Finding Our Head without Losing Our Feet:

Morality of Circumcision among The Zulus.

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Abstract

This presentation will be providing a glimpse of the book that is currently with publishers and is based on the findings of the study entitled: *The scrutiny on revival of circumcision practices in the post-apartheid South Africa: a case study of perceptions of young men based in Durban, Jozini and Hluhluwe communities in KwaZulu-Natal* (Mthembu, Chellan & Mtshali, 2012). It will give some clues on what is contained in various chapters of the book and focussing more on the methodological and the analytical approaches that were adopted in dissecting data in this regard. Lastly, it will briefly highlight some of the findings that revealed that some of the informants felt that some of the current indigenous cultural practices that are being revived such as circumcision rite tend to be advancing foreign values as it is presently conducted mostly in the clinics and hospitals.

Key words: Revival, indigenous knowledge systems – (IKS), Zulu and socialisation.

Chapter 7

"We have to confront forces that create cities as alien environments that push urbanisation in directions alien to our individual or collective purpose. To confront these forces we have first to understand them..." (Magubane 2000:312).

Theoretical framework

In order to have a clear understanding of the contemporary social change in the 'new' South Africa especially in the urban areas that are characterised by the elite class consolidation instead of redressing past unequal access to basic services such as education and other related issues; one needs to take stock of where we are from, what is said about it and what it propels us to (Edward, 1996:105). Worden (2004) and Austin (2010) argue that in pre-colonial Africa identities were embedded in the ways of life that were either destroyed or relegated to the status of uncivilized and backward beliefs, sometimes labeled as superstitious practices, or unacceptable challenges in favour of colonial programmes and preferences (Abdi, 1999:150; Soudien, 2012:98).

The present socio-political state in South Africa has attempts to incorporate the age old notion of '*ubuntu'* in facilitating accepted administration ethos as a strategy to bring about relevant service delivery to the former relegated population group (Mangaliso, 2001). U*buntu* is viewed as the citadel of truth and right principle by others who argue that it cannot succumb to current injustices whereby indigenous value systems are still regarded as inferior or ridiculed, as has been the case happening currently (ibid.).

A number of social theories can be explored to set parameters for exploring this aspired to social change that is meant to 'identify the unresolved tensions in the existing social reality and thereby to cause a change of consciousness' (Snyman, 1997:223). This study aims to go beyond Asante's (1987) Afrocentric approach limitation and exploration of ancient the Khushite approach sometimes dubbed as Ethiopianism[i], a holistic notion that encourages the promotion of a holistic approach especially when it comes to the universal indigenous knowledge systems and its institutions, as a way of dealing with challenges such as intellectual imperialism, issues that pertains to general African development, land deprivation and political economy especially in times of

decolonisation of Africa and revival of indigenous knowledge systems in the globalised era (Doniger, 1999). The approach is used to see whether such an approach can help to deal with challenges that face this country or whether to follow a linear or circular thought approach of analytical pattern (Welsing, 1991). Such considerations can become more significant especially when considering the possibilities of recognition of relevant community knowledge systems in relation to natural resources such as land and human resources (Goduka, 2000).

An understanding has to be had of an inclusive notion of national identity that entails an understanding for the destiny of others and an ability to identify with them, through a sense of solidarity that can be realised by sharing of institutions and a reduction in material inequalities. Accordingly, it is vital to utilise the critical theory as it aspires "to identify the unresolved tensions in the existing social reality and thereby to cause a change of consciousness" (Snyman, 1997:223). Beyond Asante's (1987) Afrocentric school approach limitation and exploration of ancient the Khushite approach sometimes dubbed as Ethiopianism[ii], a holistic notion that encourages the promotion of a holistic approach especially when it comes to the universal indigenous knowledge systems and its institutions, as a way of dealing with challenges such as intellectual imperialism, issues that pertains to general African development, land deprivation and political economy especially in times of decolonisation of Africa and revival of indigenous knowledge systems in the globalised era (Doniger, 1999; Nkosi, 2005; Nabudere, 2011). The approach is used to see whether such an approach can help to deal with challenges that face this country or whether to follow a linear or circular thought approach of analytical pattern (Welsing, 1991; Manzo, 1991). Such considerations can become more significant especially when it considering the possibilities of recognition of relevant community knowledge systems in relation to natural resources such as land and human resources (Goduka, 2000).

