). Roman Catholic priests went along with the Portuguese explorers and converted the Africans they met. Portuguese commercial excursions were crucial in the introduction of Christianity to West Africa. Roman Catholic priests went along with the Portuguese explorers and converted the Africans they met. As per Van der Merwe (2016:564) Christianity gradually planted some roots in the 19th century thanks

to the missionary efforts of groups like the Basel Mission, Wesleyan Methodist Community, and other Catholic missions. This was due to the Protestant movements' emergence.

Onyinah (2007:306) states that missionary Christianity played an important role in advancing African society. The main contributions were the rise of African civilizations' social structures, including the abolition of slavery and the death sentence, as well as the establishment of educational institutions and the adoption of Western medical methods. The missionaries were also responsible for promoting translation, which included creating dictionaries and grammars as well as vernacular alphabets for African languages (Onyinah 2007:306). However, African people had a way of living, though it may not have been to the standards of the missionaries', there surely was a culture of communal living, worship, traditional medicines and means of survival amongst others. If Africans were not 'civilized' before the missionaries came, whose standard was it based on? why the need to convert Africans to Christians if the goal was not for profitable gain of land and its resources? This will be discussed further in the chapter 4.

Onyinah (2007:307) further asserts that African churches that were started by Africans provided a platform for opposition to missionary activity in Africa. In the beginning, a black nationalist organization known as "Ethiopians" was the cause of this. In their churches, they mostly objected to and rebelled against white dominance (Onyinah 2007:306).A few elitist factions dispersed to create what appeared to be mission church-like African congregations. The supremacy of the missionaries was contested by a different set of persons who are sometimes referred to as 'prophets'. They were from the lower social levels and had little to no formal education.

These prophets helped establish new churches and spread the Christian word throughout Africa despite not being given the authority to do so (Onyinah 2007:307). Even if these churches garnered a sizable following, they had significant flaws, Due to their lack of a doctrinal foundation and their leaders' failure of accountability. Pentecostal churches gained a lot of popularity especially post the 19th century. Attempts by the missionaries to provide for the basic requirements of the African people were not effective. The spirit powers continued to be real and frightening for Africans. Some Africans established their own autonomous churches in the context of this, hence the emergence of African Initiated churches (AIC). This was threatening to the mainline church; however, a change had taken place, one from which many other movements derived from, an example being the Neo-Pentecostal charismatic movement,

which accommodated many people from different regions of the world. This movement originated amongst the ministry of students in the 1970s.

As per Van der Merwe (2016:566) The mainline churches created renewal organizations in reaction to their loss of members who joined the Pentecostal and African Initiated Churches. These renewal organizations skilfully adopted Pentecostal church methods, offering a theological solution that matched the religious and spiritual demands of Africans. They introduced spontaneous, unstructured Pentecostal worship, complete with dancing, hand clapping, drumming, and singing. Over time, this worship style changed to become unique to African Christianity (see Onyinah 2007:309).

2.11. The slave Trade

Although Christianity arrived in the first century after Christ, it only started being influential in sub-Saharan Africa at the beginning of the Protestant missionary era. According to Booth (1977: 255) Black people were involved in helping spread Christianity, however, it is Black people who also helped Africans not only establish but also have distinction of African characteristics in Christianity. The West Coast was seen by the Portuguese towards the end of the 15th Century. Whereas the Dutch and English chaplains ministered to Africans in the seventeen and eighteen centuries. With trading being profitable at the time, the Europeans became unaccommodating to the conversion of Africans to Christians as it disturbed the slave trade which was a lucrative business.

According to Booth (1977:256) British chaplains attempted to try to stop slavery through establishing colonies for freed slaves and continuing with missionary work throughout the rest of Africa, this resulted in Africans participating in also establishing more Christian converts in West Africa. While the mission statement of conversion was good and a 'Christian' thing to do it does not nullify what happened in Africa and beyond especially this new Christianity that run parallel ideals of docility and domestication no side was on the side of the Africans.

Slavery was an inhumane act of injustice to African people, as per Antwi (2018:3) people's freedom and rights to exist as human beings were denied by slavery. Slaves were housed in unclean and unpleasant settings. Only enough food was provided to the slaves to keep them alive. The slaves were handled and moved like commodities. In order to 'protect them from the

dangers of the sea' , they were "shackled in chains like beasts, underfed" before and during the voyage. The slave ships were so overcrowded with men, women, and children that they resembled "floating coffins," and half of the captives perished from sickness and cruel treatment. Some slaves killed themselves while traveling across the Atlantic. The slaves were turned into merchandise once they reached their final ports. To draw buyers, they had to be put on display in the slave markets.

Antwi further suggests that people were stripped of their traditional spiritual practices, cut off from their cultural origins, and lacked a feeling of acceptance in the world as a result of the slave trade. The customs of the slaves' masters were passed on to them after they separated from their own. This is reminiscent of what Steve Biko (1978: 29) argued that "All in all the black man has become a shell, a shadow of man, completely defeated, drowning in his own misery, a slave, an ox bearing the yoke of oppression with sheepish timidity." While Mdingi (2014: 127) argued that: "Black people, now more than ever, need to aware of the syllogism applied in their destruction through dehumanisation. Similarly, they need to find a syllogism in correcting their condition." This is important especially if the history of Christian remains in our radar to know what was once and now is.

Nonetheless this breakage and destruction made it clear that slave ultimately came to understand that they did not fit into the culture of their slave owners. They endured racial and social persecution, which followed them for a very long time. The only thing the slave owners cared about was accumulating riches at the cost of the slaves' human rights. As an effect of the eighteenth-century evangelical revival, according to (Booth 1977:256) a group from England known as the Clapham sect became immersed in the subject of slavery. An associate of the group obtained in 1772 , a ruling that slavery was a contravention to the law of England. However, due to the separation from family and familiar land, this meant being left destitute for the slaves who were freed from their masters. A civilized society was started in Sierra Leone in order to address the issue of destitution. Initially, about 411 slaves arrived in London known as 'Black poor', in the same year , there was only 130 who survived. There were slaves who helped the British in the war during the American Revolution in 1772 and ended up settling in Nova Scotia. A group that rebelled against Britain in Jamaica was also apprehended and removed to Nova Scotia. Although some managed to return, they took with them, the faith they

found during their time in exile. They started churches with their own people and became a colony for those who were to come after. As per Antwi (2018: 4)

> The influence of the Bible regarding oppression of other peoples was not one-sided. Whilst the oppressors sought reasons for the oppression of others, the oppressed also looked for motives for liberation. The Bible, which was the basis of Christian social teachings, was at the same time responsible for the unequal relations that existed between a master and a slave in the Americas.

This approach has been identified by others as re-reception of the Bible. Mdingi (2022: 2) asserts:

> The re-reception of the Bible implies that the agency placed upon believers and the irreconcilability of bondage and faith as the immutability of God has existential pertinence to believers. Another factor worthy to be mentioned is the aspect of rediscovering the Gospel anew and the willingness of faith in engaging the madness of oppression with the risk of being deemed mad.

Booth (1977:256) further asserts that the Christian faith became representative of the African slave. They practiced Christianity even in the midst of adverse conditions, they would chant and sing through difficulty and on their journey to Sierra Leone. As they trooped through the forest, preachers were leading the way with the Bible in hand. This meant the captives found solace in the Christian faith movement. There were attempts to liberate some slaves and send them back to their homeland one event is that of the son of a slave known as Paul Cuffe since he was a shipowner, however his attempt was rightly met with much resistance by the American Colonization Society. This was due to the fact that freed black people meant the decline in the slave trade, this meant colonization could no longer be profitable. The colony was established in Liberia with an estimated population of 2281 which also assisted in the establishment of different churches, such as the Methodist, the Baptist, the Presbyterian and the Episcopalian movements. This was obviously due to the different denominations that the slave owners belonged to, as such, many of the freed captives would subscribe to a faith that they knew, a faith that carried them through hardship.

2.12. Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the emergence of Christianity and the expansion of the early church, by discussing the history of Palestine and how the church was divided into Catholic and Gentile Christianity. Apostolic Fathers and Early Church Fathers are also a point of discussion as the pioneers of Christian Theology. I argue that the mistreatment of Black people was due to Christianity and missionaries, because they were involved in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and did not do enough to liberate the African people from such cruelty because some of the Slave owners were Christians and used the Bible to justify these abominable acts of dehumanization and injustice, in fact, many profited from the enslavement of the African people.

Chapter 3: African Spirituality

3.1. The Emergence of African Independent Churches (AIC)

The West had a very narrow-minded perspective when it came to the opinion about African people and their relationship with God. According to Olowola (1993:10):

> The West downright upheld that Africans have no concept of God. One such write made a derogatory assertion that: 'before the introduction of an authentic faith and higher customary culture by Arab people, African inhabitants had neither political configuration, nor any religion, nor any industrial expansion. None but primal reflex decide the lives and behavior of negroes, who lack every kind of ethical insight.

In the 1900s, African Independent churches gained a stronger hold in the world, however, this period was also the time when colonization was extending its roots. Christianity much like Islam, originated in the Middle East, it gained popularity much earlier than Islam. However, Christianity during that time failed to cater fully to the needs of the African people even though it had existed for a long time. To qualify this assertion western Christianity having gone through the historical process distinct of the first century church made largely of the uneducated, poor and underclass of society had transformed.

While initially sought after by the Roman Empire it now was adopted into it then serving the interest of those who possess it. Western Christianity without a proper analysis and knowledge of the African world view had a view that Africa spirituality or religion was non-existent, however, there was and a case in point is how the clash between Spirit and the mission churches occurred as the Spirit of God, known by Africans could not affirm bondage and the faith. African Christians, just as the western theologians went into the higher culture of their society to make intelligible Christianity, Africans have their reservoirs of the encounter with God that erupted at some point (see Mdingi 2014: 41).

Mdingi (2020: 204-205) asserts:

> Christ is a culmination of wisdom incarnated and restoring blacks back into the dialectical express of divine revelation, which is summed up in Christ. The concept of wisdom in Africa leaves an open possibility away from dogmas or hegemonies of truth but Christ Chapter becomes absolute as wisdom. An African proverb holds that only a fool believes in absolute truth.

Without being essentialist, the African worldview is rich theologically and would require a much-detailed fact that would not be sufficient for this study. As such, the African Independent Churches come behind this background and draw from the rich life of the African spirituality. This move is fundamentally epistemologically, hermeneutical and for praxis because in the true sense outside of the thrills, superiority and evolution brought by the Gospel and 'refining' of Africans, the AIC are able to accommodate the spiritual needs of black people, it is for that reason that they arose.

A movement that would speak to the spiritual needs of African people was necessary to combat the unhappy reality of the population. According to Booth (1977:265) African peoples' interaction with the Europeans that had colonized their land in the 1880s, saw a spirit of resistance from the black population due to that whites took control of the tropical lands of Buganda that had many benefits for the African people, especially where health is related, the white people took control of everything and left the blacks with close to nothing to benefit from. This saw the resistance towards missionaries from the black people which led to the Europeans attacking black people mercilessly. it also led to the white people prohibiting black missionaries due to their obsession of controlling the tropical lands.

Black people are not illiterate when it comes to religion, neither is their moral compass lacking, in actuality, black people have a high moral compass. According to Falaye (2015:89):

> The establishment of African-initiated churches resulted from a number of factors, including the denial of authority to Africans in European and American established churches, the Africans' love of self-government, European colorism, prejudice based on race, and the forced adoption of foreign customs and cultural norms by European missionaries."

AICs were in summary, established to allow the African person control over his faith through governance of every sphere of his life through his perspective. However, it is important to note that in the AICs, spirituality played a significant role in ensuring that a relationship with God is feasible. How do Africans relate to God? And what role does ancestors play in spirituality?

There are many ways in which African people relate to God, and as such the establishment of the AIC makes it possible for an African to know God in the way that he/she understands. The characteristics that distinguishes the AIC are that majority of the congregants are black and also have a black church leader, the gospel that is preached is mainly that of liberation and

speaks to the struggles or problems of the African person, in agreement Mdingi (2014:34) asserts that the Black church came into existence for the purpose of combating oppression and dehumanization.

According to Falaye (2015:89-90 African traditions involve worship or ceremonies where activities such as 'handclapping, dancing, drumming, and chorus singing' are all accepted. It is acceptable to engage in traditional religious rituals, conduct polygamy, hold chieftaincy, and adhere to traditional African cosmology. Prophecy, visions, and dreams are all accepted in these churches. Reciting holy names, using holy oil and water, and speaking in tongues are also typical. These African churches usually forbid women who are on their menstrual cycle from accessing the main sanctuary. However, they are allowed to be outside the church. Many of these religions prohibit wearing jewellery or other things. These churches also have a tradition of taking spiritual baths by rivers, lighting candles during prayer as well as using incense and going up the mountain to worship.

