

**Vanguard of African culture:  
an analysis of the oral history of selected AICs  
in Tshwane (Pretoria)**

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*Abstract*

AICs do not make the outright claim that they are defending African culture, but their behaviour does reflect their original African cultures in its adaptation to Christianity. These churches have been accused of syncretistic practices in the past and were seldom given the chance to prove their Christian abilities, especially alongside the mainline or mission churches. Across Southern Africa these churches are known for their colourful images and their presence everywhere in the rural and urban open spaces, under trees, on the hills and in school classrooms which they temporarily rent. What are the stories behind their faith praxis? We will investigate whether the AICs in townships are in the forefront of African culture or not. Some selected oral stories from AICs in the Tshwane (Pretoria) townships of Atteridgeville and Mamelodi will be used as samples to determine the validity of this claim. Inculturation and dual religious systems are concepts which will help clarify the issue.

**Introduction**

This article evaluates some selected stories told about the AICs<sup>i</sup> in the Tshwane (Pretoria) townships of Atteridgeville and Mamelodi to determine whether they are guarantors of African culture or not. Stories were used in traditional African societies for purposes of entertainment, moral teaching and encouragement, and to rebuke or warn. AIC oral history reflects inherited African traditional practices; whether this was done on purpose to defend their culture or selfhood remains to be seen. We aim to discover the traditional position of the AICs in their traditional cultural context. We will also look into some of their indigenous Christological understandings without being judgmental. Participant observation will be our method of approach when deliberating upon this topic. As an introduction we will give a brief historical description of the AICs, to highlight a profile about their members.

**Brief historical overview of AICs in South Africa**

We give this overview to highlight their historical background which will help to comprehend the meaning of their stories. In the early years of the twentieth century, a Dutch Reformed evangelist by the name of PL le Roux played an important role in the formation of AICs of the Zionist and Apostolic types.<sup>ii</sup> He was a student of the well known Dr Andrew Murray and he was especially interested in Murray's views on divine healing through the work of the Holy Spirit. Le Roux and his followers became aware of the Zionist movement in the USA through Dowie's magazine *Leaves of healing* and had requested membership in the group, inviting Dowie to send a representative to South Africa. Soon afterwards Bryant, as the representative of Dowie, baptised 141 converts (including Le Roux) at Wakkerstroom (Mpumalanga). From the community of Wakkerstroom, which had grown to about 5000 members by 1905, a whole series of Zionist and Pentecostal type churches eventually emerged. Wakkerstroom was to play a role in the growth of Pentecostal type churches in South Africa comparable to the role played by the Azusa Street revival in the USA in 1906, which grew into a worldwide Pentecostal movement. The continuity between the early Zionist movement and the Pentecostal movement in South Africa is crucial to our understanding of the subsequent developments, and places Indigenous Pentecostal churches within their correct historical theological context (Molobi 2008:3).

It should be clearly indicated that AICs differ widely in their organisational forms. Some resemble western Christian denominations (Ethiopian types), while others may not (Spirit types). Some have large numbers of affiliates located all over the country (the Zion Christian Church of South Africa is an example), while others may consist only of an extended family and their acquaintances meeting in a house or out of doors (Hayes 1992). Despite the variations, AICs have captivated the lives of many

Africans and can be seen as a bid to rediscover and assert themselves in a changing sociocultural environment. AICs can be seen as an important local contribution to Christianity and should be seen as more than just reactions to mainline churches or colonialism. Much of what independent churches do and experience emerges as their own creative genius and authentic response to their sociocultural environment, a contribution for which they themselves are solely responsible without any conditioning by foreign missions (Anderson 1992; Daneel 1987).

Stories in this article relate mainly to healing among the AICs as a very important part of their heritage that had been practised for generations. We will focus mainly on those AICs of the Zionist and Apostolic type for practical reasons. Their focus is strongly Holy Spirit based, in line with Christian tradition. At the same time it has become apparent that many of the AIC converts who practise as diviners have a tendency of importing their traditional experiences into the new culture, which was Christianity. This has influenced the original patterns of Christianity to become adapted to the African context.

