

**THE SOUND OF SACRIFICE: HEARING THE
HOMILY TO THE HEBREWS WITH ZULU EARS**

VERNON SABELO NDUMO

Dr. Wilhelm Meyer

Supervisor

Dr. Sibusiso Masondo

Co - Supervisor

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Natal; Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.**

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DECLARATION

I, Vernon Sabelo Ndumo, declare that

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Vernon Sabelo Ndumo

11 December 2015

Supervisor: Dr. Wilhelm Meyer

Co – Supervisor: Dr Sibusiso Masondo

11 December 2015

DEDICATION

The work done in this research is dedicated to my only surviving parent, my mother **Olga Zimbili Ndumo** for her love of education but who could not have formal education because of the opportunities back then. She has been a propelling force behind my studies and she continues to inspire me to study further in the near future. Lena eyakho mama wami, ngiyinikela kuwena uNkulunkulu akubusise njalo.

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Abstract

The book of Hebrews is saturated with the language of sacrifice especially chapters 9 and 10. It goes on to compare sacrifices of the old covenant and that of the new covenant, appealing that the new one is the better one to be accepted by the community. In this research I do not only look at it as a book but a homily to the Hebrews. This is informed by the way it was written. As the title stipulates, the phrase, “Sound of Sacrifice” is meant to appeal to the orality of the homily to the Hebrews in that the book seems to favour an extensive use of the verbs; “hear and listen” throughout. With “Hearing the homily to the Hebrews with Zulu ears”, I am putting both cultures Hebrew and Zulu into dialogue. I am exploring the new interpretation of the text of finding similarities between Hebrew and Zulu culture in the text and appealing to the Zulu community to accept the new order which is proposed in the homily, as it addresses the very needs of sacrifice but in the new order.

Chapter 1

Introduction, Motivation, Theoretical Framework and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

This research aims to hear the homily to the Hebrews with Zulu ears, as the title suggests. The main thing that a Zulu ear must hear is the language of sacrifice that is saturated in the homily (9:1 – 28; 10:1 - 22). What I want to indicate in this research is that sacrifice as it is performed by the Zulu people seems to be parallel with what the Hebrew people perform. In order to achieve all this, I will bring both cultures into dialogue by identifying the common factors in their sacrificial rituals. The main question that I will attempt to answer is this: “Are the sacrificial rituals administered in the Zulu culture by people of Christian faith any way sufficient for personal cleansing?”

I will start by sharing my personal testimony of something that happened to my family as far as sacrifice is concerned. After having brought the two cultures into dialogue with each other and using the lenses of Social Anthropologist Mary Douglas, I will then appropriate the homily to the Hebrews to my context, using inculturation as an African approach to Biblical interpretation. At that stage I will be looking at the sacrifice of Christ as an alternative sacrifice and perhaps the ultimate sacrifice as suggested by the homily to the Hebrews.

1.2 Motivation

I would like to share my testimony with regards to sacrifice in a Zulu context. The reason why I think we should heed the appeal of the homily to the Hebrews as a Zulu community, is to accept

the sacrifice of Christ as the ultimate sacrifice whether in urban or rural areas. The focus here is much about my experience, how I hear the homily to the Hebrews and what impact it has on me as a Christian Zulu man living in an urban area. I will also draw from the experiences and challenges of other people who have attempted to sacrifice or have sacrificed, and last but not least I would like to look at the negative effects of sacrificing

I grew up in the rural area called KwaNdaba in Estcourt. It was a big family that was rooted in the Zulu culture. Another thing to note about this family is that it was not rich, therefore it was struggling financially. It happened that two of my siblings were very sick, and my father being concerned about the wellbeing of his family and children, consulted the *isangoma*. His main aim was to get a remedy for the situation, since many attempts were done by sending them to professional medical doctors but help was not found. In the culture that I was raised up in, it was unusual for a person to just get sick, but rather the sickness in the family indicated that the ancestors were not pleased with something or they needed attention.

My father then did a noble thing by consulting well known and trusted *isangoma* with power to communicate with the ancestors. Fortunately the *isangoma* indicated to my father that she was able to speak with my deceased grandmother and had become an ancestor. One of the things that the *isangoma* did was to describe my deceased grandmother as she saw in a vision to my father. This built confidence for my father that he was consulting the right person. The description that the *isangoma* gave my father was perfect; by perfect I mean that it described everything that my dead grandmother had been. The utterances of the *isangoma*; built confidence in my father and was ready to hear what the problem was and the remedy to the situation.

The *isangoma* identified the problem that was faced by our family. The problem seemed to be simple yet with some complications. The problem was that since my grandmother died she had

not able to join the ancestral family because she was not cleansed. In an urgent need to be cleansed she caused my siblings to get sick. According to the *isangoma* it was the only way she could have caught the attention of my father. After the problem was identified she then indicated that my father needed to sacrifice two bulls to appease the wrath of the ancestor (*ulaka lwabaphansi*). The instructions were given by the *isangoma* to my father on how to officiate when making this sacrifice, and the warning was given that if the instructions were not to be followed as the ancestors wanted, the sacrifice was not going to be accepted.

The instruction given were as follows. Since the ancestors needed two bulls to be slaughtered, he had to slaughter two goats first: *ukundlalela¹ izinkunzi ezimbili* (in order to slaughter a bull it must be preceded by two goats). The second instruction was that my father had to *ukushisa impepho* (burn incense) and to carry *umlahlankosi²* from the grave to *emsamo wendlunkulu* (to the sacred place of the house of ancestors). He was not supposed to speak to anyone at that time until *ukushweleza kwabaphansi* (pleading with the ancestors) was completed.

The challenges with these instructions were that we were poor and it was difficult to get two bulls and two goats. We had to get other things like *utshwala besiZulu* (Zulu traditional beer) and food that was going to be eaten with the sacrificed meat. The driving force of my father to get these was his concern for his family and the sickness that was ravaging his family. When he had managed to secure all these things, the date of sacrifice was set and all other related things were arranged.

The other challenge was that our family had moved from where we were staying when my grandmother died to a new home. My father had to use public transport since he did not have

¹ *Ukundlalela* is to slaughter a goat before you slaughter a cow, this is a common practice amongst the Zulu people.

² A certain type of tree known as *umphafa* or *umlahlankosi* (*zizyphus mucronata*) is used to bring back the spirit of the departed person to look after the living members of the family. The branches and leaves of this tree are also used to attract ancestral spirits from an old kraal to the new one (Ngobese 2008:11)

money to hire his own transport. As he was instructed not to talk to anyone from the grave to *emsamo*, he was then greeted by a friend which forced him to exchange greetings with him then he proceeded. The sacrifice was done and there were celebrations at that ceremony. We were all excited thinking that the dark cloud that was over our family would move away and my siblings would be healed.

The strange thing is that even after this expensive, detailed and time consuming sacrifice things seemed not to be getting better. For those who were sick, it was like their situation was worsening and we felt as if the dark cloud was still lingering over our family. This prompted my father to go back to the *isangoma* for consultation again to hear what the problem was. The *isangoma* stipulated that the ancestors were displeased, because the instructions were not properly followed. She pointed out that my father exchanged those greetings with his friend and thus the sacrifice was not accepted as he was not supposed to speak to anyone until *ukushweleza emsamo* (pleading in a sacred place) had been done.

In all this what troubled my father was that his parents left him with nothing. In spite of that they demanded sacrifice, by causing chaos in our home. What baffled his mind was that his parents had spoken to him since he was young - why was it difficult for them to speak to him now? Above that, he expected them to appreciate all his effort and to have pity on him and his family. He then said to the *isangoma*, “Since you are able to speak with my parents, please let them know that I am displeased by their ungratefulness and I will never sacrifice anything to them.”

It was from that time onward that he stopped sacrificing to the ancestors. We then lived without being subjected to sacrifice, and we grew up without any further complications. Eventually my siblings were healed and our family was able to move on. Hearing the homily to the Hebrews, especially when it is indicated that the blood of the bulls and goats was falling short (Heb 10:4), it

reminded me of this story. It is through such experience that I felt motivated to look at the concept of sacrifice in the Bible. My attention was directed to the homily to the Hebrews as it talks more about sacrifice. However my intention is to hear this homily with Zulu ears.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The approach that I have used for my thesis as a theoretical framework is the African Biblical Hermeneutics. The main reason for this approach is that I hear the homily to the Hebrews with Zulu ears. This explicitly brings two communities into dialogue as I draw a parallel between the Jewish community and my Zulu community. This approach will strive to be faithful to the Bible as it seeks to hear the text within my own Zulu context.

The theoretical framework is informed by the “tri-polar approach”. Gerald West observed this about African Biblical Hermeneutics that, “most characterizations of Biblical hermeneutics tend to portray a bipolar approach, referring to a ‘comparative method’ in which the African context and Biblical text interprets each other.” (West 2010:21) For the purpose of this research I would like to stress that the tri-polar approach has been used.

The difference between the bipolar and tri-polar approaches is that “Biblical interpretation in Africa typically consists of three poles: the pole of the biblical text, the pole of the African context, and the pole of appropriation. Jonathan Draper has referred to this as a “tri-polar” approach (West 2008: 1). Draper calls the tri-polar method a three legged pot, for it needs all three legs to stand. What is helpful about Draper’s analysis is that it brings to the fore the often hidden third pole of ‘appropriation’” (West 2010: 21). While tri-polar is doing justice to the African scholarship by bringing the third pole, the bipolar approach seems to hide

the activity done by the reader in the dialogue of two poles. Hence Gerald West noted this in his critique of Hotler's comparative approach:

While the real reader who brings the Biblical text and African context into dialogue tends to remain 'hidden' in Hotler's explanation of the comparative method, it is always a reader who enables the text and the context to come into conversation. So when Hotler refers to the ways in which biblical text and African context 'illuminate one another', we must remember that they are only able to illuminate one another through the active participation of the reader. (West 2010: 22)

As we also engage with two communities, Draper suggests that the tri-polar method has a role to play, which I need to be aware of as an interpreter who is bringing two communities into dialogue:

Tripolar Model needs to take into account the influence of reading/interpretive communities and the possibility of making ideo-theological choices about what kind of reading community she or he belongs to and how it relates to the possibility of transformative praxis. As an aspect of this the emphasis on interpretive communities demands an accountability of the reader to others, taking responsibility for the implications of the interpretation, since there are no neutral or disinterested readings, but only interested readings declared or undeclared (Draper 2001:157)

1.3.1. Distantiation

In the first pole which is the text, I will do what we call *distantiation*. "Most attention in African Biblical interpretation focuses on the Biblical text and the methodologies used to exegete it. African Biblical Scholarship like Western Biblical Scholarship insists on *distantiation*." (West 2010:30) The main purpose of this pole is to distance yourself from the text. Draper says, "The reconstruction of the text in its own right and in opposition to us in our context and need" (Draper 2001:156). However Draper has been reluctant to use the term reconstruction. He further states that reconstruction has a narrow view of what he calls distantiation. He says:

"I use the term rather than reconstruction, the term of Bultmann. This is because I think it is the time to reject the hegemony of historical, critical study emerging from the

enlightenment privileging of historical questions as ‘scientific.’ I see no need to give such an exclusive status to historical study. There are valuable new tools coming from literary studies, such structuralism, rhetorical criticism or narrative criticism. There are also new models available to the exegete coming from social anthropology or cultural criticism. Nevertheless, there is a vital role for the exegete to gain ‘critical distance’ from the text, to suspend what s/he previously understood the text to mean, to open her/himself up to new understanding which may contradict her/his pre-suppositions.” (Draper 2002:17)

It is allowing the text to have its own voice and to speak for itself as some African Scholars put it.

That is why Gerald West says:

The Bible is a collection of ancient texts and each produced in a particular socio-historical context and the task of the biblical scholarship is ‘to hear’ the distinctive, ancient voices of the text within its socio-historical context. Before the text can be brought into dialogue with the context, it must be given its own voice. Biblical interpretation therefore seek to locate the text historically, using historical-critical tools, and then situate the historical text sociologically, within a particular social context using sociological tools. (2010:30)

This is the process when the hearer of the Bible tries by all means to distance himself/herself from the Bible and, for instance, insists that, “this stage of the process requires the reader/hearer to let the text be other than her/himself, to be strange, unexpected, even alienating. In other words, the Word is not under our control or at our disposal. It has an integrity of its own which stands over against us, challenges, and even judges us” (Draper 2002:18).

This process allows us to hear the text as it was intended for its first audience. We should understand that “if we are seeking the meaning intended by the author to the original recipients, that meaning must be the meaning they could understand at that time, not the meaning we would determine based on our position of advanced historical developments” (Klein et al 1993:10). That is why the end product of this first pole would be trying to let the text sound without any undue disturbances or interferences — as difficult as this might prove to be (see Yorke 1995).

1.3.2. Contextualisation

For the purpose of this research, I looked at contextualization as my second step in dealing with the text. This is the second pole that looks at the context and it is also known as *contextualisation*, which is born out of the question that the hearer/reader of the text may ask after approaching the text. As this research is done in Africa, therefore the African context should be taken into consideration. Gerald West notes some significant things about the context as far as the African Scholarship is concerned. He says:

While the Western forms of biblical interpretation have tended to hide or omit the contemporary context of the biblical interpreter, African biblical interpretation is overt about the context from which and for which the biblical text is interpreted. African Biblical Scholarship tries to be as thorough in its analysis of the details of African contexts as it has been about the details of the biblical text, using the whole array of historical and sociological tools. (2010:31)

The hearer of the text then looks at his or her own context. In defining it Draper says, “Contextualization involves spending time analysing who we are and what our location in society and history is. The new context is one of a new exploration of cultural identity and of a desperate need for social reconstruction and development” (Draper 2002:19). He goes on to say:

Thus contextualisation focuses specifically on analysis and evaluation of the context of the reader/hearer today. We need to understand who we are as readers and what are the questions which we bring to the text. Many different tools can be helpful in opening us up to our context. All of the analysis we undertake at this stage will be aimed at understanding ourselves as historical beings rooted in a specific time and place. The process of exegesis consists in bringing these two historical specificities together in their uniqueness and subjectivity so that each throws light on the other so that horizons touch and fuse in historical consciousness as Gadamer (1998:306 – 307) describes it. (Draper 2001:156)

In this pole I will be interrogating the text (Hebrews Community) and listening to its sound while being conscious of my context (Zulu cultural context). According to Draper at the end of this pole, the exegete acknowledges that “there is no absolute meaning of the text.” (Draper 2001:156)

1.3.3. Appropriation

This third pole is the meeting point of the first (*distantiation*) and the second (*contextualisation*). It is called appropriation. It is in this pole where we find “that there is an engagement between biblical text and African context is fundamental to African Biblical scholarship.”(West 2010:22). For Draper, “It is a process of owning the Word, of accepting the meaning I have discovered in my own context and community and taking responsibility for it” (Draper 2002:18).

This is very crucial pole to the Africans because it is not just about reading the text but about social transformation that must be born out of dialoguing with the text. “Biblical interpretation is always about changing the African context. That is what links the ordinary African Biblical interpretation and African Biblical scholarship a common commitment to ‘read’ the Bible for personal and societal transformation”. (West 2010:22)

It is in this third pole where one tries to make sense of what one studied from the Bible in one’s context. West calls this an “*ideo-theological* orientation because the act of appropriation involves a dynamic, back-and-forth movement and engagement, both the Bible and the interpreter contribute to and constitute the *ideo-theological* orientation of any particular interpreter” (2010:23). My *ideo-theological* approach will be grounded in inculturation hermeneutics since I am dealing with my own African culture. West came up with this *ideo-theological* orientation as his critique of Draper’s tripolar method. At the end Draper also felt the need to modify his method. Hence he says:

The first step forward in modifying my own model of hermeneutics, the so-called Tripolar model, is to acknowledge the role of the *ideo-theological* orientation of the reader, the pre-understanding with which the reader comes to the text and the goals, acknowledged or unacknowledged which led the reader to the Bible and indeed to this particular text. Failure to do so leads to a breakdown of genuine dialogue between a text and a reader from the outset, because it is a pseudo communication in Habermas's terms and is likely only to

confirm the reader's prior commitments and re-assure her or his pre-judices. (Draper 2001:157)

The goal of this pole or its end results should be the praxis that comes as a result of exegesis.

Draper outlines the goal that needs to be achieved by this pole.

We need read with openness to the possibilities of the numinous within the community of faith and interpret the 'sacred text' within the framework. Interpretation brings together the horizon of the text and its community and the horizon of the reader and his community and mediates a new consciousness leading to a new praxis. Appropriation implies praxis. This is why exegesis of the Bible is so important because what a community of faith believes affects what it does. (2001: 158).

This work should be carefully done while being conscious of what West is putting across, when he says, "the two other poles, the biblical text and the African context, are no less important, but the examination of the third pole clarifies how these two fundamental poles are brought into dialogue." (West 2010: 22)

1.3.4. Inculturation

Inculturation is one of the '*ideo-theological orientation[s]*' as West puts it. It is the tool that is used in African scholarship when appropriating the text. In fact Ukpong says, "Inculturation hermeneutics arose as a response, paying attention to the African socio-cultural contexts and the questions that arise therefrom." (Ukpong 1995:4) "Inculturation hermeneutics 'designates' an approach to biblical interpretation which seeks to make the African context the subject of interpretation; which means that every dimension of the interpretive process is consciously informed by the worldview of, and life experience with in that culture" (West 2010:23).

In fact Ukpong goes on to state that there are two broad tasks that the inculturation hermeneutics has. He says:

Inculturation hermeneutics has two broad tasks within which there are ramifications. One is appraising the cultural human dimension of the Bible in respect of its attitude to and evaluation of 'other' people and culture. The point of departure here is that the Bible is not (culturally and ideologically) an innocent text. It is God's word in human language which implies human culture with its ideology, worldview, orientation, perspective, values, and disvalues that are intertwined with the word of God. The other task is reading the Bible to appropriate its message for a contemporary context. This involves engaging a biblical text in dialogue with a contemporary contextual experience so as to appropriate its message in today's context. (Ukpong 2002: 18)

Whereas inculturation as my ideo-theological orientation is the perfect tool in interrogating the text because "inculturation hermeneutics designates an approach to biblical interpretation." (Ukpong 1995:6) Therefore inculturation will be the tool that will bring a dialogue out of Hebrews 9 and 10 with my Zulu context of sacrificial rituals

In my ideo-theological approach I will be stressing the fact that I am against sacrifice as it is done in the Zulu context. I will show that through translation as my appropriation. There are three kinds of translations as stipulated by many scholars (Klein et al 1993:74). These kinds of translations are what we see as a final product of translation. These three kinds of translations are as follows: *formal equivalent*, *dynamic equivalent* and *paraphrases*. Klein and others give us a detailed explanation on how these three kinds of translation work:

"Certain versions try to adhere as closely to Hebrew or Greek grammar and syntax as possible, while still being understandable in English. These may be called formally equivalent translations. The NASB is a prime example. Other versions seek to reproduce thought-for-thought rather than word-for-word and are called dynamically equivalent translations. They seek to produce the same effect on readers today that the original produced on its readers. Paraphrases go one step further; they add explanatory words or phrases that do not correspond to anything in the original text and are not necessary to preserve the sense of the passage, but which, nevertheless, give the text added freshness and impact." (Klein et al. 1993: 74, 75)

For what I would like to achieve, I have not used the formally equivalent or the dynamically equivalent of the IsiZulu translation, but I have opted for the paraphrased translation. As is stipulated above, I do not use the words that correspond to anything in the original text. My main aim is for the Zulu ears to understand them as presented in the homily. At the end of comparing different translations, I will have my personal translation which I see as a dynamic equivalent. However I have also given some commentary on some of the passages where I feel they resonate more with our Zulu sacrificial ritual language. It is through the brief commentary made that I have expressed my views and at the same time given a critique on the words used in the 1959 IsiZulu translation.

1.4 Methodology

The methodology that I will be using here is grounded in social anthropology. I will be using it especially in light of the work of Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* (1966: II). In her work she looks at the body as a social map. In other words, the body has markers which determine one's position, one's pure or impure status or place in the community. The critique of the social anthropologist is very significant when it comes to this research project.