In light of the above there are a few AIC churches that one can delve into to ensure the persistence of African spirituality. It must be noted already that the fact that African spirituality can exist in Christianity is indicative of the deep threads of what makes us human especially the role spirituality plays but what is also shared with the people of the Near Ancient East.

3.2. Zion Christian Church

In South Africa, the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) is one of the African Independent Churches that has amassed a large following over the years. As per Moripe (1996) only 12% of black South African Christians in 1950 belonged to African-initiated churches, compared to roughly 80% of those who belonged to mainstream churches. However, this percentage has since shifted in favor of AIC's to about 52% in the latter day. The founder of the ZCC, Engenas Lekganyane (1885-1948) was an African who had a vision to create a movement that will speak of Christianity from an African Context. The leaders of the ZCC in the present moment are of African identity, which shows the rich African identity of the church. The population of the church is tremendously African.

This also strengthens the dialogue between the Christian faith and African culture. As per Oosthuizen (1979: 2) the too-Europeanized, overly institutionalized, and overintellectualized

churches in Africa are being reacted to by the African Initiated Churches. These congregations follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and incorporate the supernatural into their own Christian reality.

3.3. Shembe Church

The Shembe Church began in the early 1930s by a man named Isaiah Shembe. This was during the time of the Great Depression. During this time, African people were moving to urban areas in search for jobs and opportunities to feed their families. According to Mthimkhulu (1977:25), Shembe worked on a farm in Free State when he was 'called' to go back to Natal in order to tell them about the dreams he had. He had sought to find Salvation for his people. The dream was the confirmation that he had a gift of healing and would thus use it to help his people. He did not discriminate anyone and welcomed different races. He likened his power of healing to that of Jesus. The movement was centered around economic security for his people not necessarily the establishment of a church.

Mthimkhulu (1977) asserts that "the Shembe group's essential basis was cooperation. They came together to purchase land, so as to have more security at a time when Africans were denied the buying of land individually. This resulted in them living as a communal group, further emphasizing the spirit of *ubuntu*." The Urban Areas act was already in effect in Shembe's time, which intentionally excluded the African person from Urban areas by the denial of property rights. Though it had an economic basis, it also had to develop within the religious aspect.

Shembe's reading of the Bible led him to draw a conclusion that God wanted communal living and for people to work together for a common goal, as such, he was referred to as 'Baba' which means father. He also ensured to keep the Traditional aspects of the Zulu culture alive within the community, these including virginity testing, traditional dancing as well as the beating of drums. This movement represents the incorporation of culture and tradition the in Christian Religion. This has positively impacted how African indigenous people relate to God. It is a movement that speaks to the African person without negating the influence of Christianity. In fact, it has an ethical and practical implication especially considering virgin testing around issues of purity before marriage and the prevalence of rape.

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3.4. How do African people relate to God?

African people are spiritual beings, as such, there are various ways in which we relate to God. He is seen as per Olowola (1993:8) as the Creator and the spirits are seen as his instrument. In agreement with the notion above, Mbiti (1970:3) asserts that 'African people assign omniscience to God'. As per Olowola (1993: 11) The Yoruba Christians refer to God as 'Olurun' which translates to 'He who runs the heavens. Meanwhile the Zulu and Banyarwanda refer to God as 'the Wise One' according to Mbiti (1970:3).

Metaphors are used to comprehend the notion of God, such as 'All-knowing, All-seeing, All-understanding'. It is understood that God sees even the most intricately hidden things. In Agreement with Mbiti, Olowola (1993: 12) asserts that Yoruba people believe in the omnipotence and omniscience of God. The Yoruba also refer to God as transcendent. He is not limited to nature or the sky, He is above all creation. He does not intervene in the world's affairs. Whereas the spirits are active participants in the world. Ray (1976) writes:

> God is global, impersonal, inert, and quiet in contrast to the orisha (spirits), which are primarily local, cultic, personal, functioning, and loud. He is not actively engaged in man's relationship with the gods, but rather, serves as its ultimate criterion or validation."

Biko (1978) states a different perspective from that of the Yoruba by starting: "I would like to remind the black ministry, and indeed all black people, that God is not in the habit of coming down from heaven to solve people's problems on earth." Mbiti (1970:12) suggests that transcendence and immanence must be balanced in order to see how the two complement each other. God is both far and near, He is paradoxical. The African person also exists in the present but pays homage to the past. Ancestors are acknowledged as the blueprint of present-day Africans. Not much emphasis is put on the future, there is essentially no such thing as the future; all creation myths, death myths, and nation-birth stories are derived from the past (Mbiti 1970:12). The tribes of Akan refer to him as "He who exists now as He did in the ancient times". The Zulu refer to Him as " He who thunders from far-off times".

African people have a knowledge of God through their highly intuitive nature, as noted by Olowola (1993:21) knowledge of God begins in the soul before experiencing sense. It is through the heart that we are aware of principles and reason. Through tradition is also how African people relate to God. Oral tradition in the olden days, saw children learning through gathering around the storyteller in the evenings. Usually, these stories would speak about the creation myths and conquests. However, they would also educate the child about the earth and

how to better take care of it so that you can benefit from it, such as learning about the healing properties of certain trees and roots. Hence whatever knowledge that the parent knew about God would be passed down to the Children.

Revelation was also a crucial aspect in the knowledge of God. Africans believe in God taking initiative to make Himself known. Because people are made in the image of God, it is taken as God being intentional about revealing himself. Moreover, God would reveal himself through prophecies. This revelation is also made apparent in the Bible, especially during the time of Moses (see Olowola 1993:23).

Ancestral spirits are seen as inescapable in African Spirituality. According Kalu (2000:54):

> Many years ago, a poet name Birago Diop observed that in Africa, the dead are never gone, they exist in the thickening shadow, the dead are not underground, they are part of the trees that rustles, they are in the wood that groans; the dead are never gone, they are in the in the breast of the woman, they are in the child who is wailing and in the firebrand that flames. The dead are not under the earth: they are in the forest; they are in the house. The dead are not dead.

This highlights how ancestors are also seen to play a significant role in Spirituality. Death is a transition from the world of the living to the spirit world. Many African religions devote much attention to ancestors alongside God. Kalu (2000:55) asserts Africans consider God to be supreme, however, He is invisible during day-to-day cult rituals, hence the ancestors substitute. The ancestors can therefore be seen as intercessors. They are the deliverers of messages and prayers to God, which garners a quick response. Kalu further asserts that during festivals, ceremonies or rituals, the ancestors re-enter the human world as guests regardless of their spiritual influence. Africans believe that re-incarnation is possible through children. Kalu (2000:55) writes it beautifully 'the sense of communitas stands above the individual even in death'.

Time is believed to be cyclic in the African worldview. The spirit world is considered to be a mirror of the human world. As such, birth occurs, death occurs and then reincarnation happens. It may be confusing to understand, as that would mean everyone is a product of those that came before, and not really an individual being with a once-in-a-lifetime unique human experience with a unique soul as mainstream Christianity would put it.

It is important to note however that just as much as there are evil spirits in this world, the world of ancestors also makes provision for such spirits. The world of the living and that of ancestors is separated by water according to Kalu (1993:56). Africans operate within the premise of water and land as a means to connect to the spiritual world. The spirit world where ancestors dwell is underground and transcends the water bodies of the earth. An uncomplicated explanation of this would be how Africans would offer libation to the ancestors by pouring it on the ground during ceremonies. The idea is that it seeps through the earth and ultimately reach the ancestors. This action is also done by humans to offer veneration to the ancestors but also to ward off any evil spirit that attempts to complicate the life of the one performing the ritual. This is done with the expectation that the spirit that is good will fight off the bad spirit that is bad due to being impressed by the acknowledgment from the person seeking counsel.

3.5. Ancestors and Rituals

The rituals that honour the ancestors usually last the whole day, where praise and thanksgiving is proclaimed to the ancestors for fighting off evil and offering protection, guidance, and security. This devotion is made in order to please the ancestors and to communicate further pleas for what the African person desires. According to Olowola (1993:39) The Ogun festival is a celebration commemorated by the Yoruba people. The society honors the Supreme Being (God) before offering sacrifices to the gods at this period. To guarantee that the ancestors are reinforcing their answers to the pleas, pigeons and kola nuts are among the offerings. Olowola further asserts that "there is nothing wrong in commissioning different paths for reaching the Supreme Being. The ancestors, divinities and spirits are means to an end; the end in view is *Olodumare*-God (Olowola 1993:39)

Christianity views this as worshipping other gods, and such is seen as an abominable act. The Bible repeatedly condemns this act, see (Psalm 96:7-8) it reads "7 Offer the Lord praise and strength, O families of the peoples. 8 Give the Lord the honor that is rightfully His; bring an offering; and enter His gates." This is also evident in how Israel did not get to the promised land in the time God had intended due to idolatry. Matthew (4:10) speaks against this act by also mentioning that 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve only Him (Olowola 1993:45) .' However, it can also be argued that Jesus is an idol, because, during the time of Moses, Yahweh specifically instructed the Israelites to worship only Him. However, the Messiah can also be seen as an ancestor whose spirit lives among the many Christian

congregants that are present today. It would be very shortsighted to only consider one viewpoint in this subject.

Community is spirituality and is important, according to Mthimkulu (1977:15) God being referred to as Unkulunkulu (Great Great One) removed himself after creation to an extent, however, he was invested in the relationship between human and human, thus the concept of '*uBuntu*- I am because you are'. This is because for Him, the coherence of society is of vital importance, as can be seen in the creation narrative in Genesis 1, where he made a humanity that resembled his likeness, as such the need to get along with the one that is like you is crucial because similarity breeds understanding. If this relationship is not coherent, the condemnation of humanity occurs because of sin.

The disruption of society goes against God's order and is forbidden. God's interest in human in the Zulu culture is seen through the cycle of birth because He is responsible for the fertility of both land and beast. When a phenomenon occurs where fertilization takes place, God shows His continued interest in recreating humans which ultimately means the rebirth of the lifecycle and an additional interest the forming of community between creation, especially humanity since He gave authority to humans to rule over the earth and have dominion of all that roams the earth (see Genesis 1:28)

Zulu people also believe that God is at the core of decision making which is taken by human beings. They believe people to have 'two hearts', these being 'unembeza' and 'ubovane' respectively. This are believed to govern how humans make decisions, unembezane is there to direct humans to do good whereas ubovane makes man act counter to law. According to Mthimkulu (1977:18) the Spirit is seen as immortal, and flesh is considered to be that which departs from the human world. Thus, humans are able to communicate with the world of the ancestors through dreams because it is believed that only the spirit can have an encounter with the ancestral world. Thus, the interpretation of dreams is important in the Zulu culture. Zulu refer to death as the spirit leaving the flesh, which means it has transitioned to the spirit world. Hence why the spirits are seen as per Parrinder (1968:57) the Bantu people's most personal gods; the ancestors are approached on all important matters since they are considered members of the family.

There is a difficult task of distinguish foreign gods from ancestors in African culture mainly because in Christianity, any worship ascribed to any other deity that is not God is seen as betraying God's law, at least if one fails to keep the status quo of God. Parrinder (1968:59) notes that African people have a special relationship with ancestors, they fear their ancestors yet have affection towards them. Ancestors are views as unpredictable regardless of the efforts of humans trying to coerce them.

The ancestors usually have totems that represent their fierceness. Disease is also ascribed to ancestors and can only be cured if a particular rite or ritual is performed. However, this is usually associated with ghosts or unsettled spirit that did not receive a proper send-off. Infertility is also a cause for concern due to the fact that it restricts the re-incarnation of the spirit, which means something is wrong as ancestors are invested in the expansion of their clans. To the African person, land is also an important aspect because it marks ancestral origin. As such drought and starvation are often referred to the ancestors, as they may not be pleased with the vegetation growing on their land. Parrinder (1968:60) notes: " the ancestors are the owners of the land, as seniors of the community, and alienation of the land in these days or sales and 'enclosures' are habitually against the primeval customary laws which would have permitted rent but not sale." The issue of land will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Ancestors are seen as having extensive knowledge of the after world, hence they are consulted as oracles. They are therefore consulted about different dilemmas. According to Magesa (1997:50) in the Tswana dialect, ancestors are referred to as '*badimo*' and God is referred to as "*Modimo*" ("The One Above") and because ancestors are usually a community "they are the ones above" which further supports the notion that they are Gods' agents and take deputy when he is not in control. It should be noted that God is ultimately seen as supreme because he is the creator of all things. Africans hold God to very high regard because even though ancestors have an impact in society, God has control over everything. As per Mbiti (1970: 56) God is a provider, He sustains humanity by giving life and maintaining it. This is through the provision of rain, sun, vegetation, and fertility amongst others. "The Akan people speak of God as 'the Giver of light' which ties into many other aspects such as warmth, light seasonal changes, all which are responsible for the fertility of the land and the growth of crops to nourish humanity. His presence is seen as the orbit of the Sun because he is everywhere and anywhere for all to access (Mbiti 1970:56.)"