### **Synopsis and statistical profile of AICs in Atteridgeville and Mamelodi**

The city of Tshwane (Pretoria)<sup>iii</sup> has two large black townships of Atteridgeville<sup>iv</sup> in the west and Mamelodi<sup>v</sup> about 20km away in the east. More than 150 local AICs in Atteridgeville and 250 in Mamelodi were discovered, including their headquarters and existing congregations<sup>vi</sup> in the mentioned areas. The method of identifying these churches was through house to house visitations and by following up on flags hanging at some gates which indicate the presence of some AIC's members. Interviews were conducted with most of the identified AIC church leaders and some members. The first group of the identified AIC churches were recorded and published<sup>vii</sup> in a directory in 1994 authored by Michel Clasquin and Victor Molobi. It needs to be updated constantly to keep it correct.

Other statistics have been released after 1994. Statistics South Africa for instance has recorded 21,7% of the AICs in Atteridgeville, while Christina Landman<sup>viii</sup> also through following the person to person contacts identified and recorded 20% of them. She strongly added her voice to those who were suggesting that these statistics ought to be updated on an ongoing basis.

### **Recognition and presence of the AICs in Tshwane (Pretoria) region**

There have been many debates on the claim that the voices from Africa, especially those of the AICs, are not audible enough. An association specialising in AIC research was NERMIC (an association for the study of New Religious Movements and the Independent Churches), which organised several symposiums. Individual researchers also published numerous articles on aspects of the AICs. In 1996 Maluleke (1996:50–51) indicated in one of his articles<sup>ix</sup> that there was growing consensus among students of AICs that they were not an aberration or sectarian, but indeed representative of true African Christianity.<sup>x</sup> This coincided with a growing wish among the AICs themselves to tell their own stories, and not to become dependent on outside observers and researchers. In 1985 the Institute for Contextual Theology (ICT) published *Speaking for ourselves*, edited by two AIC leaders, Bishop H Ngada and Rev K Mofokeng. They later published a second book, entitled "*African Christian witness*" (Ngada & Mofokeng 2001). In both these books AIC leaders made a self-confident claim that they were true representatives of the body of Christ on earth. There is also growing evidence that they are working towards greater unity through the merging of the various AIC associations in South Africa, the latest being FEDCAIC (Federal Council of African Indigenous Churches) founded in 1992. Ngada (2001:21–22) also indicated that:

There is a growing sense that we need to find more effective ways of working together to prevent our African Christian tradition from being hijacked by impostors, charlatans or power-seekers (Ngada (2001:21–22).

This provides clear evidence that the AICs are eager to bring forth their own history through workshops where their methods of learning are *dialogue*, *action* and *reflection*. These methods are not far removed from the simple participatory reflections where simple story telling about the AICs is impacting upon their efforts to capture and reflect upon their own bigger history.

### **Dimensions of AIC beliefs and practices: Christianity and African culture**

In this section we will elaborate on some dimensions of AIC beliefs and practices which were uncovered in our interviews and which reflect clearly their rootedness in African culture.

Bishop Mashitisho<sup>xi</sup> the archbishop of the “Ark of Noah” indicated that the name of his church suggests that it is an instrument of the salvation of lives, with specific reference to the sick and the spiritually troubled. He recounted that he had started his work while he was young, suggesting that he was experienced in what he was doing. At the time we arrived at his home he was busy with his daily consultations, organising medicated water for ablution and other healing items for his patients. He was also mixing some herbs into a concoction and filling one litre bottles. When we enquired whether his actions typified a Christian healer or a traditional healer, he responded by saying:

*Even the herbs I am using came from God. Africans were alienated from their tradition and heritage by the westerners. I invited whites (he continued) and have helped them with these herbal medications and voluntarily they came to me after hearing that I use both prayer and these traditional herbs. These herbs have been proven to work. If you want prayer, I pray for you and if your healing requires herbs I also do that. Remember, it is not me but the spirit<sup>xii</sup> that reveals things to me and I do as ordered. Often people misunderstood us thinking that we are wizards and witches, we are not but we merely use what is prescribed to us by God. Through this means we have revived and healed many people. Even those who criticise us, they come here at night and we help them (italics mine).*

