

Title of the thesis

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The role of Christ as a source of healing powers in the Traditional healing practices among
the Zulu Catholics in the Mariannhill diocese

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Chapter one

Introduction

In 2006 the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference held a consultation on the issue of Catholic priests and religious who are involved in healing. The concern of the Bishops was that some members of the Catholic populace, priests in particular, were no longer using the normal Catholic rites in healing and therefore were no longer appealing to Jesus Christ as the source and the sole giver of life. "What is even more disturbing is the fact that some priests and the religious (and lay people from other professions, teachers, doctors, nurses, etc.) have resorted to becoming diviner – healers. (SACBC 2001 -2009:16)

This concern was highlighted by certain members of the Roman Catholic Church who, avoiding the demands of their traditional religion and trying to conform with their newly found Catholic faith, went to their Parish Priests for help with regard to the socio-spiritual problems especially sickness. The problem emanated from the advice and even from the actions of these Catholics mentioned above and especially the priest(s) who, in most cases reverted to the very thing that the faithful were trying to shun. For example the priest(s) would conduct an interview much similar to that of *isangoma* or traditional healer. The priest would ask, for example, questions like "was *imbeleko* done for this child? Was the child introduced to the ancestors at birth? If not, why was it not done? Many other such questions were asked as to suggest that some of the problems can be attended to with the practice of certain traditional rituals. The professionals who are knowledgeable in traditional rituals, do the same for their patients, learners etc.as doctors, nurses, and teachers are mentioned in the Bishops' statement.

It was when these concerns reached the Bishops, that they started probing in what was reported as happening on parish levels. In their own way, as supreme pastors of their Dioceses the bishops wanted to give a directive to the priests and religious. As Francis Sullivan states that " So one aspect of the modern development of the Catholic use of the term magisterium is that it is hardly used at all except to refer to the teaching office of the hierarchy".(Sullivan 1983:25). *Magisterium* is the Latin word "which has come in recent centuries to be used almost exclusively of the teaching office of Bishops" (Sullivan

1983:25).The Bishops were following the right direction by issuing the statement to the issue of *ubungoma*. Unfortunately not enough time was given to the research and as a result the unfortunate Pastoral letter titled“Ancestor Religion and the Christian Faith” was written and much tension which could have been avoided was created. One can feel the tension that was forming between the so-called Catholic healers (religious, priests and the faithful) when the bishops defined the work of healers in this way:

“Priests act in the person of Christ and not in the persons of their ancestral spirits. They receive authority and power from the church and not from undergoing a ritual to become a diviner – healer”(SACBC 2001- 2009:16). This thesis seeks to research the truthfulness of the Bishops’ statement about priests and religious sisters who claim to possess the“gift” or “cultural knowledge” of what to be done in other cases in relation to healing. Do they really claim a double source of power and authority? According to the Bishops’ statement, the priests claim this work under a double agenda. “The claim to a double source of power and authority confuses Christians and undermines the image of the priest because the one contradicts the other”. (SACBC 2001 – 2009:17).

Although it is made by African Bishops as definitive and states the position of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa, this statement reflects the common Western assumption that traditional African religion has no concept of or the space for Christ in the healing process. “On the other hand, traditional healers put their total trust in ancestors equating them with Christ or leaving no space for Christ” (SACBC 2001 – 2009: 15). African Traditional Religion existed before Christ. God the Creator was the source of everything for the ancestors. This argument is within the two worlds: Christian world view and African world view.

It is important to note that some of the ritual actions and traditional practices are generally known to the African people, and one does not necessarily have to be an *isangoma* or *inyanga* to do or make utterances about them. For example,when someone does ridiculous things in the community, people say *„kukhona okuthize okwesiko okungenziwanga.*’This means that there is cultural element that is missing. In normal situations the so-called unruly interviews by priests and religious are day to day talk among African people. Even as priests and religious people we know and even carry evidences of the *amasiko* that were performed on our limbs. The *Ngubanes* have digit of their finger removed, others have incisions in their

faces etc. This points at the reality that generally, African priests, Zulus in particular know something about *amasiko* from their backgrounds.