The 'Khoisan' and the Venda people refer to God as the 'Rain Giver' which helps the earth become nourished. It is also a sign of renewal because rainfall signifies a change in season that brings the promise of a new life or how the Christians would put it 'washes the sins away'. Parrinder (1968:79) notes that 'rain makers in African culture are prominent in the South and East parts of Africa'. In Sepedi culture, a rain queen known as Queen Modjadji of the Lovedu is seen as responsible for making it rain for her people and withholding it from her enemies. The queen seeks counsel from her ancestors; however, it is a heavily guarded secret as to how she makes the rain happen. However, there are many rainmakers all over Africa that perform different rituals for rain to fall, however, seasons also determine the expectation of rain. The cycle of seasons are understood but there are circumstances that result in the rain not falling on the expected season and this is what causes the need for rain makers to intervene. Some of the rituals include burning green branches which produce dark clouds, which are believed to attract rain. Another method is a rain maker filling his mouth with water and squirting it out with the hopes of rain being attracted to this action and it falling.

God is also invested in ensuring that the health of his creation is intact, therefore, even in seasons of drought, the Zulu will pray for him to provide them with rain so that the land can become fertile, and the livestock can be healthy. This is also a sign of the reliance of humans on God for health and longevity. Just as in the Bible, Rachel cried out to God to give her children (see Matthew 2:18). This is similar to how African people pray to God for fertility. According to Mbiti (1970:61) children, livestock, food, and health are seen as symbols of prosperity.

3.6. Badluck, witchcraft and spiritual forces

The belief of nature being alive is very prominent in spirituality, everything is seen as connected. Hence, animals, plants and minerals are believed to hold special spirits even though they are of lower grade when compared to that of humans. They are the forces of Nature. According to Parrinder (1968:23) the hierarchy according to power or force is often noted, however, due to acknowledging that each element is important, much care is placed in not placing each more importantly than the other. Everything is connected and everything plays a significant role in the interaction of the whole cycle of relations. When humans manipulate these forces, the intention is usually to create evil, as such witchcraft becomes a result of the

manipulation. This can result in evil spirits having access to the person and encouraging them to do wrong or evil, which is ultimately the disruption of God's order, Christians may refer to it as 'demons.

The reason behind the manipulation of forces is to cause bad luck or misfortunes to others. Some Africans such as the Ndogo people who believe God is the ultimate decision-maker, and do not hold him accountable for bad things happening to people. In actual fact, they believe that it is people who do unimaginable things with the power that God gave them; the power of having dominion over the earth and all that is in it. However, according to Mbiti (1970:82):

> other African tribes such as Ila tribe people hold the sentiment that God is connected to misfortunes just as much as he is connected to good. They strongly believe that nothing happens outside of Gods' approval. An important note is to recognize that in African Spirituality, Jesus does not have as much of a prominent role as he does in Christianity. The recognition of ancestors working alongside God is more of a feasible option for Africans. This is due to the fact that they can relate more to ancestors because they have certainty of their existence, as the forefathers that came long before them. However, it must be noted that in AICs Jesus has an important role to play alongside the ancestors and the same holds true in African theology's consideration of Jesus being an ancestor. Though in strict African spirituality certainly Jesus is not considered.

The ancestors are also made known to the family through oral tradition much like in Christianity does with spreading the Gospel. As such it is important to realize and acknowledge the similarities between Christianity and spirituality especially around the idea of God, rituals, and interpretation. Certainly, there are overlaps more than they are presented opposite and in contrast. Firstly, the African Independent Churches reflect how African spirituality and Christianity or specifically the Spirit of God is the same that is and has been at work in Africa. Secondly, the danger lies in who's eyes one perceiving this for instance the world of the Old Testament, its society, practices etc. are not exclusive to biblical Hebrews and people of the Near Ancient East but for a church in the hand of the empire would not want to make those parallels because there is a sense that the Gospel is European culture. In the following chapter, the comparisons between Christianity and Spirituality will be examined in greater detail, to highlight the similarities between seemingly clashing worldviews.

3.7. Conclusion

African spirituality as an independent faith practice is discussed in this chapter. Additionally, African Initiated churches are also mentioned as a response to the needs of African people through religion. The *Shembe* church and the Zion Christian Church are prime examples of churches that preached a gospel that black people could relate to, mainly because these churches have black leaders and black congregants. Ancestors play a vital role in African Spirituality as the intermediaries that work alongside God to bring guidance to African people. Therefore, some of the rituals that are indigenous to African people such as rain making are also a point of reference. African people also view God as both immanent and transcendent but also appease their ancestors since they are believed to be the closest to God. In this way, reverence is offered to God and acknowledgment is given to the ancestors because both are known to play vital roles in the survival of humanity.

Chapter 4: The overlap between African Spirituality and Christianity

Christianity and African Spirituality share several traits in common, some have already been discussed in chapter 1, however, it is important to stress the similarities so that the de-stigmatization of African spirituality (particularly in South Africa) can occur. One of the main topics seldom discussed in terms of the similarity between Christianity and false prophets.

4.1. False prophets and witchcraft

The bible being the primary source of reference for the Christian believer speaks loudly against false prophets. "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves" see Matthew 7:15(New International Version). This is because the Holy Spirit was able to give believers spiritual gifts, 1 Corinthians (12: 4-11 NIV) reads:

> There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

This teaching by Paul also aligns with Jesus leaving the disciples with the Holy Spirit prior to the Pentecost (see John 14:9-14 NIV). Anyone can be blessed with the power to perform miracles only if they believe in Christ and call upon his name, however, human beings are corruptible as can be seen with Judas Iscariot who sold Jesus. As such, people may speak like Christians, or claim to be Christians, but it does not necessarily mean they are what they seem. Hence Christ as well as the Apostle Paul speak against imposters, as seen in Jeremiah 14:14 "God says these evildoers prophesy lies, offering 'false visions, divinations, idolatries, and the delusions of their own minds."

It is interesting to note that there were sorcerers in biblical times, as seen in Exodus 7:1-13 (NIV), this is because God had instructed Moses to tell Pharaoh to let His people go and Pharaoh was stubborn, as such the staff that Moses had turned into a snake to prove the Lord's wrath and Pharaoh called upon the sorcerers to come and confirm if truly God had sent Aaron and Moses. The sorcerers were able to also turn their staffs into snakes; however, they were swallowed by that of Aaron.

Similarly, in African Spirituality witchcraft which can sometimes be mistaken for magic, and is a phenomenon that is frowned upon. According to Parrinder (1968:123) witches are normally thought to be women, although male 'wizards' exist. These witches are known to perform rituals or use medicines with the intent of harming their enemies, hence they are also referred to as sorcerers. However, sorcery is a more predictable form of bringing harm to someone with a way of stopping should one decide otherwise, such as physically planting something in someone's yard with an evil intent, however, according to Magesa (1997:180) witchcraft is unpredictable and can also be ascribed to the conjuring of evil spirits, again with the intent to bring harm of bad luck to their enemies.

Witchcraft can sometimes be considered hereditary especially in homes where people have old women, because it is believed in the Azande people of Sudan and the Lovedu people of South Africa, that it has to be transmitted to the next generation as a rule (Magesa 1997: 184). Witchcraft is usually a practice that occurs among people with similar mindsets or a common goal. It can be seen as an organized entity where there are meetings at a given time of night that the witches have to attend. There is never proof of these meetings taking place as the activities are spiritual. Similarly, to how Christians believe that demons have a kingdom of darkness from which they operate, which is also spiritual. Much of the instruments they use are usually thought to be animals, owls, black cats, and monkeys are the ones that are commonly used.

According to Parrinder (1968:125) "antelopes, leopards and nocturnal birds are common associates to witches, which they sometimes use as a disguise." The parallels and similarity of African Spirituality and Christianity can be drawn between false prophets and witchcraft. This can be deduced from an ethical base that shuns such practices; it is not out of place to make this comparison save to say that the idea of prophet is more associated with religions of the Near Ancient East more particular Abrahamic religions—they have done so to separate themselves from other religions. The prophet is called by God but on the main Old Testament prophets address themselves to the community and society. Similar to what are healer and a seer represent in the community and society. Therefore, the false prophet is a great detriment to the people and society in the same way the witch threatens the fibre of that society. Nonetheless such a moral and social office of prophet exists in African Spirituality i.e., seers

and healers that play both an ethical/moral stance but also exact authority. Concerning the role of a witch, Grillo (2005: 442) asserts:

> The concept of "witch" in West African traditions is a complex one. People identified as witches are often those who display anti-social sentiments such as anger or jealousy, or whose behavior conveys that they are too self-sufficient: they are reclusive, arrogant, or ungenerous. Not only is it possible that the wicked may prosper, but indeed, inordinate prosperity is suspect as an indication of witchcraft! The source of evil is located in the human world and lurks in the heart of the hidden person.

4.2. Circumcision

While having stated earlier on that the subject of circumcision did come up in the early church though it did not remain as a result of the emergence of the gentile church and the subsequent fall of the temple. This subject of circumcision is important because of its early roots in the church but more importantly in repairing the image of African people, which was denied under the pretext that the "Bible says…". Though it became a shock for black to discover that in fact the world of the bible typified their own. This is clear reminiscent to the African Independent Church focus on the Old Testament or reading the New Testament with the eyes of the Old Testament, which as an early point of reference was not alien to the early church that did not have prodigious Greek and Latin ideas in developing their theology (Prusente et al 2019:1).

Though circumcision appear in the New Testament with a slight shift of application because Paul places it within the schemata of salvation, however, it would be difficult to speak about it without having known about. Obviously ever Christian needs to know the roots of his/her faith rooted in Israel's history. In fact, to fully understand Christian theology you must build from the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the act of circumcision can be seen first in Genesis (17; NIV) where God reveals himself to then ninety-nine -year -old Abraham. He had previously struggled to have children and only had Ishmael. However, the Lord told Abram to be faithful to Him so that he could bless him with many children. Abram agreed to this covenant and was told that his name would be Abraham. Due to his pledging allegiance to God, he became the ancestor of Israel, and his offspring would then honour God by circumcising their male children at birth. This removal of the foreskin was an act of honour of the covenant that Abraham had made with God. Circumcision was also an act that distinguished the Jew from the Gentile.

Circumcision in African culture is seen as a rite of passage, the act that distinguishes the boy from the man, one of the oldest customs still carried out by numerous black African ethnic groups is male circumcision. It entails surgically removing all or a portion of the penis' foreskin. It plays a crucial part in the identity formation of young men. Nevertheless, it is also carried out for religious and health-related purposes. The latter is important as the colonialist and missionaries saw this act of circumcision as barbaric despite having the possession of the Bible fail to acknowledge the deep-seated mystery entailed in culture such as this practice (circumcision) that has religious and cultural underpinnings but in the same vein possesses a serious angle on health. This is important as even the health campaigns, such as here in South Africa, around circumcision fail to declare that modernity was wrong, and our people were wise in the ways. According to Prusente et al (2019:1) they note:

> A traditional nurse (ikhankatha) is then tasked with facilitating the security and wellbeing of the initiates, tracking their recovery, and continuously imparting teachings about manhood. Traditional male circumcision is carried out in a conventional manner by a traditional surgeon (ingcibi) who underwent the same procedure using a traditional spear.

Tradition plays a special role in Spirituality because it shapes the man that you become for the community, which ensures that the spirit of '*ubuntu'* lives within you. Although in Christianity there is not necessarily such a practice for women, in African Spirituality, the rite of passage for girls is known as 'umemulo' as per Zulu tradition. 'Umemulo' (the coming of age) is the equivalent of circumcision. In that the woman is taking for 'ukuhlolwa' (virginity testing) at the age of 21, to check if she has been a 'good girl' who is fit to be celebrated for the woman she is about to become. Umemulo represents the change from girlhood to womanhood. Women are usually prepared for the possibility of marriage and all the responsibility it entails. This is an event that is celebrated as a signal of pride and gratitude of the girl who upheld all the responsibility that led her to womanhood. During the ceremony, traditional food and traditional beer 'umqombothi' is served as per custom.