In commenting on the sacrificial ritual, for example, Douglas has this to say:

“The commonest of all expression for atonement, *kipper*, also points in this direction if the original meaning of the term may be defined as “to wipe away” on the basis of the Babylonians and Assyrian parallels. Here the fundamental concept of sin of a material impurity, and the blood, as a holy substance endowed with miraculous power, is expected to remove stain of sin quite automatically. (1966:26)

This method will then help us to look comparatively at both communities: the ancient Jewish and the Zulu communities from the perspective of social anthropology. It has been understood that most cultures perform sacrificial rituals so that they may be accepted in the society. Now this

acceptance can only be seen or realised when a person is pure, and according to Mary Douglas no-one can be accepted when they are unclean. Hence she says, “For us sacred things and places are to be protected from defilement. Holiness and impurity are at the opposite poles.” (1966:7)

Now this separation of the “sacred and impure” can be seen in both cultures under my scrutiny. What is notable in what she says below is that both cultures (Hebrew and Zulu) have witnessed this, especially in some circles:

The person under the taboo is not regarded as holy, for he is separated from approach to the sanctuary, as well as from contact of men, but his act or condition is somehow associated with supernatural dangers, arising, according to the common savage explanation, from the presence of formidable spirits which are shunned like an infectious disease. (Douglas 1966:10)

She indicates clearly that the person who is regarded as impure or unclean eventually becomes an outcast, a person that you cannot easily associate with unless if you want to be defiled too. The remedy that restores one’s dignity and a rightful place in the society is sacrificial ritual and other forms of cleansing rituals in both Hebrew and Zulu communities. Therefore from the work of Mary Douglas, “purity and danger” is the best suited methodology for my research.

For the purpose of my research I do not focus on other cleansing rituals but only on sacrificial rituals. I zoom into defilements/unsacredness/impurity in both communities that require the cleansing which can only be achieved through the performance of sacrificial ritual. The spectacles I wear are those of Mary Douglas the social anthropologist, because I deal with communities and their social issues and will help us to determine if, indeed, we can hear the sound of sacrifice to the Hebrews with Zulu ears.

1.4.1 Translation Theory

The other tool that will be relevant for this research is translation. This tool is important because in my attempt to hear the homily with Zulu ears, I have chosen to present the text with my personal translation. Why translation? What will this translation bring about in this research? As I am dealing with sacrifice done in the Zulu community, it is crucial to have the homily in understandable language. Nord explains the need for translation. His explanation is crucial as I deal with the homily that was presented in a particular language of a particular culture and was listened to in a different language of a different culture.

Translation is the production of a functional target text maintaining a relationship with a given source text that is specified according to the intended or demanded function of the target text (translation skopos). Translation allows a communicative act to take place which because of existing linguistic and cultural barriers would not have been possible without it (Nord 2005: 31).

It will be through translation that I will be able to achieve my goal. At present we have the translation in IsiZulu that was published in 1959, and the ‘New Testament with Psalms’ that was published in 1986. The reason why I choose to use the 1959 translation is that most people in the Zulu community are in possession of the 1959 translation as it comes with both Old and New Testament, which is normal for their convenience.

The difference between my translation and the 1959 one is that some of the words that were used in the 1959 translation are no longer used, therefore my personal translation will seek to bring in new words that are used by modern Zulu speakers and are easily heard as they are frequently used. By doing the above, I will be trying to achieve the goal of translation which is to bring new concepts. As is stated by Timothy Wilt:

Translation is... a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and poetics as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. (Wilt, 2002: 8)

The work of translation will be done from Greek to IsiZulu, as the Homily to the Hebrews was first written in Greek.

About how this translation connects to orality, Harvey says: “prior to the introduction of alphabet, early Greek culture was neither “primitive” nor “illiterate.” It was nonliterate; oral communication dominated all relationships and transactions.” (Harvey 1998: 9). Since most translated text was at first spoken, then it is my pursuit to translate in a way that will appeal to the ear rather than the eye. Draper explains the links between orality and literacy when he says:

Verbal art truly matures only in texts. Only by inscription can we manage complex literary maneuvering. Oral poetry is all well and good, but it fulfils its promise only when the new vehicle of literacy (our own vehicle) comes to prominence. Writing restructures consciousness, makes more reasoning more analytical, and clears the way for major Western monuments such as the ancient Greek Iliad and Odyssey, which are simply unimaginable without textual underpinning. (Draper 2004: 9)

In my pursuit of getting the homily to be heard with Zulu ears, I will not only translate from Greek. However the two English versions differ in the sense that they were not published at the same time and they have different translations. This helps me to have more translations at my disposal for comparison's sake. I am being careful in undertaking this task as I will be comparing with the translation already in use so that I do not lose the theology of the book in my deliberation.

Chapter 2 –

Authorship, Dating and Audience; and Hebrews and the Old Testament

2.1 Authorship, Dating and Audience

At the end of his pursuit of the author of Hebrews, Neil exclaimed, “As to who actually wrote the epistle, God knows the truth of the matter” (Neil, 1955: xiii). The book of Hebrews authorship has been contested by many New Testament scholars. It is not my intention to look deeply into the issues of authorship, but I would not like to overlook the matter. The reason is that the authorship also gives an indication as to who may be the audience and vice versa. This is crucial for my research because I am looking at the communities, the first being my community the Zulu community and the Hebrews community. There have been a number of suggested scholars by various New Testament scholars and historians, whom I would like to look at closely.

The first person that the authorship has been attributed to is Paul by “Clement of Alexandria” (Eusebius, H.E. 6.14), who said Paul wrote the Epistle and Luke translated it from Hebrew into Greek” (Montefiore 1964: I). “There is no internal evidence to lend support to Clément’s hypothesis that the Epistle, as now we have it, is the translation document” (Montefiore 1964: I). Hagner challenges the attribution on three points: it is almost unanimously agreed that Paul did not write Hebrews; the document is more a homily-treatise than an epistle and some have even challenged whether it was written to Hebrews, that is, to Jewish Christians” (Hagner 2002:24).

The second argument by Collins says:

The absence of the standard epistolary greeting from the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews means that this is the only one the fourteen letters traditionally attributed to

Paul which does not explicitly claim Pauline authorship. In fact, the name of the Apostle is never mentioned in the Epistle. (1988: 20)

The tradition noted the inclusion of “Timothy” in Hebrews 13:23. It suggested that Paul is the author since he had a companion by the name of Timothy. In disputing this argument Collins says, “Timothy was not an uncommon name in antiquity. Christians commonly referred to one another as brother and sister (see 1Cor 9:5, for example). Thus, it is not demonstrably certain that the Timothy of Hebrews 13:23 is the same individual as the companion of Paul whose name appears in 1 Thess1:1” (Collins, 1988:20).

Some have proposed and attributed the authorship to Luke. But as far as the language used here is concerned, it seems to eliminate him as one of the candidates. “It seems incredible that, had he written the Epistle, he would not have introduced somewhere into the Acts of the Apostles a reference to Christ’s high priesthood.” (Montefiore 1964:1) The absence of the central message of the book of Hebrews about the sanctuary and Christ’s priesthood which should have been mentioned in his other previous books makes one question his authorship. “He emphasised there the Ascension, and stressed the importance of the sufferings of the Christ; but he did not think of Christ as the high priest of the heavenly Sanctuary. Luke therefore cannot be accepted as a serious candidate for authorship” (Montefiore, 1964:1).

There has been mention of other potential authors by historians most of whom are disputed too. The list includes but is not limited to Apollos, Barnabas, Clement, Priscilla and others. Even so “numerous other suggestions have been made in modern scholarship, but commentators are increasingly reluctant to identify the author with any individual named in the New Testament” (Lindars, 1991:17).

While we may not have the name in the New Testament identified as the author, Collins argues that there are few things that we understand about him/her. These are crucial for the purpose of

my research. The first one is that, “reading the work gives us the impression that its author was a well-educated individual, well versed in the Greek language and familiar with Jewish traditions.” (Collins, 1988:47) The other important aspect that reveals the author to us is that, “the author of Hebrews can be identified as a Hellenistic Jew” (Collins, 1988:47). In fact Collins goes on to make a strong utterance about this. He says:

We do not know the identity of the author of Hebrews. We know something of his skill and his vision. We know something of his Hellenistic Jewish background and of his closeness to the community for which he wrote. We know that he was a Christian of the second generation. (Collins, 1988:52, 53)

The above then becomes crucial because it asserts that the author knows what he is talking about as far as the Jewish culture is concerned.

Having such an author as the one described by Collins gives me courage that the book of Hebrews will give me clear or first-hand information when it comes to the Jewish tradition. Therefore my submission is that not knowing the author or his/her identity is not a hindrance in the interpretation of the text. Collins goes on to say, “in fact the issue of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is more an issue for the study of the tradition of the church than it is a study relevant to the interpretation of the text itself.”

Since there are some uncertainties about the author of Hebrews the dating of the book is not exempted too. However for the purpose of this research there are some key factors that I would like to look at. The argument about dating seems to be centred in the Jerusalem Temple that was destroyed in A.D. 70. Bruce says:

True, there is no overt reference to the temple; the ritual details which figure in the epistle are mostly taken from the Old Testament account of Tabernacle. Yet in principle the tabernacle and the temple were one; the ritual of the former was the ritual of the latter. And our author writes as if the ritual were still going on. (1964: xliii)

While not disputing the above argument Lindars indicates that we cannot have this argument only to determine the dating of the book. “Hebrews simply presupposes that what was done in the temple (or used to be done, if it is destroyed) accords with the standards of the law. (1991:20). He goes on to say:

Firstly Hebrews gives no impression that the readers were turning to a spiritualising of sacrifice which was considered more effective than the spirituality of the sacrifice of the death of Jesus. It is always presupposed that the actual sacrificial system is the only alternative on offer. This does not mean that the readers would have to be within the range of the temple, only that they would wish to have the practical means of feeling solidarity with its worship which were open to all Diaspora Jews. (1991:20)

The author’s crucial factor which is brought forward by those who are challenging the approach of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, is that the author seems not to talk about it. It could have been a huge event and probably could have been highlighted it in his homily. Hagners says, “It is important to note moreover that the author does not seem to know of the destruction of Jerusalem (in A.D. 70). This is evident not so much from use of the present tense in describing the temple cultus, but rather from the fact that the author makes no reference to its actual end, which would have provided a fitting capstone to his argument” (2002:25).

“Hebrews must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 because: (1) If it had been written after this date, the author surely would have mentioned the temple’s destruction and the end of the Jewish sacrificial system; and (2) the author consistently uses the Greek present tense when speaking of the temple and the priestly activities connected with it (see 5:1–3; 7:23,27; 8:3–5; 9:6–9,13,25; 10:1,3–4,8,11; 13:10–11). (Biblica 2014)

As we look at some of the arguments about audience, Kalengyo gives a summary of everything when he says, “whoever the writer of Hebrews was and the readers were, one thing is certain from Hebrews: The writer knows the specific community he is writing to and the community knows him.” (Kalengyo 2006:64) He is making this statement on the basis of the numerous verses in

Hebrews where the author seems to identify himself / herself with the readers, promising them a visit and above all he knows their past life experiences. Even though Kalengyo says this, there have been a lot of debates as far as audience is concerned but I will elaborate on that in the following paragraph.

Some of the arguments about the audience I have alluded to above when writing about the dating of the book. In the many theories with regards to the audience or people addressed, some have thought that it is Rome or Corinth, and others Jerusalem. Those who are pro-Jerusalem (Wm Ramsay, C. H. Turner and others) say that, “the concentration on sacrifice has suggested Jerusalem” (Lindars 1991:18). “But the consistent reference to the tent in the wilderness rather than the temple makes this unlikely.” (1991:18)

The epistle seems to give us a variety of clues as to who the audience was or is. The very first one is the one that we have indicated before when we were dealing with dating which is also affirmed by Kalengyo: “it is also clear that both the writer and the readers have a sound knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures (especially the LXX) judging from the level of quotation and use of the Old Testament passages in the whole argument.” (Kalengyo 2006:64). The second clue is the use of the word “Hebrews”. Lindars argues that “the address, ‘to the Hebrews’ remains an unsolved problem. It is most likely to that it means a group of Christians who are Jews by race (cf 2 Cor. 11. 22; Phil. 3.5).” (Lindars, 1991:17)

In elaborating on what Lindars says about the audience being likely to be a group of Christians who are Jews by race, Bruce goes on to say, “the addressees appear, then, to have been a group of Jewish Christians who had never seen or heard Jesus in person, but learned of Him (as the writer of the epistle also did) from some who had themselves listened to Him.” (Bruce, 1964: xxx). What

seems to be clear from the New Testament scholarship is that the book talks about the Jews in Diaspora (See Bruce, Masoga and others). Hagner argues that, “a specific community or perhaps a cluster of communities of Jews is clearly in view.” (2002: 23)

In looking at the extensive usage of the Old Testament quotations, most scholars have noted and agreed that it is Greek (Septuagint). Bruce also indicates the following:

“We may infer from the epistle that they were Hellenists; they knew the Old Testament in the Greek version. It is implied, too, that their knowledge of the ancient sacrificial ritual of Israel was derived from reading of the Old Testament and not from the first hand contact with the temple services in Jerusalem.” (1965: xxx)

The major question is where did they live? “Where this group of Jewish Christians lived remains uncertain. It does not follow that because they were Jews they lived in Palestine, since Jews and Jewish Christians lived throughout the Roman Empire”. (Hagner 2002: 24) The internal evidence has given us an indication that the audience seems to be connected with those that are in Italy. While some scholars are reluctant to point out the destination as Rome, the majority in New Testament scholarship seems to point to Rome. Kalengyo suggests that,

“The single reference to Italy (13:24) in the farewell greeting is not conclusive. The phrase ‘those from Italy’ (*οἱ ἰπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας*) can either be understood to refer to ‘members of readers’ own group (in which case the destination would be Italy, possible Rome)’, or those in Italy with the writer send their greeting.” (Kalengyo 2006: 66)

Hagner seems to subscribe to this idea by Kalengyo and in addition to that he seems to add what he perceives as a cutting edge in pointing out the destination of the Hebrews. He agrees that the phrase “those that are in Italy” may mean two things as has been stipulated before. But he goes on further to say, “they could indicate that the letter was addressed to the community or communities in Rome and those who were in Italy with the author wished to be remembered to their compatriots.” (Hagner 2002: 24). Basing this argument on internal evidence, all pointers seem

to point at Rome as the destination. The internal evidence that points to Rome is not limited to persecutions but also to the generosity of the audience, which most scholars believe that they affirm Rome. This is a result of knowing the state of the Roman Church compared to the impoverished Jerusalem Church (See Hagner, Montefiore and others).

2.2 Hebrews and the Old Testament

As I have indicated above on the issue of authorship, one of the arguments raised is that the book has no epistolary salutations or greetings. In the absence of the epistolary greetings, Bruce suggests that,

“Its literary character is defined for us by the author himself: it is a ‘word of exhortation’, as he puts it in Ch. 13:22. A ‘word’ of exhortation’ is a form of sermon or homily, as is made plain in Acts 13:15, where the rulers of the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch invite Paul and Barnabas to speak if they have any word of exhortation for the people. (Bruce 1964 xlviij)

“We must conclude that Hebrews is written as an address to be read at the Christian assembly, finishing with the blessing in (13: 20-21)” (Lindars 1991:7). Since this is the homily to the Hebrews then we should note that there is an extensive usage of the Old Testament. “Hebrews, as we have noted is filled with Old Testament quotations and to a large extent the author builds his argument upon them” (Hagner 2002:31). Considering the usage of the Greek language something more to be noted about these quotations is that, “the form in which the Old Testament is quoted throughout the epistle is regularly that of the Septuagint version.” (Bruce 1964: xlix)

What is of interest is that the quotations are not from one Old Testament book but are from different books. What seems to be noted right from the onset is that, “the opening chain of seven quotations includes three from well-known ‘messianic’ passages: Psalm 2:7; 2 Samuel 7:14 (both in 1:5); Psalm 110:1 (in 1:13). Already we are dealing with a deeper meaning or fuller sense which the

Jews themselves recognized, than is to be found in the original historical reference (an enthroned king in the two psalms; Solomon in 2 Samuel 7)” (Hagner 2002:31).

Why is it crucial for the author to use extensive quotes on the Old Testament? What is he planning to achieve with this hermeneutical tool? Bruce suggests that “the historical perspective of the Old Testament is well preserved in Hebrews because our author thinks of the age of anticipation as foreshadowing the age of fulfilment; he finds it necessary to look before and after” (Bruce 1964: li). This kind of interpretation is significant because it uses the Old Testament as a shadow of things to come. That is why Hagner says:

Much of Hebrews may be described as Christological in content that is, it centres on the person and work of Jesus Christ. The author’s interpretation of the Old Testament may also be designated as Christocentric. Very simple, this means that the ultimate or final meaning of the Old Testament is to be found in its *telos* (goal), Christ. It is Jesus Christ of History who stands as the goal, the achieved purpose of all that God has said and done in the Old Testament. (2002:31)

The serious question I always face when I am looking at Hebrews is the integration of the Old and the New. This question does not end only in the connection of the Old and New but it goes further to the status of the Old when the new comes.

“The Old Testament is an unfinished story; it cannot be made to stand entirely on its own legs. It remains valid in itself as indispensable preparation, but as Jeremiah saw something new was needed. Already within the old order the old was inadequate. Speaking through Jeremiah God declared the first covenant old and soon to disappear (cf Heb 8:13). The coming of the new involved fundamental changes of the old, one of the remarkable things about Hebrews is the courage with which the Jewish author writing to the Jewish readers marks out the discontinuity of old. (Hagner 2002:35)

As Hagner stated above, it becomes clear that the relationship between Judaism and Hebrews is that the former finds its meaning in the latter. That is why we see an extensive usage of the Old Testament quotes and it is not unusual because many New Testament authors have done the same.

“The notion of sacrifice is of course not unique to the New Testament documents, especially not when compared to the Old Testament. But also beyond that comparison, sacrifice is an enduring phenomenon in religion, from the earliest times, which also explains the enduring interest in and value attached to sacrifice in scholarly research.” (Punt 2009:431) I therefore note that as part of my work I will be looking at Hebrews which is not alienated from the Old Testament writings.

2. 3. Orality in the Bible

One thing that we should understand when we talk about orality in the Bible is to learn to understand the basics as to how the Bible came to be a book. This part is crucial as I seek to hear the “Sound of Sacrifice” with Hebrew ears. For that to be realized, I need to look at the Bible Context mainly in the OT first, before even zooming into Hebrews. We know that the Bible is more about Jewish people. Ben-Amos indicates that “The Jews, as a people, maintain a collective memory that extends well into the second millennium BCE. Although literacy undoubtedly figured in the preservation of the Jewish cultural heritage to a great extent, at each period it was complemented by orality” (Ben – Amos, 1999: 140). Now if we talk about cultural heritage we also talk about the collective memory that was needed so that rituals that were to be remembered by the nation come to mind. Ben–Amos suggests that this is also the case with the Bible: :

The preservation of historical events in a national collective memory requires the institutionalization of a ritual narration of history. This process is evident in the biblical instructions for the commemoration of the exodus from Egypt: “You shall say to your children, ‘We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt and the Lord freed us from Egypt with a mighty hand’” (Deuteronomy 6:21; see also Exodus 13:8). The ritual observance of the transmission of historical narratives became known as *leil shimurim* (“night of vigil,” Exodus 12:42), a term that likely refers to all-night storytelling. (Ben–Amos 1999:141)

It should be understood that even though we talk about orality, there is still written material even though at times a limited one. Shiner in his writings:

“...had stressed the difference between oral and written media, his later writings have explored the complex interrelationship between the two in rhetoric cultures such as that found in the Roman Empire during New Testament times. Oral delivery was still the norm in a rhetoric culture, but the nature of the compositions and the method of composition were very different from those found in purely oral culture.” (Shiner 2006:147)

When commenting about this rhetoric culture, Harvey says:

...such culture is familiar with writing, but in essence, oral. The predominantly oral nature of a rhetorical culture requires speakers to arrange their material in ways that can be followed easily by a listener. Clues to the organization of thought are, of necessity, based on sound rather than on sight. (Harvey 1998: xv)

Orality is then not a strange phenomenon in Hebrews as it permeates the whole Bible.

Sterne presents a formal theory that was given by Walter Ong and it will help us to understand what orality encompasses. He seems to be against the above quotations because he stresses the fact that to him oral cultures are those without writing. In this theory he argues the binary oppositions between seeing and hearing. He says:

Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy* (1982) presents a formal theory of consciousness and culture deductively derived from a set of binary oppositions between hearing and seeing. Ong posited orality as that mode of consciousness structured by the impossibility of writing anything down, or of even conceptualizing that possibility. “Without writing, words as such have no visual presence, even when the objects they represent are visual. They are sounds. ... They are occurrences, events” (p. 30). For Ong, cultures without writing are by definition oral cultures, and they have a distinctive set of characteristics. Ong causally derived most of the salient features of oral culture from the ephemeral character of sound. When sound is present, it is already going out of existence. The rest were derived from hearing's ability to detect interiority without violating it. You can hear what is inside an object without passing through its surface; according to Ong, you cannot do the same with touch, taste, smell, or sight. (Sterne 2011: 211)

Walter Ong in his assertion that the Bible has a rhetoric culture, and as Harvey indicated that in such culture there is orality and limited reading. Even though the Bible has a rhetoric culture Ong calls that it should be celebrated but below he goes a bit further to suggest that the Bible is orally

grounded. He says the fact that Jesus is understood in Christian tradition as the Word of God, he is understood as a spoken word rather than written word.

