

The renewed discourse of syncretism in the study of religion brings into question the idea of purity of cultures in general and religious in particular. It dismisses the question of purity, orthodoxy and essentialism as a chimera and instead celebrates the acknowledgement of interpenetration of cultures and beliefs leading to hybridities.

This study has been conceptualized and undertaken on these premises. It has argued that syncretism is not a bizarre concept, but rather the correct framework in studying history of all religions. It has taken, for broad purposes of comparison and vindication of the syncretising dynamic, two contrasting geographical areas and periods. The study instantiates and demonstrates that Western Christianity is a highly syncretic product of centuries of a dialectical process of encounter and interaction between indigenous European cosmologies and biblical concepts. This dismisses the rhetoric of mission Christianity as orthodox or pure, and explains the failure of the Western missionary programme of *ethnocide* and *religiocide* in Africa.

The study has highlighted the syncretising dynamic in a Western Kenya cultural borderzone consisting of three ethnic groups and how they engaged in bartering of concepts in the pre-Christian or pre-colonial period. The dynamic underlay an active and long history of religion in the area to which Western Christianity was implanted and synthesized for yet another pattern of syncretism in the first three decades of the twentieth century.

The emergence of the indigenous independent church movement in Western Kenya at the close of the third decade of the twentieth century is explained and illustrated as a reaction against the imposition of Christianity in the Western cultural mold upon the Africans, and as a divestiture of these Western swaddling clothes in order to allow unfettered cross-fertilization between the indigenous cosmologies and the biblical on key beliefs and practices.

The study couched within a theoretical framework that appropriates aspects from the Hegelian dialectical triad and Aseka's triune nature of human consciousness. The former holds that historical processes develop in a dialectical manner, bringing into constant clash different ideas, which nevertheless do not decimate each other, but rather effect syntheses out of each other which become new theses for subsequent clashes. The second holds that the triune components of the human being are the physical body, the intellectual soul and the spirit; and that religion in whichever form is not possible and not conceivable without the last component coming into play