4.3. Libation- Umqombothi and wine

Libation is critical during traditional ceremonies as per Parrinder (1962:8) "one of the great sources behind many social sacrifices is of communion. Offerings may involve libations of water, rum or 'umqombothi' in Zulu culture and small amounts of food." The pouring out of blood from a slaughtered animal is also crucial. The sharing of a meal represents unity and closeness, it creates a bond and a harmonious environment.

Some tribes, such as the tribe of Thonga from Mozambique believe that food and drinks are a vehicle of reconciliation. Similarly, in Christianity the Lord's supper is seen with the disciples gathering around the table to share a meal with Jesus (Matthew 26:17-29 NIV) symbolized an important point in history, where Christ was instructing them that the breaking of the bread will always indicate the renewal of the covenant and ensure the existing bond between Him, and the disciples. Libation was also important in the offering of sacrifices to the Lord. Biko (1987:44-45) speaking on African culture and religious practices asserts:

> All people are agreed that Africans are a deeply religious race. In the various forms of worship that one found throughout the Southern part of our Continent there was at least a common basis. We all accepted without any doubt the existence of a God. We had our own community of saints. We believed---and this was consistent with our views of life---that all people who died had a special place next to God. We felt that a communication with God, could only be through these people. We never knew anything about hell---we do not believe that God can create people only to punish them eternally after a short period on earth.

Biko (1987: 45) further argues:

> Another aspect of religious practices was the occasion of worship. Again, we did not believe that religion could be featured as a separate part of our existence on earth. It was manifest in our daily lives. We thanked God through our ancestors before we drank beer, married, worked etc. We would obviously find it artificial to create special occasions for worship. Neither did we see it logical to have a particular building in which all worship would be conducted. We believed that God was always in communication with us and therefore merited attention everywhere and anywhere. It was the missionaries who confused our people with their new religion. By some strange logic, they argued that theirs was a scientific religion and ours was mere superstition in spite of the biological discrepancies so obvious in the basis of their religion.

What Biko argues especially around the spaces of worship and the role of drink/libation is an indication first of how similar the African religion is/was to the Hebrew faith. For instance, when considering the first instance that speaks of a drink as part of an offering is in (Gen 35:14, NIV) "Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it." The fact that Jacob could set up a pillar as indication of his encounter with the Lord shows how primitive/ indigenous Hebrew religion had no designated areas to worship God. While later the temple emerged for the Hebrews, for Africans this remain so as the whole land is a place of worship and a sacrament to God this is clear seen in the AICs (see Mdingi 2014).

In fact, Jesus Christ, reiterates this with his encounter with the Samaritan woman in John 4 where critiques both Jews with their Jerusalem and the Samaritan with the well of Jacob. Jesus asserted that the true worshippers of the Father worship him in truth and spirit. As such, clearly indicating the sovereignty and accessibility of God in all of creation. Though one thing that remain in African culture which it shares with the Jews is that all throughout the Old Testament are instructions of how people should offer sacrifices to the Lord and in many instances such as in the book of Numbers where the Levites are given instructions on how to build the sanctuary and what process is involved in sacrificial offerings goes into detail about the pouring of libation during sacrificial offerings see (Num 4-7 NIV). The role of the Levites is not different from the sangoma who performs rituals on behalf of a clan tribe etc.

4.4. Totems and Genealogy

The totem, also known as the spirit, sacred object, symbol, or emblem of a family, clan, lineage, or tribe, has special importance in tribal life. According to Manash (2018: 1) asserts:

> The totemic figure, symbol, mark, word, ideogram, or any other identifier, in their opinion, serves as a reminder of their heritage or legendary past. It denotes a connection within a clan or lineage with a bird, animal, or natural occurrence on a spiritual, religious, communal, or cultural level.

It is a known expectation to respect the totem as articulated by Ndubisi (2018:1) when arguing that: "In this sense, most African societies frown against mistreating or even murdering totemic animals. Totems recognition is widespread in traditional African civilization. Africans have a strong feeling of regard for their individual or collective totems." This practice also implies a reverence for creation and her creatures, but it also has ecological implications that deeply rooted in African indigenous religion and expressing the Edenic sensitivities of the religion of the Hebrews. Purely from an interpretive lens in contrast to historicity that might need to be considered in such a text we encounter in Genesis Adam being in the presence of animals and in fact naming them.

The vision in Isaiah 11:7-9 and many texts in the Hebrew bible shows the nexus between humanity, creation and all of her creatures. This is important theologically because it implies a sense of convergence between the God revealed in the Bible and known by indigenous people. The Nguni people of Southern Africa have many totems which refer to either the characteristics that represent that family, or where they are believed to have origin; *Mhlanga* (reed), *Ndlovu* (Elephant), *Manzi* (water) are some of the multiple totems found among African people. These

totems represent the identity of a clan, which frequently becomes the last name of that clan, and thus, lineage continues. Interestingly, this view of totems is indicated ion some sense in the bible specifically to Jesus Christ who is referred to as the 'Lion of Judah' and the 'Lamb of God'. While these titles might seem to be functionary roles in salvific history they do denote similar attributes as African totems. According to Magesa (1997:89) the manner in which a name is provided, is to signify the reincarnation of a paternal or maternal ancestor depending on the gender of the child, this is a typical example of many African cultures, particularly to the Agni tribe of Cote d'Ivoire.

According to Koosend & Seesengood (2013:146) biblical lineage serves as a code for tales that serve as the intellectual foundations of identity. Genealogies provide information about who we are by locating our allegiances and identities in historical context. They are invocations of names, occasions, and locations. Genealogies provide historical narratives and aid in understanding the present. The genealogy of David, son of Jesse, which can be found in the Bible, serves as a great illustration of Jesus' origins. The whole book of Chronicles is a sentimental look back at Judah and Israel's kingship, with a special emphasis on David's illustrious reign. The Chronicles creates continuity via lineage.

The Bible speaks on the twelve tribes of Israel, which meant God's chosen people as per the covenant with Abraham (Gen 17, NIV), are the descendant of Israel as per the promise he made to God. The tribes are separated according to their duties and their strengths. This relates to African spirituality because of how significant identity is to both. Although the tribes have different clans, they are collectively referred to as 'Israelites'. Israel became a formidable nation as we know today. Deysel (2009:566) asserts that genealogies in historiography serve to highlight the significance of ancestry. Ancestry is significant in African culture as well Christianity, and one's ancestors are often viewed as a connection to God. Similar to this, genealogies play a significant role in the degree of similarities between traditional African culture and ancient Near Eastern civilization and should be noted by researchers since they are far more similar to one another than either is to contemporary Western society.

4.5. Livestock

The owning of many livestock was regarded as a blessing from the Lord which meant a person is wealthy. The book of Job is an indication of how wealth was a reward for loyal allegiance to God. Job was a faithful servant who was wealthy. The enemy told God that Job's loyalty was

due to his wealth, as such to prove that this was not the case, God took all of Job's wealth which resulted in Him giving it all back twofold because Job still remained loyal despite the many challenges he faced, see (Job 42: 10-17 NIV). According to West (2014: 734) "the Ninevites and their cattle are directly connected in the king of Nineveh's royal proclamation:

> Let man and beast, herd and flock, not taste anything; let them not feed, or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them cry mightily to God; yea, let every man turn from his evil way and from the violence which is in his hands. Who knows, God may yet repent and turn from His fierce anger, so that we perish not?" (Jonah 3:7–9 NIV).

According to Shava and Masuku (2019:1): "The Bantu people of southern Africa share an agro-pastoral way of life, especially the significance they place on cattle and how they used it as a means of exchange for commerce and other social interactions within the Nguni and Shona community settings." There are various herds of animals kept, such as cows, sheep, goats, and poultry. The degree of an animal's numerous uses determines how valuable an animal is. Most cultural groups consider cattle to be the most significant of these several livestock species. Livestock does not only aid in subsistence farming, but also signals wealth and security. The Batswana people also regard livestock as a form of currency. Subsequently, the role that money plays in contemporary capitalist economies is filled by cattle in indigenous rural communities (see Schneider, 1964).

According to Masuku (2019:3) the way that cattle, goats, and chickens were cared for revealed and still reveals that there is a sacred interaction between the animals, homestead people, their worldviews, and socio-ecological development. Animals have had and continue to have important social, economic, political, spiritual, and ecological effects. This point is important considering the dispossession of land implied the end of ownership of livestock's none is as explicit as the story of Nongqawuse, a young prophetess deceived to lead the Xhosa people to burn all their crops and cattle as they would return coupled with the resurrection of the dead. While keeping of livestock continues its often a mainstay of a few who feed many at high prices as these products are dumped in large amounts in the market for consumption and maximization of profit.

4.6. Role of women

Women are very important in Christianity as can be seen in the Bible. The very instance that solidifies women and their importance in the world, is in Genesis (2:18;20 NIV) where the

helper of Adam is first introduced. According to Heger (2014:3), a helper does not signify that the helper is secondary to the person helped; a helper is potentially a subordinate aide or an equal partner. In marriage, while the woman is required to assist her husband, if she brought maiden slaves with her as part of her dowry, they might do the labour while she sat on her position of power, doing nothing. Because of this, her contributions to or responsibilities for her husband are not seen as low-grade domestic duties but rather as equal to and complimentary to those the husband does for the benefit of his wife. By recognizing the intrinsic worth of women as individuals, Jesus showed the high value He placed on them. Christ sees women as having the same essential worth as men. According to Jesus (Matthew 19:4; see Genesis 1:27), "the Creator made them male and female' at the beginning." Just like males, women were made in the likeness of God. They share many traits with males, including self-awareness, personal independence, some degree of self-determination, and accountability for one's own acts (see Borland 1991:105).

Allen Boesak 2019 in The Children of the Waters of Meriba highlights the importance of the woman at the well and the contribution she has towards the liberation of women. Boesak (2019) eloquently mentions how Jesus and the woman at the well is a necessary stride towards liberation of women, he writes the woman at the well did what was deemed as horrendous back in the day, questioning the stereotypical views of the society in which she lived, still she was not given a name, indication how women's identities were almost as if they are non-existent and unrecognisable and unworthy, yet she is the one who later ran and spread the word, without shame or doubt but with the conviction and certainty that she was doing the right thing despite what that might look like to others.

Boesak highlights the wonderful revelation that occurs at the well, Boesak (2019:180) mentions "this woman may be "unorthodox", but he also mentions that hers is a liberating unorthodoxy, for her and for Jesus. If it is remarkable that Jesus is breaking social, religious, and cultural boundaries, it is even more remarkable that she does it as well. Seeing the pitfalls of the politics of race, gender, and religion in this situation, a timid person would have withdrawn from the conversation or at the very least ignored the request from the man who is asking her for water, going on her way without running the risks of engagement. But this woman is far from timid.

According to Shava and Masuku (2019:1) in African spirituality females are more valued stakeholders in society due to their reproductive capacity and ability to nurture. In Spirituality, earth is referred as 'mother nature' because it gives birth to all life forms, as Magesa (1997:83) notes that women are regarded highly due to them being the carriers of ancestry, they bring to life what God created and blessed humanity with. Conception is seen as an ancestral approval of the continuation of the family name. According to Jeffries (2019:2) women impact society in how they teach, lead, and carry responsibility for children even outside of their biological ones.

Turman and Cheryl Townsend Gilkes (2016:6) argue that not only are black women moral agents of black communities, but black women are, more importantly, indispensable moral agents within their communities. Simultaneously navigating the multiple social jeopardies of race, gender, and class that largely restrict them to the margins of both church and society. Gilkes (2016) contends that black women have persevered, creating communities of their own, as in the black women's club movement of the 20th century, and communities within communities.

It takes a village to raise a child is rooted in the caring nature and selflessness of African women. Magesa (1997:83) further asserts that: "In the act of conception, relationships are starting to form connecting the visible and invisible worlds." Women also hold a special position in Spirituality, as most rainmakers are women known as rain queens. In agreement to this, Setiloane (1993:13) proclaims that 'she (the woman) is the official head who connects the surviving community with the deceased ancestral community'. In African religion women are also priestesses as noted by Parrinder (1968:101) when arguing that: "they are measured as renowned as the men. The intuitive capabilities of women have obtained recognition and scope to a much greater degree. They may also have full control of a sanctuary like Deborah in the Bible."