1.1. Research Area

My research area was among Zulu Catholics who hold the gift of healing within the Catholic Church of the Mariannhill diocese. The reason for this is that it is in this area within which the writer currently works and has observed the enormous growth of this gift among the faithful including the priests, religious and lay members of the sodalities. Secondly, the area was identified generally as the part in which the (gift) of healing seems to be prevalent, hence the consultation was held in the Mariannhill diocese in August 2006.

To date the Mariannhill diocese is the second largest in South Africa. There are more than 300 000 Catholics in the diocese. These Catholics are served in 45 parishes of which thirty seven are mainly Zulus. I argue that the Catholics in this diocese with such background are confused about many things. This confusion has led the Bishops to write a harsh statement ordering Zulu Catholics to desist from practicing healing rites and rituals that are known to be wrong and therefore not accepted in the Catholic Church.

1.2 Research question

What is the role of Christ as a source of healing in the traditional healer's practices among The Zulu Catholics in the Mariannhill diocese?

There is obviously a problem when one talks about African traditional religion together with Christianity because, while the two religions are not necessarily mutually exclusive, they are however not familiar with one another's terms of theological language. The assumption of the bishops is that Christ has no role in African traditional healing. This language can be true for the traditional healers who are not Christians and who do not go along with this idea. But today traditional healers are Christians. They share the gifts of Christ in their sister and brotherhood to Christ. Healing is Christ's mission to this world. The statement is directed to the priests and religious. These are Christians. The bishops accept this fact in their statement by writing that "Christ is our great Healer" (SACBC 2001 – 2009: 15).

In this research, I explored whether inculturation can be the solution to this dilemma. One of the things that the bishops highlight in their statement is that ancestors are equated with

Christ. Is it true that Zulu Catholics with the gift of healing equate Christ with their Ancestors in their “gift” of healing? Is there a place for Christ in their ministry or not? The Second Vatican Council stated: “What the faithful have received by faith and sacrament in the celebration of the Eucharist should have its effect on their way of life” (SC 59).

The Christian religion was foreign to Africans. African traditional religion was practiced in Africa long before Christianity came. People benefited from it. Healing was taking place in many ways. The existing method used by the *izinyanga*, *izangoma* was in operation before Christianity was introduced. What happened when Christianity was introduced? Is it possible that in the process of acculturation, the traditional African healers, who had become Catholics, introduced Christian aspects into their healing methods? Or that the baptized person accepts the gift of healing? What comes first? Is it the gift before baptism or the baptism that is followed by the gift?

1.3 Research Methodology: Qualitative.

Qualitative method is a method whereby one collects information by listening to one person at a time and interact if necessary. Wanting to understand the worldview of the *izangoma*, *izinyanga* and *abathandazi* in a kind of conversation, I planned to do an unstructured interview which Martin Terre Blanche & Kevin Durrheim in their book *Research In Practice* recommends that “If you want people to talk to you in some depth about their feelings or experiences, you will do better to plan for an unstructured interview” (Blanche & Durrheim 1999: 128). I had questions planned to be asked with the freedom of expressing the feelings.

As I could not survey the whole of Mariannhill diocese, I chose only six representatives from each group and a priest and a Bishop were also interviewed. I made an appointment with each one of them. This was a one to one interview and a case study at the same time because I wanted to find out about a personal call from each one. Interviews were going to take place at their homes and the priest at his parish. I explained the procedure before. I asked the permission to do recording during our discussion which I received after a deep explanation as to why do I want to record them. I prepared questions for my different interviewees to capture their feelings and experiences as interview continues.

Since my interviews were limited to Mariannhill diocese, it was only selected Catholics in the Mariannhill diocese with healing “powers” that were interviewed. The following categories were identified in the Church services I deliberately visited on Sundays. A Catholic who in his \ her healing procedures uses traditional methods like roots, barks, leaves and any other herbs was interviewed. In other words these were practicing Catholics who are traditional healers. One man and one woman who were *izangoma*, one man and one woman who were *izinyanga* and one man and woman who were *abathandazi* were interviewed.