This gives an interesting perspective on the perceived relationship between Christianity and African religions and traditions. The core of this story is the comfortable relationship between Christian teachings and African religion and tradition in the mind of a bishop who is saying that he became a Christian while successful in his African traditional healing method. Why should he stop if it was good work and came from God – after all, God provided the herbs and the knowledge about them? Bediako (in Dedji 2003:196) said that a sustainable African Christian theology will have to attempt what the writer of the epistle to Hebrews did: to make room, within an inherited body of tradition, for new ideas, new realities which though seemingly entering from outside come in to fulfil aspirations within the tradition and then alter quite significantly the basis of self-understanding within that tradition. A simple unthinking rejection is in any case of no use, because even those who “by day”, in other words in public, criticise African culture as unacceptable still need it so urgently that they have to utilise it in secret (“at night”). This describes a reality which probably 99% of those ministering to an African community know very well.

Bishop Mosoro of the “Zion Apostolic City of South Africa”<sup>xiii</sup> in Atteridgeville was asked the following two questions: What is your feeling about African traditional religion on sacrifices and slaughtering for the ancestors? And how do you respond to the visiting of graveyards during Easter times (a widespread African tradition)?

His response was:

I am no longer on that side (referring to the practices of ancestral veneration) because the Bible says you should not work for two masters. *I am no longer on that side where my grandparents are sleeping.* I am on the side of the light. Now you can see the two are no longer going hand in hand. The Bible and old African tradition differ. I am only visiting the graveyard on Easter Friday to fix the stones which children in the community often scatter when they play there. *You see there are certain issues which you can tell to the people, and to the children, but there are those which are supposed to be kept by you, only known to you alone.* I do visit the graveyard voluntarily to communicate with my ancestors, and ask them why they are leaving me to suffer when things are not going well for me. I am the one who is responsible for that. This I don't mention to anybody and I also go there alone and do it alone and question them. I get relieved, I feel as if they are people who are directly taking care of me. The mere act of *talking to the heap of stones marking their graves makes me feel as if I am talking to my late parents and grandparents (italics mine).*

Mosoro rejected certain key elements of African tradition such as polygamy and beer drinking,<sup>xiv</sup> but argued that ancestral veneration is a personal matter that has nothing to do with the church or friends. He interprets his present state of life partially through the life of his predecessors (ancestors) whom he knew very well. It is clear that Mosoro finds himself in a dilemma when relating African tradition and Christianity; it is something which is intensely private, something which he keeps to himself. But he is open about his dilemma and has formulated a response which satisfies his needs.

Bishop Tshabalala was 80 years old at the time of the interview; he belongs to the “New St Paul Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa”. He had an interesting understanding of the meaning of “prophet” (propheticism is very widespread in AICs). He gave his own version of understanding the Old Testament word *senohe* (in Southern Sotho) for *diviner*, and he prominently referred to it during the interview. The word is used in a well-known Southern Sotho proverb: “*Senohe ha se rorisoe mapatlelong a ha bo sona*” (English: “A prophet is not praised in his or her homestead”). The word is generally used in Southern Sotho to refer to educated or philosophical persons, which perhaps is the reason why Tshabalala perceived its meaning to go beyond that of being a prophet. He indicated that to view the word “prophet” as an accurate translation of *senohe* was not correct. Bishop Tshabalala viewed *bonohe* (divining) as described in Samuel 9:7 as an act of someone at a given time who made contact with God to enquire about something. According to Tshabalala, from a religious perspective *dinohe* or diviners are greater than the *sangomas* (African spiritual mediums and shamans). They are those who are bone throwers and can predict events through reading them. There are also those who can see through visions and revelations and those are known as *dinohe* (true prophets). The spirit of visions and revelations (given by God and the ancestors – *Modimo le badimo*) according to Tshabalala characterises the core of *dinohe*.

The seeming confusion between God and the ancestors is confirmed in Tshabalala's explanation that a person working through the spirit has a family gift and tradition. He says that a gift of visions and revelation is of God but it is shared between God and some people. He gave the example of Elijah and Elisha: when Elijah ascended to heaven, Elisha got hold of part of his garment, which became his “double portion”. Through that piece of cloth, he could separate the river water and perform other miracles (declaring a need for symbolism or physical contact). Interesting in this story is that the gift of prophecy is not lasting; according to Tshabalala, it comes and goes and it is never permanent. *Senohe* works like that: “the gift comes at certain times and disappears after fulfilling its obligations, yet gifts are not far from the people. When tough challenges come, you will see something in a form of vision which warns you in advance. This is a sign that you have a gift of *bonohe*”.