Because of its orally grounded prophetic and witnessing cast, the Bible is very likely the most variegated orality-literacy mix we have in any text. Moreover, despite the radical primacy that the biblical text has in Christian tradition, the Word of God, who is the Son, is to be thought of by analogy with the human spoken word, not the written word. Our growing appreciation of the economy of oral thought and expression promises to deepen our understanding of the word of God in the fullness of all its various senses, to provide new insights for biblical studies and thereby for the study of salvation history, that is, of the work of redemption itself as this manifests itself in biblical faith, as well as new insights into the other religions of the world which rely on texts developing out of unimaginably rich oral prehistories (Ong 1987: 381)

Chapter 3 –

Background of Hebrews Sacrifice

3.1 Definition of Sacrifice

The word sacrifice seems to have a wide variety of meanings. It is crucial for the purpose of this research to look at the meaning of this verse. As Skyes points out that, “the word has a wider connotation and comprehends the surrender to the deity of some object or possession which may be other than a beast or a bird, for the purpose of propitiation or homage.” (Sykes 1991:9) Out of interest in the word I then looked at the origin of it and its original meaning as it had been stipulated above that it might have a wider connotation. Kalengyo gives an interesting etymological meaning of this word. He says, “the word sacrifice originates from two Latin words: *sacer* = sacred; and *facere* = to make; thus etymologically, it means ‘to make something sacred’, i.e. to set something apart or make it sacred.” (Kalengyo 2006:16) Therefore an act of sacrifice as Sykes and Kalengyo have stated has something to do with the gods or with holy things. In addition to what they have stated, Pedley states, “to sacrifice is to perform a sacred act, or to make something sacred, to separate it from the world of men and give it to the gods” (Pedley 2006:80).

Kalengyo, Burkett and others give us the view of how the Graeco-Roman world viewed sacrifice and what their understanding of it was:

The of essence of the sacred act, which is hence often simply termed doing or making sacred or working sacred things, is in Greek practice a straightforward and far from miraculous process: the slaughter and consumption of a domestic animal for a God. (Kalengyo 2006:16)

It seems evident from the definition and their understanding of sacrifice that it was an important aspect in their lives. Hence Kalengyo continues to say, “as with nearly all pre-Christian religions, the main element of Roman worship was the sacrifice: *rem divinam facere* “to attend divine matters” was practically synonymous with ‘to sacrifice.’ (Kalengyo 2006:16, Gladigow 1992:812)

It should be acknowledged that sacrifice did not originate with the Jews but it has been a worldwide phenomenon. “The vital importance of going outside the Judaeo-Christian tradition must be reaffirmed. Sacrifice is a factor in the religious evolution of mankind, not merely of the Hebrews. It may be possible to maintain as does Young (1979), that sacrifice is a strictly universal phenomenon.” (Sykes 1991:12)

3.2 Sacrifice in Jewish Religion

In the Judean religion there were public offerings which were done in public places and some were done on behalf of the public. Such offerings were done in the Jerusalem temple. However there were also private offering or individual offerings that were done. The motive of all forms of sacrifice was according to Petropoulou:

“A whole burnt offering serves the offerer’s motive to honour God, because it is complete, with no elements of self-interest (unlike the other two kinds of offerings which represents man’s personal preoccupation); a preservation offering shows the offerers concern with participation in the benefits of life; a sin offering is made by someone who wants to remove evils namely, errors committed in the past.” (2008:174)

The above motives seem to be the driving factors of making a sacrifice. In the Jewish religion according to Young and others there are classifications of types of sacrifice, which are crucial in our understanding of sacrifice. He mentions that there are (a) communion-sacrifices, (b) holocausts, and (c) expiatory sacrifices (see Young 1979).

Young continues:

“This term is intended to cover all sacrifices of the offerer, his family and guests and the priest partook. Originally it was as the at local altars whenever meat was eaten, part of the slaughtered animal being offered to God on the same principle as the first fruits, namely that God’s gift of food should not be enjoyed without offering part to him in gratitude.” (Young 1979:35)

As the word suggests, this kind of an offering was offered and it had communal participation. The slaughtered animal or any form of sacrifice was shared between God and the one who makes an offering, which may include his family and those related to him. The second being the holocausts; which he defines it as,

“The whole burnt offering was the best gift that could be offered to God, and it expressed the worshiper’s praise and thanksgiving. This should be contrasted with Greek religion, where, as we saw earlier, the holocaust was an offering of aversion to the underworld powers. In the later Temple the priests offered daily burnt-offerings on behalf of the nation, so performing a continual act of praise to God for his mercies.” (Young 1979:38)

This form of offering was seen by others as the real form of sacrifice because the entire object of worship was dedicated to God. Even though Young points out the criticism of this kind of offering that at first, “costly gifts were thought to gain God’s favour but in later Judaism such an attitude was not general. Because man owes everything to God, it is right that tribute should be paid to him.” (1979:39)

The third in the classification of types according to Young is expiatory sacrifices. According to him:

“The ritual for the expiatory sacrifices differs from that of the two types of sacrifice we have so far considered. As in the communion-were, only specified parts were offered to God, but by contrast, the one who needed purification was not permitted to eat the flesh of the sacrifice; it was therefore eaten by the priests, unless the sacrifice was offered on the priest’s behalf, in which case it was thrown outside and burned. The blood ritual was more elaborate than in other types of sacrifice, because the blood was considered to be the agent in expiating sin. The object of these offerings was the removal of ritual impurities, whether of the altar, the sacred vessels, the priests, the nation or individual.” (1979:40, 41)

3. 2. 1 Sacrifice in the Bible

In this section I look at the metamorphosis of sacrificial ritual in the Bible. The idea behind this is to indicate that sacrifice has always been changing, taking different forms at different times. “The form of Judaism which pagans and the first Christians knew was a monotheistic religion defined by a sacred book and a temple: the Pentateuch, and the Temple in Jerusalem.” (Petropoulou 2008:123) This metamorphosis of sacrificial ritual is not only seen by Petropoulou but other authors too. Even though this has been rooted in the Bible at the beginning there are changes from time to time. Jones goes on to suggest that, “within the Old Testament there are signs of profound change. The sacrificial cult operating in the post-exilic period is different in detail and completeness from that operating under the kings.” (Sykes 1991:13)

The metamorphosis of sacrificial ritual in the Israelite religion, came as a result of the exposure of the Hebrews to different cultures, especially to the first century world, an exposure of the Hebrews religion to the surrounding religions for instance like the Greeks’. In elaborating on the Hebrews’ religion that solely relied on sacred scriptures and the Temple in Jerusalem, Petropoulou says:

“This is usually called ‘mainstream Judaism’ a term which does not exclude variety in Jewish beliefs, but which has been used by scholars as a contrast to Jewish sect, which took exception to at least one of the two elements above (for instance, Qumran sect and its distancing from the Jerusalem Temple). A basic characteristic of mainstream Judaism is that we cannot easily talk about its ‘Hellenization’ or ‘Romanization’. These terms, when applied to religion in Palestine, rather concern the religion of the coastal cities which had been in contact with Greeks from Hellenistic period, or the various inland cults other than that of mainstream Judaism. The reason is that ‘Hellenization’ or ‘Romanization’ presupposes a peaceful and gradual course of influence on a cult, whenever Greek, Roman, or other foreign influences affected mainstream Judaism, conflict arose.” (Petropoulou 2008:123,124)

These influences of other religions and their changing theological interpretations had much impact on their sacrificial ritual. Sacrifice has been linked to their theological understanding, therefore if they had a change in theological interpretation, which I refer as a theoretical part, it will affect the actual sacrifices (in my view as the practical part). Although in Judaism sacrifice has always played a crucial role, from time to time there had always been a reinterpretation of sacrifice. Hence Young says:

It was that Judaism was able to develop from a religion in which sacrifice played a most important part to a religion in which sacrifice had no place. Tradition and ancient law books enforced the practice as long as the Temple stood, but for centuries, developments in theology had called the usual interpretations of sacrifice into question. The system maintained as it became reinterpreted as God-given for the good of the people, not as a crude means of influencing God. (Young 1979:69)

3. 2. 2 Sacrifice and the Temple

The temple was a place of worship and this worship would also include the ritual of sacrifice. Some have used the word temple synonymously with the words sanctuary. It was crucial to have it as long as it had an altar for sacrifices. Pedley defines the sanctuary like this:

“A sanctuary is a sacred area, a place apart from the secular world of humans, where gods were worshipped and rituals took place. The Greek words for a sanctuary were *hieron* (sacred) and *temenos* (a place set aside: from the verb *temno*, meaning ‘to cut off,’ to suggest a separation from secular)” (Pedley 2006:29)

Judeans, like other religions that surrounded them, had the temple. The history of their temple is too long for the purpose of this research. However I would like to focus on the temple in the first century. The temple is crucial as we are dealing with the sacrificial ritual. Petropoulou observed that many wars were fought which revolved around the temple and it affected mainstream Judaism. She says:

This is obvious in every political event in the history of Judaea. Popular reaction there – in the form of revolts – was centred on the Temple, both geographically and ideologically. The chronological period we are concerned with starts while the Second Temple in Jerusalem still stands. The history of the Jewish Temple is a long one and is marked by struggles against internal and external enemies. A brief survey of the circumstances when conflict centred on the temple is indispensable for the understanding of the place of Jewish sacrifice in the Graeco-Roman context: whatever happened to the Temple had an unavoidable impact on Jewish sacrificial cult. (Petropoulou 2008:124)

Sacrifice did not only depend on the Temple building and that is why it was able to survive even after the destruction of the Temple. Even apart from the destruction of the Temple, those who had no access of the Temple in Jerusalem had to survive without it. Sacrifice was able to continue in public and private. That is why Petropoulou says, “One cannot refute the continued importance of public and continuous presence of private offerings.” (2008:128)

3.3 The Need of Sacrifice

In my earlier argument I gave the definition of sacrifice but it is not enough until we know what propelled people to sacrifice. Jones states that, “when the sacrificial cult was operative, it was effective because it was regarded as God’s provision to bridge the sacred and profane worlds.”

(Sykes 1991:15) The Jewish sacrifices were made on the basis of the Bible:

“According to the Bible, the occasions on which sacrifice could be carried out were either defined by the calendar and represented the whole nation, so that on these occasions public sacrifices were offered; or were individual obligations and resulted in the offering of private sacrifices. Public Jewish sacrifices were regularly offered every day and, in addition more lavishly during the Jewish festival. The only group responsible for the offering public sacrifices was the hereditary priesthood in the temple. (Petropoulou 2008:119)

While most of the public sacrifices were done as per the requirements of calendar and other festivals, the private sacrifices were done on the basis of many things. Young highlights two of them which are part of a number of things. He goes on to say:

It is frequently claimed that the animal victim died as a substitute for the offerer: by laying on of hands, the man offering the victim so that they could be wiped out by the destruction of the animal and, in the blood rituals, the life of the victim was poured out as a symbol of the life of the sacrifice offered to God. (Young 1979:51)

Even though Young wrote about this a while ago, some modern scholarship seems to be in favour of his statement. Astell and Goodhart in his way of redefining sacrifice and at the same time alluding to the need of sacrifice say:

Sacrifices are religious acts that, through the offering of victims, discharge debts that humans have incurred in their relations with the gods. Those kinds of debts that humans incur establish a system of exchanges that may be called sacrificial economies between humans and gods. The debts thus incurred may also define the moral and ontological status of the individual. (Astell and Goodhart 2011:77)

From the above we have noted that the need for sacrifice is a result of bridging the gap between God and human being. Astell and Goodhart go on to say that it is paying the debts that humans incur to God. The question may be how the debt is incurred, how we came to realize that there is a gap. Eberhart says:

If a person when he sins by doing something among all the commandments of Yahweh which are not permitted to be done and does so out of ignorance, then he is guilty and shall carry the punishment for his sin. He must bring in a blemish free ram from the flock, in accordance with your appraisal, for a guilt-offering to the priest, the priest will perform the atonement over him on account of his sin done in ignorance which he sinned but did not know and he will be pardoned. That is the guilt offering for the one who is truly guilty against Yahweh (2011:45).

This sacrifice may not only be limited to the sin committed in ignorance but this gives us an idea that if God wants to be appeased even for a sin committed in ignorance, how much more for a sin committed deliberately? This suggests that God takes the issue of sin very seriously.

Sacrificial rites express this in ways that change and develop according to deepening understanding of both the character of God and the nature of sin. They express that total self-giving which is owed by man to God, the very purpose of his existence and ultimately his

highest joy. Sacrifice whether by means of rites or by self-giving corresponds to the seriousness with which the distance (separation, alienation) between God and man is taken. Restoration is costly. The symbol of this cost is blood. (Sykes 1991:17)

Many scholars who are interested in and value sacrifice have indicated that the role of sacrifice in the community is determined by the theory of sacrifice they subscribe to. There are many theories that different scholars have come up with, but for the purpose of this research I am interested in what Jeremy Punt calls “social scientific”. About this theory he says:

“In the social-scientific approaches to the New Testament, sacrifice is often seen as related to ‘rites of passages that permit boundary crossing into areas normally, ‘out of place’ to ‘clean’ people’ (Neyrey 1996:90 – 91, referring to Malina). Such explanations of sacrifice are premised on the notion of clean and unclean, or purity and dirt and links up largely with the work of British anthropologist Mary Douglas, who focussed on anthropological notions and explanations of defilement, and explains how dirt refers to the things considered polluted, unclean or out of place. Sacrifice, therefore, is on the one hand about the ordering of society and (its) selves, the regulating power.” (Punt 2009:434; see also Douglas 1966)

Chapter 4 – Priesthood and Sacrifice in Hebrews

4.1. The Sacrifice in the New Covenant

In the homily to the Hebrews the author indicates that there is a new covenant. Lehne in the first chapter of her book ‘The New Covenant in Hebrews’ posits that the New Covenant concept plays a prominent role in the structure of Hebrews. She goes on to say, “We argued that, given his comparative form of argumentation, the author chooses the *διαθήκη* motif in order to express both the elements of continuity and discontinuity in the Christian Story (vis-à-vis its Israelite precursor).” (Lehne 1990:93)

In dealing with the New Covenant motif that is found in the homily to the Hebrews, Lindars says:

The new covenant theme was thus available in connection with the sacrificial death of Jesus as atonement for sins. Hebrews builds up his argument on this basis in such a way as to reach the conclusion that the sacrifice of Jesus has produced a permanent situation in which no further act of atonement is necessary. (Lindars 1991:81)

The New Testament scholarship agrees that there is this new covenant motif which some even abbreviate as NC. This theme makes the Hebrew author recapitulate the Old Testament then making it live in the New Testament. Lehne draws some parallels of what were old and what is new now. Below are those parallels in the Old Testament and what he regards as new in the New Testament specifically in the book of Hebrews. She says the contrasting features can be represented schematically:

<i>Cult under Old Covenant</i>	<i>Cult under New Covenant</i>
Many mortal priests with genealogy	One high priest lives forever
Appointment by fleshly	By word of oath perfected forever
Commandment/Law, in weakness.	
Offer for their own sins	Sinless, blameless
Daily earthly ministry	Superior heavenly ministry
Patterns of heavenly things	The very heavenly things
Holy places made with hands	Heaven itself
Figures of the 'real'	God's presence
Many offerings	One <i>ἑφάπαξ</i> Offering
Many (annual) entries	One entry
Continual services	Climax of ages
Limited access; barriers	Access to the 'real'
No final purgation	Sins definitely removed
Sacrifice of animals	Sacrifice of himself
Animal blood	Christ's own blood

(Lehne 1990:98, 99)

In fact is that the above table of contrasting features summarizes the whole homily because it shows us what was in the old and then reveals to us what is in the new. If the new comes then it is not good to follow the old. "The contrast between the conditions of the two covenants proves conclusively that the Old covenant was destined to become obsolete" (Lindars 1991: 83 see also Kalengyo 2006). Schenk says:

The point the author is making yet again is that the whole of the old covenant cultic rituals is now past in the light of Christ. The Levitical cult contributed only to the cleansing of the

flesh, while Christ's work is spiritual and cleanses the conscience. Christ is thus the mediator of a better covenant, because his death has brought about an eternal redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant, which leads to the reception of the promise of an eternal inheritance (9:15). The author thus returns to his original covenant theme and completes the contrast begun in 9:1. (2007: 100)

Thus the new covenant becomes the ultimate and the climax of ages as Lehne calls it. The author seems to be persuading the audience that is familiar with the language of covenant. The language of the Old Testament is what they understand, thus building from what is known to what is unknown to them. Hence Lindars says:

In general the Jews in the New Testament times felt themselves to be the covenant people, and this was powerful factor in Paul's involvement in the Judaistic controversy. Hence the readers of Hebrews may well have retained a sense of the continuing validity of Sinai covenant, and their present need for atonement will encourage them to rely on it as they resume Jewish practices and Jewish fellowship. This is why it is essential for Hebrews to insist that it has been superseded by the sacrifice of Jesus. To that end, he must now show how the death of Jesus has the effect of an atoning sacrifice and same time inaugurates the new covenant in which its effect will be permanently available. (Lindars 1991: 83, 84)

Kalengyo also agrees with the above Hebrews scholars but he goes further as far the argument is concerned that the New Covenant is the fulfilment of the prophecy. He says:

The writer is making use of the prophetic oracle in Jer 31: 31 – 34 which he sets in contrast with the covenant which Yahweh made with Israelites when delivering them from Egypt as recorded in Ex 24: 1 – 8 and referred to in Heb 9: 18 – 20. The Israelites did not keep this Covenant and so God in Jer 31: 31 – 34 promises that he will make a new covenant with his people on completely new terms. The writer of Hebrews sees Christ as the eschatological fulfilment of this prophecy inaugurating a new era of the new covenant as foretold by the prophet Jeremiah. As the Old covenant is now obsolete, all its institutions become obsolete with it. (Kalengyo 2006: 88)

In summing up the covenant theme that is found in the book of Hebrews it is important to note that the new covenant in Christ is better. This assertion can be backed up with many reasons that are pointed out by different scholars and that is why Schenk says:

This amalgamation serves to contrast the old covenant as a whole in all its multiplicity with a singular sacrifice of Christ. It is also significant that the author replaces the altar by the

book of covenant, for it confirms that the Law and cult in Hebrews are intrinsically bound together and that the people were given the Law on the basis of the Levitical cult (7:11) (Schenk 2007:102)

“Through his death, exaltation, and installation as a heavenly priest, Jesus provides security that the new and better covenant will not be annulled.” (Lane 1991a:188)

4.2 Priesthood in Hebrews

According to the homily to the Hebrews the priesthood is a crucial aspect that needs to be communicated to the audience. It also serves as a foundation of everything because the priest is the one who is offering on behalf of the people. Kalengyo states that, “the first task of the writer in establishing the high priesthood of Jesus Christ is to prove to his readers that he (Christ) matches the qualification for a high priest (of the Aaronic order. Cf. 5:1-4)” (2006: 78)

Lindars shares with us the qualification and the duties of the priest which are found in the priesthood of Jesus Christ. He says in Hebrews 5:1-10 that the author makes a statement but he terms it a programmatic statement. He then says, “Perhaps because this is intended as a programmatic statement 5. 1 – 10 is constructed in the form of chiasmus

- a. A Priest is commissioned to ‘deal gently’ with sinners (1-2)
 - b. His ministry is on behalf of all people, including himself (3)
 - c. It is divinely called status (4)
 - c. Jesus was divinely called (5-6)
 - b. Jesus shared our suffering and learnt the meaning of human obedience (7,8)
- a. Jesus thus became the means of salvation to all in his priestly capacity (9 – 10) (Lindars 1991: 61)

Kalengyo summarises what has been shared by Lindars above by giving an Old Testament background in his submission. He indicates that the priest was chosen to be a middleman and to do mediatory work on behalf of people. The other crucial aspect is that they never applied for the office of priest but they were chosen to perform this holy duty. In fact this quotation affirms that

Christ meets all the requirements of a priest thus qualifies to be the one to intercede for human beings. He says:

A high priest represents men and women before God (5:1). He is a people's representative chosen from among men to act on their behalf before God. This would for example automatically rule out angels. This principle of choosing high priests 'from among men' to 'act on behalf of men' before God is seen operating in Ex 28: 1; Num. 8:6. It is essentially because the high priest is by nature identified with men so that he can act and plead on their behalf. He is not only chosen from among men but is 'appointed' (NEB) The Greek word is *καθίσταται*, which in the passive voice implies that the high priest does not put himself in office. Though it is not apparent here, it is made clear in 5:4 that it is God who appoints the high priests to their office. (Kalengyo 2006: 78)

In chapters 8 and 9 the author of Hebrews talks more about priesthood. He confirms the necessity of the priesthood in their lives, presenting priesthood as their solution in their hopeless situation. As the old covenant relied so much on priesthood, he puts to his audience that the priesthood in the New Covenant is the centre of everything. Actually Schenk puts it this way:

"Hebrews 8:1 confirms that the high priesthood of Christ is indeed the *κεφάλαιον* of author's exposition. We can thus presume that whatever Christ's priesthood entailed for the author, it provided the perceived solution to the audience's problem of waning confidence. The significance of Christ's high priesthood is the focal point that substantiates the author's exhortations to hold fast in faithfulness. Thus far we have seen the significance of that high priesthood in terms of (1) the superiority of a new covenant to the previous one, largely entailing (2) a superior atonement and priestly intercession on the part of Christ vis-à-vis the Levitical cultus, and further (3) that in fact the author believed the new covenant with its atonement displaced and replaced the old covenant and its atonement."(Schenk 2007: 37, 38)

In looking at the effectiveness of Christ's unique sacrifice with other sacrifices (10:1-10; 13:7-17)

Patte says "by comparing Jesus Christ's unique sacrifice with other sacrifices (10: 1 -10), Hebrews clarifies three kinds of relationships" He then lists these three:

- a. "Resemblance: the sacrifice material ('gifts and sacrifices' 8:3), the necessity of the victim's death ('a death that redeems them from the transgressions,' 9:15-16), the redeeming role of the blood (9:7, 14, 18, 24).
- b. Differentiation: instead of the 'gifts and sacrifices' brought by the high priest of the old covenant (9:6-9), Christ 'through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God'

- c. Superiority: the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice does not limit itself to ritual purification; it secures an *eternal redemption* (9:12)" (Patte 2004: 532, 533)

4.3 Priesthood and Melchizedek

The homily to the Hebrews is saturated with the tabernacle language. This includes priesthood as I have indicated earlier on when dealing with the covenant. However the priesthood here is in comparison with that of Melchizedek. The question would be who this Melchizedek is. We are introduced to Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:1 as a priest.