Concepts that define the present socio-political state in South Africa have to be unpacked for a clearer understanding of all the underlying implications thereof. The notion of a national identity versus a personal identity becomes central in understanding actions and utterances of different groups. Barry (2001) argues that the notion of

national identity is relevant when considering the problem of ethnic divisions, discrimination and the notion of a rainbow nation. Furthermore, a recognised conception of nationality is insufficient to generate the level of "equal concern and respect" for other citizens with whom one does not identify in any other way (Barry, 2001).

Thus, national identity attempts to establish homogeneity, or a homogeneous national identity, which may not be the solution. Nonetheless, what is required is an inclusive notion of national identity that entails an understanding for the destiny of others and an ability to identify with them, through, a sense of solidarity that can be realised by sharing of institutions and a reduction in material inequalities. Presently, one may argue, what is more visible is the cultural difference of material circumstances that are perpetuated by a liberal democracy (Barry, 2001). Although currently, liberal democracy is the order of the day that depends on citizens having certain attitudes towards one another, most importantly is that they must regard everyone's interests as counting equally, so that they are able to identify a common good and are prepared to make certain sacrifices for that common good (Barry, 2001).

Barry thus labels this exercise as civic nationality, which is different to formal nationality (i.e. as personified in a passport) and ethnic nationality proves to be divisive, as it demonises "the other." he Identity is not a "constant sum game" that entails one identity to be replaced by another, but identity has an "additive" quality to it, of which parallel is the ability to learn to speak more than one language (Barry, 2001: 81). There must be a certain degree of overlap in people's identities in order for them to be in a required level of "mutual recognition" and understanding of one another to exist and obliterate differences (Samara, 2004).

Relating to the subject at hand, besides that the contemporary set–up that tends to be more consumer oriented and the need to consider issues such as genital mutilation in 'times' of "human rights" specially to those who happened to be minor in taking decision to partake or not, as such decision are normally taken by their guardian (Daneel, 1998:242).despite the various views regarding the origins of this ritual but there is also a need to really consider its relevance at period. In doing so, it will be vital to highlight that origin of this ritual tends to highlight that its origins are somehow linked to some faith

oriented covenant that required that its adherents have to physically circumcise a symbol their commitment.

It is this purpose of this discussion to interrogate why a ritual as this one has suddenly been revived and the related reasoning behind the process. This revival has led to ceaseless debates some of which become relevant especially when considering the premise that the adherents of the Bible[1] argue from, which cannot be taken lightly, especially when we speak of Africa and faith that remain inseparable. It is however evident that the liberalist agenda has become the influential factor concerning understanding challenges confronting indigenous people and the manner of reduction of their expectation (Mthembu, 2011:13). Thus, Mayekiso (1996:24) emphasised that the tendency of capitalist to ensure their 'culture of privilege' in such as a way that they are:

"…willing to do anything in their power, even floating reactionary and untenable ideas to the civic movement, to maintain their wealth, assure the continuation of an extremely exploitative form of capitalism in South Africa, and lower the political will power of the civic movement to gain socio-economic objectives".

Profiles of area(s) under study

The area(s) that this study focused was locales from within eThekwini – Durban, Mkhumbane – Cato Manor and Kwa Mashu townships of which are occupied by the same indigenous populace that has been forcefully shifted and moved around by the colonialist fronts in pursuit of capitalist oriented agenda. These indigenous Nguni people that are under discussion form part and parcel of the earlier century exodus from the Great Lakes of Central and East Africa.

Nguni people in the South migrated from the North Africa towards the sea from the Lebombo Mountains and various family members carried their relevant possessions, women carried their stuff on their heads, young men drove livestock carrying their sticks. Various clans occupied the whole southern region between 14th and 17th century and named it after King Mwene Mutapa, or Monomotapa or simply Matapa, and today it

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[1] Refer to some of the Bible chapter - Leviticus 26:40-42; Deuteronomy 10:12-16

is only east coast territory that still referred to as Maputaland (http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/africa/maps-southern/southern.html).