4.7. Land Rites

Land is a significant part of human existence. It is undeniable how impactful land is both from a Christian and Spiritual viewpoint, in actual fact, humanity as a whole relies heavily on land because it represents origin, ancestry and inheritance. Koosend & Seesengood (2013:60) asserts that: "Land produces legend, biography transforms into mythology, legend and

mythology produce history". In order to understand the issue of landlessness and dispossession today and where it originates from, we need to look extensively at the history of Western Christianity particularly beginning with the Papacy and its Papal Bulls and how they influence in the modern-day land matters in Africa, the Americus, and particularly in South Africa where both the Protestant and Catholic churches are responsible of land dispossession. The Christian Bible agrees with African Spirituality with regards to the importance of land and its significance, as can be seen in Ruth 4:5-10 (NIV):

> Then Boaz said, "You must wed Ruth, the deceased man's wife, after you purchase the property from Naomi. She is the Moabite lady. with this manner, the land will remain with the heirs of her late husband. "Then I can't buy the land back," the close relative said. I could lose what I could provide to my own boys if I did that. I am unable to repurchase the land. you purchase it yourself. When trading or buying something back in ancient Israel, one person would take off his sandal and give it to the other. They might use this as evidence of purchase. The close relative thus advised, 'Buy the land yourself'. He removed his sandal next. Then Boaz addressed the elders and the entire populace. You are today's witnesses of what I am purchasing from Naomi, he continued. Everything that belongs to Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon is now mine. Ruth will be my wife as well. She is the Moabite who was Mahlon's bride. I'm taking this action to ensure that her late husband's family receives the property. His name will remain linked to his kin and his property in this way. You are present for today."

It is undeniable that land ownership was important in the bible, in the same manner, Shembe and Lekganyane saw the importance of owning land and establishing the various AIC movements because land means security, it signifies belonging. Moripe (1996:13) alludes to the Psalmist who argues: "How can we sing a song to the Lord in a foreign land? (Ps. 137: 4), in a foreign language and a foreign thought? This is a profound question which is being asked by the African Initiated Churches in particular, the Zion Christian Church. For nothing less than the future of the church - even more the Kingdom of God! - in Africa and in particular South Africa is at stake."

The African National Native Congress was founded in 1912 with significant assistance from the African Initiated Churches of South Africa (the adjective "native" was dropped in 1925). Black people were excluded from the National Convention that wrote the laws for the Union of South Africa, which led to the formation of the African National Congress. This group fought in vain for forty-eight years to persuade the succeeding white administrations that South Africa is destined to fail if Blacks are not incorporated in its legal systems before it was outlawed in

South Africa. Some African-Initiated Churches placed a lot of emphasis on it, and it had nationalistic inclinations (see Moripe 1996:142).

Far-reaching changes were made by the government in 1957: only churches with a Western orientation and a congregation of one million or more people in South Africa would be eligible for church premises. Other churches would need to demonstrate that they had at least six religious' groups, a regular constitution, a following of 100 baptized participants over a period of fifteen years, and that their ministers were educated, morally upright, and capable of carrying out civil duties. The State could approve the church in question if the conditions were satisfied. Sadly, the majority of Black churches were incapable to fulfil these demands (see Sundkler 1976). Due to this very strict rule, many of the churches were left without land and no alternative plan. the surviving churches were "Bantu Methodist Church of South Africa, 1933; the African congregational Church, 1937; the African Orthodox Church, 1941 and finally the African Gospel Church 1948whence the Ethiopian Church of South Africa was removed from the list of recognized churches. This is an indication of how the whites continuously placed black leaders at a disadvantage, with the ultimate goal being control over the AICs. (Moripe 1996:142)

4.8. Papal Bull and the role of the Bible in larceny

The council of Nicea had acknowledged bishops as authoritative officials within a region as early as the fourth century, this is according to Wand (1937:234). However, from the thirteenth century, there was a significant increase in the higher levels of ecclesiastical organization. Although the word "papal bulls" has been in use probably since the sixth century, it wasn't widely utilized until the thirteenth century, and even then, it was primarily used internally for unauthorized administrative duties. There was a need to establish an official creed which would be a canon of orthodoxy. The bishops with the special authority were from Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. The great Council of Chalcedon saw Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem as the Patriarchates (Wand 1937:234).

The papacy in simpler terms is an order in which the church set the rules and came up with laws to solidify its authority. The council decided on many policies, including the instruction of monks being under the bishops, additionally according to Wand (1937:243) the clergy were

ordered to not be involved in trade or leave the church they were ordained in, disputes would be referred to the Patriarchate Constantinople. Authority of the patriarchy became more prominent when Palestine was placed under Jerusalem and putting Pontus, Asia as well as Thrace under the dominion of Constantinople. This occurred at the fourth Oecumenical Council. Though no clear explanation of faith in the Christian Doctrine was given, some valuable decisions were reached.

The Papacy is very closely linked with slavery, as noted by Adiele (2017:1) with its associated effects on the lives and reputation of the inhabitants of the Black continent, the Transatlantic Slave Trade—during which the Black Africans were enslaved—is regarded as the most barbaric kind of slavery and the brutal form of cruelty to humans in the history of mankind. It ran for more than 400 years in total during the length of its existence. These were lost decades for Black Africa, as well as centuries of organized international condemnation and the brutal killing of millions of her defenceless and untainted sons and daughters of Africa. They were also years of political calamity, economic losses, chaos in society, and growth stagnation in all of its manifestations.

Pope Alexander VI's papal bull "Inter Caetera," which was published on May 4, 1493, was crucial to the Spanish conquest of the New World. The paper backed Spain's plan to secure its ownership of the territories that Columbus had found the year before. It created a demarcation line 100 leagues west of the Azores and the islands of Cape Verde and granted Spain the sole authority to annex and trade in any countries west of that line. Without a special permit from the Spanish monarchs, everyone else was barred from traveling to the areas west of the border. As a result, Spain had a legal monopoly on the lands in the New World.

The Bull demanded that the "Catholic faith and the Christian religion be elevated and be all over grew and spread, that the well-being of souls be cared for, and that barbarous nations be overthrown and converted to the faith itself." It also announced that any land that was not occupied by Christians was open to be "discovered," claimed, and capitalized by Christian rulers. This "Doctrine of Discovery" served as the cornerstone for all European claims in the Americas as well as the US's westward advancement (see The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History,2012).

According to Charles and Rah (2019:15) a set of legal precepts known as the Doctrine of Discovery guided the European colonial powers, especially with relation to the management of indigenous lands. It is a piece of international law that was created in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and is still the 'primary legal precedent that still controls native affairs and rights.' From a theological standpoint, the Doctrine of Discovery's legal and political functions are a result of a broken religious imagination that helped to create the worldview of European colonial settlers. Charles & Rah (2019:15) asserts:

> The concept was established through a number of papal bulls from the fourteenth century, which are authoritative pronouncements made by the pope and bear all of the authority of his ecclesiastical office. Pope Nicholas V released the first batch of writings that would make up the Doctrine on June 18, 1452, through the papal bull Dum Diversas. This document would list potential targets for "perpetual slavery" as pagans (basically designating any non-Christian or "others") and saracens (a name used for Muslims at the period). The papal bull purposefully employed terminology to label individuals who are not part of the European Christian community and to reinforce the notion of non-Europeans in Western theology as being 'other'.

Although there are other types of enslavement in history, the most notable one being the Jewish enslavement by Egyptians, the Trans-Atlantic slavery was different in that it was racially motivated. According to Adiele (2017:2) it was the only slave trade that transported its captives on vessels of all sizes and forms carrying the names of Saints from the Holy Roman Catholic Church, like the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, St. Thomas, St. George, and others. Once more, the scope and gravity of its execution, as well as the savagery of its perpetrators, are what make it distinctive. As per Charles and Rah (2019: 17) the pope held that "if we confer appropriate favours and particular mercies on those Catholic kings and princes, who... confine the savage vices of the Saracens and of other nonbelievers, antagonists of the Christian name, but also for the preservation and expansion of the faith, eliminate them and their territories and habitations," then we will be able to defeat them and their territories and communities. The European monarchs would be shamelessly elevated, while non-Europeans would be diminished and demonized after being victoriously defeated. The church's flawed theology would eventually find fulfilment and actual manifestation in the slave trade.

The Black Africans endured the first-ever injustice at the hands of the Catholic Church hierarchy with this most heinous and deadliest crime. According to Adiele (2017:2) speaking about it today is speaking of the momentous, terrible event in the history of the Black man on

earth. It is to discuss the inhumane and degrading forced deportation of millions of Black Africans over the perilous Atlantic Ocean in ships carrying human cargoes of all kinds and lengths on a trip without pause to the purported New World that Christopher Columbus found in 1492.While traveling across the Atlantic, millions of these defenceless, destitute victims of the slave trade perished.

The enslavement of West Indians took place concurrently with the captivity of Black Africans by the very same European slave dealers and their respective home countries. Interestingly, the Spanish conquerors and slave traffickers did not exploit Indians for very long before receiving the attention and condemnation they deserved from the popes and their own country. Due to the Church's persistent efforts through her Apostolic Writings and Office and the persistent efforts of her missionaries in the Caribbean islands under the direction of Bishop Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484– 1566), who was occasionally referred to as 'the Apostle and liberator' of the Indians of the West Indies, Indian slavery was publicly condemned and outlawed by Pope Paul III. This was unfortunately not the case for Black African slaves, as they were not subjected to the same fate. One might wonder if the God of restoration and justice worked for all nations but the African nation? This is due to the fact that the church later confessed to the injustice of slavery to every nation but African people.

In addition to all of this, the Church's stance of keeping the memory of Black African slaves in the cooler of forgetfulness has not changed even as of this writing. Instead, this mindset is still apparent in certain of the esteemed institutions of higher learning in South Africa. The racial tension keeps rising between Afriforum and The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), after the SRC elections took place at the University of Pretoria with the EFF fairly winning all the major seats of the SRC as per the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) preliminary digital results as voted for by the students on 09 September 2023 (Caxton Network News, 2023).

Afriforum which is a predominantly white Afrikaans party suggested that EFF won unfairly and was inciting violence. This might not necessarily be the case, because the EFF also won a majority of the seats of the SRC elections in other higher learning institutions. Evidently, there is a need for a response from a theology that is on the side of the African person. A movement that will exercise justice and fairness to Black African people, a Black Liberation Theology. What the black youth is doing, is making a statement as per Boesak (1984:6) stance that:

> …as Adam Small says: 'we do not live by the grace of the whites.., whites have always thought they hold our lives in their hands. Although, therefore, protest shall play a role in our future actions, we must realize, nevertheless, that protest is itself a form of begging. We shall not, I repeat beg. The primary form of expression shall be the manifestation of our Blackness. Over and over again we shall make our Blackness visible. We do not exist for the benefit of the whites. We exist.

The discussion of the political parties was a necessary departure point to show how the liberation of black people is an important discussion amongst Theologians and society at large. A critical view at the Church and its stance on slavery and injustice is necessary as it will highlight the commonality between olden and modern-day oppression and enslavement. Participation of political parties in the oppression of Black people is not a foreign concept to the Church as well. There were Christian Churches outside the Catholic Church that took part in the abhorrent slave trade that solely used Black men as its targets and commodities. A number of other significant Christian faiths also participated in the transatlantic enslavement of Black Africans.

Often slavery has presented as having biblical reference traced as early as in the book of Genesis (9:18-27 NIV) where the account of Noah's family after the Flood as well as the curse placed on Ham by his father is recorded. This verse is the first in the Bible to discuss the history of true slavery. Additionally, it is the Bible passage that has been cited the most times to support the enslaved state of Black Africans. After the great deluge that wiped out all life on Earth, Noah is said to have been the first man to grow a vineyard. And after being intoxicated on the results of his labour, he fell into a deep slumber and awoke nude. His second son Ham noticed that he was nude and left without concealing it. When Shem and Japhet, Noah's other two children, learned about this later, they entered the tent without opening their eyes and covered Noah's nakedness with a linen cloth without peering at him. Upon awakening, Noah condemned Ham for his actions and gave his brothers the following blessing: "Cursed be Canaan, he will become his brother's meanest slave. Blessed be Yahweh, God of Shem, let Canaan be his slave, he concluded. May God increase Japheth, allow him to reside in Shem's tents, and make Canaan his slave."

According to Adiele (2017:168), those who spread this myth believed that the cursed Ham and his offspring were the ancestors of Black Africans, whereas the blessed Shem and Japheth were thought to be the ancestors of Europeans, Americans, Asians, and inhabitants of other countries.