“Melchizedek's credential is established immediately in Hebrews 7:1, where he is called both king of Salem and priest of the most High God – rendering of *El Elyon* who was at the top of the Canaanite pantheon, and a phrase later applied to Yahweh. Melchizedek is the very first priest mentioned in the Old Testament and even more remarkably his priesthood is seen as valid, though it is not of any Israelite priestly line (Similarly Ex 2:16)” (Witherington 2007:237).

From the above quotation we deduce two things: that Melchizedek is the priest not just any priest but a high priest of God; and that he is also the king of Salem. For the purpose of this thesis our focus is in the priesthood side of his work. Now Witherington draws an interesting argument as far as the priesthood of Melchizedek is concerned when he goes to the point of linking it with Jesus Christ's priesthood. He says for us to understand the power of this argument of Melchizedek's priesthood with its relation to Jesus Christ, we must understand the following:

“(1) Levi is the grandson of Abraham; (2) If Abraham pays tithe to Melchizedek, then Levi (seminally present in Abraham) is paying the tithe to Melchizedek, which is ironic since later the tithes were paid to Levi; (3) this in turn implies that the Melchizedekian priesthood is greater than the Levitical and that Melchizedek is greater than either Abraham or Levi; (4) this in turn implies that the ultimate Melchizedekian priest, Jesus, is greater than all the above; (5) the icing on the cake proving the logic of all this is that Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek, and as Hebrews 7:7 says the superior blesses the inferior. While the argument seems to be from Melchizedek to the Son of God, it is from the Son of God to Melchizedek.

The conviction that Christ is our eternal high priest finds its support in Psalm 110, which then becomes the key for interpreting Genesis 14.” (Witherington 2007 237)

Kalengyo and Bruce also concur with Witherington on the above statement. They further state that, “it is not the type that determines the anti-type, but the anti-type that determines the type. Jesus is not portrayed after the pattern of Melchizedek, but Melchizedek is ‘made conformable to the Son of God’ ”. (Kalengyo 2006:85 see also Bruce 1964)

Having said all of the above about the priesthood of Melchizedek, the main conclusion that we should draw is that, “in Hebrews Melchizedek is not a redeemer, and he performs no saving acts, he is a historical figure who serves as a precedent for a priesthood not based on lineage or law” (Lane 1991a:162). Most New Testament scholars dispute that the author could have linked his development of Melchizedek with extra-Biblical material but, as Lane and others insist, “his development of Melchizedek is essentially independent from extra-biblical ideas. It is derived from Gen: 17 – 20, which has been approached typologically from the perspective of Ps 110:4” (Lane 1991a:162)

The second thing that we should get from the book of Hebrews about Melchizedek is that even the name itself has a meaning so that we can learn a few lessons as far as the priesthood of Christ is concerned. Kalengyo says:

“He focuses on Melchizedek’s name as meaning ‘king of righteousness, and his being king of Salem which the writer interprets as meaning ‘king of peace’ What is important here from the point of view of the writer is that, ‘righteousness’ and peace are attributes of the Messiah ‘intended to show that Melchizedek is the one who is *ἀφωμοιωμένος δέ τῷ νύθῳ θεοῦ*, and are intended as a basis of comparison between Melchizedek and Jesus (cf. Zech 9:9; Mal 3:20; Jer 23:5; Dan 9:24; Isa 9:5; Mic 5:4 where ‘righteousness and ‘peace’ are attributed to the Messiah.” (Kalengyo 2006: 84)

4. 4. The Priesthood of Jesus Christ

As I indicated earlier on ‘priesthood’ is one of the themes in the book of Hebrews. Now I want to focus on the priesthood of Jesus as the main character in this homily. It is clear that the priesthood is coupled with dire threats throughout the book and this is also noted by Lindars when he says, “These conjunctions of the priesthood theme and dire threats, both growing in intensity and fullness as the letter moves forward, and finally the argument 7.1-10. 18; give the strongest indication that the priestly work of Jesus is the heart of our author’s doctrine” (Lindars 1991:59).

In fact Witherington argues that there is a chiasmic structure in the book of Hebrews which places the priesthood of Christ at the centre of everything, even the dire threats that Lindars talks about.

He says:

“Imagery of pilgrimage, including first warning (Heb 4:14 – 11:40)

Introduction of Jesus as the high priest (Heb 4:14 – 5:10)

First severe warning (Heb 5:11 – 6:12)

Jesus our High Priest (Heb 6:13 – 10:18)

Second severe warning (Heb 10:19 – 31)

Importance of faith (Heb 10:32 – 11:40)

Imagery of pilgrimage, including final warning (Heb 12:1 -29)” (Witherington 2007:46 see also Morna Hooker.)

When reflecting on the above, Witherington says, “On this showing the theme of Christ as the heavenly priest is central to the whole discourse. This makes excellent sense, and one could even talk about the imagery of visually placing Christ in the inner sanctum of the heavenly sanctuary just as he is placed at the centre of the discourse.” (2007: 46, 47)

The priesthood of Christ as stated in this homily that it is according to the order Melchizedek. We note few things: that it is an eternal high priest (6:20) and what can be noted also is that in comparison with the Levitical and Aaronic priesthood is that it was “weak and ineffectual”. (7:5:25) in presenting the argument of Christ as the high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. He points out three things:

1. The old priesthood cannot lead to perfection (*teleiosis* 7:11).
2. The priest according “to the order of Melchizedek” is not supposed to be a descendent from sacerdotal tribe, Levi, but Judah, has ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah.... (7:13-14).
3. The service of the old priesthood is transitory, while the intercessory ministry of Jesus the great high priest continues in the heavens: “he always lives to make intercession for them. (Patte 2004:532)

Lindars gives the qualification of Christ as a high priest, the reason why the audience must have confidence in him, and his obedience as a model of Hebrews obedience. He says:

There can be a little doubt that Hebrews also has in mind the pastoral ministry of Jesus. It is widely held in verse 7 there is allusion to Gethsemane tradition (Mark 14:32 – 42 and parallels). It has already been asserted in the humanity of Jesus that ‘he himself has suffered and tempted’ (2: 18). This has been recalled as a pastoral qualification for the priesthood 4:15: ‘one who in every respect was tempted as we are, yet without sinning.’ In 5:8 the point is made in such a way as to make Jesus the model for the readers. He ‘learned obedience through what he suffered’ and so can save ‘all who obey him’ (verse 9). The readers too need to learn obedience through their suffering and temptations. (Lindars 1991:62, 63)

4.5 Atonement

In the homily to the Hebrews the main argument seems simple at first glance: Jesus as the high priest offered himself, atoning sin “once and for all” (9:26), so that there is no need of the ineffective sacrifices of the Temple. Hurst asks whether an anti-sacrificial reading is possible. He says:

Jesus heavenly high priesthood is seen from these vertical and horizontal perspectives. The letter to the Hebrews confronts its readers with the references to heavenly things – a

sanctuary, a throne, an altar: ‘We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent that the Lord and not any mortal, has set up’ (Heb.10: 1- 2). The author interprets Jesus’ death in comparison to the sacrifice offered once a year on the Day of Atonement by the high priest (cf Lv 16). (Hurst 1990: 190)

The idea of atonement cannot be escaped from when dealing with the homily to the Hebrews, as Hurst has indicated above. Barnabas Lindars also argues along with Hurst by saying, “Hebrews begins this section (Atonement sacrifice) of his argument with some general considerations of the arrangements for the Day of the Atonement before coming to the specific application to the death of Jesus.” (Lindars 1991: 86) Commenting on the Day of Atonement, Kalengyo has this to say:

“As a basis for his argument, the writer finds the annual event of the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) very helpful. The readers must have been very conversant with it. Besides, it is probably what they desire to return to. If the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is to be considered as an atoning sacrifice in any meaningful sense, then it has to meet the set standards of the Day of Atonement sacrifice. It is precisely on this Day of Atonement that the sins of the Israelites (accumulated over a period of a year) were atoned for (Lev 16:30) (Kalengyo 2006: 90)

Even though Kalengyo use the word ‘readers’ especially when he says, “whoever the writer of Hebrews was and the readers were” (2006: 64). I would prefer the word audience as I am of the firm belief that this was a homily delivered to a certain audience by one reader who was elected to read it. In Hebrews 9, the author deals with those general considerations of the arrangements of the Day of Atonement that Lindars talks about. He then continues to point out those arrangements as he says:

“First he (Hebrews Author) describes the plan of the tent, which consists of two chambers, the holy place and the holy of holies beyond it, separated by a curtain. He then mentions the contents of the holy of holies as listed in various references (Exod. 30: 1 – 5; 16: 32 – 33; Num. 17: 8 – 10). The description dwells on two points. As before, these are features which prove that the earthly arrangements are only temporary and are destined to be superseded in the eschatological fulfilment. The first point is the two chamber pattern of the tent and the second is the extreme restriction on the entry into the holy of holies. The holy of holies by its very name indicates that it is the place of the presence of God, in so far as his presence can be considered to be localised at all. (Lindars 1991: 86)

Gordon also has the same argument with Lindars: that of the listing of the furnishings in the two compartments. He says:

“The listing of the furnishings in the two compartments (vv 2 – 5) assumes no detailed knowledge on the part of the addresses but at the same time presents one or two problems for the interpreter. Chief among these is the allocation of the altar of incense – for this is what must be intended by *thumiateron* – to the most holy place (v. 4) (Gordon 2000 : 96)

However Lindars feels that there is no need to address this problem. He says “he makes a mistake in saying the altar of incense was within the holy of holies, but it does not affect his argument.”

(Lindars 1991: 86) While Gordon seems to give the author the benefit of the doubt by not fully calling it a mistake, he says:

“There are however, Old Testament references that associate this altar with the inner sanctum and its furnishings. In Ex 30.6 its positioning is given as ‘in front of the curtain that is above the ark of the covenant, in front of the mercy seat that is over the covenant,’ while according to Exod. 40:5 it was to be installed ‘before the ark of covenant.’ (Gordon 2000: 96)

The question is what was happening in the earthly sanctuary. The author does not leave his audience in the dark but he explains the operations in the tent. Kalengyo says:

“In 9: 6 -7, the writer describes the operations in the tent. Priests go continually into the outer compartment of the tent. (vs. 6) but only the high priest goes into the second and he but once a year, and not without taking the blood that he offers for himself and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people (9:7). Even when the high priest did receive permission to enter, his entry was safeguarded by sacrificial blood (pointing to his own limitations because of his sins or sinful nature). This, superimposed on the fact that there existed a curtain between the two chambers, show that entry was restricted and therefore access to God was restricted too (9:8), not least for the rest of the Israelites.” (Kalengyo 2006: 92, 93)

Gordon goes further to note that the author goes into details about the operations as he mentions the ‘scapegoat’. He says:

“Far from banishing sin from the consciousness of the community, the ritual of the out Day of Atonement, as v. 3 points, involved the calling of sins to remembrance: the priest confessed over the head of ‘scapegoat’ all sins of the people of Israel (cf. Lev. 16: 21). Again there is an element of reductionism here (cf. on 9: 9 – 10), for the Day of Atonement was

also concerned with the making of atonement as the name suggests (cf. Lev 16:30) (Gordon 2000: 109)

This atonement could not have been done without blood; hence ‘blood’ is central to the homily especially in chapter 9. Kalengyo notes that the reference to blood pops up from time to time in the homily. He says, “The author is using ‘blood’ here to refer to the life of Christ given up in death as a sacrifice. He is certainly alluding to the Old Testament blood ritual of the cult sacrifice (Leviticus 16). In the Old Testament, blood is identified with life (cf Deut 12:23), and in Lev 17:11, life is located in blood so that blood is equal to life. It is on the basis of this that blood is able to atone sins.” (Kalengyo 2006:99) The centrality of the blood cannot be ignored as it lays the foundation of the author’s argument. Hence you find blood almost everywhere in the homily. Lane says:

The declaration in v22 b is the third of three postulates that have been formulated in a similar way to stress the crucial importance of sacrificial blood: blood was the medium of access to God (v. 7); blood was the basis for inauguration of the former covenant (v. 18); blood is the medium of *ἀφεσις* (v 22b)

v. 7 *οὐ χωρίς αἵματος*

“Not without blood”

v. 18 *οὐδέ ... χωρίς αἵματος*

“Not even [the former covenant was inaugurated] without blood”

v. 19 *χωρίς αἵματεκχυσίας οὐ*

“Without the application of blood [there is] no,”

On each occasion the writer used *χωρίς* in a prepositional sense (“without”) and cast his statement negatively. (Lane 1991b:246)

The reason why the author brings the Day of Atonement in his argument, is because:

“This inference finds support when the writer applies the Day of Atonement ritual to Christ in 9:25-28. The annual entrance of the high priest for blood aspersion in the most Holy place finds its eschatological fulfilment in Christ’s death, (*προσφορά*, ‘offering’; 10:10,14). The creative use of unusual terminology to describe the atonement ritual in v 7 is indicative the

writer's interpretation of the Levitical rite is controlled by the Christ-event. (Lane 1991b:223)

Apart from the furnishings of the compartments and the operations in the tent, the Hebrew author outlines the defects of the challenges of the Levitical system. These challenges are the ones that expose the Levitical system's inability to make the total cleansing (which includes internally and externally.) Most New Testament scholars agree that the author in Hebrews poses some challenges. Hence Hurst observes a number of things highlighted by the author:

The epistle contains statements describing the Levitical system as faulty (8:7), imperfect (7:11), abrogated (7:18; 8:13), ineffectual in cleansing the conscience (9:9 – 10), and displeasing to God (10: 5 – 6) statements that imply a discontinuity between the ministry of Jesus and cult of Temple sacrifice. In these passages the author discloses the problem of the cultic system and also passing judgement on it. (Hurst 2011: 438)

Out of many things that Lee is highlighting above, it is important to note that the main aim is to show us that in Hebrews the type meets the antitype and therefore become obsolete. The limitation of the Levitical system in Hebrews has been outlined by Kalengyo also when he says:

The inadequacy of these sacrifices lies in their repetition (9:9, 14). They are unable, as Hagner puts it 'to cleanse the conscience of the worshipers i.e. 'to remove sin from the conscience.' The sacrifices of the old order are just helpless when it comes to definitive purgation. The author further emphasises the limited nature of the sacrifices of the Old order: 'but in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year' (10:3). For the author, the Day of Atonement ritual served as a reminder of sin year after year. On the basis of this exposition, he draws a firm conclusion: 'For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins' (10:4; cf 9:12, 13, and 19) (Kalengyo 2006: 110)

In addition to what Kalengyo and other have pointed above in exposing the inadequacy of the old order, Lindars says "Hebrews draws the conclusion that direct access to God is not available under the old Law" (1991:87). In summarising the whole issue Gordon says:

The inadequacy of the ceremonial law is underlined in the root-reprise whereby '(cannot) perfect worshipper'. (*teleiosai ton latreuonta*) recalls the reference in v. 6 to the priests who carry out their ritual duties (*tas latreias epitelountes*) in the tabernacle. The one is within the officiants' competence, but the other is beyond their jurisdiction. What comes within

jurisdiction of the Israelite priests is summed up in v. 10. As matters relating to food and drink and sundry ritual washing, here viewed as merely interim observances awaiting the time of reformation. The assonance in ‘food’ (*bromasin*) contributes to a sense of their insignificance as compared with what the author regards as the main issue. ‘Food and drink and various baptisms would fairly sum up that part of Leviticus immediately preceding ch.16 and the subject of the Day of Atonement that is never far from the author’s mind in Heb 9 – 10. The main topics in Lev. 11 -15 are food laws (ch . 11) and ritual purification (chs. 12 - 15). (Gordon 2000:98, 99)

This whole notion of the Day of Atonement comes to mind because the author is driving his point to the sacrifice of Jesus. Most New Testament scholars argue that the old covenant was not a permanent solution but it was to point out the sacrifice of Christ a supreme sacrifice, “for according to Hebrews the sacrifices of the Old covenant were never expected to have permanent effect, requiring no further repetition, which is the chief characteristic of the sacrifice of Christ.” (Lindars 1991: 88)

4.6 The Superiority of Christ’s Sacrifice

The main point in the homily to the Hebrews is the sacrifice of Christ which is superior to the sacrifice of the old covenant. The sacrifice of Christ is better than the sacrifices of animals. Kalengyo outlines the beginning of the argument of the author by pointing out the superiority of Christ’s Sacrifice. He says:

“Our author in Heb 9:11 introduce his argument with the now characteristic *δέ* construction (but) which should be understood as a complement of the *μέν ούν* clause of Heb 9:1 (‘now on the one hand’... ‘but on the other hand’). The use of the ‘adversative particle’ ushers in a major shift in our authors’ argument establishing Heb 9:11 – 14 (and the pericope that follows) as of counterpart what has been said in 9:1-10. It is also to be noted that this is not an ordinary counterpart but ‘ultimate counterpart’ in the sense that ‘the work of Christ is final, absolute, definitive, complete and perfect.’ (Kalengyo 2006:96)

The first and foremost issue at hand is that Christ himself becomes the sacrifice. He is both the sacrifice and the one officiating in sacrifice. This then makes his sacrifice important and from it the beneficiaries get the following:

“The old covenant exacted death for transgressions committed while it was in force (cf 10:28). Those who had ratified the covenant had pledged their obedience to the stipulations of the covenant in a self-mediatory manner. Their transgressions were evidence that they had failed to keep their oath and put them in jeopardy of being cut off from God (cf. Deut 30:15 – 20). In his death Jesus identified himself with the transgressors and took upon himself the curse sanctions of the covenant that were invoked upon whenever the stipulations of the covenant were ignored. In an act of supreme obedience, Jesus died a representative death as the cursed one so that those whom he represents may receive the blessings of the covenant promised to those who obey its mandates.” (Lane 1991b: 252)

In fact the above quotation by Lane it is evident that the death of Christ was vicarious in its nature. Lane probably does apply the message from the book of Isaiah: “He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” (53:5)

Witherington also outlines three things that made the Christ sacrifice, especially his blood to be the best form or ultimate sacrifice. His argument emanates from the author of Hebrews words when he says “Jesus did not enter into the heavenly sanctuary through the blood of bulls and goats but through his own blood, and when he entered it was once and for all time” (Heb. 9:12). In his argument Witherington says:

“The point is this is that, (1.) Shed blood is the means or necessary prerequisite for Jesus to be able to enter the most holy place, as was also true for the high priest on earth. (2.) His own blood and not the blood of others, qualified him to enter heavenly holy place and (3.) such was the efficacy of his shed blood that he could enter once for all time, having made final and effective atonement. By this death and entering he found or obtained eternal redemption all by himself.” (Witherington 2007:269)

Unlike the earthly priest who had to enter repeatedly, Christ did this once and for all when he sacrificed himself. Witherington continues to draw parallels from the sacrifice of Christ and that of the old order. He says, “The redemption is eternal not only because of its eternal effect but also because of the nature of the one who procured it and how he did so. It is qualitatively not just quantitatively different from the redemption that came by means of the earthly tabernacle system.” (Witherington 2007:26)

When looking at the sacrifice of Christ we cannot neglect the fact that he is also the one who is offering sacrifice on behalf of his people. This makes him both the sacrifice and the sacrificer. Now after Jesus had given himself as a sacrifice he had to do like the priest of the old covenant did: they went to the earthly tabernacle with the blood to sprinkle it. The author of the homily to Hebrews draws some parallels between the old covenant and the new covenant that is introduced through Christ. He then moves a bit further by saying that in Christ is the ultimate form of sacrifice and the better covenant. In Hebrews 9:11 – 14 he says

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have now come, passing through the greater and more perfect compartment not made with hands, that is to say, not of ordinary building, he entered once for all into the real sanctuary, thus obtaining eternal redemption. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkled ashes of a heifer, sanctify those who have been ceremonially defiled to the extent of purging of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ purge conscience from acts that lead to death, so that we may worship the living God, seeing that he offered himself through the eternal Spirit as an unblemished sacrifice to God.”