Other clans within Nguni people migrated further south, settled along the way as others settled at Umkhumbane basin and founded towns such as the city of Shumbamusha city that became to be known today as Durban and Mbiremusha[2] later became to be known as Cape Town (see Magema, 1998:110; Pheko, 1992:71). Worden (2004) argues that pre-colonial South Africa societies were marked by the division of labour, a highly patriarchal system of social organisation and authority of which connected together clans and shared a structure of homestead based on pastoral and arable production. Nevertheless, land was vital for them to have sufficient labour which was supplied by their family members who worked together to produce their basic needs (Callinicos, 1990; Austin, 2010).

Furthermore, in the pre-industrial society, social roles were based on age, the young expected to care for the elderly, and the mediator has to reach a certain age to be considered a "wise man" that can be tasked with resolving conflict in the community . Callinicos (1990) and Worden (2004:7) state that family members' possessed different skills, such as farming and women were skilled in pottery and other things at home including nurturing children, whilst men were skilled in specialised duties such as being a healer/spiritual healer, musician, or iron-making/ironsmith. Young people played different roles in their families especially when it comes to food security and meeting daily livelihoods (see Callinicos, 1990: 2; Magema, 1998). For example, young men played significant roles in their respective communities such as herding and milking cattle and related duties and young women were responsible chores.

Around 1600s the colonisation violent programme spearheaded by European settlers was experienced in the southern part of Africa and the continent in general of which

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[2] Monomotapa. [o] Available on: http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/maps/websites/africa/maps-southern/southern.html (accessed: 09/11/11).

altered the African subsistence community system. This land dispossession programme led to another bitter war for resistance against land dispossession/ *alienation* from then land. This is clearly illustrated by the earlier wars that led to the inventing borders within the area of southern part of Africa was first experienced in the Cape between the indigenous people versus the Dutch settlers. This war was followed by the British settlers and after that, the finally Zulus and British settlers and a series of other wars that came after and still ingeniously continued today (Wrong, 1946; Callinicos, 1990).

Colonialist violent programmes varied from region to region and that was determined by the colonising country. As colonisers were blood thirsty and hungry for looting of riches of Africa, they developed strategies of exerting power over the indigenous people. In ensuring their control, they use various strategies. For example, in occupied Azania [South Africa/ Zuid Afrika] in the late nineteenth century, British and Dutch colonists participated in bartering exchange trade and later traders began to demand money of which marked the introduction of *monetary system* that is vital for the colonisers, as it help them to put values of exchanged in quantitative and fixed rather than in subjective terms (see Wrong, 1946:376; Pheko, 1992).

Furthermore, another significant strategy colonisers they depended on even today their scandalous Roman-Dutch Law that help the colonisers as a strategy to 'legitimise' their thuggery in the form of legislation that entrenches the values and cultures of Europe (Pheko, 1992). On other hand the policies adopted under this basis enabled the oppressors to alienate indigenous people from their land, decision making, to increase control and environment and to finally to destroy the indigenous values and cultures. In fulfilling the colonising spree, the colonisers in the south around about 1760, in what is now termed as the Cape Town they passed legislations such as the Pass Laws and in 1809 that legislation was extended to all indigenous people of the occupied Azania (ibid.). Therefore, any resistance to these changes were dealt by killing, marring and imprisonment to the famous Robben Island that first experiences the imprisonments of 'all' indigenous royal families. The indigenes were further subjected to their movement control and chosen residential areas mechanism through forced of personal details in

the form of *pass* document (of which was something new to the indigenes) that are still continued under the name of *green identity books* (Callinicos, 1990).

According to Abdi (1999) argues that these strategies played a significant role as they helped in the formation of perceptions and practices that entrenched the uneven compartments among the racial groups and as well as the identity construction. Ghosh (1996) argues that "identities are always in the making and are the result of individual's history and culture, class and ethnicity or race as well as their experiences as male and female (Abdi, 1999:153). Thus, pre-colonial African individuals who had clear identity that were affected by the rise of colonialism and imposition of new ones, demeaning, oppressive, and "technically" seconded from a host of earlier and recent racial theories most of the time, left the off springs with an identity crisis to date.. The newly imposed identities proved false, forced on them while they emphasized the superiority of the colonial status (Soudien, 2012; Abdi, 1999).