A joint interview was conducted with Reverends Seakamela and Lehabe (both in their seventies) of the “International Pentecostal Holiness Church” (IPHC) founded by Modise.<sup>xv</sup> We asked them specifically about *senohe*. They understood the term differently from Bishop Tshabalala. To them *senohe* describes a magician who can also be viewed as a Satanist, a person who can perform magic using the principalities and powers of darkness. One reason why they rejected the traditional understanding from their Christian perspective has to do with the position of the founder of the church, Rev Modise. He is regarded in a messianic light and all attributes of healing were given to him by Jesus Christ while he was sick in hospital. In every house where there is an IPHC member there is a picture of Rev Modise on the wall to guard against danger in any form. Recourse to *senohe* is therefore unacceptable. The story of the healing of Rev Seakamela's wife illustrates their understanding of healing:

My wife had something moving in her stomach and it was removed through prayer by the late Father Modise and she was healed. After praying for Mrs Seakamela the strange thing that was moving in her stomach could not move anymore but they had a problem of removing it from her stomach. She had to be operated in hospital to remove it which was not in line with the doctrine of the IPHC. After a long pleading Rev Modise was convinced and Mrs Seakamela was operated in hospital and got completely healed. The strange thing was even taken to the University of Pretoria and was found to be a strange and unknown thing.

The fact that Modise allowed Mrs Seakamela to go to hospital is very interesting. It is generally believed that he had never allowed any of his members to visit a hospital for operation or any sickness. It is therefore interesting to discover this soft spot and sympathy from Modise which allowed Mrs Seakamela to go to hospital for an operation. It certainly also indicates some degree of pragmatism and adaptation.

The following interview was with Bishop Shilobane, a member of the “St John's Apostolic Church of Manku”, who was in his middle seventies during the interview. He indicated that he went a long way back with this church. The interview was started by referring to the custom that St John's members start their services by praying and asking supernatural favours from those who have departed long ago. Bishop Shilobane responded:

*Ancestors provide power. They are the ones who can help one to reach aspirations. The question to whom you pray does not matter but what matters is that Christ is nature, He*

*is everything, including the powers that people need. St John's have gone to the ancient; you know long ago people were praying to Ngwadi, the other Sotho traditional name for God. They prayed to Ngwadi through their grandparents. This Ngwadi was the same God we pray to through Christ. This story is reinterpreting the God of the Bible through the eye of an African.*

Shilobane's story expresses the strong wish to view new things in terms of local cultural and traditional perspective. Yet he did not want to be seen as someone traditional and *not* Christian.

The final interview we wish to recount was with Rev Khuzwayo of the "Zion Apostolic New Jerusalem of South Africa". He emphasised that the Zionists in South Africa could be traced way back to 1896 to the Christian Catholic Church in Illinois, United States of America. In discussing the story of Christ, Rev Khuzwayo asked:

*How can a white man die for the blacks? Is it possible for a white to prepare a better place in heaven [for black people], when here on earth there is nothing good he does for them? Down here one cannot live nor dine with a white man! This problem is caused by two things: *The colour of Christ on pictures is white*; and the separate development system in our country South Africa. According to Zionists, there is no white man who goes to heaven and no black man who goes to hell. In Luke 16, we see the rich man as the white South African, who did not want a black man in his house or even to dine with him. The black man is outside the gate begging for bread. The rich man died and found himself in hell. The poor man, who is a black man, was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom when he died because he suffered on earth. The Zionist people and many of the fellow blacks will go to a Christ-less eternity because of their unremitted sins and they believe that God is going to require their blood from our white South Africans (italics mine).*

The story by Khuzwayo, critical as it may seem, is actually creating a necessary platform to understand the broader mindset of the AICs and how they would like to engage themselves in a Christian way. They seem constantly to be in protest against what may seem the rejection and exclusion of their vital self which was not robustly engaged in debate by the early, white missionaries. This may need to be taken seriously to bring about something beyond what is known by those who regard themselves as Christian. For this reason we move now to our own analysis of the interviews.

