

The Semblance Divine Derivations of Azande Surnames: A Cultural Appraisal of Christianity

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Abstract

Many biblical scholars have written extensively about the personal Divine name of Yahweh (יהוה) which in English is in reference to the God of the Hebrews. "The Bible is first and foremost about God and his/her dealing with humanity," (Aloo, 2019: 22). The way in which this God dealt or continues to deal with humanity varies from one community to another, depending on the context. The different names which are attributed to God vary from one community to another. One may easily conclude that the other community or tribe does not know God and does not respect His Divine name. However, the way God revealed His name or Himself to the Hebrew Patriarchs is different from the way in which the same God has been revealing His name or Himself to the different people, including Africans. Each ethnic group occupies a geographical location and characterized by unique cultural traits and worship of God. In reference to Exodus 20:7 which says that "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain." Based on this verse the Jews cannot call or pronounce the name Yahweh (יהוה) because God's name is Holy. However, this is not the case among the Azande people in South Sudan. Traditionally, an Azande person cannot call or mention the name of an elder person. But the question is, why do the Azande people name their children with names which are derived directly from the Divine name of Mbori? In reference to Exodus 20:7, does it mean that they are misusing the Divine name of Mbori? Does it mean there is syncretism between Azande tradition religion vis a vis Christianity and the Bible? This article is written to bridge the social gap between the Azande tradition and that of the Jews concerning the use of the Divine name of God. It also explains the perception of the Azande on God's name and how His name is being used among them. More so, it provides an insight into the Azande cognition and encounter with God in their daily life, thus, providing an objective perspective of the Azande traditional religious view. Furthermore, the article encourages the Azande people to name children with names which stem from the Divine name of Mbori. Since those names exalt God and they explain the goodness of God to the Azande people and, above all, such names are meaningful and reveal the character or identity of the bearers. The practices of giving bad names to children among the Azande is on rise and this needs to be avoided, since those names may bring bad luck to people bearing such evil names. This article discourages husband and wife from using bad names as weapon(s) to fight each other in their marriage. For Christianity to be rooted in the hearts of the Azande, the concept of God needs to be molded into the social aspect of an Azande person and enables him/her to live harmoniously with his/her fellow members in the community.

Keywords: Propitiation, Impetration, Azande, Zandeland, Mbori

Introduction

Among the Azande people in South Sudan, there are several names which are attributed to God like *Baira*, *Baati*, *Batoro*, and *Gbiã* among others. The word *Baira* means Master, *Baati* means the father of garden, *Batoro* means the father of spirit and *Gbiã* means Lord. The personal or proper name of God is *Mbori*. However, the purpose of this article is to give a brief background about the personal name of God, to bring to light the Azande rich attributes of Mbori, the meaning of the name Mbori, its usage among the Azande people and to explain that the Azande people knew God already even before the coming of missionaries into Africa. In this article, we will briefly examine the biblical concept of the name God/Yahweh, then how do the Azande people view God and respect God's name in reference to Exodus 20:7.

Brief History about the Azande

The ethnic term *Azande* refers to a culturally diverse group of people, who over the past two hundred years have been brought together under the governance of several distinct kingdoms. Reliable first-hand accounts of the Azande began to appear toward the middle of the nineteenth century. However, the Azande had become well-known to anthropologists through the work of the British anthropologist Sir Edward Evans Pritchard (*Pritchard, E., 1902:73*). The Azande people live in an area divided between the southwest of South Sudan, the eastern part of Central African Republic and the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo, approximately between 23 - 30 longitude in east and 6 degrees of latitude in the north. The Azande kingdom came to an end with the assassination of King Gbudue on 09/02/1905 during a battle with the British imperialists. However, on 09th/02/2022 the Azande kingdom was restored with the coronation of His Grace King Atoroba Peni Rikito Gbudue the King of the Azande.

It is widely accepted that the ancestors of Azande society migrated from West Africa into the Democratic Republic of Congo, to South Sudan and Central Africa Republic beginning in the 1600s. Because of their relative isolation from Westerners; the Azande practiced many traditional such as witchcrafts and oracles. Presently the Azande people live across the borders of three above mentioned countries. In recent decades the Azande are exposed to Christianity, missionary education, and modernization influences (*Pritchard, E., 1902:76*).

Traditional Azande society was highly patriarchal. Men held all positions of public authority and women were subservient in a lesser obedient position to their husbands. Marriage was contracted through the exchange of bride wealth. Common people (men) were usually able to

marry only one woman. However, nobles and particularly chiefs and kings had many women as wives (Prichard, E., 1902:73).

