Preface

Until now the call to the Christian ministry may be what we knew most about African Christian dreams. The theological literature has not documented the role or significance of dreams and visions in the mission churches to any meaningful degree, while their prevalence and significance in many independent churches of Africa are well acknowledged. This study is the first treatment of African Christian dreams and visions on a systematic scale utilising data collected from a particular mission church, the Baptists of Zambia.

The phenomena of dreams and visions are prominent in various cultures in the non-Western world, as they are in the Biblical literature. The value and role of dreams and visions in the early church and their use, misuse or neglect in the ensuing centuries is noted. A Western psychological perspective to the phenomena is helpful in distinguishing their scientific from their religious dimensions.

The widespread use of dreams and visions in the independent churches of Africa is evaluated through a typology of dream and vision appearances and a typology of motifs. When compared with the dreams and visions of Zambian Baptists in rural and urban settings, similarities and differences appear. In addition, M.L. Daneel’s ten observations regarding dreams in the mission and independent churches are pegs which help us compare and better interpret the significance of dreams among Baptists of Zambia.

The study of Baptist dreams and visions, their regularity among church members, and the predominant failure to interpret and use dreams constructively, point to the need for greater appreciation of dreams and visions as legitimate means of divine revelation.

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