### **The reality of inculturation and a dual religious system**

It is clear even from this very limited sample of interviews with AIC leaders that African tradition and culture are a present reality in their everyday existence. Previously the way in which African tradition and culture were represented in the beliefs and practices of AICs has often been described in a pejorative way as "syncretistic". On the basis of this analysis we wish to propose rather that we are faced with an incomplete and ongoing process of inculturation, which sometimes gives rise to the existence of a dual religious system.

The widely accepted term "inculturation" we understand primarily in the generally accepted sense in which it is used by Bate (1995:16); and our understanding of a "dual religious system" is inspired by the writing of Schreiter (1985). It is our contention that the process of inculturation is incomplete and ongoing by definition, as culture is never static but always adapting to a new context. As a result, sometimes parallel understandings and beliefs exist, not as syncretism (an illegitimate mixing of religious beliefs), but as a dual religious system which, according to Schreiter (1985:158), is actually a reflection of legitimate stages in the process called "conversion", the "resolution and incorporation" of cultural dimensions into a religious system. The continuing problem of truly inculturating the Gospel in Africa is mostly a result of the way in which it was brought here by Western missionaries in the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth centuries. As the AIC leader, Bishop Ngada (in Du Toit 1999:3) states:

... Africanness is the mirror of any belief that you accept. Your culture, customs, norms, and traditions are the backbone of your existence. Therefore whatever comes into your life is measured also in terms of your lifestyle. As Christian faith was brought in a Western mould, it was meant to transform black people into black/white hypocrites. The AICs chose to be honest to God and themselves and worship God as they were, in their own context, without pretending.

Ngada states the simple truth that AIC members are traditional Africans who do not know how to move completely away from being African in favour of the newly suggested self, which is the Christian gospel in Western robes. This simple truth is repeatedly reflected in the stories told above. All these stories give the impression that African culture and traditions are important since they cannot be separated from an African person. To separate an African from being African is equivalent to “dislocating self from context”,<sup>xvi</sup> which is impossible. We wish to argue that it is also not necessary that this should happen. The story of Jesus of Nazareth is the story of the gospel of God’s love incarnated in specific human form, that of a Jew in Palestine under Roman occupation. This principle of incarnation inherent in the gospel demands the incarnation of the same story of Jesus of Nazareth in every new missionary context. For various reasons this did not happen when missionaries came to Southern Africa. To state this truth is not to denigrate the missionaries, as they were children of their place and time. There was a time before Christians were aware of the need for inculturation. For this reason we can honestly confess the mistake and participate in the process of the inculturation of the gospel as it is happening in the AICs rather than accusing them of syncretism and heretical tendencies. It is with this understanding that we attempt to analyse the process of inculturation we find reflected in the stories above. It is our contention that it seems clear that the process is ongoing, and that in some cases this has given rise to a situation of the existence of dual religious systems.<sup>xvii</sup>

The recounted stories deal with two important domains of African life where it seems to us evidence of the existence of dual religious systems can be identified: healing, and relating to the ancestors. In Africa healing by the spirit, by herbs and by conventional medicine is interwoven. One reason why this is so is because a situation of health and well-being is characterised especially as a situation where a *community* exists in *balance and harmony between the living, the living-dead, the yet-to-be-born, the spirits and the environment* (cf. Saayman & Kriel 1992:34–36). This understanding clearly undergirds Bishop Mashitsho’s story above. Herbs have been given by God to the African people to encourage and ensure well-being; why should they now be discarded because missionaries regarded them as superstitions? Some people who came to him for healing obviously felt more comfortable with the more conventional Christian healing instrument of prayer only, and Mashitsho was quite happy to accommodate their preferences. But he could not find any clear indication in his understanding of the Christian religion that his traditional remedies had to be eliminated completely. Therefore he clearly felt that in his indigenous church he was able to reclaim part of that tradition and heritage which Westerners had tried to take away from him. This seems to us an area where the process of inculturation is still incomplete (cf. Bate 1995) and where in some mainline and mission churches the debate has indeed been prematurely halted. That is why we are left with a situation of a dual religious system, where some Christians have to publicly criticise AIC healing practitioners “by day”, yet secretly come to visit them “at night” because of the proven success of the treatment.