The full scale war against the physical and mental being of the African population was also taken to absurdity where those who arrived from Europe invoked what they have defiantly called the principle of first occupancy or dubbed primitive accumulation[3] (Pheko, 1992). Therefore, further entrenchment of colonialism though the formation of Union of South Africa in 1910 that authorised the western colonies their self-governance from direct Imperial control, and allowed local Whites to run the newly founded national state. However, swift changes towards greater regulation of the African presence in the cities were experienced after. For example, the 1911 Native Regulation Act was promulgated that substantially consolidated a system in which single proletarised[4] male individuals were expected to live in hostels for the duration of their labour contracts, before their return to their newly demarcated rural homes. In addition, various ongoing attempts to install an effective system of pass controls over African women had some shortcomings. Though about a quarter of Durban's 30 000

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[3] Primitive accumulation - a strategy that western colonisers utilised to deprive indigenes of Africa their land of which the colonisers distributed amongst themselves as rewards for their loyal individuals to the colonising programme.

[4] Forced to sell his/her labour power to meet daily livelihoods.

African workers were formally housed in male only barracks. White paranoia about Africans living outside of prison-like compounds remained rampant of which demanded new strategies to meet this challenge (ibid.).

The passing of 1913 Land Act that granted legal impetus to a broad daylight land robbery, as massive enclosures of land for the purpose of setting up white commercial agriculture of which exacerbated a rural crisis into a spiraling descent into mass poverty that is still witnessed in the deprivation and struggles of today. So, the Land Act started two waves of evictions from the land: the land expropriation and enclosed.

These changes impacted negatively to the indigenes, as in 1920s, fundamental changes in the Zulu nation were evident, as large scores of men descended on the mines and cities as wage earners. These changes formed part of bigger scheme of proletarisation that included the importation of indenture labour. This sparked not only a culture of separation from the land and introduction of urbanised lifestyle but an infux of Zulu people in the 1920s into Durban.

The new city demarcation of eThekwini[5] Municipality was drawn after the 2000 local government elections and the implementation of the Municipal Structures Act. Through this, seven different local councils that were previously divided under apartheid demarcations were unified. Thus, the eThekwini Municipality covers uMkhomazi in the south, including the tribal areas of Mbumbulu; Uthongathi in the north, some tribal areas in Ndwedwe, and Cato Ridge in the west. The eThekwini Municipality Metropolitan area has a geographical area of 2291.8910 square kilometres. Most of the newly incorporated areas are rural in nature with 50 percent of the area being used for subsistence farming and only 2 percent for urban settlement See Map 1 of eThekwini Municipality Area below (Mthembu, 2008).

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[5] Although this town was named Shumbamusha during the reign of King Mutota of Ngoni nation under the auspices of Monomotapa Empire

(1425 AD), but the name eThekwini was first mentioned by King Shandu of the amaThuli, who settled on the bay and later named the bay after

its appearance like a bull with one testicle‒ ithweke (Bluff being penis and the Bay being testicle) that refers to a lagoon (Fuze, 1922:170).