In the above verses the author highlights some important factors that are also noted by Gordon. Gordon says, “verses 11 – 12 make two basic points, namely that Christ officiates in a ‘tent’ more elevated than any earthly sanctuary made by human hands, and that his presence there is on the basis not of mere animal sacrifice but of his own self-offering” (Gordon 2000: 99).

They have pointed out that Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary, which is not made by hands but with his own blood. The phrase ‘his own blood’ keep coming back. As it has been pointed out by Kalengyo: “The reference to Christ’s blood, keeps surfacing in this epistle (see 9:14; 10:19, 29; 13:12, 20)”. The author is using blood here to refer to the life of Christ given up in death as a sacrifice. He is certainly alluding to the Old Testament blood ritual of the cult sacrifice (Lev 16)” (Kalengyo 2006: 99). Apart from the allusion to the Old Testament Gordon says, “that he entered ‘by his own blood’ carries a definite implication about the sacrificial nature of Christ’s death, grounded in the conviction that humanity’s alienation from God is basically a moral issue and that this too involves its own kind of reparation to God” (Gordon 2000: 100)

“The phrase through his blood’ does not likely mean ‘with his blood’ as though he actually carried his blood to heaven and finished the work of atonement there. The word once for all time indicates an act of atonement in time that is unique, final and definitive, not continued in heaven.” (Witherington 2006:271)

4.7 Christ Intercessory Role / Mediator

“The redemptive work of Christ through his sacrificial death is complete (10:11 – 13) and now he sits at the right hand of God where he continues his intercessory priestly role.” (Kalengyo 2006: 120) The author draws the attention to the work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary as their mediator or doing an intercessory role for us (8:6; 9:15; 12:24). Marie Isaacs stresses the fact that the mediatory work is not something new in the homily but it is a familiar word in Judaism. She says:

“That neither the Hebrew nor the Greek Old Testament has a single term for ‘mediator’ should not lead us to assume that ancient Judaism had no such notion. Even most cursory reading of the Jewish Scriptures reveals various mediatorial figures who act as go-betweens in the relationship between God and Israel. Principally this is the function of angels, of Moses, of the prophets, of the high priest and of the Davidic King. We shall see that the

author of the Epistle to the Hebrews draws on all of these established mediatorial categories in his presentation of Jesus as the definitive mediator between God and people.” (Isaacs 1992:127)

Jesus is now portrayed as the intercessor in the heavenly sanctuary. Whose ministry supersede those who were once mediators in the old covenant and have pleaded on behalf of people to God. “The shadow has now been superseded by the reality located in Jesus Christ.” (Kalengyo 2006:119). Christ stands on our behalf in the heavenly sanctuary, hence John says, “My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*”. (1 John 2:1-2)

Marie Isaacs makes an important observation as far as the Jewish culture is concerned. She says:

“In Jewish tradition God is not obliged to use an intermediary. He can and does on occasion act without an agent. Where a place is made for such figures, they are clearly modelled on those established mediators between God and Israel of the past, enshrined in Scripture. Thus in Israel’s eschatological hopes in the postexilic period, we find not one but a number of salvific figures – Mosaic, priestly, Davidic, angelic – espoused group or another as the model for God’s agent, who would inaugurate His sovereign on earth or in heaven. In his presentation of Jesus as the final, definitive agent of God, the author of Hebrews, therefore, compares and contrasts him with Israel’s principal members who have gone before.”(Isaacs 1992: 132, 133)

In the homily to the Hebrews Christ is then the new mediator who is the best and supersedes the previous ones. The hope that was placed on the previous mediators in the old covenant should then be transferred to Jesus Christ who now mediates in the better position which is the heavenly sanctuary. The reasoning of this argument is simple “the fact of his intercession provides assurance that the people of God will be able to endure stringent testing and will obtain the promised salvation” (Lane 1991: 235). If that is the case then what is presented before this audience is

beneficial and advantageous to them. However Lane states that Christ is not only the “mediator or intercessor” but his work goes beyond than that. He says

In relationship to the covenant, Jesus is designated *ἐγγυος* ‘guarantor.’ The choice of the term which occurs only here in the NT is purposeful. In the papyri it can denote a bond, collateral, or some form of material guarantee that will be paid or a promise fulfilled. But it may also refer to an individual who offers his own life as the ‘guarantor’ of another person. In this personal sense, the *ἐγγυος* assumes a weightier responsibility than the *μεσίτης*, ‘mediator’ (cf. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). The mediator steps into a gap between two parties, but the ‘guarantor’ stakes his person and his life on his word. (Lane 1991:188)

4.8 Jesus as means of access

In the homily to the Hebrews the author shifts the focus from Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Then he says the audience itself has the means of approaching the most holy place which are also the means of access. The author states the following:

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And *having* an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb. 19:19 – 22)

The means of access can only be realised in the new covenant brought about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Since the author makes it clear that the old covenant could not provide access to God, in fact Kalengyo calls it a limited access to God in contrast to an unlimited access through Christ. He says:

“The author builds on the architecture of the tabernacle with its two chambers (separated by a curtain/veil – 9:1 – 5) and the limited entry by the high priest into the second chamber – the Holy of Holies (only once a year on the Day of Atonement) to make his conclusion that: By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing (9:8). To the writer of Hebrews, this is one way in which the Levitical system was incomplete. It never allowed full access to God”. (Kalengyo 2006:121)

Chapter 5 – Encounters between Jewish and Zulu Cultures of Sacrifice

In this chapter I would like to bring the Jewish and Zulu cultures into dialogue. Even though this work needs to be done with help of relevant literature, I must indicate that when it comes to the Zulu culture we do not have much literature. This limitation is necessitated by the fact that there is not much work in the Zulu culture that deals with performing rituals as this was orally transmitted from generation to generation. This has brought some limitations in engaging with the culture. However on the positive side I have also valued this research as it will contribute to the little literature that we have.

I have seen similarities in the two cultures as far as the sacrificial rituals are concerned. This is the focal point of my research, where I hear the homily to the Hebrews with Zulu ears. Using the glasses of the social anthropologist Mary Douglas in her book “Purity and Danger” as I put two cultures into dialogue as far as rituals are concerned. She believes that in life there are two opposite poles, the poles of purity and of danger. If you are cleansed and have not committed sin you are in the pole of purity but if the opposite has occurred then you are in the pole of danger. According to her a person who is impure is regarded as under taboo and is a threat to his or her community as his or her uncleanness poses danger. She says,

“The person under taboo is not regarded as holy, for he is separated from approach to the sanctuary, as well as from contact men, but his of condition is somehow associated with supernatural dangers, arising, according to the common savage explanation, from the presence of formidable spirits which are shunned like an infectious disease.” (Douglas 1966:10)

The notion of the similarity between the two cultures is based on my reading of Hebrews 9:13 “The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.” (NIV). There are two broad categories of

sacrifices: 1. When people are giving thanks to their ancestors for good fortune and good life. 2. When people are in crisis and they need restoration - restoration of relations with their ancestors. It also goes farther than that: "The shedding of the blood of the animal signifies life offered up in death on the sinner's behalf, thus granting him the right to live and not to suffer the consequences of his sins". (Mvunabandi 2008:153)

In the Zulu culture and some other African cultures too, a person who does not obey ancestors or does not conduct sacrificial rituals as required by ancestors is considered to be with *isinyama*³. The question of Isinyama arises only after misfortune has befallen an individual. Upon investigation, it might be determined that it happened due to their failure to observe and perform ancestral rituals.

It is in this state where you will have misfortunes, bad luck, and be without protection. Therefore sacrificial rituals serve as a cleansing from darkness which is *isinyama* to the light which is the cleansed state. The cleansing involves many things but blood is the key. "Blood united those in the world of the dead and living... Families in the case of marriage are brought together through blood... The community also follows this method of spilling blood to cleanse itself from any wrongdoing". (Mvunabandi 2008: 291) Blood seems to be the ingredient that orders life in an African culture and to be specific in Zulu culture, as it does to the Hebrews (9:13, 18, 20, 21, and 22). Among the Hebrews it is indicated many times that sacrifice is the key (9:18; 19; 20; 21; 22) and without the shedding of blood there is no salvation or cleansing. In other words it is through sacrifice where one is saved from danger to purity. That is why Mvunabandi says:

"Among Zulu people, blood sacrificial rituals communicate power to reinforce the vital link with ancestors who freely circulate among them. The bile and chyme communicates the

³ Isinyama- is a dark cloud that envelops a person attracting both bad luck and attacks by witches, which is a danger not only to that person but to people he/she associates with. In many instances the question of isinyama only arises after a misfortune has befallen an individual. It is only then that a determination is made about the source(s) of isinyama.

cleansing and purification power of both people and utensils or sacrificial material. The process among Zulu people is centred on the digestive system, because the chyme possessed life-giving properties and plays an exclusive role in the purification of sacrifices, requiring no ritual cooking. The chyme enables people to recover the state of 'whiteness' formerly lost because of broken prohibitions. (Mvunabandi 2008:319 see Ngubane 1977)

“When good things of life are realized people say; ‘the ancestors are with us ;’(*abakithi basibhekile*) when misfortunes happen they say; ‘the ancestors are facing away from us’ (*abakithi basifulathele*). Without the ancestors’ protection the descendants become vulnerable to all sorts of misfortune and diseases” (Ngubane 1977:51). The Zulus believe that if a person does not offer sacrifices to the ancestors s/he will be in danger of having evil and misfortune befall them. “The ancestors are said to be primarily concerned with the welfare of their descendants. For the ancestors are believed to withdraw their protection and gifts of good fortune from erring descendants” (Ngubane 1977:51). For Mary Douglas the withdrawal of ancestral protection exposes the individual to danger. Sacrifice, as a means of ancestral appeasement, restores an individual or group to a pure state.

5.1 Orality in the Homily to the Hebrews

The phrase “sound of sacrifice” is meant to appeal to the orality of the homily to the Hebrews in that the book seems to favour an extensive use of the verbs “hear and listen” throughout. (3:7; 3:15; 4:7). “The clearest evidence of oral tradition in the Hebrew Bible is the repetition of a theme” (Ben – Amos 1999: 142). “For the Hebrew the most important of his senses for the experience of truth was his hearing (as well as various kinds of feeling). The Hebrews lived in an eventful world of sound.” (Sterne 2011: 215). This is entirely consistent with what Harvey has to say. For him, “the popular culture of the first century was, technically, a rhetorical culture. In a rhetorical culture, literacy is limited and reading is vocal. Even the solitary reader reads aloud” (1998: xv). Harvey

goes on to say, “Spoken style is style for everyday conversation. Oral style is designed to be heard, remembered, and transmitted by memory” (Harvey 1998: 3). This oral culture demonstrated in the homily to the Hebrews is also seen in the Zulu culture.

In the Zulu community the tradition has always been to pass sacrificial rituals orally from one generation to another. As I have indicated, this tends to be the limiting factor in Zulu cultural ritual-based sources, as most of the actions were not documented. This was necessitated by there being many people who were used to the rhetorical culture in the society. Having said that I must mention that even though people are exposed to the written material the culture continues to be transmitted orally as we have a small amount of written material. This oral tradition tends to be a common factor between the Hebrew people of Biblical times and modern-day Zulu communities in Africa because,

“Texts were shaped with sound qualities in mind. They were produced for oral performance and maximum rhetorical effect. Writing was distrusted as an impoverished means of communication. Often writing was regarded as magic. The tradition of memorised materials played a much more significant role than in modern information cultures. There was a distinct link between spirit and memory. (Loubser 2003:225)

What is the case with the Hebrew culture is also the case with the Zulu culture: all Zulu rituals were orally transmitted from generation to generation.

“This religion is rather passed on from one generation to the next by word of mouth. Moreover, ancestors are not worshipped in silence. It is a verbal worship expressed in an oral style which also involves an audience. People listen to what is said and participate to a limited degree in the ceremonies performed. They copy the performances and later use them or part thereof in their own situations. (Magwaza 1993:14)

However it is notable that oral tradition seems to be the key in performing these rituals.

“These Zulu ceremonies are still largely oral. That they are ‘oral’ means that they are handed down from one generation to the next through the oral channel. They are only communicated

orally. All interaction takes place in a face to face situation. Even with the ancestors people maintain that *babhekene nabaphansi gqo*, meaning they face the ancestors directly but they adopt a respectful attitude to them. Performing these ceremonies is one way of establishing communication between the performers and audience, and because of this recurrent communication these ceremonies do not die. As they are oral, they rely on performance for survival. (Magwaza 1993:9)

It should be noted that since both cultures relied on oral performance, if we were to transmit this knowledge through written communication it would have to suit the oral style. What is also notable is that since the Zulu culture is used to taking the instructions orally, it is easy for them to identify with the culture that is orally transmitted. Draper explains that it is not only in the Zulu culture but it is also African to use oral performance:

The oral nature of African tradition cannot be divorced from its ritual performance in interaction with an audience in song, dance, movement and gest. It also means that it is continually fluid and dynamic in nature, changing imperceptibly in response to changed circumstances, since there is no “archetype” against which to check a performance, even though there is continuity in that there are limits to acceptable diversity in the communal reception of a performance. The collective representation of oral tradition in performance is what constitutes African religious worldviews, which are usually implicit and assumed to be known rather than explicitly stated. (Draper and Mtata 2012:1)

5.2 Tabernacle and its services

The tabernacle is the central stage or primary sacred space for the performance of Hebrew rituals. It is in these services where I have noticed similarities. The Israelites’ tabernacle which symbolised the presence of God in the Jewish religious thought was not there by the time the homily was written. For oral communication however the author alludes to it. Therefore there should be no confusion when we talk about a tabernacle and not a temple.

As I have indicated earlier on when looking at the issue of tabernacle that it had three sections: outer court, holy place and holy of holies. In the Zulu community there is a structure that bears similarities to the tabernacle. I see *Isibaya* as an “outer court”, *Indlunkulu* as “the holy place” and

umsamo in the *indlunkulu* as the most holy place. These three spaces are an equivalent of the tabernacle. All these are regarded as sacred places, as Mary Douglas says, “For us sacred things and places are to be protected from defilement” (Douglas 1966:7) It is through preserving the above places from defilement that people are saved from danger and thus kept pure. These spaces are protected by not allowing everyone to use them anyhow; only authorised people of the family can use them under the guidance of *isangoma*. For instance all these places are protected from defilement by not allowing people who are not ritually clean to enter - women who are in their periods and outsiders.

5.2.1. Outer court versus *Isibaya*

In the homily to the Hebrews the author does not mention the altar of sacrifice but it is implied as we know that the holy place and most holy place activities are preceded by the outer court activities. Since every sacrificial activity is performed in the outer court in Jewish culture, it is imperative to look at *isibaya* as the area where the slaughtering of the sacrificial animals is done.

In the Jewish culture they had an altar of sacrifice; this was in the outer court of the tabernacle. The description of the outer court is found in many verses in the Old Testament (Exodus 27: 1 - 13). The outer court itself is holy but for the sake of description it is called outer court, because it is outside while other apartments are in the tent. The *isibaya*, as is the case with the outer court, is normally situated in the centre of the homestead in an open space.

In the centre of every *umuzi* is the all-important cattle byre (*Isibaya*). However, the cattle byre is more than just a place where the cattle are kept at night. It is also a sacred place where the heard of the household is buried, and consequently it is also believed to be one of the places where the male ancestors of the family reside. To keep the ancestors informed of earthly events, important announcements are made in the *isibaya*. Sacrifices are also offered here. (Derwent 1998:42)

In both places it is where an animal for sacrificial ritual was slaughtered. As is the case with the outer court, the *isibaya* also is regarded as a sacred area in the Zulu community.

. .The ritual celebrations and ritual slaughter take place at this point of the enclosure. It is a sacred place. From here the living communicate with the living dead. The cattle enclosure serves the same purpose as the hut *umsamo*.” (Ngobese 2003:68, 69)

As the *isibaya* serves the purpose of ritual slaughter whereby the living communicate with the living dead, it is also the case with the outer court. In the book of Exodus we get the perfect example of what was done in the outer court and what was its implication. It is through the activities done in the outer court that the Jewish people were able to communicate with the Living God, to please and appease him.

Bring the bull to the front of the Tent of Meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. Slaughter it in the Lord's presence at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. Take some of the bull's blood and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar. Then take all the fat around the inner parts, the covering of the liver, and both kidneys with the fat on them, and burn them on the altar. But burn the bull's flesh and its hide and its offal outside the camp. It is a sin offering. Take one of the rams, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. Slaughter it and take the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides. Cut the ram into pieces and wash the inner parts and the legs, putting them with the head and the other pieces. Then burn the entire ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire. (Exodus 29: 10 -18)

5.2.2. Holy place and most holy place versus *Umsamo* in *Indlunkulu*

The holy place and the most holy place are mentioned in Hebrews (9:1 – 28). These are the most crucial places as far as the performance of sacrificial ritual is concerned. What should be noted is that it was one temple but separated into two by the veil (9:2; 3). The parallels that I would like to draw are that the *indlunkulu* in the Zulu community where the sacrificial rituals are performed has two areas even though they are not separated with a veil or curtain. In the *indlunkulu* the first part

that is just by the entrance, is regarded as a holy place, as Ngobese puts it: “The doorway arch is also sacred.” (Ngobese 2008:68). It is the revered place where the ancestors dwell.

The most important house in an *umuzi* was that of the grandmother, or of the great wife. This was usually the largest house, built opposite to (facing) the entrance of the *umuzi*. This is also known as the ancestors’ house, (*indlu yangenhla*) as it is believed that the ancestors reside here. Rituals in honour of the ancestors were held in this house on special occasions, such as weddings, coming of age ceremonies, or when someone died. A goat or cow would usually be slaughtered outside in the cattle byre and entrails cooked and eaten in the ancestors’ house, to appease the spirit of the ancestors. (Derwent 1998:45)

The second part is called *umsamo*. As I have indicated before, *umsamo* is regarded as the most sacred place in the *indlunkulu*.

“The *umsamo* is sacred, for it is where the guardian spirits of the homestead abide. The *umsamo* is set aside for ancestors with the aim of letting them know that their descendants are looking to them. Berglund says at the *umsamo*, vessels, clothing, and precious articles are stored. An empty *umsamo* says to the ancestors ‘we do not know you.’ Putting things at this sacred place is to tell them that the home is theirs. Meat and beer are put there overnight before the day of the ceremony. The *umsamo* is without any doubt used by the people to communicate with their ancestors, however, not always verbally.(Magwaza 1993:17)

According to Magwaza it becomes clear that *umsamo* is the platform of communication, because she goes on to say, “reporting –*ukuthetha* to the ancestors telling them about what is about to happen and what is happening.” (Magwaza 1993:17). “It is therefore clear that the key aspect of the ancestral cult is ‘letting them know.’ They are informed not only verbally, but also through practices like cattle slaughtering, burning of the *impepho* and treating the *inyongo* reverently.”(Ntshangase 2012:14) However the reporting to the ancestors is not only limited to what is happening now and what will happen, but it even goes backwards to tell them what has happened.

As it is with the Most Holy place, there are things that are kept at *Umsamo* and most of those things are also regarded as holy things. Ngobese mentions a few of these things, he says:

This place is regarded with respect and reverence. It belongs to the living dead. The guardian spirit of the family lives there. The rituals of the kraal are therefore performed from there. The vessels and clothing of ritual significance are stored there. The ritual spears as well as *isiphuku* (skin blanket) are also kept there in order to be blessed and used by the shades (*izithunzi/amathongo/amadlozi*). The carcass of the slaughtered beast is kept there overnight for the consumption of the shades before it is cooked and eaten the following day. The well-brewed African beer (*umqombothi*) is also kept there overnight. It is drunk the following day by the elderly people of the clan or family. (Ngobese 2003: 66, 67)

The similarities drawn are that sacrifice is done in the outer court which is *isibaya* in the Zulu culture but it does not end there. The performance proceeded to the holy place and to the holy of holies in the Jewish culture. It is also the case with the Zulu culture where sacrifice is done outside, then from *isibaya* to the *indlunkulu* passing the first part then to the second part called *umsamo*. The notable difference with the Zulu culture is that it does not have a curtain that separates the holy place and the most holy place (*umsamo*). However the separation is understood by people in the culture and those that use *indlunkulu*.

