

MOKHUKHU DANCE

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- **INTRODUCTION**

- During the Palaeolithic age, an unknown artist painted a minor masterpiece on the wall of a Spanish cave. It represented three dancing men. In this particular instance it is without question a religious dance that was being depicted.
- Religious music plays a significant part in Hebrew culture throughout Biblical history. This illustrated by the fact that when the Israelites went into foreign captivity, kings took care to preserve the Hebrew musicians, who enjoyed international fame in the ancient near-east.

- Psalm 137 laments a similar sort of experience during captivity.
- It is impossible to think of a religious organisation without music.
- We are convinced that the early Christians knew how to sing.
- The book of Psalms is the great hymn book of the Bible.
- Music is the finest of the fine arts and sacred music ought to be the best.

- **BACKGROUND OF THE ZION CHRISTIAN CHURCH (ZCC)**

- The ZCC is the largest of the African Indigenous churches in Southern Africa
- and the second largest in Africa, second to the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth in Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Music and dancing are powerful forces of communication, and healing within the African communities.
- ZCC displays this fact through Mokhukhu dancers, like many other African Indigenous churches across the African continent.

- **MUSIC AND DANCE**

- The height of the ZCC calendar is the Annual Easter pilgrimage to Moriah.
- The Mokhukhu dancers are conspicuous in their uniform and attract thousands of spectators.
- At Moriah they normally compete against each other, but not necessary for a prize or a reward.
- The Mokhukhu dancers are the second best musical group in the church, second to the brass band which is led by his grace Bishop Barnabas Lekganyane.

- Africans are naturally inclined to music with rhythm.
- Blacks like singing at all times. It is not only when they are happy, but also in the midst of sorrow and trouble.
- Dance is one of the main pillars of any African community.
- Song and dance have always played a very important role in the life of an African.

- In the initiation school it is used as a very effective method of teaching.
- On the streets and sidewalks of South Africa, members of Mokhukhu dance are instantly recognisable.
- They all wear their white boots, khaki suits, khaki shirts, black tie, and a black cap with a silver five-pointed star on the forehead, with letters ZCC, sown on a small strip of green baize cloth and proudly pinned to their clothes.

- Mokhukhu simply means a shelter, a place giving protection from danger or a place providing food and accommodation.
- The Mokhukhu musical group is indeed a place of safety within the structures of the ZCC.
- The communal dance by male adherents involves leaping energetically into air and coming down firmly on both feet, with much jollification and rhythmic movement.
- It is a very rigorous dance.
- These men are able to sing for the whole night with only few intervals for tea and coffee without sugar and milk, which is prayed for.

- Mokhukhu dance is above all a healing dance, epitomizing the characteristics of sharing and egalitarianism.
- It provides healing in the most generic sense: it may cure a sick body or mind as the healer pulls out sickness by laying on hands; mend the social fabric as the dance promotes social cohesion and a manageable release of hostility.
- Mokhukhu dance is an act of worship.
- The Mokhukhu dance provides an outlet to the emotional expression of religious life and is a powerful means of communication in African traditional life.
- It helps to express fellowship and participation in life. It also helps to reduce stress and depression.

- Healing is the most dynamic experience known to the members of the ZCC. This church is well known- for its healing and prophetic ministry, which is its major force of attraction for millions of people.
- The founder of the church His grace Engenas, had healing and prophetic abilities.
- Mokhukhu dancers are full members of the church, and they are obliged to observe all the rules in order to perform their rigorous dance.

- **CONCLUSION**

- African creativity is producing an African church music suited to Africans – over one hundred and eighty years after the first missionaries brought Christianity to the Xhosa (and thereafter to the other Sotho languages peoples of Southern Africa).
- For so many years no steps were taken to develop an African music for worship, and yet the one called the “precursor of independency” – the prophet uTsikana’s – showed over hundred and eighty nine years ago that an African Christianity with its own African church music is completely possible, and in fact more effective than a mission Christianity.

- uTsikana's music has survived both within the African indigenous churches, including the ZCC, and as a traditional music.
- An interesting process of musical change is presently taking place within the missionary churches including the Catholic Church in South Africa
- A long-established prejudice and intuitive understanding of what is appropriate and acceptable for use in people's relationship with God.

- It is more than a question of what is acceptable, it is a question of what is musically satisfying to the worshipper; like for example the Mokhukhu dancers.
- The “Zionist” music has all but penetrated worship in the missionary churches. What is emerging is total removal of prejudice against “Zionist” songs

• THANK YOU