Figure 39: A map of eThekwini Municipality area

Map 1
eThekwini Municipal Area
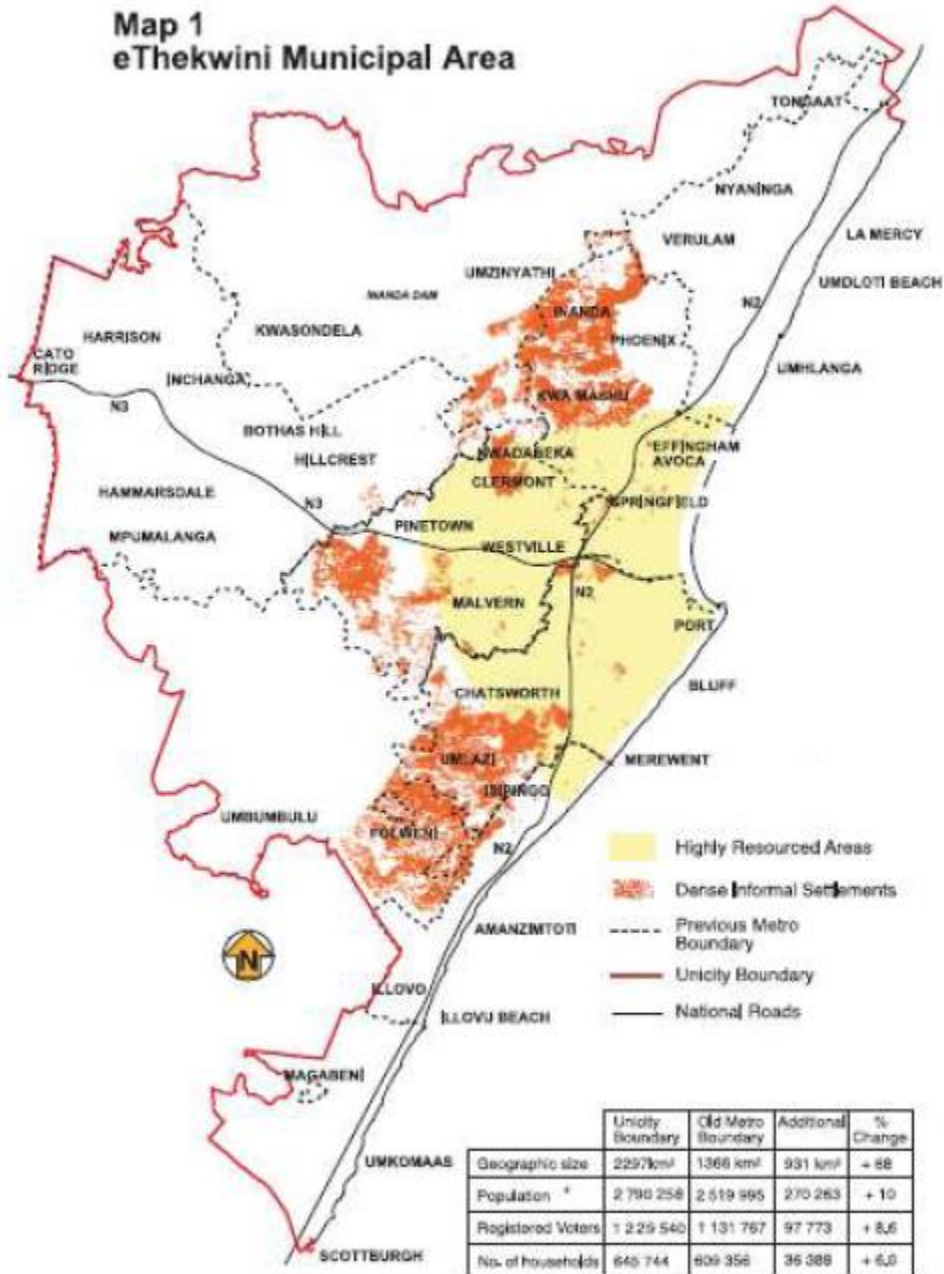
Source: eThekwini Integrated Development Plan 2002 - 2006

The land dispossession of the indigenes left those who were occupants of Durban landless while the Indian indentured labourers were granted plots of land. The indigenes became renters in their own yard though leasing of small plots in Mkhumbane later

became to be known as Cato Manor from Indian settlers, as they were prohibited by the law from purchasing land of their own. By 1932, the uMkhumbane was incorporated into Borough of Durban with its hundreds of informal shelters.

However, the era of apartheid in the 1940s marked more drastic changes for all Black South Africans in particular Africans and the Zulu communities living in Durban were no exception. These changes included the separation of citizens into so-called 'White', 'Bantu/African', 'Coloured' and 'Asian' suburbs, as a result of the Group Areas Act of 1950. Townships were established during apartheid era to accommodate the mass resettlement of Africans that were initially removed from Durban and sent to Cato Manor during 1958–65 some were further moved to Kwa Mashu[6] township that was built by the City of Durban between 1957 and 1968 to settle African people who were being relocated from Cato Manor. More resistance and rioting occurred as a result of the forced removals, especially in Cato Manor. In 1988 KwaMashu township was incorporated into the KwaZulu homeland labour reserve. This incorporation contributed in consolidation of high levels of political mobilisation that were witnessed in the 1980s, and as well as it's notoriority for criminal and gang activity in the late 80s and 1990s that led to 1994 political settlement (Rauch, 2002).