Because of this division of roles in this story, Western Christian academics of the Middle Ages and Modern Times held that Black Africans in particular were descended directly from Ham and hence subject to a divine punishment. The earliest-century Alexandrian Jew, philosopher, and exegete Philo (20 BC–50 AD) brought the association of the Hebrew term Ham with the concept of heated or black for the very first time in Christian literature. Ham was said to as a "representation of the isolated man, the clan-less, illegitimate merciless man, who like pagan ethnics had no understanding of God" by St. Augustine of Hippo.

It comes as no surprise that even in modern Christian Theology, there are writers who still believe in the transatlantic slave trade as a justifiable cause when associating it with Ham and the curse in Genesis (9:18-27), Park (2021: 1) notes: "considering key features of the racist antebellum interpretation, I argue that the proslavery rationalization of Christian antebellum writers is rooted in a deracialized whiteness that was biblically produced and blessed with divine authority." Park further goes to explain this white racist perspective by quoting Sloan (1857:80) who asserts that:

> Black, restricted, hated, and bent down are the terms used to characterize the state and status of Ham's children. They are prevented from being on an equal footing with their more favoured brethren because of the degrading mark on their skin. They are also frequently despised and forbidden from marrying or mixing with the white and red races. Finally, they are forced to submit to the authority of their superiors without putting up any meaningful resistance.

Park (2021: 2) further asserts that: "according to Sloan, black skin palpably expresses "the condition and place of Ham's children". It is a physical 'mark of degradation' that renders their subordination to other races visible. Moreover, the descendants of Ham are 'despised' and placed in a permanent posture of obeisance; they are "bowed down" to the superior 'white and red races'. For Sloan, black skin is an indelible mark that signals the accursed and enslaved status of Ham and his descendants."

Mark and Rah (2019:23) suggest that the result of the abovementioned perspective is that 'in the minds of Westerners, the idea of white superiority became entrenched. The American Christian worldview now incorporates this figment and narrative as reality.' There are many etymologies that aim to justify why blackness is considered a sin, however, there is no narrative that can ever justify the evil that came with the enslavement of black Africans by supposed

'believers' of God. As per Goldenberg (2018:16), the Curse of Ham in general has become a widely recognized element of Christian worldview and biblical scholarship in the West. And just as the idea of the curse resulted in the growth of black slavery in the Muslim East, it also did so in the Christian West, and for the same motives: it more deeply linked slavery to black skin as the very indicator of subservience, the outward indication of the blacks' degradation, and did so by demeaning black skin itself.

This issue of slavery came with the issue of displacement and appropriation of land by so-called Christians under the assumed Doctrine of Discovery. According to Adiele (2017: 238-239) it was justified from a religious standpoint on the grounds that the Christian faith and its founder were both born in Jerusalem. Political justification for the Mission to the Holy Land and other Levantine and North African areas came from the fact that they were being reclaimed by Christianity after having been Christian territory under the old Roman Empire. Therefore, in the eyes of the medieval canonists and the papacy, declaring a military war against them with religious motivations was something acceptable and moral.

 However, interestingly enough, the papacy twisted the Bible in its favour with complete disregard of the biblical passage Matthew (5:45 NIV) that reads:" that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." This passage clearly shows that the pope or Christians are not allowed to take pagans and other non-believers' lands and possessions. This injustice requires a different perspective, a perspective of the ones who were previously disadvantaged, as such, an inspection of Black Theology and its stance is necessary to provide an alternative viewpoint.

4.9. A response to injustice and oppression by the Black Consciousness Movement and African Theology

After laying out the main points of convergence between the biblical world and Africa the research particularly around land dispossession, the Doctrine of Discovery and blatant religious racism sought to expose the serious underpinning of white theology and the false image it has about black people (see Maimela 1981). Firstly, it must be accepted that the world of the bible and that of Africa are not far apart. Secondly, a true a concise theology would consider the true message of the bible, which is not cultural bastardisation or appropriation. Third, there should

be a rejection of Europe imposing itself as Christian and making the story about the bible about whites, white history, civilisation and modernity.

In this section while attempting to draw together congruence between Christianity and Africa spirituality the study makes use of the hermeneutical and epistemological apparatus of African theology and Black Consciousness. Black Theology is concerned with the liberation of the Black population through mental emancipation, political awareness and Black Consciousness. It is a Theology that aims to redress the injustices that white Christian Theology has perpetrated over the years.

Black Theology is a response to white racism. This (white Christian Theology) was used as a tool in perpetuating racism as Mofokeng (1988:34) proclaims that by promising that the Bible would, in contrast to the colonists' concerns, turn the indigenous people into obedient and devoted hardworking slaves, the missionaries were able to overcome the early resistance to their work among Africans in South Africa. Setiloane (1980:47) holds the sentiment similar to John Mbiti's critical and acerbic in that "condemnation of Black religion in South Africa cannot be ignored: 'A ready-made Western theology turned into a consumption commodity for Africans.' Because it makes no attempt to depart from Western theology's conceptualization and methods. Instead, it makes use of them. As a result, Black Theology continues to practice theology within the framework of Western European Graeco-Roman influenced ideas. However, there are varying views on this because Black liberation theology emerged out of African theology.

African Theology on the other hand is 'an attempt to give African expression to the Christian Faith within a theological framework' (Ukpong 1984: 501). A more spiritual point is noted as noted by Masoga (2014:17):

> according to Setiloane is the perception that ancestors are bound together with the African insight of Umuntu-Motho, i.e., its approximation of the human person (man). This understanding is rooted in the view that the human person is incorruptible and endures after corporal death. The belief that the human person shares in divinity is far more pronounced and practically acknowledged in African theology than in Western theology, which seems to be contrasted to shy away from it as reminiscent of humanism, a heresy of the last century in the

West. Africans declare simply that *Motho ke Modimo* – a human person is something sacred or even divine, i.e., it participates in divinity, without necessarily claiming equality with it.

Setiloane (1980:49) therefore asserts Black theology is the expression of the Black man's moral and socio-ethical experience of God. Ethics now entails movement, response, and connections. On the other hand, consciousness is at a more fundamental, primary, and even primeval level. Whether a White man is there or not, I think the Black man is trying to verbalise this at the Black Consciousness level by understanding himself as Man, that is, his existence in its entirety. The White man and his Whiteness are essential to Black Theology, but they have no bearing on black consciousness. Setiloane (1980:49) further asserts that "Black Consciousness aids the Black man in returning to his origins as Man, African Man"

According to Murangi (2008:60)

Black consciousness and negritude are the same thing. People from Francophone nations, such the late president of Senegal, Leopold Senghor, Aime Ceaser, and Pablo Neruda, to name a few, are accused of being nefarious. The Black Consciousness Movement included Bobby Seele, Bobby Hutton, Huey P. Newton, and Stokely Carmichael. The Black Panther Party or Movement, as you may call it, was really founded in Oakland, California, by the latter three. The phrase 'Black Power' and the fist salute were reportedly first used by Stokely Carmichael. Stephen Bantu Biko, who passed while in police detention in September 1977, was regarded as the 'pioneer' of black consciousness in South Africa. He became a martyr in that sense as a result.

Slavery much like apartheid is centred around racism. Boesak (1984:111) asserts that racism is focused on the idea of racial supremacy acclaimed by whites that impose beliefs of inferiority on Black people. It thus justifies the mistreatment of that particular group. White people have made the gospel exclusively theirs. As such, white people have made it their mission to reiterate that all the persecution that the Black people haves suffered (apartheid, larceny) has a greater reward in heaven, which is rather absurd. The white people are more concerned with the preservation of property and possessions of the Native Africans. Black Theology according to Cone (1969:124) is more concerned with refusing to embrace black suffering and justifying it as God's will.

In South Africa apartheid- which is an extension of slavery and racism continued to thrive even after the 1994 elections. Townships were the demarcated areas which black people were forced

to live in, which are still in existence to this day. A township is a neighbourhood on the outskirts of a town or metropolis that has traditionally been utilized to maintain racial segregated housing. The apartheid political system, which was 'officially' in effect from 1948 until the early 1990s, is when the township system was initially established. Any groups of individuals who were not formally categorized as white were prohibited from residing in cities under that system. Instead, they had to live in townships. Townships often have subpar housing conditions and are overcrowded. With a focus on security and population control rather than infrastructure and resources, the territories are purposefully impoverished. Biko (2004:67) asserts: "these tribal cocoons have been effective in ensuring that the Black populace remains repressed."

The white man's pursuit for power has ensured the destruction of the Black population by placing them in shanty towns or squatter camps, mentally indoctrinating them to believe that the African way of life is barbaric, and baring them of any form of economic advancements by placing multiple barriers towards education and decent employment. However most Black people are coming to the realization that the White man has been taking them for a ride. Black Consciousness is responsible for this realization. According to Biko (2004: 67): "the blacks are starting to realize the need to unite around the cause of their suffering- their black skin and to ignore the false promises that come from the white world."

Biko noticed this almost instantly in the 60s where the white minority was utilising the media such as the Bantu Radio station to spread propaganda to the Black population with the promise of a better future and better conditions. There were promises being made to the Black people of South Africa, promises around liberation, however, this was carefully orchestrated to ensure that the black population can enjoy the 'freedom' from the outskirts of the cities. However, this was an inhumane act of the continuation of the apartheid regime because black people still did not have access to the necessary resources though they were falsely promised improvements unprovoked (Biko 2004:67).

According to Bankie &Mchombu (2008:67): The fact that contemporary theories of socioeconomic growth have completely overlooked African knowledge systems is one cause of Africa's underdevelopment. The way the African expansion problem is now being approached is similar to getting up a tree using its branches. Such a strategy has no natural

origins in the African people's heritage or educational system. As a result, the African people lack context and significance for the development process. As a result, it has been challenging for the populace to take control of this growth process. Development cannot come from without, as is common knowledge. Development must originate internally. The only thing that lasts is self-development.

White people also cunningly ensured that black people turned against one another by implementing borders in African countries, yet in Europe, there are no borders. This is to ensure the xenophobic persistence between fellow African nations. Pan-Africanism is a response to racism and intolerance that swept through much of Europe and the Americas in the latter days of the 19th and early 20th Centuries. Black people were continually marginalized, subject to discrimination, and vilified and despised in the western region and Europe. Africans in the Diaspora stepped up their efforts to see Pan-Africanism win against global forces like colonialism, racism, and apartheid (see Bankie & Mchombu 2008:32).

While political independence has been accomplished, genuine economic and social empowerment has not, leaving many concerns unresolved. This is the fundamental issue post-colonial Africa is currently confronting. Hence, there is a need for Black consciousness and the doctrine of Black Theology, to eradicate the injustice that is prevalent in African societies due to the actions of the white man. Black Theology maintains that in order to speak about God's love, you need to simultaneously speak about God's justice. According to Boesak (1984:9) God's liberation is not an isolated incident it is rather a movement concerned with change throughout history. Just as God proclaimed to Pharaoh "let my people go", he is just as invested in ensuring the liberation of Black people is in full effect.

Boesak (1984:131) proclaims that people's realities are influenced by the environment, and their method of comprehension is influenced by the social conditions in which they exist in. The same applies to Christians in that, they are influenced by the realities around them and interpret that with regards to the Gospel. As such, Black Christians will interpret the Gospel from a liberation perspective whereas white Christians will associate it with the justification of slavery. Black people therefore view the God of the Exodus, as a God concerned with liberation not the different God of cruelty and injustice that whites make him out to be.

Liberation will undeniably be met with resistance. The white counterparts are more concerned with the progression of the white race than the upliftment of the black race. When examining the issue of the land in South Africa, it is imperative to look at the belief behind the division of the land amongst the whites, this was strategically to ensure the economic progression of their race. This is points to the rationing of land on a bigger scale- first second and third world.

 The white liberals who claim to be African allies are also not invested in the success of black people. These liberals claim to be non-conformists and tend to believe that they are not racist, nor have they had any contribution to injustice as far as slavery is concerned. As per Biko (2004: 69) these people attempt to liken their struggles to that of black people and claim to feel the repercussions of oppression with black people alike. However, this group of people is invested in trying to influence the thought and political dogma that black people believe in. Their policies become popular amongst Black people because of their supposed alliance, which results in the black leaders also vesting power on them and seeking counsel from them because they believe in the promises they make. However, Biko (2004) notes that this is a strategy to come the masses down by utilising gentle persuasion, which is a different form of violence. It is a strategy that is used to control without using force.