5.2.3 The burnt incense versus Impepho

In the Jewish culture they had an altar of incense which was inside the holy place (Exodus 27: 1 – 7; 30:1). In Leviticus a detailed description of how the incense was to be used is written. It says:

Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals from the fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine and bring it inside the veil. And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die. (Lev 16:12, 13)

In (Hebrews 9:4) the author tells us about the location of the Ark of the Covenant which had a golden jar with incense which parallels with the *impepho* in so many ways. The table below shows the similarities between the two.

Now what is happening here above is similar to what is happening in the Zulu culture. There is an altar of burning incense. Normally the fire is made in the centre of *indlunkulu*, then the officiant

will take coals from that fire and take them to *umsamo* where he will burn the incense. “Burning the incense (*impepho*) and bones of a slaughtered animal it invites the ancestors to be part of the celebration.” (Ntshangase 2012:16) *Impepho* is the IsiZulu word for incense. *Impepho* plays a pivotal role in performing rituals and more specific sacrificial rituals. This is a certain plant that is burnt to create smoke to the ancestors.

The smoke of the *impepho* should be something that keeps evolving for the ancestors to smell. This suggests that *impepho* should be kept burning for the duration of the ritual. “When the smoke clears away, the father adds pinch of *imphepho* grass as he calls upon the ancestors” (De Heusch 1985:51)

Incense (Judaism)	<i>Impepho</i> (Zulu Culture)
Located in a Most Holy place	Located in <i>Umsamo</i> (Most Holy place)
Golden Altar of incense	Altar of <i>impepho</i> made of calabash material.
Burnt continually during the ritual	Burnt continually during the ritual

5.2.4. Sacrificing similarities

In both communities, Hebrews and Zulus sacrificed animals so that they could use their blood in the sacrificial ritual. ... Blood plays an important role because Hebrews 9:22 says “In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” Among Zulu people, blood sacrificial rituals communicate power to reinforce the vital link with ancestors who freely circulate among them (De Heusch, 1985:55). It is notable that since the ultimate reason for sacrifice is to get the blood, then from the smallest animal like a dove

to the biggest one like a bull, they are sacrificed in both communities under research. In fact Mvunabandi says, “The comparison between biblical blood sacrificial rituals and African ones reveals striking similarities and a few differences.” (Mvunabandi 2008:2). In the Book of Leviticus it is written:

The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting. He said, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'when any of you brings an offering to the Lord bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock. 'If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. 'If the offering is a burnt offering from the flock, from either the sheep or the goats, he is to offer a male without defect. 'If the offering to the Lord is a burnt offering of birds, he is to offer a dove or a young pigeon. (Leviticus 1:1 – 14)

Mvunabandi shows those striking similarities between the African and Biblical contexts, but at the end of the quotation below he also points out the difference, that chickens are treated as sacrifices which is not the case in the Biblical religious context. He says, “Sacrificial animals in both Biblical and African traditional religious contexts include goats, sheep, oxen or bulls, and calves and *inkomo* or cows for Zulu people (Lv 1-7; Berguland, 1975:54-66; De Heuch, 1985:56-57), as well as doves as a provision of sacrifices for the poor. Africans also recognize chickens as sacrifices.” (Mvunabandi 2008:270)

The dissimilarities that we can notice in both cultures as far as the sacrifice is concerned, is that the Zulus sacrifice for ancestors which means they are appeasing them. “Sacrifices and offerings can either be an animal or food products. A sacrifice or an offering is put aside in order to influence supernatural powers. Sacrifice involves destroying an item that is sacrificed. For instance a sheep, goat or beast has got to be slaughtered in order to appease the ancestors or to restore relationships.” (Ngobese 2003:53, 54)

Sacrifice in the Hebrews' culture is to appease God, as (9:20) stipulates that "this is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep" (NIV). It is clear that sacrifice here is as a result of God's commandment. "The word for "sacrifice" is not a "scientific concept, but a loan word", coined from the church Latin word *Operari*: "to serve God through works" (Mvunabandi 2008:2). As Young points out:

It is frequently claimed that the animal victim died as a substitute for the offerer: by laying on of hands, the man offering the victim so that they could be wiped out by the destruction of the animal and, in the blood rituals, the life of the victim was poured out as a symbol of the life of the sacrifice offered to God. (Young 1979:51)

5.2.5 Mediatory work

The work of mediation is very crucial in both cultures. It seems clear that Hebrews as well as Zulus view God as a Supreme Being who cannot be easily approached but can be approached through a middle man. The Zulu culture is a monotheistic religion as it had been with the Hebrew culture (Job 33:23; Gal 3:19, 20; 1 Tim 2:5).

The ancestors play a vital role in the life of the Zulus. They bridge the chasm between *Mvelinqangi* and the living. They are consulted regularly through slaughtering and ritual communication, which accompanies it. They however, believed in intermediaries as means of approaching the transcendent God who was only experienced as immanent through intermediaries. The Zulus do not worship the ancestors. Worship is reserved for the absolute power (*Mvelinqangi*). That is why the Zulus sometimes scold (*thethisa*) the ancestors. They scold them because they once lived here on earth themselves. (Ngobese 2003: 44, 45)

As I have indicated above, mediatory work is appreciated in both cultures. Isaacs affirms that the work of a mediator is highly regarded in the Jewish culture. She says:

"In Jewish tradition God is not obliged to use an intermediary. He can and does on occasion act without an agent. Where a place is made for such figures, they are clearly modelled on those established mediators between God and Israel of the past, enshrined in Scripture. Thus in Israel's eschatological hopes in the postexilic period, we find not one but a number of salvific figures – Mosaic, priestly, Davidic, angelic – espoused group or another as the model

for God's agent, who would inaugurate His sovereign on earth or in heaven. In his presentation of Jesus as the final, definitive agent of God, the author of Hebrews, therefore, compares and contrasts him with Israel's principal members who have gone before. (Isaacs 1992:132, 133)

Isaacs here mentions the number of God's agents that have been used in the process of intermediation. Some of these agents were Mosaic, priestly, Davidic, angelic. The focus in the homily to the Hebrews is that the mediation work is done by priesthood (2:17; 5:1; 7:11, 8:3, 4; 9:7; 10:11; 13:11). The work of mediation is performed by the father in the family and if the father is no more, any senior person in the family serves as a priest to do the work of mediation through ancestors and their duty is not only limited to officiating in a sacrificial ceremony but also to make sure that they pass their tradition orally to their children.

“Elderly people, these are the religious leaders of the African Religion. They venerate the ancestors, sacrifice to them and also appease them in times of hardships. The elderly people are also the teachers of the clan. They regard it their duty to convey African cultures and beliefs to the younger generations. So they are priests and teachers of African Religion. (Ngobese 2003:18, 19)

Chapter 6 - IsiZulu Translation of Hebrews 9

6.0 Introduction

As I have indicated in my ideo-theological approach, I am anti-sacrifice and I want to show that there is no need for the further sacrifice of animals. Therefore in this chapter I will do the work of translation. My intention is to use this tool as appropriation showing that my understanding of the homily to the Hebrews supports my stance. Even though translating the whole homily would have been an ideal, for the purpose of this research I would focus only on Chapters 9 and 10 just for the one reason that they focus explicitly on sacrifice.

Through my “personal translation” I have managed to hear the text talking more about sacrifice as it is in the Zulu context. Mary Douglas says:

“The separation of sanctuary and consecrated things and persons from profane ones, which is a normal part of religious cults, is basically the same as the separations which are inspired by fear of malevolent spirits. Separation is the essential idea in both contexts, only the motive is different – and not so very different either, since friendly gods are also to be feared on occasion” (Douglas 1966: 11)

It is through my personal translation that I see the sacred places in the Hebrews homily as our sacred places in the Zulu culture. As Mary Douglas indicates that the designation of sacred places may be for different reasons, but it is through this exercise that both cultures learn the meaning of separation. The sacred places from both cultures may not be similar in every respect, but there is so much we can learn from the way they operate.

Those who are officiating at the sacrifice such as priests, are seen as similar to those who are doing it in the Zulu culture. The usage of orality occurs in both cultures especially when performing rituals. The list similarities is endless because I also understand that the utensils which are kept in

the sacred places for holy use are talking to the purity that should be maintained when handling the utensils that are kept in sacred place in the Zulu context. Purity is the theme of both cultures. Mary Douglas says these sacred things must always be protected from being profane and the perception is that they are always in danger of being profaned, thus vigilance is advised when performing rituals so that purity is maintained.

It is their nature always to be in danger of losing their distinctive and necessary character. The sacred needs to be continually hedged in with prohibitions. The sacred must always be treated as contagious because relations with it are bound to be expressed by rituals of separation and demarcation and by beliefs in the danger of crossing forbidden boundaries. (1966:22)

That is why I feel that there is the need for translation just to hear in detail what may be perceived as just for Hebrews, but could also be heard with a Zulu ear addressing the very needs of the Zulu culture.

In my pursuit to hear the homily to the Hebrews with Zulu ears, I will translate verses in the homily to the Hebrews into the isiZulu language. What makes my personal isiZulu translation different is the fact that it is not just a general translation but focuses solely on the Zulus and addresses their cultural needs. To hear the homily to the Hebrews as if it is preached to the Zulu congregation, in my translation, I use the words that will sound familiar to Zulu ears. The translation also supports my stance that I am anti-sacrifice. Apart from that, my personal translation also seeks to replace those isiZulu words that are no longer used or not understood by many modern Zulu speakers.

In making sure that I do not lose the theology of the book while translating, I will do a translation from the Greek Bible (SBL Greek New Testament (SBLGNT 1979)). I will also consult with two English translations (New International Version 1984 and American Standard Version 1901) and the isiZulu translation: All these translations will help me to do a textual analysis in my

engagement with the text. Then after each and every analysis I will produce my personal translation where necessary.

The significant changes that I have made below are through my work of appropriating through translation. I must indicate though, that, as I have indicated earlier on, I will use “inculturation” as my ideo-theological approach. The tool that I have used is that of a comparative analysis, as I engage two cultures and put them into dialogue. Some of the changes have been made through this analysis. Where I looked at the Hebrew culture and then compared it with what we have in the Zulu culture, I found common points and substituted those words from Hebrew culture with words from Zulu culture. I put those words that I understand to be equivalent to the words in the homily.

Through my personal translation, I have seen it fit to translate the tabernacle (outer court, holy place and most holy place) being equivalent to the sacred places in a Zulu setting. The outer court being translated into *isibaya*, the holy place being *indlunkulu* and then the most holy place being *umsamo*. I have gone even further to look at the cross as the better *isibaya* in the context of the Zulus, and the heavenly sanctuary as the better *indlunkulu* with *umsamo*. Another change that I have made below is that of a priest. In the Zulu context, we do not have a priest interceding for us but we have elders in the family that assume that role. Therefore in my translation I have also seen priests as elders in the family, who help officiate in the sacrificial ritual. This priestly role that is played by the elders is seen as a type of the antitype in the form of the ministry of Jesus in heavenly *indlunkulu*. An altar of incense that was in the most holy place is now translated as *impepho* that is stored at *umsamo*.

6.1 Heb 9:1, 2

(SBLGNT). *Εἶχε μὲν οὖν ἡ πρώτη δικαιοῦματα λατρείας τό τε ἅγιον κοσμικόν. σκηνὴ γὰρ κατεσκευάσθη ἡ πρώτη ἐν ᾗ ἦ τε λυχνία καὶ ἡ τράπεζα καὶ ἡ πρόθεσις τῶν ἄρτων, ἥτις λέγεται Ἅγια·*

(NIV) Heb 9:1, 2. Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place

(ASV) Heb 9:1, 2. Then verily the first *covenant* had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein *were* the candlestick, and the table, and the showbread; which is called the Holy place

(1959 IsiZulu Translation). KumaHeberu 9:1, 2. *Kepha nesivumelwano sokuqala sasinezimiso zenkonzo nendlu engcwele yasezwi. Ngokuba kwathiwa itabernakele lokuqala okwakukhona kulo uthi lwezibani, netafula nezinkwa zokubukwa, okuthiwa elingcwele;*

One of the first things that one notices in 1959 isiZulu Translation is the spelling of the title of the homily “KuMaHeberu” which I doubt the Zulu ear will hear properly. That is why in all my personal translations I have put “KumaHebheru” because when it is pronounced the “bh” must be audible and the inclusion of “h” will make the translation sound more accurate than without it. In a Zulu person’s ear when reading verse one and two they hear a message talking about their sacred places especially in this case, *indlunkulu* where sacred things were kept. However my preferred translation would be as follows.

Personal Translation:

KumaHebheru 9:1, 2 “*Isivumelwano sokuqala sasinemigomo nendlela yokukhonza khona manjalo kwakukhona nesakhiwo sokudumisa uSimakade. Kwakumiswe ithende lesivumelwano elabe*

linezindawo ezimbili. Kweyokuqala okwakugcinwa kuyo uthi lwezibani kanye netafula okwakubekwa kulo izinkwa ezazinikelwa kuNkulunkulu, lena kwakuthiwa indawo engcwele.

6.2 Heb 9: 3, 4, 5

(SBLGNT) μετὰ δὲ τὸ δεύτερον καταπέτασμα σκηνῆ ἢ λεγομένη. Ἅγια Ἁγίων, χρυσοῦν ἔχουσα θυμιατήριον καὶ τὴν κιβωτὸν τῆς διαθήκης περικεκαλυμμένην πάντοθεν χρυσίῳ, ἐν ᾗ στάμνος χρυσοῦ ἔχουσα τὸ μάννα καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος Ἀαρὼν ἢ βλαστήσασα καὶ αἱ πλάκες τῆς διαθήκης, ὑπεράνω δὲ αὐτῆς Χερουβὶν δόξης κατασκιάζοντα τὸ ἱλαστήριον· περὶ ὧν οὐκ ἔστιν νῦν λέγειν κατὰ μέρος.

(NIV) Heb 9:3, 4, 5. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, Which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered Ark of the Covenant; this ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant, above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now

(ASV) Heb 9:3, 4, 5. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies. Having a golden altar of incense, and the Ark of the Covenant overlaid roundabout with gold, wherein *was* a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally

(1959 IsiZulu Translation). KumaHeberu 9:3, 4, 5. *Emuva kwesihengo sesibili sethende kwakukhona indawo ebizwa ngokuthi engcwelengcwele, Yayine alithale legolide lokushisa impepho nomphongolo wesivumelwano umboziwe ndawo zonke ngegolide, kwakukhona kuwona isitsha segolide esasiphethe imana, nenduku ka Aroni ehlumileyo, nezingcezu ezimbili zamatshe. Phezu kwawo kwakukhona amakherubi enkazimulo engamele isihlalo somusa, okungenakukhulunywa ngakho ngakunye manje.*

What is described here is an important place as it is called holy place, with holy things and even manna kept there. It would probably be *umsamo* the most sacred place for Zulu people. It is also a

place where the food of the ancestors is kept and other sacred things that were possessions of the ancestors. As the author correctly points out, there were many things in the most holy place that he cannot discuss in detail; it is also the case with the things that were kept at *umsamo*. We cannot go into detail because they could be a project on their own.

Personal Translation:

KumaHebheru 9: 3, 4, 5. *Emuva kwesihengo sesibili sethende kwakukhona indawo ebizwa ngokuthi engcwelengcwele Yayine alithale legolide lokushisa impepho nomphongolo wesivumelwano omboziwe ndawo zonke ngegolide, kwakukhona kuwona isitsha segolide esasiphethe imana, nenduku ka Aroni enamahlumela, nezingcezu ezimbili zamatshe. Ngaphezu kwalo Mphongolo kwakumi amakherubhi enkazimulo ayendlale amaphiko awo phezu kwesivalo lapho kwakukhokhelwa khona inhlawulo yezono. Okwamanje thina ngeke sageqa amagula ngalokhu*

6.3 Heb 9:6, 7

(SBLGNT) Heb 9: 6, 7. Τούτων δὲ οὕτως κατεσκευασμένων, εἰς μὲν τὴν πρώτην σκηνὴν διὰ παντὸς εἰσίσιασιν οἱ ἱερεῖς τὰς λατρείας ἐπιτελοῦντες, εἰς δὲ τὴν δευτέραν ἅπαξ τοῦ ἔνιαυτοῦ ὁ μόνος ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, οὐ χωρὶς αἵματος, ὁ προσφέρει ὑπὲρ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων,

(NIV) Heb 9: 6, 7. When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry, but only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

(ASV) Heb 9: 6, 7. Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services; but only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) KumaHeberu 9:6, 7. *Kepha lezi zinto zilungisiwe ngokunjalo, abapristi bangena njalo etabernakele lokuqala befeza izinkonzo, Kodwa kwelesibili kungena umpristi omkhulu yedwa Kanye ngomnyaka, kungengaphandle kwegazi anikela ngalo ngenxa yakhe uqobo nangenxa yezono zabantu.*

The above verses in a Zulu ear sound as if the sacrificial ritual ceremony preparations were completed. The elders in the family who are regarded as priests will go to the *indlunkulu* to carry out services which are to venerate the ancestors, but the most senior in the family or it could be the father, will go as far as *umsamo* to *ukuyoshweleza* (plead for forgiveness and blessings) on behalf of the family. That person who stands and pleads on behalf of the family and leads in officiating the sacrificial ritual is seen as a priest. As I was reading the above text I came up with this translation below.

Personal Translation:

KumaHeberu 9:6. *Kodwa ke uma konke sekulungisiwe, abaphristi babengena njalo kwitende lokuqala beqhuba izinkonzo, Kodwa endaweni yesibili kungena kuphela umpristi omkhulu futhi engena kanye vo ngonyaka. Wayengeke angene uma engakafafazi Igazi aliphethe umpristi omkhulu elokushwelezela izono zakhe azaziyo nangazazi kanye nemithwalo yezono zoquqaba lonke.* **Heb 9: 8 - 10**

(SLBGNT) *τοῦτο δηλοῦντος τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ ἁγίου, μήπω πεφανερῶσθαι τὴν τῶν ἁγίων ὁδὸν ἔτι τῆς πρώτης σκηνῆς ἐχοῦσης στάσιν, ἥτις παραβολὴ εἰς τὸν καιρὸν τὸν ἐνεστηκότα, καθ' ἣν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίαι προσφέρονται μὴ δυνάμεναι κατὰ συνείδησιν τελειῶσαι τὸν λατρεύοντα, μόνον ἐπὶ βρώμασιν καὶ πόμασιν καὶ διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς, δικαιώματα σαρκὸς μέχρι καιροῦ διορθώσεως ἐπικείμενα*

(NIV) Heb 9:8, 9, 10. The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing, This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings--external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

(ASV) Heb 9:8, 9, 10. The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while the first tabernacle is yet standing, which *is* a figure for the time present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect, *being* only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) KumaHeberu 9:8, 9, 10. *Umoya ongcwele etshengisa lokhu ukuthi ayikabonakaliswa indlela eya endaweni engcwele, lisemi itabernakele lokuqala. Elona lingumfanekiso kulesi sikhathi samanje okulethwa ngaso iminikelo nemihlatshelo engenakumenza okhonzayo aphelele maqondana nonembeza, Kodwa yona kanye nokudla nokuphuza nokugeza okuyizinhlobonhlobo iyizimiso senyama kuphela ezibekiweyo, kuze kufike isikhathi sokupheleliswa kwezinto.*

These verses above suggest to the Zulu ear that all forms of sacrificial ritual from *isibaya*, *indlunkulu* to *emsamo* are not enough for cleansing the conscience but they end up being ceremonies of feasting on the food sacrificed to ancestors. All these rituals are not enough but they are part of the old order and they were good, as the old order was still in effect without the new order.