Traditional Beliefs of the Azande

Before the scramble for Africa, the Azande people had the concept of God, whom they regarded as supernatural. Everyone is inferior before Him. The Azande people therefore do not regard or worship Mbori only as ancestral spirits but “*Mbori is God, the one Supreme Being, Creator and Lord of all is,*” (De Schleppe 1956: 11) Therefore, Mbori is the Azande object of religion to whom all is due is addressed to Him. The Azande know at least that *Mbori* which means (Supreme Being) is the Great Chief and Creator of all things. *Mbori* has made all and that no one can do anything against him. The universe is his property, the animals of the bush belong to him, and even the stars are his work. Mbori sees things and hears what is said. He does not remain a stranger to his handiwork. He intervenes continually, not only causing illness and death when it pleases him, or producing abnormal phenomena, but he intervenes in daily life, as he pleases. Above all, God also chastise men when they commit evil.

Tradition tells us that prayers of the Azande people were addressed to the Supreme Being known as Mbori. Like the Christian God, who worked through the medium of the Holy Spirit, angels and prophets and prophetesses, even Mbori, the Supreme Being worked through the good spirits, messengers and sometimes through the chiefs. Before the scramble of Africa by the Europeans, the Azande people had the concept of God, whom they considered as the Supernatural. Every human being and the creatures are inferior to Him.

The Name of God among the Azande

In Azande culture, children or young people are not supposed to mention the name of their parents or elders. Traditionally, this is a sign of disrespect towards parents or elderly persons. I remember when I grew up and reached the age of 10 years, I didn't know the names of my parents. I knew my father as *Baba* and my mother as *Nana or Mama*. But when it comes to the proper names of God, the Azande people have derived most of their proper names from the proper name of God which translated into Zande language as *Mbori*. The question that comes to mind at this point is that: Do the Azande people really respect the personal name of God in reference to Exodus 20:7? As we look to find an answer or answers to this question, you may be in for some surprise.

Origin of the Name Mbori

The Azande people use an anthropomorphic language to define Mbori. The name Mbori is the proper name of God in Zande language. The name Mbori makes no meaning to the person who is not enculturated or who is a foreigner. This is because that person may not understand the sole meaning or origin of the name Mbori. According to the Azande tradition, the term Mbori was formerly known as “MOBARI.” This noun is the combination of two nouns and a personal pronoun. The words read as follows: MO-BA-RI. The primary meaning of MOBARI is “you are above the heads”, meaning Mbori is the Supreme Being above all creatures and spirits. MO is a personal pronoun, which means ‘you’. BA is a noun which means FATHER and RI is also a noun which means Head. So, due to the reason of euphony, it came to be called *MBORI*. From this rich name one may even predict the actual conception of Mbori by the Azande people.

Besides the unique and sacred name Mbori, which is the object of Zande religion, there are other attributes to show the power of Mbori, His domination and greatness. Such attributes are *Batoro* which means Great Spirit, the Father of the spirits. Mbori is also considered as the Great King of the universe. Thus, respect is given to Mbori, and the Azande feel dependent on him especially in the time of crisis. In expressing the mighty power of Mbori, the Azande say that He is *Baakangbi* which means the Holder of the Universe. The attributes show that the Azande consider the power of Mbori in the spiritual world on earth, and over comic powers.

The Super Eminence and the Self Existence of Mbori

Mbori is the cause of whatever is and the reason why things come into being and disappear. When the Azande say that Mbori is Baakangbi, they do not think the way we hold things. The Azande believe that Mbori is powerful and always the same. The Azande describe the self-existence of Mbori by saying Batoro which means that: He is the Father of Spirits or the Great Spirit. The first description expresses the self-existence eternally: Lord of hosts, the second shows the self-existence of Mbori externally, meaning dominant. Furthermore, the Zande expression: *Da du wa Mbori* which means ‘who is like God?’ or ‘who can dare equally with God?’ It emphasizes the sufficiency and self-support that He is the beginning and the end of everything.