According to Biko (2004:69): 'The reliance on the white liberals ended up giving the Black leaders a false sense of accomplishment in that they felt they could trust the white liberals. As such, they became relaxed and let their guard down. This ends up with the influence of the white liberals suggesting which leaders were problematic and which ones had to be let go to maintain the peace. This led to the black church once again being left vulnerable to the attacks of the oppressor. The Liberal whites preached a Gospel of integration, yet according to Biko "is impossible for two parties whose whole upbringing had been to support the notion that one race is superior to the other." This is a superficial Gospel that the white liberals influenced the blacks to believe. The only way for true liberation to take place is by understanding blackness and the context in which blackness exists. Setiloane believes that as per Masoga (2012:4) :

> African Theology is an effort to comprehend how God and the African worldview relate in Jesus Christ. Because it is actually an understanding gained over time through the Western cultural perspective, which is now implemented, by the presumption of Christian orthodoxy,

wherever the Christian message is welcomed and accepted, it challenges the generally accepted, so-called ecumenical theology in that it obscures the issue of Christian Revelation.

In African Theology that is where Black power is truly in effect. According to Munyangi (2008:60) Even if both ideas emphasize the effort—or, more precisely, the elevation of Black consciousness—as a similar goal, Negritude is forceful in its effort or 'subtle,' but Black Power is 'aggressive' and can be viewed as 'Reverse Reactive Racism, though this view is not true.' Black Power is concerned with the complete emancipation of black people from the oppression of the whites by whatever means necessary.

According to Cone (1969:6) "Black power can take many forms whether it be by boycotting, matching or rebellion", it is the demonstration of Black freedom, where black people take affirmative action towards solidifying their dignity as human beings, claiming their place in humanity. It is to stand firm in the conviction of Black people and their pursuit of justice. This concept of Black power aims to take pride in the realisation of Black greatness. To emancipate the mind and to make Black people realise that, as Biko (1978:9) would put it "the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed".

White society has ensured the continuation of privilege for their children, hence white liberal claims of supporting black liberation are farfetched. This is because of the persistence of white profit off black labour. Biko (2004:71) proclaim "For a 20-yearold white liberal to expect acceptance with open arms by the black population is to overestimate the power of forgiveness of the black people." The movement of Black consciousness is required to ensure that the black person becomes conscious of self, to be in a battle with the mind over the false narratives that the whites have indoctrinated them with. Self-awareness is ultimately the goal, to assess inwardly so that the reality around can change.

Consciousness will expose the myth of white people acclaiming god status for themselves, it will strip the mentality of black-white dependency that favour the colonists. This is unfolding in this current moment, nationally, Black people are becoming aware of the fallacy of white supremacy, a revolution has begun. The Economic Freedom Fighters is an interesting case as far as the economic liberation of people is concerned. The EFF have taken it upon themselves

to contest against the national party the African National Congress (ANC) which has been in power since 1994 and expose their contribution towards South Africa potentially becoming a fallen state due to poor governance, looting of funds and the alleged alliance with white monopoly capital. This is a step in the right direction, as the liberation of Black people is necessary on all fronts, mentally, financially and politically.

The EFF is becoming South Africa's fast-growing political party, with the mandate being the economic upliftment of black people and land expropriation without compensation. Though this might be a ploy to win the 2024 governmental elections, it is undeniable the impact they have had in ensuring the emancipation of Black people by being active participators in the fight against racism and white monopoly capital. Their mandate is closely related with Biko's mentality of suggesting that "we must pursue to reinstate to the black people a sense of the great stress we used to lay on the value of human relationships; to focus on the fact that in the pre-Van Riebeek days we held to high repute people, their property and life in general" (Biko 2004:77).

According to (Sebola 2022) the political scene since the 2019 presidential elections in South Africa has been characterized by land expropriation without compensation. The African National Congress (ANC), the country's current ruling party, blindly hopped on the revolutionary land policy bandwagon while being aware of how difficult it would be to put such a framework into practice. The ANC only used "land expropriation without compensation" to its advantage in order to stop the observance of electoral underperformance by the general public , as opposed to the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), who adopted a radical and populist strategy. The struggle for economic freedom and land ownership is a continuous struggle which we must strive to overcome.

The above discourse is further supported by Setiloane on the importance of land and ancestry. According to Setiloane (1991:35-36) No SothoTswana service or rite is regarded as effective unless it is addressed to "*Beng be lefatshe.*.:translated 'the Landowners'. The Nguni term "*abaphanzi*" has a similar effect. Thus, every Sotho-Tswana social anthropology student must encounter the ceremonial prayer at some point. In their research: *Medimo e mennye re rapeleleng go e megoIo*, which literally translates to "Junior predecessors (deities) with greater

force intervene on our behalf," with the senior ancestors so that our prayers can reach the Great God. The lesson here is that the right of indigenous people to own property does not vanish as a result of conflict or prolonged occupancy of any stolen territory and a flaw theology "apparently" supported by the bible and a theology of hell. Biko (1987: 45) asserts:

> It was the missionaries who confused our people with their new religion. By some strange logic, they argued that theirs was a scientific religion and ours was mere superstition in spite of the biological discrepancies so obvious in the basis of their religion. They further went on to preach a theology of the existence of hell, scaring our fathers and mothers with stories about burning in eternal flames and gnashing of teeth and grinding of bone. This cold cruel religion was strange to us, but our fore-fathers were sufficiently scared of the unknown impending anger to believe that it was worth a try. Down went our cultural values!

The numerous "ancient tribal land disputes" are really driven by this idea (the idea of stolen property stolen through the great book that said "thou shalt not steal"). Nobody could dispute that we were, and still are, involved in a religious experience after hearing the non -returning South African exiles sing about their country in distant countries:

> "*Thina sizwe esimnyama* ... We the black nation   *Sikhalela izwe lethu*
>
> ... We cry for our land *e lathatwa nga bamhlophe* ... Which was taken
>
> by the Whites"

Black Africans can no longer be satisfied with mediocrity of the whites trying to continuously be the sole beneficiaries of the land that does not belong to them. According to Setiloane (1991:36) this warning is primarily aimed at the Africans who will represent us at the bargaining table. Unless and until this customary and essential notion of land proprietorship, which is still held by a large portion of us Africans, is raised up and given the attention that It deserves, no discussions about bringing in a "New South Africa" will be permissible, incisive, nor adequate, nor effective of any enduring structures for peace. From the onset to the very end, the White man's notions about property ownership are geared to justify their deprivation of the land's legitimate successors.

Maimela (1988:61) asserts that black humanity has been destroyed by tyranny and hostility. However, God is able to create individuals from a state of "nothingness," stimulate and promote them, and inspire them to take some constructive activities for liberty and justice. The rise of Black awareness and Black Theology in reaction to Black dehumanization is evidence of God's

creation. Finally, if the Bible is clear on the relationship between the Hebrews, liberation, their God and the Land this does not preclude the same clarion call that African spiritual articulates in various forms such as praxis, rituals etc. There is a need that true Christianity must be realised beyond the clutter of white lens, pedagogy, interpretation, conquest, dehumanisation, colonialism and power. Biko (1987: 55-56) argues:

> For indeed, each religion has a message for the people amongst whom it is operative. These are perhaps some of the things that never were uppermost in the minds of the people who brought Christianity into South Africa. Whereas Christianity had gone through rigorous cultural adaptation from ancient Judea through Rome, through London, through Brussels and Lisbon, somehow when it landed in the Cape, it was made to look fairly rigid. Christianity was made the central point of a culture which brought with it new styles of clothing, new customs, new forms of etiquette, new medical approaches, and perhaps new armaments. The people amongst whom Christianity was spread had to cast away their indigenous clothing, their customs, their beliefs which were all described as being pagan and barbaric.

He (1987: 56) further asserts:

> Stripped of the core of their being and estranged from each other because of their differences the African people became a playground for colonialists. It has always been the pattern throughout history that whosoever brings the new order knows it best and is therefore the perpetual teacher of those to whom the new order is being brought. If the white missionaries were "right" about their God in the eyes of the people, then the African people could only accept whatever these new know-all tutors had to say about life. The acceptance of the colonialist-tainted version of Christianity marked the turning point in the resistance of African people.

This turning point, which Biko is referring to is still present and requires not for the salvation of Christianity from whiteness but from the like that whiteness perpetuated about it. In light of this what needs to happen is a clear historicism of the Christian faith and the root of its existence in the Hebrew religion before it was bastardised by Greek ideas.

4.10. Conclusion

Chapter 4 explores the overlap between Christianity and African spirituality in greater detail. This is to showcase the similarities between the two faith practices such as circumcision, significance of livestock and inheritance. Moreso, it looks extensively at how the Bible and the Papal Bull are the main contributing factors to the larceny of land, how the movements like the Black Consciousness Movement alongside the Economic Freedom Fighters are attempting to

emancipate the African person from the shackles of mental slavery and oppression. I argue that these movements aim to humanize Black people and are concerned with an eschatology that is liberating for all African people, so that issues of land, economic expansion and opportunities are available to Black people.

Chapter 5: Concluding Chapter

5.1. Conflicting views within Christianity

As it has been discussed in this research, Western Christianity has a tendency of demonizing African spirituality. This is largely due to the cultural imposition of the West to the Bible and the appropriation of the Hebrew faith, as if its synonymous with Western society. As a result, the epistemic and hermeneutical lenses used in most of Theology is often Western, to the extent that even biblical passages are not viewed from their particular context and society. For instance, there are passages that seem to suggest the African worldview as the example Psalm 115:17 reads "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any who go down into silence (Psalm 115:17 NIV)". Also, when one reads John (3:16) on how "God loved the world so much, that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have everlasting life. This passage acknowledged that the son of God gives eternal life although resurrected he had to die first. The Idea of death does not seem to be an end unto itself but is a continuation of something.

According to Bujo (2005:426): "The life and death tension is predominant in the world, and cosmic nature is a companion one has to associate with in order for life to triumph over death." Viewed from the African perspective, the resurrection of Christ is anticipated as victory over death. Here one can draw parallels from the African conception of death and life and, the death and life that the Lord Jesus provides. This point is important in showing the nexus connections that African Spirituality shares with authentic Christianity. Unlike traditional Western Christianity that taught Africans that Christianity and the gospel are about otherworldliness, Christianity is in fact concerned with this world, and this it shares with African Spirituality and morality. Bujo (2005:432) argues:

> Participation in this common life is so essential that even the dead depend on it for safeguarding the growth of their being as a person. Becoming a person is thus a continuous and perpetual process, which does not end at death.

In this study it has been argued that the role of lineage in the Hebrew faith is an indication of the continuation of life, family bonds and communion. This stresses yet again how the experience of life and death of the Near Ancient East and Africa meet For instance, ancestors are those who are passed but live on as African people believe- still live amongst the family, and gives them counsel Bujo (2005:425426)argues" humans are not only part of the cosmos,

but they are also the summary of its totality so to speak, 'at the same time, earth and sky, spirit and cosmic forces, past, present, and future, the human really is a miniature version of the universe, a microcosm within the macrocosm'"(Mveng 1985:12).

> In Black Africa, humans belong at the same time to the world of the living, the dead, and the not-yet born. They can identify with the spirit, animals, plants, minerals. They know that between them and the cosmos, there is a vital flux making up the solidarity of creation as a whole and ultimately connecting them to the Supreme Being, God, the source of life. The African worldview does not disregard the Superiority of God and his Word but highlight the seemingly contrast of what the Western Christians emphasize in teaching Africans as a way to discredit their traditional beliefs.

Ancestors play a significantly vital role in ensuring that God's divinity is held to high esteem. However, Christians tend to overlook that, it is as though they turn a blind eye to the many instances where reverence is given to God first, before the acknowledgment of the forefathers. The problem with Western Theology is that it has its pedagogical and hermeneutical assumptions rooted in Western society. For instance, Aristotle and Plato are useful in shaping Western Christian Theology but when African go to their own silos of knowledge, they are discouraged from doing such According to Bako (2009:79):

> The majority of spirits, according to African people, are the spirits of their forefathers. As a result, ancestors are more 'human' than spirits. For African people, dying is not the end; rather, it marks the beginning of the journey into the land of the dead. This unseen universe is a dynamic one. The ancestors also have a supernatural ability that they may employ for good or bad against people.

In order to know one's identity, it is important to know where you come from, your heritage. For Christians, this is betraying God's divinity despite the fact that lineages are predominant in the text. One might assume that the Christian does not want the African realizing his/ her identity because Christianity as a movement will perish. It seems the rejection of spirituality, is a sign of insecurity. A sign that the realization of truth will expose that Christianity on a fundamental basis is a product of spirituality or a religious experience, not the other way round. Christianity fears the realization that Africans taught Christians or Hebrews all there is to know about religion, about God, and about community. There seems to be an obsession with

controlling the narrative in Western Christianity, as such everything is assumed to be pioneered by them.

