

**THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF ZIMBABWE**

**IN CONJUNCTION WITH**

**ZIMBABWE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROBLEM OF SYNCRETISM AMONG  
EMAKHANDENI CHRISTIANS**

**BY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Emakhandeni is an area that is open to the gospel of Jesus Christ; however it has been observed that the problem of syncretism among Christians is prevalent among Christians. The researcher intended to find out how much of African traditional religion (ATR), have been imported and infused into the Christian faith, because involvement of other beliefs in Christianity renders Christianity irrelevant and ineffective. The research was restricted to Rock of Ages, Methodist and Emakhandeni community churches. Syncretism has been investigated using qualitative methodology and phenomenology design. The targeted population was one hundred participants out of six hundred people from the three churches. Data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires, whilst secondary data from journals, newspapers and electronic reading material were used. Data presentation was done in the form of pie charts, tables and bar graphs. One of the major issues discovered was Christian identity meaning whether one is an African Christian or Christian African, for which without a clear understanding, syncretism may be practiced ignorantly under the influences of ATR. Moreover, research findings concerning traditional and spiritual problems, cultural practices and social issues were uncovered. Suggested recommendations sought to empower pastoral leadership and congregants to seek true biblical Christian practice through theological training, personal research and to fully depend on the work of the cross through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit should also be given room to teach and guide Christians to the whole truth of God's counsel.

**Key Words:** Syncretism, African Traditional Religion, Burial Customs, Missionary, Culture, Church Leadership