Mbori and the Social Group

The relationship between the Azande and the Spiritual world is never remote. The fact that the ancestors are part of the family and are with Mbori makes the Azande not doubt Mbori's concern for them. Thus, the Azande communicate to Mbori through propitiation, impetration, and other means such as through their daily prayers to Mbori. Propitiation played a vital role among the Azande. Through the propitiatory action of appeasing the ancestors was carried out with a branch of leaves. On the other hand, impetration is the petition offered through the ancestors to Mbori. It is the component of the Azande prayer to Mbori as it is their custom to pray to Mbori daily. The Azande believe that they are always in touch with their ancestors especially in dreams. The Azande do not believe in natural death and illness. Nevertheless, the Azande do attribute death to Mbori through two ways: first through lightening. This comes from the concept that Mbori punishes with thunder those who do evil, such as stealing and committing adultery. Second, that people came from Mbori and it is God Himself who calls them back.

Mbori and Affliction

Afflictions are always there in human life. These afflictions puzzle the Azande, and they endeavour to find reasons for their occurrence and offer explanation. The Azande will not leave an event with bad consequences to pass without knowing the reason why it occurred at a particular moment, place, and only to that particular individual, or group, and not anyone else.

Priestly Functions among the Azande

Like the Hebrew God whom the Levites and the prophets mediated between Him and the people; the elders, or the princes among the Azande play the priestly duties. The function was done mainly by those elders who are of high esteem and princes of people. In addition to this group were *Anabi*, in plural, and *Nabi* in singular. The word *Nabi* is made of two words *Na* which means who and *bi* is a verb which means see, or foreseeing. *Anabi* could see what is going to happen in the future and warn the community to take precaution measures.

Prayers and Thanksgiving among the Azande

For the Christian God, all prayers are addressed to Yahweh God through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us that the Israelites were required by law to offer different sacrifices to God to appease Him. Among the Azande, prayers are also addressed to Mbori. Traditionally, the Azande people were also offering sacrifices to Mbori. This was mainly in

times of natural calamities like pandemics, long spell of drought, and for abundant harvest. The Azande, within their own proficiency, give thanks to Mbori at family levels and communitarian level. Thanksgiving was made in the family when naming the child after the umbilical cord has fallen, during which the child is incorporated into the community. At the community level *“the Azande hold a thanksgiving ceremony during a drought or other misfortune at which they thank God for his gifts off good crops and ask him to prosper their land,”* (Mbiti, J., 1970: 210).

For instance, when there could be a long dry season, the Nabi could call the community to collect all food items available among the Azande and take it to a distant hill, or at the source of a spring which does not get dry during the dry season and leave those food items there. While there, the Nabi could pray on behalf of the community, ask Mbori to forgive them for any wrong committed against him, then the Nabi could also present the food items to Mbori. Surprisingly, after leaving the place and before they could reach their villages, rain could start raining on them. The question that arises in mind is that: If not Yahweh God, who else could send rain to the Azande people? Of course not, it was the real Mbori who was sending rain. However, there were times when those offerings were made; but Mbori was hesitant to respond, or did not do what the community wanted. In such a case, the Nabi could declare a time for fasting. Unlike for the Christian God, to whom the Levites could slaughter animals and burn them as burnt offerings; the Azande were only collecting samples of all food items and take them to Mbori without burning them.

However, despite all these, there were some Azande who were practising witchcraft and sorceries in the community. As such, despite the wide spread of Christianity among the Azande, there is a high level of syncretism practices among them. They are deep rooted in the practices of witchcraft.

Sustenance

It is Mbori who is *“the one who settles the differences between us who are men,* (Mbiti, J.; 1979: 76).” Since creation, the Azande maintain that God has since been sustaining them with rain and magical skills to maximize their chances of survival in the face of rough environment and other supernatural powers.

The Usage of the Divine Name of Mbori (God) among the Azande

A name helps to identify a person, an object, or a location. It is very significant, and it conveys a message in the African world. *“If you should be described as such by your name unless of course you wish you were not an African,”* (Sanyo: 1996: 292). The Azande people believe and assert that naming a child with a name that is derived from the personal name of God brings blessing and fortunes to that child during his or her lifetime on earth. From the Divine name of Mbori, the Azande people derive many proper names of their children because they believe that Children come from God. Because of His goodness to the Azande *“... incorporate God’s name into their children’s name; thereby recognizing that children come from Him,”* (Mbiti, J.; 1995: 54). Below are some of the names derived from the name Mbori:

- **Mboringaba:** this name is made up of a noun (Mbori) + a verb (nga) which means ‘is’ + a noun (ba) which means ‘father’. *Mboringaba* therefore means “God is the Father.”
- **Mborigie** is made of two a noun (Mbori) “God” plus a verb (gie) which means “heard”. The name *Mborigie* means “God hears/heard” our prayers. This name can be given to male or female child.
- **Mboribie** is made of the Divine name of (Mbori) “God” plus a verb (bie) which means “see/seen it”. Therefore, name *Mboribie* means “God has seen us/our misery/anguish and has given us a child.” This name can be given to a baby boy or a girl.
- **Mboribiko:** this name is made of a noun (Mbori) “God” + a verb (bi) which means “seen/seeing” + a pronoun (*ko*) which means “him”. *Mboribiko* means God has seen him. It is manly given to a baby boy. That God has seen the misery of the father and has blessed him with a son.
- **Gamboriko:** this name is made up of an adverb (*Ga*) which means “belong” + noun (Mbori) “God” + a pronoun (*ko*) which means “him”. *Gamboriko* therefore means “He belong to God”.
- **Mboriko** is made of a noun (Mbori) “God” + a pronoun (*ko*) which means “him”. *Mboriko* therefore means “His God”. This name is given to a baby boy after God either saved the life of the parents, or the child himself from a serious incident, or during the labour.

- **Mborifuko** is made of a noun (Mbori) “God” + verb (fu) means “give/given” and pronoun (ko) means “him”. *Mborifuko* therefore means God has given him.
- **Mboriundo** is made up of a noun (Mbori) “God” + a verb (undo) meaning “help/helps”. *Mboriundo* therefore means “God helps/ has helped.”
- **Mborinaani**: this name is made up of a noun (Mbori) “God” + a verb (na) which means “is with” and a pronoun (ani) meaning “us”. Therefore, *Mborinaani* means “God is with us”.
- **Mboringbanami**: this name is made up with a noun (Mbori) “God” + a verb (ngba) which means is “good” + conjunction (na) which means “with” + a pronoun (mi) which means “me”. *Mboringbanami* means “God is good with me/ to me”.
- **Mborigikperani**: this name is made of a noun (Mbori) “God” + a verb (gi) which means “listen/listened” + noun (kpe) which means “cry/prayer” + a pronoun (rani) meaning ours. *Mborigikperani* therefore means God “listens/listened to our cry/prayer”.
- **Mboriidie**: This name is made up of a noun (Mbori) “God” + a verb (idie) meaning “accepted”. This name *Mboriidie* means God has accepted. This name can either be given to a baby boy or a girl.
- **Mboriinie**: this name is made up of a noun (Mbori) “God” + a verb (inie) which means “: knows/ knowing”. The name *Mboriinie* means “God knows”.
- **Mborifuyo**: this name is made up of three words, that, is a noun (Mbori) “God” + a verb (fu) which means “given” + a pronoun (yo) meaning “them”. The name *Mborifuyo* means “God has given them”.

The list is endless, therefore, basing on these few examples given above, one realises that all these proper names among the Azande are derived from the Divine name, *Mbori*, and as such, they are biblical names to the Azande people. At this point, one may agree with Idowu Bolaji, John Mbiti, Robert E. Hood, and E.G Parrinder who demonstrated that “*atheism was unknown in African societies and that the African concept of God was essentially monotheistic one.*”

Thus, the proper name of God and its usage varies from one ethnicity to the other. In support of this, Professor Aloo Osotsi says: “*in general the use of God’s name in the indigenous language and culture has helped to develop a strong point of similarities between the new faith and the traditional indigenous faith,*” (Osotsi, A., 2018: 28). No human language can

sufficiently explain the nature and name of God, which all people will understand since God does not reveal Himself in the same manner to people. So, people have used different names depending on the language to refer to the same God. In support of this, Rev. Linda Smallwood had this to say:

“Mere human language—whether Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, or whatever—falls far short in its attempts to define the One who created all things . . . who measures the Universe with the span of His hand and thrills at the dance of the tiny, multi-coloured peacock spider . . . whose voice roars above the mighty waters and stills a storm to a whisper . . . who commands the planets and stars and watches over the sparrow and causes lilies to grow in the desert . . . How can a fallible, created being possibly comprehend and describe the Uncreated One who created it?” (Smallwood, 2019: 9).

Hence, there are several names by which God has been revealing Himself to humankind. Those attribute names are applied to God throughout the Bible.

My personal opinion is that, those names are derived from God’s name and they portray the Azande faith toward God. In short those names show the goodness of God to the Azande people and giving such names to children does not mean that the Azande disrespect God’s Divine name or misusing it in vain. So, the Azande people need to revive the tradition of naming their children with names which are derived from God’s name. They should avoid giving all first names to their children; such combination are John Martin, Peter Mark, Mary Suzan, Paul John; rather they need to combine both first name and the sir name. More so, they should avoid giving bad family names to their children.