5.1.1. Eschatology

The abovementioned is a prelude to how Africa s considers eschatology. Firstly, the idea of the close connection of death and life, secondly the human process as unceasing, thirdly communion, the living, the not-yet born, the cosmos and God. There is a sense of how the present and the future hang together. However, according to Hans (2000:6): 'Christianity is the foundation and trustee of the future, the very act of discovering and protecting it, and without the Christian spirit there is no true destiny for man,' This is referred to by Hans in reference to Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, a Jewish Christian philosopher who lived from 1888 to 1973. The future implies originality and expanding beyond past routines and accomplishments. A monotonous habit has no place in the future. However, context must be considered. In the West, modern life is lived within the framework of Judeo-Christian heritage. Progressivism in contemporary life assumes a linear view of time with a beginning and end. This idea of time comes from the Judeo-Christian Tradition, which has inspired other religions to limit their definition of time to a cyclical one.

A close look at the Canaanite religion's pantheon of Baal shows how death had the initial victory over Baal, then Baal over death. The Epic of Baal changed from " Truly I know that Victorious Baal is dead, that the Lord of the Earth has perished, to "Truly know that Victorious Baal lives, that the Lord of the Earth Exists." These events reflected a cyclic view for the society of Canaan. This was made to show how Baal would have health complications through different seasons or even years, but ultimately will regain strength, good health, and resurrection. This was a foreign theory for Yahwism. The dominant perspective is centered around escaping the continual cycle of life, death, and rebirth, by attaining absolute union with God (Schwarz 2000:8).

The Christian faith's cyclic nature of the death and resurrection of Christ is seen as an act of redemption by God, to show how God created the world, (the beginning), how is involved in the world (Present acts of God), and his definite goal (redemption in and through Christ). It is important to note also that Christianity does not share the same views as the Greco-Roman

world where they believed that history is a record of human deeds and purposes, and that the gods have no intention to interfere in the day-to-day lives of humans, instead they only administer reward or punishment to people, whereas Christianity focuses on God as the ultimate influencer of human purpose and dignity. All hope is centered around God not in humanity due to the fallen nature of creation. Christian Churches also put a strong emphasis on human imperfection as a way to place conviction on the need for Christian people to look to God for hope and a future (Schwarz 2000:8). The West also tends to remove the possibility of ancestry from spirituality. The whole idea of a future secluded from this world, is in fact not Christian. The only difference is ones' own philosophical position i.e.., dualism and wholeness. African Spirituality and Christianity seem to borderline on wholeness. For example, the ancestor and lineage, the importance of the world and a God involved in the world.

African culture has a strong belief in a Supreme Being that must be understood as the most powerful deity in the universe. He distinguishes himself from both the spirit and the human worlds by his titles and characteristics, yet he actually belongs to neither. Being transcendent, he can only be approached through intermediaries (ancestors). Sawyer (1970:6) asserts that most people believe that God is distant from human matters. But the reality of God's existence is never contested. According to Sawyer (1970:8-9)

> God is seen as the one who created both the world and man. Therefore, He is the oldest being that may exist, like a grandpa, and the only one who cares for His offspring. He was consequently the first man. Furthermore, God is no longer directly connected to man's daily activities since, like early human forebears, he is now separated from him by both time and space. As a result, he is perceived as being far away.

The promise that Western Christianity gave to African people was to keep them indoctrinated in a Western eschatological promise of a better reality in heaven. This idea is centered around white preservation as per reflection upon slavery and colonialism. This is true even today, due to the fact that questions of justice are utterly ignored for what is to come, which has not come. Cone (1969:121-123) argues:

> If eschatology means that one believes that God is completely uninvolved in the suffering of men because he is preparing them for another world, then Black Theology is not eschatological. Black Theology is an earthly Theology! It's not concerned with the 'Last things' but with the 'white thing'.

This point is important because religious practices and culture deal with the now. When considering the history that the Hebrews have with their God, one gets a sense that there is no future promise, but a God involved in history. Eschatology when viewed from the African perspective and authentic Christianity is not an escape but confrontation. Cone (1969:123) further asserts that:

> White missionaries convinced black religious people that life on earth was insignificant because obedient servants of God could expect a 'reward' in heaven after death, this meant adherence to the white masters' rules." This outlook then led to Black people becoming divergent and ignorant of their concern for freedom. Many black people ended up believing the hopelessness there is of attaining absolute freedom due to the overwhelming dominance of white power.

According to the African worldview, all beings can be categorized as either belonging to the visible world or the unseen realm. Ikenga-Metuh (1987:80) argues that while some African viewpoints explain the authority and role of supernatural entities with regard to the human needs that they are thought to satisfy, others define them in relation to significant natural events that they are believed to govern. Ikeng-Matuh (1987:80) draws the conclusion that traditional African worldviews reveal a strong connection between the spiritual and material realms. The ontological order consists of a network of relationships that connects all entities. African worldviews are also anthropocentric since they place human at the top of the food chain. Although it is believed that God transcends humanity, God exists for humanity and not humanity for God, and the purpose of worship is for human to receive God's blessings.

Therefore, eschatology is also not a foreign concept to African people, but they look to God and the ancestors to help them become active agents of change. Black people tend to seek counsel from the 'Other world' or the world of the living dead. A liberating concept of looking at ancestors for guidance and wisdom. According to Cone (1969:122) 'Christians have tried to convince Black people to have the mentality that as long as there's Jesus, it does not matter if there is injustice, brutality, and suffering" because suffering is a lieu way to heaven.'

Eschatology in spirituality is an act of liberation and tactic, not a doctrine. It is seen as a need to call on the God of salvation while simultaneously focusing on the historical and political

progression of society and purposefully acting to change the situation. In African Spirituality, Black people believe that the dead are undeniably connected to God, who becomes connected to people. It is all communal, everything and everyone is connected, and there is a never-ending rotational cycle of life.

Mbiti (1970:269) asserts that:

> according to the Akamba, the Spirit of the deceased are under God's command, and He may occasionally relay messages through them to humans. The departed are the nearest to God according to African spirituality. The Bushmen consider stars to be departed animals or ancient people, whereas the Zulu people view stars as those who watch us from ezulwini 'heaven'. During prayer and libation, Africans mention God's name and honour His supremacy before concluding the process." There are many instances where God's honour takes precedence, even in times of travel or seeking for opportunity, God's name is revered. If anything, most of the clans in African regions begin proclaiming prayer with the words 'God and our ancestors'.

The concept of Eschatology in Christianity and African Spirituality is different due to interpretation and hermeneutical lenses. For the West, it is important for Christians to drive the belief that heaven is coming for the ones suffering on earth (Black people) meanwhile, they have the riches and wealth that was given to them by Christ who is ultimately the realized utopia that White Christians enjoy today. Whereas for African people there is still a need to fight for this utopia, because the experience of a heaven on earth is not a reality for Black people.

As such, Cone (1969:123) asserts that: "self-determination of Black people must be stressed repeatedly because there is no room for the viewpoint of a 'reward' in heaven". Looking through the lenses of Western Theology, evil and injustice are changed to be viewed as good in view of the awaited apocalypse. Certain texts are used to justify this expected apocalypse and an eschatology that is unrelated to the world. Matthew (5:10-12 NIV)

> Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you in false account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

This idea of paradise is irrelevant for African spirituality and this view it shares with Black Liberation Theology, which is Christian in essence. there is no need for Christians to think about the next world (if such even exists). Eschatology is concerned with making the world what it ought to be, as expressed by Cone (1969:126):

> Christian man looks to the future not for a reward or possible punishment of evildoers, but as a means of making him dissatisfied with the present. His only purpose for looking to a distant past or an unrealized future is that both disclose the ungodliness of the present. Looking to the future he sees that present injustice cannot be tolerated. Black Theology asserts an eschatology that confronts the world of racism with Black Power.

True eschatology related to life include fulfilment of the eschatological hopes of legality, the humanization of man, the socialization of mankind, and harmony for all of creation. It does not just refer to redemption of the soul, personal deliverance from the wicked world, and solace for the tormented conscience. In the end, our hopes for the future must become realities for the present. Therefore, when Christianity is viewed from an African lens, it is not alien in a true sense to the ideas already existing before its emergence. What is dangerous, is when a particular cultural preference is imposed for ill will onto the text.

5.1.2. Summary

In Chapter 1, the main focus was to introduce the concept of African Spirituality and Christianity, to show the reason behind the study and to discuss the methodology of the dissertation. Chapter 1 briefly discussed the subjects of colonialism and imperialism as well as the emergence of the AIC. This was an attempt to give the reader an opportunity to gain an overview of the whole paper. The highlights of chapter 1 include the purpose of the study which was to demonstrate the similarities between African spirituality and Jewish Christianity These similarities are significant today because there are many discussions around decoloniality, indigenization, and Africanization of religion. It gave a briefly literature review on some of the similarities between Christianity and Spirituality such as ancestors and God, animal sacrifices, healing, places of worship, dreams, the symbolism of blood, incense, ancestors and saints, significance of water and baptism, priests vs healers, the dark side of African Spirituality and Christianity, the oppression of women and the dangers of blood sacrifices. These topics were explored as an attempt to highlight that the two belief systems can co-exist.

Chapter 2 explored the emergence of Christianity in detail. It looked at the brief history of Palestine, the formation of religion, the arrival of the messiah, the establishment of the church, the different types of early Christianity which included Gentile and Catholic Christianity. It looked at the Apostolic Fathers and their influence on the early Church Fathers and how the impact they had on the establishment of the church and the origin of the slave trade.

Chapter 3 extensively explored African Spirituality; it went into detail about the emergence of the African Initiated churches as a response to the Christian faith movement. It focused on the commonly known AICs which is the Zion Christian Church and the Shembe Church. This chapter established how African people relate to while regarding Him as the Supreme Being and how ancestors play a role as his intermediaries. It explored some of the rituals that are indigenous to various African tribes, such as rainmaking and how witchcraft is also one of the practices that may be found in spirituality, along with the conjuring of spirits which relate to spiritual forces.

Chapter 4 was an in-depth description of the overlap between African Spirituality and Christianity. It looked at false prophecy and witchcraft, practices of circumcision, the honouring of God and ancestors through pouring of libation (wine and umqombothi), totems and genealogy and livestock, the role of women as leaders and important contributors to society, the issue of land and the contribution of the Papal Bull on the larceny of land. This chapter also explored modern day issues of land expropriation without compensation, the political climate of South Africa, a response of the Black Consciousness Movement and African Theology with regards to injustice and oppression.

Chapter 5 which is the concluding chapter focused on the conflicting views within Christianity and the eschatology of the Christian faith as well as a liberation eschatology of Black Theology. It explored the reason why an eschatology that is concerned with a reward in heaven is not the ideal Theology for black people and the need to pursue an eschatology that will be beneficial and encompassing for all, in an attempt to redress the injustices of the past and to give mankind new hope. A future that is fulfilling for all. Eschatology is the focal point of Chapter 5 and the conclusion as well as final remarks

5.1.3. Final Remarks

It is of utmost importance to constantly equip oneself with knowledge, as such, the comparison between African Spirituality and Christianity might help several people aspire to knowing more about their history and Identity as it has inspired me to do the same. And to highlight that African Spirituality is not Barbaric, it is not a curse, it is not a by-product of the 'highly regarded' Christianity. As an African person, who grew up a staunch Christian, believing that Spirituality is an 'idol', I frown upon my ignorance, my short-sightedness. I realize the power of indoctrination, even of a learned person such as myself. How foolish of me to think I could be completely Christian and not completely African!

I am a product and manifestation of those who are passed and a pioneer for those still coming. Being a Theologian has taught me to learn more about what it means to be African, and being African has taught me about what it means to be a woman. Thus, I have found myself longing to be a conscious African Christian woman, to truly understand my identity, to tap into the land of discovery (Africa) and discover its hidden treasures (Spirituality). This paper has challenged my views on many things I had previously considered 'truth'. I have discovered that all that I thought to be true is a matter of perspective, and how can perception be real if it is only seen from one viewpoint? I have learned to embrace the idea of multiplicity and spend time searching for other 'truths. In reality, there is much that is undiscovered, both of self and the world around me. I look to God to help me navigate the journey of discovery, with the hopes of reaching Canaan (self-actualization), as written in Esther 4:14 (NIV) "it may be that I was made to be queen, for such a time as this."

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