The problem of relationships with the ancestors is also prominently reflected in the stories we retold. This is probably a more serious problem than the misunderstandings about healing. We referred above to Moila’s understanding of sickness (Moila 2002:95) as “dislocating self from context”. Any conscious break in the relationship with the ancestors is a far more serious dislocation of self from context than sickness. A leading African theologian, John Pobee (in Saayman & Kriel 1992:35), states that the African life philosophy is expressed in the saying: *Cognatus, ergo sum* (“I belong through kinship, therefore I am”). In the words of a well-known Southern African saying, “A person is a person through and with other persons”. If the link connecting the total community, namely the living, the living-dead, and the yet-to-be-born, is therefore cut through for any reason, it is indeed life itself which becomes impossible. Yet this is what all the mission churches required, that veneration of ancestors (wrongly termed “worshipping” of ancestors) be terminated completely. There is far more debate about the issue today (cf. Molobi 2004), yet the process of inculturation is still incomplete. This gives rise to another clear instance of the existence of a dual religious system. Bishop Mosoro has worked out a very satisfying understanding for himself: he needs the comfort of his parents’ advice, and he senses it better at their graves than anywhere else. So he goes there to consult them, without the usual traditional libations of beer. Yet he cannot openly propagate his solution, as it is supposedly “superstitious” in mainline Christianity, and therefore keeps it a secret known only to himself. Bishop Tshabalala still experiences great uncertainty about the relationship between God (Modimo) and the ancestors (badimo), to the extent that he is unsure whether he can address the one without the others. He also experiences a growing understanding, namely that the prophet/diviner is greater than the sangoma. Yet he also has to accept the unsatisfactory existence of a dual religious system. Bishop Shilobane seems to have progressed further in his understanding. Ancestors indeed dispense power, but it is power given to them in and through Christ, who is nature. For him this represents simply an African reconsideration of a gospel truth.

Rev Khuzwayo presents the need for such a reconsideration (inculturation) at its most poignant with his painful South African question: "Can a white man die for a black man?" He asks the question because South African race history and its racist reality answer the question with a resounding: "No!" Yet the gospel story about this "white man" (Jesus Christ) is so convincingly attractive that Rev Khuzwayo has accepted it as his own. So he also is left with a disruptive duality in his religious beliefs, underlying again the absolute urgent necessity of ongoing inculturation, a process in which the AICs have a very important contribution to make.

## Conclusion

The stories that we have discussed serve to indicate that oral research among the AICs has helped to unearth unrecognised realities of African Christian life in story forms. These stories could be utilised to encourage debates around contextual Christian challenges. The stories from the AICs in Atteridgeville and Mamelodi clearly portray their understanding of Christian existence today and are making their own contributions towards building a contextualised African society of believers.

African Initiated Churches undoubtedly constitute an integral domain of African cosmology and as a result their recognition and preservation in well-being remain important for the sustainable existence of Christianity in Africa. Real growth in understanding takes place where African traditionalism and western oriented traditional Christianity meet in Afro-Christianity.

It is also clear that AICs are growing not only structurally but also theologically. They are therefore essential partners in the ongoing process of enculturation. If we are to articulate a relevant and sustainable vision for mission in Southern Africa at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the mainly oral and enacted theology of the AICs has to be an integral ingredient (Molobi 2004; Saayman & Molobi 2006).

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## Interviews

Atteridgeville ministers Fraternal. Interview, 12 July 1994.

Interview with Rev Khuzwayo of the Zion Apostolic New Jerusalem of South Africa, 24 February 1994.

Interview with Bishop Mashitisho of the Ark of Noah, 10 November 1994. Mamelodi East.

Interview with Bishop Mosoro of the Zion Apostolic City of South Africa, 14 June 1994. Atteridgeville.

Interview with Archbishop Shilenga of the Bethesda Spiritual Church of God in South Africa, 8 September 1994.

Interview with Archbishop Shisane of the Pentecostal Freedom Holy Spirit Apostolic Church, August 1994.

Interview with Bishop Tshabalala of the New St Paul Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, 20 October 1994. Saulsville.

