

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

This chapter is the climax of the study 'Africanisation of Christianity at the crossroad: a reflection of the white garment church spirituality in Zimbabwe. It is organized in four sections which look at the following areas: conclusions of the study, study limitation, study contribution and areas of further study. The research study analysed the extent of the inculturation of African spiritual elements in the JMCN Church in Zimbabwe. This was accomplished by answering the following research questions:

1. To what extent have the JMCN Church of Chirumhanzu inculcated African spiritual elements of faith?
2. How valid is the assertion that JMCN Church spirituality has deviated from authentic Christian spirituality?
3. What are the setbacks of Africanisation of Christianity with some AICs Christianising African Traditional Religions in Zimbabwe?

The study found out that there were five basic elements that defined African spirituality which are:

1. Veneration of ancestor;
2. Rituals in sacred shrines;
3. Use of certain objects in worship;
4. Strong beliefs in the world of spirits; and
5. Strong belief in mystical powers.

This research has shown that out of five Karanga pre-Christian spiritual elements of faith, JMCN inculcated four basic Karanga spiritual elements of faith. The evidence for this conclusion is based on the following beliefs and practices of the JMCN Church in Zimbabwe. First, we have noted that the JMCN Church sacred places are those renowned African Traditional sacred shrines. Examples cited in the study are the Chivavarira hill, the DomboraMwari rock in the Epworth Harare suburbs and the Mawanga mountain of Goromonzi Chinamhora District all in Zimbabwe. Praying in these sacred places is not an accident of history but it's done in search of the intervention of the sacred powers that are associated with these places.

Second, JMCN Church initiates its new Church members in sacred traditional pools such as Nyatsime and Gonawapotera. It has been shown in the study that the cited pools are revered by the locals because they believe that such pools were residence of water spirits, *njuzu*. There is a traditional myth that if one is taken by a *njuzu* he/she will come out of the waters equipped with curative powers. Basing on that belief the JMCN initiated its members in such dreadful pools.

Third, the Church uses sacred traditional objects of faith such as *mbiya*, *makate*, wooden rods caved from sacred trees like *mutema masanhu*, *mutowa*, and *mutarara*. The use of these objects proved that the Church spirituality is heavily engrained in African spirituality.

Fourthly, JMCN's emphases on paying of *Mombe yeumai* in particular is an indication that its spirituality is heavily steeped in African Karanga worldviews. *Mombe yeumai* in particular is paid to appease the maternal spirits which are feared by most traditional Shona people of Zimbabwe. Maternal spirits unlike paternal spirits can cause untold suffering in a newly married couple. It can cause stillbirths and other misfortunes in marriage. It is against this background that the JMCN emphasis on *mombe yeumai* on their marriage rituals.

Fifthly, it was also found out that the JMCN Church follow traditional African burial rituals for example, in what they call *rukukwe rwemupositori*, using *mahapa*, *nhokwe ne tsanga*. It is on these grounds that JMCN is classified in the study as a disputed African Indigenous Church.

There are five central spiritual elements that characterized authentic Christian spirituality. These are:

1. Doctrine of Christ;
2. Doctrine of the Bible;
3. Doctrine of the Trinitarian God;
4. Doctrine of Salvation through Jesus Christ;
5. Doctrine of the Second coming of Jesus Christ.

The JMCN Church observed none of the five central Christian spiritual elements listed above. In lieu of the five central spiritual elements of faith listed above it was found that JMCN developed an alternative set of spiritual elements which were borrowed wholesomely from African Traditional Religions. The following JMCN Church spiritual elements were studied and found out that the Church removed the central universal Christian spiritual tenets with certain pre-Christian beliefs and practices.

First, JMCN replaced the mediatorship of Jesus Christ with its own Church Fathers Johane, Emanuweri and Nyenyedzi. The reason for doing this was that Jesus Christ does not qualify to mediate black Africans to God since he (Jesus Christ) was a white man from overseas. For them logically only black Church leaders whom God sent for black Africans have the capacity to mediate for black African Masowe Church members.

Second, the Bible was replaced by *tsanangudzo dzeMweya* the 'sayings of the spirit'. This removal of the Bible by the Church posited that the Church presents a non Biblical spirituality. This becomes an important issue because Christian spirituality is a bible-based spirituality. As we have Islamic spirituality from sacred scripture -Holy Quran, the Bible is a key source for authentic Christian spirituality without which the Church presents a questionable spirituality.