Personal Translation:

KumaHeberu 9:8 *Umoya Ongcwele ebonisa lokhu ukuthi indlela eya endaweni engcwele ayikabonakaliswa, uma nje lisamile itende lokuqala. Okuyilona elingumfanekiso waleli eliseZulwini, okuyilona elimele ukuthi kwenziwe kulona imihlatshelo neminikelo kodwa engakwazi*

ukwenza okhonzayo ahlambululwe unembeza wakhe. Njengoba kungukudla nokuphuzwayo nezihlambo ezihlukene, imithetho emaqondana nezinto zangaphandle iba khona kuphela kuze kube yilapho uNkulunkulu enza uhlelo olusha

6.4 Heb 9:11 - 14

(SLBGNT).Χριστὸς δὲ παραγενόμενος ἀρχιερεὺς τῶν γενομένων ἀγαθῶν διὰ τῆς μείζονος καὶ τελειότερας σκινηῆς οὐ χειροποιήτου, τοῦτ' ἔστιν οὐ ταύτης τῆς κτίσεως, οὐδὲ δι' αἵματος τράγων καὶ μόσχων διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος, εἰσῆλθεν ἐφάπαξ εἰς τὰ ἅγια, αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὐράμενος. εἰ γὰρ τὸ αἶμα τράγων καὶ ταύρων καὶ σποδὸς δαμάλεως ῥαντίζουσα τοὺς κεκοινωμένους ἀγιάζει πρὸς τὴν τῆς σαρκὸς καθαρότητα, πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ αἶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ, καθαρῶς τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων εἰς τὸ λατρεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι.

(NIV) Heb 9:11 – 14. When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

(ASV) Heb 9:11. But Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that have been defiled, sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the

eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) KumaHeberu 9:11 – 14. *Kepha lokhu uKristu esefikile, engumpristi omkhulu wezinto ezinhle ezizayo, wadabula itabernakele elikhulu neliphelele kunalelo, elingenziwanga ngezandla, okungukuthi elingesilo elalokhu kudalwa, Wangena kanye kuphela endaweni engcwele, kungengegazi lezimbuzi nelamathole kepha ngegazi lakhe, ezuzile ukukhululwa kwaphakade. Ngokuba uma igazi lezimbuzi nezinkunzi nomlotha wesithole ufafaza abangcolileyo, kuhlambulula kube ngukuhlanzeka kwenyama, Kakhulu kangakanani igazi likaKristu owazinikela kuNkulunkulu ngoMoya ophakade engenacala lizakuhlansa unembeza wethu emisebenzini efileyo, ukuze sikhonze uNkulunkulu ophilayo.*

The above passage to the Zulu ear means the following: since the sacrifice that was done in previous verses was not enough or perfect therefore a new sacrifice is introduced. This is the sacrifice that was done by Jesus Christ, and it is of the new order. It is compared to the sacrifice of the goats and bulls that was able to cleanse outwardly but it his blood which has an ability to cleanse the conscience. Jesus then becomes the perfect sacrifice that has been offered in place of goats and bulls; his sacrifice is perfect because he was without sin. His form of sacrifice is heard as a new covenant which is better than the old one.

Personal Translation:

KumaHeberu 9:11 - 14. *Kodwa kuthe esefikile uKristu, engumphristi omkhulu wezinto ezinhle ezizayo, wadabula ithabanakele elikhulu neliphelele kunalelo lasemhlabeni, elingenziwanga ngezandla zamuntu, okusho ukuthi elingazange lakhiwe. Akangenanga ngegazi lamathole nezimbuzi kodwa ngegazi lakhe, esetholile ukukhululwa kwaphakade. Ngokuba uma igazi lezimbuzi nezinkunzi nomlotha wesithole ufafaza abangcolileyo, ukuhlambulula kwakuba ukuhlambulula kwenyama. Kakhulu kangakanani igazi likaKhristu owazinikela kuNkulunkulu*

ngoMoya ophakade engenasici, lizakuhlanza unembeza wethu emisebenzini efileyo, ukuze sikhonze uNkulunkulu ophilayo

6.5 Heb 9: 15 - 18

(SLBGNT) *Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διαθήκης καινῆς μεσίτης ἐστίν, ὅπως θανάτου γενομένου εἰς ἀπολύτρωσιν τῶν ἐπὶ τῇ πρώτῃ διαθήκῃ παραβάσεων τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν λάβωσιν οἱ κεκλημένοι τῆς αἰωνίου κληρονομίας. ὅπου γὰρ διαθήκη, θάνατον ἀνάγκη φέρεσθαι τοῦ διαθεμένου· διαθήκη γὰρ ἐπὶ νεκροῖς βεβαία, ἐπεὶ μήποτε ἰσχύει ὅτε ζῆ ὁ διαθέμενος. ὅθεν οὐδὲ ἡ πρώτη χωρὶς αἵματος ἐγκεκαίνισται·*

(NIV) Heb 9:15 – 18. For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood

(ASV) Heb 9:15 – 18. And for this cause he is the mediator of a new covenant, that a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they that have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth. Wherefore even the first *covenant* hath not been dedicated without blood.

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) KumaHeberu 9:15. *Ngalokho-ke ungumlamuleli wesivumelwano esisha, kuze kuthi ngokufa okungenxa yokukhululwa eziphambekweni zesivumelwano sokuqala ababiziweyo bazuze ifa eliphakade elathenjiwayo. Ngokuba lapho kukhona itestamente, kufuneka ukuba kubikwe ukufa kowalenzayo. Ngokuba itestamente lisebenza sekufiwe, ngokuba alize lingaba namandla esekhona owalenzayo. Ngalokho-ke isivumelwano sokuqala asimiswanga ngaphandle kwegazi.*

Jesus is then seen as a risen ancestor and a priest who is pleading (*oshweleza*) to the father because of our sins. In the above verses is again the contrast between what was offered by sacrificial ritual to the ancestors (as the first covenant) and what is offered by the sacrifice of Christ. What we get is that since there was no cleansing or forgiveness without the shedding of blood, then by Christ's death the Zulu people are saved from the sacrifice of goats and bulls.

Personal Translation:

KumaHebheru 9:15. *Ngakho – ke ungumlamuleli wesivumelwano esisha, ngenxa yokufa okwenzeka ukuze kukhululwe ababonile kwisivumelwano esidala, nokuthi labo ababiziweyo bathole isithembiso sokukhululwakwaphakade. Ngokuba lapho kukhona isivumelwano, kudingekile ukuthi lowo osenzile abonise ngokufa kwakhe. Ngokuba isivumelwano sisebenza uma skufiwe, asibi namandla uma lowo owasenzeyo esaphila. . Ngakho – ke isivumelwano sokuqala asimiswanga ngaphandle kwegazi*

6.6 Heb 9: 19 - 23

(SLBGNT) *λαληθείσης γὰρ πάσης ἐντολῆς κατὰ τὸν νόμον ὑπὸ Μωϋσέως παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, λαβὼν τὸ αἷμα τῶν μόσχων μετὰ ὕδατος καὶ ἐρίου κοκκίνου καὶ ὑσσώπου αὐτό τε τὸ βιβλίον καὶ πάντα τὸν λαὸν ἐράντισεν, λέγων· Τοῦτο τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης ἧς ἐνετείλατο πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὁ θεός· καὶ τὴν σκηνὴν δὲ καὶ πάντα τὰ σκεύη τῆς λειτουργίας τῷ αἵματι ὁμοίως ἐράντισεν. καὶ σχεδὸν ἐν αἵματι πάντα καθαρίζεται κατὰ τὸν νόμον, καὶ χωρὶς αἱματεκχυσίας οὐ γίνεται ἄφεσις. Ἀνάγκη οὖν τὰ μὲν ὑποδείγματα τῶν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς τούτοις καθαρίζεσθαι, αὐτὰ δὲ τὰ ἐπουράνια κρείττοσι θυσίαις παρὰ ταύτας.*

(NIV) Heb 9:19 – 23. When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of

hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep." In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

(ASV) Heb 9:19 – 23. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, this is the blood of the covenant which God commanded to you-ward. Moreover the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. And according to the law, I may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. . It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) KumaHeberu 9: 19 – 23. *Ngokuba isikhulunyiwe imiyalelo yonke ngokomthetho nguMose kubantu bonke, wayesethatha igazi lamathole nezimbuzi kanye namanzi noboya obubomvu nehisopi, wafafaza incwadi nabantu bonke, ethi: "lokhu kuyigazi lesivumelwano aniyale ngaso uNkulunkulu," Netabernakele futhi, nezitsha zonke zenkonzo wakufafaza kanjalo ngegazi. Yebo, cishe zonke izinto zihlanjululwa ngegazi ngokomthetho; ngaphandle kokuchitha igazi akukho ukuthethelelwa. Njalo-ke kwakudingekile ukuba imifanekiso yokusezulwini ihlanzwe ngalokho, kepha okusezulwini uqobo lwakho kuhlanzwe ngeminikelo emihle kunalena.*

Since the Zulus do not know Moses they do believe that their great ancestors were instructed to conduct sacrificial rituals. Those instruction were passed orally to the next generation, and it was simple to use the blood of all the stipulated animals. It then became the law that every cleansing or remission be done by blood. That is why almost everything in Zulu culture was done through the shedding of blood. But all this was just a shadow or an example of things that are in Heaven.

Personal Translation:

KumaHebheru 9:19 – 23. *Ngokuba uma isikhulunyiwe yonke imyalelo ngokomthetho kubantu bonke, wayesethatha igazi lamathole lezimbuli, namanzi kanye noboya obubende nehisophi wafafaza incwadi uqobo nabantu bonke. ethi kubona: “leli yigazi lesivumelwano uNkulunkulu aniyale ngaso ukuthi niligcine. Netende, nezitsha zonke zenkonzo wakufafaza nakho ngaleyondlela ngegazi. Yebo, emthethweni cishe zonke izinto zihlanjululwa ngegazi; ngaphandle kokuchithwa kwegazi akukho ukuthethelelwa. Kwakudingekile ukuba imifanekiso yokusezulwini ihlanzwe ngaleyo mnikelo kodwa okusezulwini kuhlanzwe ngeminikelo engcono kunalena.*

6.7 Heb 9: 24 - 28

(SLBGNT) οὐ γὰρ εἰς χειροποίητα εἰσῆλθεν ἅγια Χριστός, ἀντίτυπα τῶν ἀληθινῶν, ἀλλ' εἰς αὐτὸν τὸν οὐρανόν, νῦν ἐμφανισθῆναι τῷ προσώπῳ τοῦ θεοῦ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν· οὐδ' ἵνα πολλάκις προσφέρῃ ἑαυτόν, ὥσπερ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰσέρχεται εἰς τὰ ἅγια κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ἐν αἵματι ἀλλοτρίῳ, ἐπεὶ ἔδει αὐτὸν πολλάκις παθεῖν ἀπὸ καταβολῆς κόσμου· νυνὶ δὲ ἅπαξ ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ πεφανέρωται. καὶ καθ' ὅσον ἀπόκειται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἅπαξ ἀποθανεῖν, μετὰ δὲ τοῦτο κρίσις, οὕτως καὶ ὁ Χριστός, ἅπαξ προσενεχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας, ἐκ δευτέρου χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας ὀφθήσεται τοῖς αὐτὸν ἀπεκδεχομένοις εἰς σωτηρίαν.

(NIV) Heb 9:24 – 28. For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most

Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

(ASV) Heb 9: 24 – 28. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us. nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place year by year with blood not his own; else must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this *cometh* judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.

(1958 IsiZulu Translation) KumaHeberu 9:24. *Ngokuba uKristu kangenanga endaweni engcwele eyenziwe ngezandla, engumfanekiso waleyo okuyiyo ngempela, kepha wangena ezulwini uqobo ukuba manje abonakale ebusweni bukaNkulunkulu ngenxa yethu, Futhi akazange azinikele kaningi, njengalokhu umphristi omkhulu wayengena endaweni engcwele iminyaka ngeminyaka ephethe igazi okungesilo elakhe. Uma kwakunjalo wayemelwe ukuhlupheka kaningi selokhu kwasekelwa izwe; kodwa kalokhu ubonakalisiwe kanye ekupheleni kwesikhathi ukuba asuse izono ngokuzinikela kwakhe. Futhi njengalokhu kumiselwe abantu ukuba bafe kanye, emva kwalokhu kwahlulelwa, Kunjalo noKristu, esenikelwe kanye ukuba athwale izono zabaningi, uyakubonakala ngokwesibili ngaphandle kwesono kulabo abamlindeleyo, kube ngukusindiswa.*

Jesus is seen here entering *indlunkulu yase Zulwini* (Heavenly holy place). He did not perform sacrifice continually like it was done in the Zulu tradition but he performed his sacrifice once and for all. He approached *umsamo wase Zulwini* (most holy place) to talk directly to God on behalf of the Zulu people. Just as the elders in a home (those who serve as priests) did not stay at *umsamo* forever, after the sacrifice has been accepted then Christ will not stay at *umsamo* in heaven forever

but will come out then the salvation will be assured. This is how the homily to the Hebrews is heard with Zulu ears.

Personal Translation:

KumaHebheru 9:24. Ngokuba uKhristu kangenanga endaweni engcwele eyenziwe ngezandla zabantu, wangena eZulwini uqobo ukuyosimela phambi kuka Nkulunkulu uqobo. Futhi akazange azinikele kaningi, njengalokhu umphristi omkhulu wayengena endaweni engcwele iminyaka ngeminyaka ephethe igazi okungesilo elakhe. Ukube kwakunjalo wayemelwe ukuhlupheka kaningi selokhu kwadalwa umhlaba kodwa ubonakalisiwe kanye ekupheleni kwesikhathi ukuba asuse izono ngokuzinikela kwakhe. Njengokuba kumiselwe abantu ukuba bafe kanye, emva kwalokho bebhekane nokwahlulela. Kanjalo ke no Khristu, wanikelwa kanye vo ukuba athwalw izono zabaningi, uyakubonakala ngokwesibili engezile ukuzothwala isono kodwa insindiso kulabo abamlindeleyo.

6.8 Heb 10: 1 - 3

(SBLGNT) Σκιὰν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν, οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων, κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν ταῖς αὐταῖς θυσίαις ἅς προσφέρουσιν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς οὐδέποτε δύναται τοὺς προσερχομένους τελειῶσαι. ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐπαύσαντο προσφερόμεναι, διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν ἔχειν ἔτι συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν τοὺς λατρεύοντας ἅπαζ κεκαθαρισμένους; ἀλλ' ἐν αὐταῖς ἀνάμνησις ἁμαρτιῶν κατ' ἐνιαυτόν, ἀδύνατον γὰρ αἷμα ταύρων καὶ τράγων ἀφαιρεῖν ἁμαρτίας.

(NIV) Heb 10:1 – 3. The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and

would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

(ASV) 10:1 – 3. For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins

(1959 IsiZulu Translation). KumaHeberu 10:1 – 3. *Ngokuba lokhu umthetho unesithunzi sezinto ezinhle ezizayo, ungesiwo umfanekiso wazo uqobo, ungeze waba namandla ngemihlatshelo enikelwa njalonjalo iminyaka ngeminyaka ukubenza baphelele labo abasondelayo; uma kwakungenjalo, nga ingayekwanga ukunikelwa na? lokhu phela abakhonzayo sebehlanjululwe kanye babengasayikuba novalo ngezono. Kodwa kuleyo mihlatshelo kukhona ukukhunjulwa kwezono iminyaka ngeminyaka; Ngokuba akunakwenzeka ukuba igazi lezinkunzi nelezimbuzi lisuse izono.*

The above verses talk about the sacrifices that were done in Jewish culture as a shadow of the things that were to come. This seems to apply to the sacrifices that are done in the Zulu context that are also a shadow of which was to come. The similarities drawn from both cultures is that the repeated sacrifices have no power of total cleansing but they do also remind people of their sins.

Personal Translation:

KumaHeberu 10:1 – 3. *Ngokuba umthetho uyisithunzi kuphela sezinto ezinhle ezizayo, ungesiwo umfanekiso wazo uqobo, ungeke ube namandla ngemihlatshelo enikelwa njalo iminyaka ngeminyaka ukubenza baphelele labo abasondelayo; ngabe awuyekwanga ukunikelwa na? Ngokuba phela abakhonzayo sebehambululiwe kanye bebengasayikuba novalo ngezono zabo. Kodwa kuleyo mihlatshelo kukhona okukhumbuzayo ngezono iminyaka ngeminyaka; ngokuba akunakwenzeka ukuba igazi lezinkunzi nelezimbuzi lisuse izono.*

6.9 Heb 10: 4 - 6

(SBLGNT) διὸ εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον λέγει· Θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι. ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ εὐδόκησας. τότε εἶπον· Ἴδου ἦκω, ἐν κεφαλίδι βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ, τοῦ ποιῆσαι, ὁ θεός, τὸ θέλημά σου

(NIV) 10: 4 – 6. Therefore, when Christ came into the world, with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll I have come to do your will, my God.’”

(ASV) Heb 10: 4 – 6. Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, “Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But a body You have prepared for Me; In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You have taken no pleasure. “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God.’”

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) KumaHeberu 10: 4 – 6. *Ngalokho-ke esefika ezweni uthi: “Umhlatshelo nomnikelo awuwuthandanga, kodwa ungilungisele umzimba. Iminikelo yokushiswa nemihlatshelo ngenxa yesono awuyithokozelanga. Ngase ngithi: ‘Bheka, ngiyenza emqulwini wencwadi kulotshiwe ngami --ukuba ngiyenze, Nkulunkulu, intando yakho.’ ”*

Verses 4 – 6, indicates that Christ came as our new sacrifice and our priest. The difference between both Jewish and Zulu culture is that the sacrifice and the one officiating at a sacrifice are two different people. In Christ we find a new package where he is both. Christ is talking to God here, and he is presenting himself to do his will.

Personal Translation:

Ngakho-ke kuthe uKhristu esefikile emhlabeni, wathi: umhlatshele wokushiswa nomnikelo ngenxa yezono awuyithokozelanga. Ngase ngithi: bheka ngiyeza, emqulwini wencwadi kulotshiwe ngami ukuba ngenze intando yakho Simakade wami.

6.10 Heb 10: 7 - 9

(SBLGNT) *ώτερον λέγων ὅτι Θυσίας καὶ προσφορὰς καὶ ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ ἠθέλησας οὐδὲ εὐδόκησας, αἵτινες κατὰ νόμον προσφέρονται, τότε εἶρηκεν· Ἴδου ἤκω τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου· ἀναιρεῖ τὸ πρῶτον ἵνα τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ. ἐν ᾧ θελήματι ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμὲν διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφάπαξ.*

(NIV) Heb 10: 7 – 9. First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

(ASV) Heb 10: 7 – 9. After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure *in them*” (which are offered according to the Law), then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will.” He takes away the first in order to establish the second. By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) *KumaHeberu 10:7 – 9. Eseshilo ngasenhla ukuthi: “Imihlatshelo, neminikelo, neminikelo yokushiswa, nemihlatshelo ngenxa yezono awuyithandanga, awuyithokozelanga,” eyona ilethwa ngokomthetho, ubuye wathi: “Bheka, ngiyeza ukwenza intando yakho.” Ususa okokuqala, ukuze amise okwesibili. Ngaleyo ntando singcwelisiwe ngokunikelwa komzimba kaJesu Kristu kanye kuphela.*

The above verses indicate that God is not pleased with these sacrifices that are done yearly. Therefore a new order is set by abolishing the first order. It is through this new order that the

cleansing of both cultures can be achieved. The new order stipulates that the body of Christ which now stands in the place of goat and bulls was sacrifice once and for all to achieve this purpose.

Personal Translation:

Eshilo ngasenhla ukuthi, “imihlatshelo, neminikelo, neminikelo yokushiswa kanye nemihlatshelo ngenxa yezono awuyithandanga, awuyithokozelanga,” yona elethwa ngokomthetho, ubuye wathi: Bheka, ngiyeza ukwenza intando yakho.” Ususa okokuqala, ukuze amise okwesibili. Ngaleyo ntando singcwelisiwe ngokunikelwa komzimba kaJesu Khristu kanye vo

6.11 Heb 10: 10 - 13

(SBLGNT) *Καὶ πᾶς μὲν ἱερεὺς ἕστηκεν καθ’ ἡμέραν λειτουργῶν καὶ τὰς αὐτὰς πολλάκις προσφέρων θυσίας, αἵτινες οὐδέποτε δύνανται περιελεῖν ἁμαρτίας. οὗτος δὲ μίαν ὑπὲρ ἁμαρτιῶν προσενέγκας θυσίαν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς ἐκάθισεν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκδεχόμενος ἕως τεθῶσιν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ ὑποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ, μιᾷ γὰρ προσφορᾷ τετελείωκεν εἰς τὸ διηνεκὲς τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους*

(NIV) Heb 10:10 - 13 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God; And since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

(ASV) Heb 10:10 – 13. Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) *KumaHeberu 10: 10 – 13. Abapristi bonke kambe bemi bekhonza imihla ngemihla, benikela kaningi ngayona leyo mihlatshelo engasoze yaba namandla okususa izono; kepha yena, esenikele ngomhlatshelo waba munye ngenxa yezono, wahlala phakade ngakwesokunene sikaNkulunkulu, usalindele izitha zakhe zize zenziwe isenabelo sezinyawo zakhe. Ngokuba ngomnikelo munye uphelelise njalonjalo labo abangcwelisiweyo.*

The comparison is given here of a priest who offered daily sacrifices which had no power to cleanse sin with Christ's offering which has been done once and for all. It has a power to cleanse sin and Christ is now seen seated at *umsamo waseZulwini* (Most Holy Place) and continually pleading on behalf of his people.