## Endnotes

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- 1 AICs can stand for African Independent Churches; African Indigenous Churches; African Initiated Churches; African Instituted Churches; but in this article we will adhere to African Initiated Churches.
  - 2 Various types of AICs are recognised. The most important group is the Spirit-type group, characterised by Pentecostal and charismatic practices. They usually name themselves with reference to Zionist or Apostolic churches. A second important group is the Ethiopian Churches, which often resemble Western churches.
  - 3 Tshwane is the indigenous name for Pretoria. The name was derived from the streams and fountains that are found in and around the city. Often members of the AICs are baptised in these streams.
  - 4 Atteridgeville was established in 1939 as a black township named after Mrs MP Atteridge, former city council member. Its total population is about 200 000, with a multicultural community. (See [www.Saweb.co.za/townships](http://www.Saweb.co.za/townships)).
  - 5 Mamelodi was established in 1953, with a current population of about 1 million. The statistics are not official and there could be far more, taking into consideration the newly built extension plus squatters around. (See [www.Saweb.co.za/townships](http://www.Saweb.co.za/townships)).
  - 6 Apart from Atteridgeville and Mamelodi there are two neighbouring townships: Eersterus (for coloureds) and Laudium for Indian communities. And during the process of collecting stories there were some overlaps, especially in Eersterus where many people in Mamelodi have biological connections (e.g. many of the graves in Eersterus are connected to families in Mamelodi).
  - 7 The directory was available in the CB Powell Centre in the Research Institute for Theology and Religion (RITR) at University of South Africa (Unisa).
  - 8 Landman is a professor and researcher in the Research Institute of theology and Religion (RITR) at Unisa. See also Landman (2007:18, 19).
  - 9 Published in *Journal of constructive theology*, vol. 2, December 1996.
  - 10 Historically the interest in AICs has tended to be dominated by white missionaries and missionary bodies. The first scientific study of the AICs was conducted by a government commission: Native Churches Commission of 1925. It seems therefore that it has been those who consider AICs to be a problem who have shown most interest in them. This is one other reason why the research and collecting stories was significant.
  - 11 Bishop Mashitisho (72 years old) is the founder of Ark of Noah in Mamelodi. (Interview: 10 November 1994). Mamelodi East.
  - 12 It is not always possible to determine whether the references in the indigenous languages are to the Holy Spirit or spirits in general; both interpretations are possible.
  - 13 Bishop Mosoro, in his late seventies, studied under Archbishop Titus Maponga who studied in America many years ago. Maponga brought the gospel to South Africa, according to Mosoro. Although Mosoro was a bishop of the Zion Apostolic City of South Africa at that time, he acquired his status through hard work and experience. He worked as an evangelist and ended up as the archbishop. Key elements for being a faithful member of his church were abstinence from polygamy and alcohol. Interestingly, although he was a man of a high stature he lived life in poverty. One thing that became apparent was that Bishop Mosoro will never appear in the limelight, even though religiously he was influenced by a popular bishop who had studied in America. He lacked modern education and he was an introvert, whether as a result of his state of

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church life or other factors is not clear. Only through careful probing during the interview did he disclose some information about himself.

- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Modise was born in 1914, and joined the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) in 1939 under Engenase Lekganyane. Modise became ill in 1959 and lost all of his belongings. He heard a voice on 14 September 1959 telling him to get up from his bed and go home. Subsequently he founded the IPHC. The voice also instructed him to confess his sins and pray for the sick, and was to become a benchmark for all his descendents and converts to this faith. Revs Seakamela and Lehabe were to operate from the same presuppositions as the story below will attest (Anderson 1992:110-111).
- 16 Moila (2002:95) identifies challenging issues in African Christianity and regards sickness as "dislocating self from context".
- 17 A dual religious system comes into being where a new religion is introduced which gains major acceptance, and has specific clear advantages over the old system. Some of the essential and life-affirming cultural presuppositions which underlay the old religion system, however, are not taken seriously enough and debated at an existential level. In Africa this often happened because African traditional religions were considered nothing but superstitions. Africans honestly accepted the Gospel, but because some domains of life were still adequately addressed and explained only in terms of the old religious system, in certain cases they start to practise a dual religious system. The older and the newer systems are not mixed and beaten together like eggs; each retains its sovereign existence, but in separate domains (cf Schreiter 1985).