Yet in post apartheid era, Kwa Mashu Township remains amongst the areas that are known for its high youth unemployment rate of which has contributed to the high crime rate in the area.They have however been receptive to government interventions that are meant revive cultural rites,like circumcision, with a view to exploring and understanding themselves better especially as urban youth is totaly alienated from the land and their surrounding environment. Since South Africa is considered a country that has 'repented' in its segrational policies that were marked by high levels of inequality in accessing basic services and unfair land distribution and as well as the continance of forced selling of their labour power for their daily livelihoods; it remains a question why this inclusive city theory, as South Africa has nullified segragation policy, lets the loot from

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[6] Kwa Mashu simply means *Place of Marshall* named after Marshall Campbell who once owned the land as his sugar cane farm after the indigenous populace were forcefully removed from it of which form part of notorious land grab buy the colonizers dubbed it primitive accumulation (Rauch, 2002).

colonisation process remain highly safeguarded by vicious Roman-Dutch law. Then the scrutiny of provision become more apparent than before with a view to understand physical welfare and service infrastructure and the quality of life, health, safety and security of residents and as well as the "ability to aspire" through the cycle of generations. The inclusion view is regarded as the cornerstone of current economic and sustainable development that led to merger of various administration centres that were divided along the racial lines in the colonial regime that emphasised on segregated development policy. Then, the notion of inclusion becomes more critical especially when it comes to the extends the governance engages its citizens in participation in decision-making and planning, that provides a sense of control over social and political aspects of living that encourage their sense of well-being and belonging and part of the economic life of the city and society in general (Inclusive Cities, 2006).

Research methodology

The *qualitative research design* or approach in collecting and analysing the data; phenomena in their natural environments and uses a variety of empirical materials such as case studies, life stories, interviews, interactions and visual text that describe routine and problems and meaning in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2; Morse, 1994);

A range of secondary literature, for example, government documents, journals, manuals, reports and magazines were also drawn on and utilised in the study.;

The survey approach was applied in this study as it attempted to enhance the depth of understanding in perceptions, attitudes, and existing knowledge, in this instance, on questions of youth participation, socio-political landscapes, equity, food security and unemployment (Kuechler, 1998:178);

A semi-structured interview schedule; face-to-face interviews were conducted in order to extract information relevant to this studying so as to understand the mechanisms of social processes, relationships and human events (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:133; see Denzin, 1970);

Lastly, an urban settlement setting as 'one case study' was used to generalize across relevant populace, especially when one is conducting an in-depth investigation in conjunction with in-depth (semi-structured) interviews, focus group, questionnaires, observation, and direct observation to bring out the facts from the viewpoint of the informants (Tellis, 1997; Eisenhardt, 2002:9).

Sampling methods

The non-probability a stratified random sampling: - to identify roles and relationships among participants who are informed and critical incidents that are relevant to the topic under study (Morse, 1994a:228; Goddard & Melville, 2005:37);

Participants -black African people from within designated areas regarded as having high HIV/AIDS prevalence's – the top four being the three districts from KwaZulu-Natal including the eThekwini Municipality (Department of Health – KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government, 2010b; Department of Health, South Africa, 2010).

Although circumcision is permitted to young men between a certain number of years(15 and 49 but for the sake this study, focus young men range between *18 and 45 years* of age (Department of Health, KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government, 2010a);

Participants are unemployed and employed members of the community.

Data analysis

This was a qualitative study to generate findings that transform raw data into new knowledge- engage in active and demanding analytical processes throughout all phases of the study (Thorne, 2000);

As it expanded it also became qualitative analytical approach and also incorporated quantitative methods into its design (Morse, 1994a:225). This analytical approach was utilised in conjunction with the quantitative analysis of data through the use of the SPSS electronic software to formulate patterns and relationships to their daily livelihoods (Andrew, Nonnecke & Preece, 2003:196).

[i] Ethiopianism emanates from the term Ethiopia that refers to Kush/ Cush the ancient name of African continent. The word Ethiopian therefore represents Africa's dignity and place in the divine dispensation and provided a platform for free African faith and nations of the future.

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