Personal Translation:

Abaphristi bonke babemkhonza imihla ngemihla, benikela ngayo lemihlatshelo engasoze yaba namandla okususa izono; kepha yena esenikele ngomhlatshelo waba munye ngenxa yezono, wabe esehlala phakade ngakwesokunene sikaNkulunkulu, usalindele izitha zakhe zize zenziwe isenabelo sezinyawo zakhe. Ngokuba ngomnikelo owodwa uphelelisile njalo abangcwelisiweyo.

6.12 Heb 10: 14 - 18

(SBLGNT) *μαρτυρεῖ δὲ ἡμῖν καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, μετὰ γὰρ τὸ εἰρηκέναι. Αὕτη ἡ διαθήκη ἦν διαθήσομαι πρὸς αὐτοὺς μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκείνας, λέγει κύριος, διδοὺς νόμους μου ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς, καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν καὶ τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθήσομαι ἔτι. ὅπου δὲ ἄφεσις τούτων, οὐκέτι προσφορὰ περὶ ἁμαρτίας.*

(NIV) Heb 10: 14 – 18. The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless

acts I will remember no more.” And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary.

(ASV) Heb 10: 14 – 18. And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying: “This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will write them,” *He then says*, “And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) KumaHeberu 10: 14 – 18. *Kepha noMoya oNgcwele uyafakaza kithina, ngokuba emva kokusho kwakhe ukuthi: “Yilesi sivumelwano engizakusenza nabo, emva kwalezo zinsuku, isho iNkosi: Ngiyakufaka imithetho yami ezinhliziyweni zabo, ngiyilobe engqondweni yabo, “Nezono zabo nobubi babo angisoze ngakukhumbula futhi.” Kepha lapho kukhona ukuthethelelwa kwalokho, akusadingeki ukunikela ngenxa yesono. Umyalo wokukholwa nokuthembeka*

God is assuring his people that once forgiveness is effected there is no need for sacrifice. By my reading of this passage; the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ accomplished what could not have been accomplished with yearly sacrifices. Therefore the author suggests there is no need of sacrifice.

Personal Translation:

NoMoya oyingcwele uyafakaza kithina, okokuqala uthi: “yilesi isivumelwano engiyakusenza nabo emva kwalesosikhathi, isho Inkosi: “ngiyakufaka umthetho wami ezinhliziyweni zabo, ngiyilobe engqondweni yabo.” Wabe esethi, “nezono zabo nokuphula kwabo umthetho angisoze ngakukhumbula.” Lapho lezizinto sezixolelwe, umnikelo wesono awusadingeki.

6.13 Heb 10 : 19 - 22

(SBLGNT) Ἔχοντες οὖν, ἀδελφοί, παρρησίαν εἰς τὴν εἴσοδον τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ αἵματι Ἰησοῦ, ἣν ἐνεκαίνισεν ἡμῖν ὁδὸν πρόσφατον καὶ ζῶσαν διὰ τοῦ καταπετάσματος, τοῦτ' ἔστιν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἱερέα μέγαν ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ, προσερχώμεθα μετὰ ἀληθινῆς καρδίας ἐν πληροφορίᾳ πίστεως, ῥεραντισμένοι τὰς καρδίας ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως πονηρᾶς καὶ λελουσμένοι τὸ σῶμα ὕδατι καθαρῷ·

(NIV) Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God. Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water

(ASV) Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since *we have* a great priest over the house of God. let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

(1959 IsiZulu Translation) *Ngakho-ke, bazalwane, njengokuba sinesibindi sokungena endaweni engcwele ngegazi likaJesu, ngendlela asivulela yona, indlela entsha ephilayo, edabula isihenqo, okungukuthi inyama yakhe, sinompristi omkhulu wendlu kaNkulunkulu, masisondele ngenhliziyo eqinisileyo ngokwethemba okupheleleyo kokukholwa, zifafaziwe izinhliziyo zethu kungasekho valo lokubi, umzimba wethu ugeziwe ngamanzi acwebileyo*

The author is appealing to the community that is used to having their own sacrifices that since there is a sacrifice of Christ and he has entered the umsamo (Most holy place) in heaven. Since Christ is our high priest who sprinkled our hearts with his blood therefore we must be assured of cleansing of both conscience and our bodies.

Personal Translation:

Ngakho-ke, bazalwane, njengokuba sinesibindi sokungena endaweni engcwele ngcwele ngegazi likaJesu, ngendlela entsha nephilayo asidabulela ngayo isihengo, okungukuthi umzimba wakhe, sinomphristi omkhulu wendlu Simakade. Masisondele ngenhliziyo ehlambululekiyo ngokwethemba okuqinisekileyo kokukholwa, sezifafaziwe izinhliziyo zethu kunembeza wesono, nomzimba wethu uhlambululiwe ngamanzi acwebileyo.

Chapter 7 –

Sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the Perfect Sacrifice

This chapter will seek to address the meaning of the sacrifice of Jesus to the Zulu community especially to those living in the modern era. The question that it seeks to answer is, how do I hear a homily to the Hebrews with Zulu ears? As I have drawn some parallels between the Hebrews and Zulus, as far as the sacrifice is concern, I would like to go further and appropriate this homily to the Zulu ears as it is done to the Hebrews.

7.1 Mount of Golgotha as Better *Isibaya* (Kraal)

The crucifixion of Jesus on Mount Golgotha serves as a substitute of the sacrifice that is done in the *isibaya*. Even though we do not have a detailed account of the crucifixion but it is implied throughout chapter nine and ten. In the Zulu culture what is expected in the kraal is that the animal for sacrifice must be identified and be separated from others. Mvunabandi says:

“The *inkomo yamandlozi* is an animal of exceptional ritual status, namely a bull or a cow with proven fertility, fat, and docile with long horns, but never a castrated ox. It is set aside for the ancestor and cannot therefore work. It cannot be sacrificed or sold to anyone: the owner offers it to the ancestors by rubbing its back with *imphepho* medicine.” (2008:94)

Having been identified by Judas in a form of a kiss (Luke 22:48), He was then offered as a sacrifice at the *isibaya* of Golgotha. One of the things that are expected on the sacrificed animal is what has been pointed out here by Richards:

“Methods of killing vary across historical, geographical and cultural contexts and the purpose of the ceremony being performed. When killed for ceremonial purposes, Krieger explains that if the animal ‘bellows when slaughtered, this is a sign that the ancestors are pleased with it, for this bellowing is the method employed by the spirits of expressing their

acceptance of the offering' This implies that a moment of pain was necessary and could be induced by removing the spear before a fatal cut." (Ballard 2010:4)

The above quotation makes it clear that it is necessary for the animal killed for ceremonial purposes to cry and this will be the sign that the ancestors are pleased and that they accept the sacrifice. One thing that makes me confident that the sacrifice of Christ becomes a substitute of the one that is done in a Zulu culture is the fact that Christ cried on the cross. The agony, pain and the cry of Jesus suggests that the sacrifice of Christ is accepted by God (Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:46), "The Supreme Power (Mvelinqangi) is worshipped. The Supreme Power (Mvelinqangi – First Appearer) is worshipped but He is addressed through the living dead (Ancestors or Shades)." (Ngobese 2003: 14, 15) In fact the prophet Isaiah had prophesied that Christ would suffer pains and after He had suffered then God of the ancestor is please to accept his sacrifice:

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people He *was* stricken. And He put His grave with the wicked, and with a rich one in His death; although He had done no violence, nor *was any* deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased Jehovah to crush Him; to grieve Him; *that* He should put forth His soul as a guilt-offering. He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, and the will of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand. (Isaiah 53:8 -10 NKJV)

The death of Jesus Christ at Golgotha is like an antitype of the Zulu ancestral sacrifice. What has always been achieved through the sacrifice of goats and bulls is achieved through the sacrifice of Christ. The quality of the sacrifice of Christ is demonstrated through the process of suffering and through the actually killing as a sacrifice. Therefore the outer court in the Hebrew culture and the isibaya (kraal) in the Zulu culture are the type of the cross and vice versa the cross becomes the antitype.

7.2 Heavenly Tabernacle as Better *Indlunkulu* and *Umsamo*

The sacrifice process does not end in the kraal but it proceeds to *Indlunkulu* and finally to *umsamo*. Ngobese when he connects the *umsamo* and *isibaya*, says, “The rituals of the kraal are therefore performed from there” - by “there” he (Ngobese) is referring to *umsamo*. The sequence followed in the Zulu culture is seen in Christ too. Haskell stipulates the following:

No sacrifice was ever slain within the sanctuary; but the offerings were slain in the court, and the blood and flesh were carried within the sanctuary by the priest. Christ, the great antitypical Sacrifice, was slain in the antitypical court, this earth, and then entered the antitypical sanctuary in the heavens with His own blood and the same body in which He bore our sins on Calvary. (Haskell 1990: 75)

The homily to the Hebrews attests that Christ ascended to heaven to a holy of holies. “For Christ has not entered into the Holy of Holies made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” (9:24).

What seems to be interesting when it comes to the Zulu culture compared to the Hebrew culture, is that there is no curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place. This puts Zulu culture at an even better position as the people have always been able to see what was happening at the *umsamo*, unlike those who were blocked by the curtain. This interests me because, through the death of Christ, the curtain is removed and we are able to understand what the high priest is doing in the most holy place. Therefore it is easier for the Zulu culture to embrace what is realized in the ministry of Jesus Christ. For in Hebrews 10: 18 – 22 the preacher of the homily says:

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. (NIV)

7.3 Sacrifice of Christ as a Substitute Sacrifice

Ngobese (he is leaning more unto Magesa when doing this explanation) explains the meaning of sacrifice to the Zulu culture and he even connects the sacrifice to God. He says

Magesa (1998:183) explains the value of sacrifices and offerings in these words: “The offerer identifies himself or herself with the sacrificial item by touching it or making a similar gesture before the victim is destroyed or dedicated. In other words the offerer becomes the sacrificial victim”. Sacrifices are directed to God (Supreme Being) through the ancestors. (Ngobese 2003: 54)

What Ngobese is explaining above is the importance of the sacrifice in Zulu culture as he connects the sacrifice with the one officiating at the sacrifice; I find it to be what the homily to the Hebrews about. It looks at the sacrifice of Jesus Christ: what seems to be interesting is that the one officiating in the sacrifice and the sacrifice is literally one. Unlike in the Zulu culture the one officiating in sacrifice identifies himself with the sacrificial item but here the homily says:

When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Heb 9: 11 – 14 NIV)

What is seen in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is that it surpasses the one that is done in the Zulu culture, with regards to the following: Christ is unblemished as one who officiates at a sacrifice and the sacrifice. As I have noted earlier, to the Zulu culture the one who officiates sacrifice identifies himself with the sacrifice therefore all this was realized through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.

7.4 Christ as a better ancestor than our ancestors

The words that we encounter when talking about the ancestors are normally many, some use the word *abaphansi* while others use *amadlozi*. However Nxumalo feels that there should a distinction between these two names. He says:

The word *abaphansi* is a generic term; it includes all the dead of the family, children, women and all the members of the family who did not father any offspring. They are subsumed under *idlozi*, as the old man stressed, *idlozi* is the father, the grandfather and ancestors: *okhokho*. *Idlozi* or *amadlozi* are the ones who are addressed directly at the ceremonies, the rites of family celebrations (Nxumalo, 1980: 67).

It should be noted that the Zulu do not worship the ancestors but they venerate them. They perceive the ancestors to be intermediaries between them and God. They believe that since the ancestors they are from this life, therefore they are in a good position to plead for them as they know their sufferings and the things they need. Hence Ngobese says:

The Zulus and other African tribes are not known for the practice of idolatry even in the distant past. They believed in the one Creator God even before the advent of the Western Missionaries. They however, believed in intermediaries as means of approaching the transcendent God who was only experienced as immanent through intermediaries. The Zulus do not worship the ancestors. Worship is reserved for the absolute power (*Mvelinqangi*). That is why the Zulus sometimes scold (*thethisa*) the ancestors. They scold them because they once lived here on earth themselves. (Ngobese 2003:45)

The homily to the Hebrews when it talks about Jesus Christ, stipulates that we can have confidence in approaching Christ and it gives the reasons as follows:

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are yet he did not sin. (Heb 4: 14, 15)

Moreover the fact that Jesus is in touch with our infirmities, that he was here on this planet, and that he knows what we want, he is in a better position to plead (*ukushweleza*) for us as he is in the heavenly tabernacle before God (*uMvelinqangi*). The homily says:

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood (9:15 – 18)

Lane indicates that more than the work of mediating (*Ukushweleza*), the homily suggests more work than that, for he says:

In relationship to the covenant, Jesus is designated *ἐγγυος* ‘guarantor.’ The choice of the term which occurs only here in the NT is purposeful. In the papyri it can denote a bond, collateral, or some form of material guarantee that will be paid or a promise fulfilled. But it may also refer to an individual who offers his own life as the ‘guarantor’ of another person. In this personal sense, the *ἐγγυος* assumes a weightier responsibility than the *μεσίτης*, ‘mediator’ (cf. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). The mediator steps into a gap between two parties, but the ‘guarantor’ stakes his person and his life on his word. (Lane 1991:188)

This suggests that what can be of benefit from Christ’s work of mediating is far better than what is realized in the Zulu culture, for Christ is not just a mediator according to the explanation of Lane but he is the guarantor. That is why he did not sacrifice the blood of animals but his own life. As he pleads for us in heaven, we can have confidence in his work that it will be a success because he guarantees it with his life. Jesus is then seen as a risen ancestor or to put it another way, he is the living ancestor and a priest who is pleading (*oshweleza*) to the father because of our sins.

Ancestors are present in terms of authority; ancestors are present in terms of time, space and power; ancestors are present in terms of familiarity. Yet, ancestors are not present in their vitality, as they used to be when alive. The ontological divide between the living and the deceased must be bridged in some way or another. The same is true for the risen Christ. (Nurnberger 2007: 51)

Therefore Christ is better than ancestors in the Zulu context, as they are the dead ancestors (often referred as the living dead), but he is the living one in the sense that he died and rose again. The word dead is no longer attached to him but the word life is, as he lives forever more. In fact Nurnberger draws a good conclusion when he contrasts what is achieved through ancestors and what is achieved through Christ. He indicates that the difference between ancestors and Christ is not actually what they stand for but what they do to us. This is the key in accepting what I am proposing in this thesis. When he was comparing the 'living dead' (ancestors) in the African tradition and the 'Living God' (resurrected Jesus) in Biblical perspective, he points out a number of factors and these are as follows. The first one is:

Becoming an ancestor is a passage into the past, even though this past has power over the present. The resurrection of Christ is a passage into the future of God, even though this future can gain power over the present. In Paul's terminology, the ancestor belongs to the genealogy of the first Adam, the genealogy of the 'flesh'. Christ became the second Adam, the 'new creation', the spiritual human being (Rom 5:12ff). Resurrection is an eschatological concept. African traditions have no eschatology in the biblical sense of the word. (Nurnberger 2007: 97)

In the above quotation he looks at the focus of the ancestors in African traditions He says they are focusing on the past, compared to Christ whose death and resurrection focuses on the present and the future. Nurnberger goes further on his second point which I have seen as an elaboration of the first one about the focus of the past by the ancestors and the future by God. He says, "This explains why ancestors suck us back into the past, while Christ lures us into the future of God. The power of the ancestors lies in the power of memory. The power of Christ lies in the power of anticipation." (Nurnberger 2007: 97))

The other points he focuses on are the issues of authority which seems to be the centre of the ancestral beliefs in his views and the freedom from God, but he continues to portray that that which is realized in Christ is much better. Here the contrast is about authority and freedom:

Ancestors stand for authority; Christ stands for the freedom and responsibility of mature sons and daughters (representatives) of God. Ancestors stand for ethnic traditions inherited from the past; Christ stands for God's vision of comprehensive and universal well-being. The supervision of the ancestors covers their descendants, the family, the clan, the organised community. The new life of Christ can be accessed by the whole of humanity. The authority of ancestors is confirmed and strengthened by their clans through appropriate rituals. The community of believers manifests the redemptive action of Christ through the proclamation of the gospel when it is made valid, accessible and effective by the Holy Spirit. The ancestral spirit is the spirit of the clan that keeps its members on track. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ that permeates the Body of Christ – a spirit that liberates, motivates, transforms and sends us out into the world as instruments of God's redemptive designs. (Nurnberger 2007: 98) What I have deduced from Nurnberger when contrasting authority from ancestors and freedom from Christ, is that through Christ we become free indeed. This freedom is not only for a particular family or clan, but also for the entire universe. As is the case with the Spirit of God, it also permeates the Body of Christ and liberates and transforms all those who are part of it, not just a certain clan or family.

7.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Hebrews author seems to be critiquing the old covenant that is becoming obsolete. Therefore it needs to be replaced by the new covenant. The crucial part is that he points out the similarities between the old and the new but quickly proving that the New is so much better than the Old. These similarities are pointed out in a comparative form but apart from it being comparative, it embodies the oral style which gives the audience an easy way to follow while listening. He acknowledges that the Old was effective but its effectiveness was temporal, waiting

for something permanent. In fact he uses the word “type” so that it pointed to the antitype which could only be achieved in Christ.

In my study I have also have looked at many comparisons between the Hebrews and the Zulus as far as the sacrificial ritual is concerned. The striking similarities from the oral performance of the sacrificial ritual, the sacred places, the forms of sacrificing and the repetition of performance of the ritual, are also indicators that both cultures were not perfect but had fallen short in fulfilling their purpose. “The contrast between the conditions of the two covenants proves conclusively that the Old covenant was destined to become obsolete” (Lindars 1991: 83; see also Kalengyo 2006). In my view since the Old was destined to become obsolete as Lindars has suggested, then the Zulu sacrifice also is destined to be obsolete in light of the homily to the Hebrews being heard with the Zulu ear.

Apart from being destined to be obsolete, the Old covenant could not perform cleansing as desired. Schenk in his book ‘Cosmology and Eschatology in Hebrews, the Setting of Sacrifice’ says:

The point the author is making yet again is that the whole of the old covenant cultic rituals is now past in the light of Christ. The Levitical cult contributed only to the cleansing of the flesh, while Christ’s work is spiritual and cleanses the conscience. Christ is thus the mediator of a better covenant, because his death has brought about an eternal redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant, which leads to the reception of the promise of an eternal inheritance (9:15) The author thus returns to his original covenant theme and completes the contrast begun in 9:1. (2007: 100)

The fact that the Old Covenant required sacrifice year after year as the Zulu sacrifice requires the same, in itself shows that the inadequacy of sacrifice to fulfill the desired outcome. Schenk indicates that sacrifice in the Old Covenant was able to cleanse the flesh but could not cleanse the conscience and the spiritual part. The blood that was required from animals is now substituted by

the blood of Jesus. Thus his atonement benefits both those who were under the old covenant and Zulu culture.

The homily to the Hebrews as I have indicated early on, has serious warnings to those who refuse to accept salvation that is brought about by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Unlike in the Old Covenant the priest represented his people, Christ's death has become a substitute for our sacrifice. The similar appeal and warnings given in the homily to the Hebrews can also be given to the Zulus who are listening to this homily as if it was directed to them.

“Jesus’ heavenly high priesthood is seen from these vertical and horizontal perspectives. The letter to the Hebrews confronts its readers with the references to heavenly things – a sanctuary, a throne, an altar: ‘We have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent that the Lord and not any mortal, has set up’ (Heb.10: 1- 2). The author interprets Jesus’ death in comparison to the sacrifice offered once a year on the Day of Atonement by the high priest (cf Lv 16).” (Hurst 1990:190)

The death of Christ and all the benefits of the new covenant seems to be far much better. It provides all what was achieved in the old and supersedes it. Christ is the perfect priest who is blameless as the homily states (9:14). He has offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice without blemish. Above all, his sacrifice was offered once and for all (9:14). He lives to intercede for people in the heavenly sanctuary (9:26). The heavenly sanctuary is the perfect sanctuary for ALL of them (Hebrews and Zulus) (9:14). Therefore the Hebrew and Zulu people can benefit a lot from the new covenant which is presented before them through the homily. The acceptance of the new covenant brought about by the ministry of Jesus Christ will usher in a new dimension of sacrificial ritual: a situation where no animal sacrifice will be witnessed again, where we will have no more priests

interceding for us and no need of earthly sacred places that were revered in both cultures, but accepting the work of salvation that has come as a result of Jesus Christ's perfect sacrifice.

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