The way God reveals Himself to individuals or communities differ from one place to the other. For the Azande people, much as God is holy, the Sovereign and Supreme Being; but He is very close to them. Therefore, deriving their proper names from the personal name of God is not a sin; but it is to proclaim God’s goodness among the Azande.

Mbori in the Life of the Azande People

The Azande people consider Mbori as benevolent. “*The Zande believe that God takes active interest in their affairs; and they demonstrate this in their custom of praying to him daily,* (Mbiti, J.; 1995: 54.” Beside that the Azande conceive God as a judge. Thunder for the Azande people is considered as the direct punishment from Mbori. In support of this, Mbiti says:

“The Azande hold that God punishes with thunder those wrong deeds like stealing. In the time of crisis they pray, declaring to God that they have not stolen or converted other people’s goods and that all men are acceptable to

them, they address him as the one who settles the difference between us who are men,” (Mbiti, J.; 1996: 76).

The settling of differences among the Azande, in this case, is raised into a higher value. This is the voice of justice. For any wrong-doing which goes unnoticed, or not compensated for once that individual is struck by misfortune, the Azande attribute to the justice of Mbori as at work among them.

The Notion of the Church and Kinship among the Azande

As it is widely well understood in Christianity, the Christian idea of the Church is that it is the community of the people of God having one faith in Jesus Christ incorporated through the sacrament of baptism. The Church is also extended to be the community of saints. The Azande have kinship and extended family. The ancestors are considered as part of the relations. This therefore is almost equal to the communion of saints in the Bible.

The Azande get a lot of aspects in the Bible which makes them to welcome it. The Ten Commandments is one of the major typical examples. From time immemorial, the Azande never carved anything to adore, nor do they worship Mbori in the representation of any statue. Among the Azande, children have great respect for their parents. As a sign of respect, grown up Azande people do not mention or call the names of the elders. A child will always call his or her mother *mama* or *Nina* and his, or her father *baba* or Buba, and grandfather, or grandmother as *Tita*. This is the respect for parents, and this goes with the fifth commandment.

Among the Azande, stealing is considered as the most deviant behaviour. The Azande in their prayers always denounce stealing. “*An old man will pray to Mbori at dawn, before he makes his early morning ablutions, saying that he has stolen no man’s thing that he has committed adultery with no man’s wife, that he bears no man ill will; but desires to live at charity with his neighbours,*” (Pritchard, 1929). Mothers, fathers, kings, and chiefs are always seen instructing their children against uttering lies, insisting that a liar is never trusted.

In spite of all these forms of respect, there are still internal conflicts, practices of polygamy and domestic violence against women and children among the Azande. The source of those evils is because the Azande people have failed to centre their tradition on Jesus Christ. For instance, the Azande have adopted some bad cultures from the neighbouring community. An

example of that is the issue of revenge killing which was not among the Azande before, but the Azande have borrowed this from the neighbouring communities.

General Christians' Concept about God's Name

Throughout the Bible, the names which parents gave to their children, or which God Himself gave to individuals, explained something about special about the bearer of that name. Sometimes, a name explains how God helped the bearer of that name. For instance, the name Samuel in the Old Testament derives from a Hebrew phrase meaning, "God has heard" and if in Zande the name would be *Mborigie*. Furthermore, the meaning of the name Moses is "drawn forth", and in Hebrew, the meaning of the name Moses is "saved from the water". Another example in the Bible is the name Joshua. This comes from the Hebrew name "*Yehoshua*". *Yehoshua* is derived from "*yeho*" meaning God and "*shua*" means to deliver or save. In short Joshua means "God is deliverance".

In the New Testament, the name Emmanuel means "God with us". Indeed, God came through His son to be with humankind on earth. These few examples explain the circumstance under which those people were born and what they did. The same thing applies to the different personal names which people have attributed to our God.

The Bible tells us that God is infinite and eternal, meaning that He does not have the beginning or an end. In short, God lives forever. The same God is "*almighty, self-existent, self-sufficient, ineffably glorious, and holy. This great God is a God to be feared, worshipped, and obeyed*" (Fortner, 2010: 5).