Third, JMCN Church presented a strange Trinitarian doctrine. In their Trinity there is God the Father, three Church Fathers and the Holy Spirit. Thus, their Trinity has been distorted by their doctrine called *tsoro yaJohane*. *Tsoro yaJohane* is a teaching that states that salvation for Africans was made possible by the salvific work done by Johane Masowe, Emanuweri Mudyiwa and Sandros Nyenyedzi. Salvation was made possible only through *mitumbi mitatu* (three sacred Holy Fathers).

In the study JMCN Church spirituality has been presented as a questionable Church spirituality because the Church does not believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world. While other Christians believe in the second coming of Jesus Christ/ *Parousia*, JMCN does not teach or believe in

the second coming of Jesus Christ. This is so because they do not even believe that Jesus Christ came once to save human beings hence they cannot believe in his second coming.

It can be concluded that to a greater extent, indeed JMCN spirituality wholesomely deviates from universally accepted Christian spirituality. This happens to the extent that JMCN spirituality is closer to African Traditional Religion than to Christianity. Below are general responses given during interviews showing that the Church deviated from being an authentic Christian Church to another syncretic Religious Denomination in Zimbabwe: We are not Christians, *tiri vadzidzi vaJohane*; we are followers of Johane Masowe (Baba Gift:2014).

Christians follow the teachings of Jesus from the Bible, but we follow what the Spirit said to us through prophets (Madzibaba Tawona: 2015)

- Jesus was sent by God to people of overseas, *mhiri yegungwa* and not to Africans (Baba Givemore: 2014)
- Jesus had his disciples, but Johane Masowe has also us as his disciples (Baba Amos:2014)
- Christians go to Church, we don't go to Church we go to the wilderness, *kumasowe* (Madzimai Marjory:2025)
- I know that Jesus was sent by God to the whites, but they killed him. This is the reason why *mweya akati tisabate musoro varungu*, we don't trust whites, we don't convert a white person (Madzimai Mellisa:2013)
- Christians celebrate Holy Communion but we do not (Baba Israel: 2015).

The Africanisation of Christianity is not a new concept. It is one that was developed to render the Church in Africa more appealing to indigenous Africans. However, JMCN ended up appropriating most if not all of its central spiritual and worship practices from African Traditional Religion. This accommodation of African spiritual elements was substantial to the extent that instead of the orthodox Africanisation of Christianity, what we found was the opposite- the Christianisation of African Traditional beliefs and practices.

We found out that carrying a research in such highly religiously sensitive area of spirituality invites high risks and lack of information. We could not have any chance to speak to the hierarchy of the Church for we were told that in Johane Masowe weChishanu yeNyenyedzi there is no human leader, only the Holy Spirit/ Nyenyedzi is the leader. They all argued that unlike other Churches where you find Archbishops, Priests, Clergy, Pastors e.t.c, JMCN does not have such structures. Anyone who is being pushed by the Spirit can be the leader for that instance because the Spirit had insisted that all members shall be vessels of the spirit.

We found out that the Church relies heavily on oral transmission and no documents were available to study the History and theology of the Church. There is a book being compiled now for the JMCN *tsanangudzo dzemweya* which upon requesting to ready we were informed that the book is not yet accessible to everyone since it is in the compilation stage.

This was again a strong limitation of the study. We went into the field without any scholarly documents on JMCN spirituality. Most of the scholarly work available was on AICs spirituality which suggests that AICs spirituality is homogenous that in any way is not what we found on the ground. We were like breaking new grounds particularly on the mutual symbiotic relations between a Church spirituality and African Traditional spirituality.

JMCN, like any other JMC Churches in Zimbabwe, is very secretive. The Church is not comfortable in welcoming other members of different church denominations to most of their shrines for research. Only those people who go there for spiritual help can easily follow their rituals and ceremonies through to the end. Studying other people's religions is always a challenge to some extent limited the scope of analysis and extent of the debate.

The study set out to determine the extent to which JMCN inculturated African spiritual elements of faith to shape its Church spirituality in Zimbabwe. The major contribution made by the study is the documentation of the theology and spirituality of JMCN Church in Zimbabwe. This was a grey area that needed some exploration which the study aptly did.

There are various areas that still need to be explored. The study only analysed the inculturated African spiritual elements by JMCN Church and left out other aspects that still deserve to be explored. These include but are not limited to the following: Church governance in the JMCN Church; the causes of the numerous breakaways in these Churches. We only looked at the inculturated African spiritual elements in the JMCN, other scholars can also look at the same topic but in other various Johane Masowe Churches as the study as shown that Johane Masowe weChishanu is not a homogenous Church but has numerous Church denominations using the same designation.