In Christianity, the Bible is considered the authoritative source for knowing God and His character. Genesis 1:1 states that: "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" This verse reveals God as the Creator of humanity and He is Alfa and Omega, which therefore, means He does not have a beginning or an end. The Bible clearly reveals God as an involved player in the creation of universe. In the Bible, there are several names, which are attributed to God such as: Creator, Redeemer, Sovereign Lord, Protector, Defender, Everlasting, Supreme Being and Infinity Spirit among others. All these attributed names reveal the true characters of God to His people, depending on the season. In Hebrew, the personal or proper name is (יהוה) Yahweh, which is translated, into English as 'I AM', and 'LORD'. According to Jewish's tradition extracted from the Torah, the Jews are not supposed to mention the proper name of God, but refer to him as 'Ha Shem', the Name, because He is holy. In the Bible there are different names attributed to the same Hebrew God, and those

names show how God revealed Himself to people through different ways. The book of Exodus 20:7 which states that: *“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain,”* they are not supposed to pronounce or mention the proper name of Yahweh (יהוה). Based on this, the Jews fear to mention the proper name of God.

In the Jewish tradition names were given to children depending on the circumstance under which the child was born. In support of this, Fortner (2010: 2) states that *“Throughout the Word of God names were given to children that had special meaning and significance. Sometimes a person’s name would be changed, or a name would be ascribed to him, either by God or by someone else, indicating radical change of life.”*

Among the Jews, it is prohibited to mention the name of God. In Deuteronomy 5: 11, the Bible tells us that: *“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.”* The Jews do not mention the name of God even when writing about God they say: “Hashem” (meaning “the name” when referring to God. For them this is a way of showing reverence to God. In Support of this Rev. Linda Smallwood states that:

“Although they’ve substituted "Adonai" for the original name (יהוה), " they believe they’re breaking the above commandment if they even use the name "Adonai" in any context outside of worship, praise, or prayer. Many are so strict in their observance of this teaching that, if they do happen to say the name Adonai, they immediately follow it with statements such as: Bless His holy name,” (Smallwood, 2019: 19).

According to the Jewish tradition, Christians are not allowed to misuse the name of their Lord God in vain. In short, they are not supposed to mention God’s name. However, the same Bible tells us many times to call upon God’s name and exalt it. This verse gives us greenlight to use the name of God during the moment of prayers. In the Old Testament, God is translated in Greek as “Theos,” which means *“God, is one who is holy, who sees all things and knows all things, and disposes of all things. God, who is light, is perfectly holy. He sees all things with perfect clarity. And he disposes of all things as he will,”* (Fortner: 2010: 5).

God's Name in the New Testament

In the Old Testament, God revealed Himself differently in each community. But in the New Testament, the revelation came to its climax with the unveiling of God's glory in the face of Christ (2Corinthians 4:6). Philippians 2:9 tells us that: *"Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name..."* Through Christ, God revealed His full loving nature to humankind. In the Old Testament, God spoke in various ways through the patriarchs and the prophets; but in the New Testament God has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world (Hebrews1:1-2).

Furthermore, the Gospel of Mathew 28:19 presents the same God as the Triune, meaning God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The book of Revelation 22:4 states that: *"They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads."* Here Apostle John describes the blessing and reward of being marked by God's new name, which is Christ.

Conclusion

On the lips of a modern person, tradition is just a mere version of the past. However, any tree must have roots in order to enable it to stand straight up in its majestic glory. Indeed, tradition is essential in all respects as it connects the past with the present, and the future. There is similarity between Mbori and Yahweh; therefore the Azande tradition and the new revelation of God's name in the New Testament must embrace each other.

As such the Christians Gospel must reach out to the culture and tradition of the Azande and African people at large without suppressing that potentially valuable tradition that is part and parcel of the Azande life. Zande tradition is succumbing to secularism embodied in individualism and the unnecessary yielding to everything in the name of freedoms, which are conducive to and a breeding ground for all kinds of immoralities. This significant aspect of the Azande culture, that of naming children with names that derive from the name of Mbori (God) should be encouraged. The Azande therefore should be baptized with their own family names which are more meaningful and concrete to the reality around them. Based on this analysis, one may agree with me that the Azande people do respect the Divine name of God and value it. This, therefore, means that Azande people are not religion-ignorant. Therefore, the same ways the Azande language is being used for preaching the Good News of salvation, the same should be applied by baptizing and christening Azande people using those names which are derived from the proper name of God.

For Christianity to penetrate all spheres of an Azande person there is need to repackage the way of evangelism, catechism, liturgy, discipline of the Church, and inclusion of public piety of the Azande and their good customs. Evangelism is more than to teach catechism, or pour water on people to conform them, and filling the register books with numerous names. But evangelism should be a reaching to reveal Christ through the material culture to bridge the gap between Christianity and the Azande traditions.

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