This was done to find out the different interpretations of their experiences in their procedures as I was not sure whether they carry the same mentality as men and women sometimes differ in the way of doing things like in initiation towards a certain stages in life. I looked for the place of Christ and the role of the ancestral spirits in their healing procedures. In other words who heals? Is it Christ? Is it the Ancestors? Or is it both? A priest with the gift of healing was interviewed as well for the same purpose of finding out the power he believes in, in healing the people of God. Does he solely believe in his ancestors or in Christ as the source of powers of healing? The Bishop of Mariannhill was interviewed mainly to clarify some issues that may need explanation on behalf of other Bishops as the statement was issued by the Bishops and the consultation was held in his diocese.

For the Bishop I had two questions. One was why do the Bishops have the impression that there is no space for Christ in traditional healing? The second one was “Why the Bishops think that traditional healers equate Christ with Ancestors? For the reader to capture the questions asked from each category, he/she must visit the appendix 2 at the back of this thesis. These were unstructured interviews, interviewees were free to talk and express themselves. One can imagine how difficult it was to control my interviewees who were angry at the situation.

1.4 The position of Christ in African Catholic healing

The interest of this thesis is to research the position of Christ within the healing ministry of African Catholics, since it is well known that African traditional religion places ancestral veneration at the center of its practice. There was indeed no figure of Christ in African religion before Christianity. This research is done in this time and age when people are Christians. It is the purpose of this research to investigate whether Christ serves the same purpose as the ancestors in the understanding of healing. There are many positive outcomes

of consulting the ancestors, including prosperity manifested in health of the body, in the increment of livestock and in good relations among the people. Does this happen through Christ, ancestors or both according to the Catholic traditional healers?

What is important to note is that when the Trappists arrived, the Zulu people had a concept of God and they were worshipping God differently in their lives. Healing was taking place through their methods. The God of the Zulu people was in action in terms of healing the sick before Christianity came into existence.

1.5 The outline of the thesis

Chapter one mainly deals with the research area, research personnel and the position of Christ in African Catholic healing ministries. It includes the history of the area before the arrival of the Trappists who later became missionaries.

In Chapter two I used records from the Mariannhill Archives where I discovered that the area was not vacant when the Trappists arrived.

Chapter three discusses the issue of *izangoma* and *izinyanga* who practised traditional healing in the area of Mariannhill and the introduction of Western medicine by the Mariannhill priests.

Chapter four discusses healing in the Scriptures. According to the Scriptures God is the source of all powers, including healing. In this case nothing can happen outside the power of God not even healing. It is for this reason that God sent Jesus with the mission of healing. Jesus is the healing power of God.

Chapter five presents the content of the interviews. Interviews were the necessary tool for this thesis. *Izangoma*, *izinyanga* and *abathandazi* talked from their own experiences about their call to healing ministries. All admitted the power of Jesus Christ behind their gift. My interviews were limited to the Catholics of Mariannhill diocese.

Chapter six discusses the content of the interviews. All admitted that no one can attend to the sick successfully if she/he is not sent by God through Jesus Christ to do so. These Catholics believed in the reality of the ancestors as part of their work.

Chapter seven discusses theological and cultural issues in the research. It was shown that the healing ministry in the Catholic Church faces a dilemma because of the relation between faith and culture. It is in the understanding that traditional religion and culture can be seen as the way of life that bonded together with Christian religion.

Chapter eight is a summary of the thesis.

Chapter Two

The beginnings of the Mariannahill Monastery

2.1 Introduction

It is important for us to know whether there were any inhabitants in the land of Mariannahill before the arrival of the Trappists in the area. In this chapter I introduce the historical background of the site where Mariannahill is built and how did it come to its existence. The names and surnames of the families who occupied the farm in those days as recorded in the Mariannahill Monastery Archives and books.

2. 2 Historical background of the research area and the inhabitants.

When the Trappists came to occupy the area, there were African people on the plot. Records state: “Five families lived in the area during this time. These were the *Hlophes*, the *Mdadanes*, the *Mswimbezis* (the family of *Mampalane*), the *Phewas* (the family of *Mphathwa*) and of course the *Shozi* – clan, which was the family of chief *Manzini*”.¹ It is said that this land belonged to *amaNgangeni*. Records in the Archives state that they arrived in the land of the *amaNgangeni* late at night and only saw a fire in the distance. As animals could not make fire, it had to be a sign of human civilization. They were welcomed by the head of the kraal, where the fire had been set, who was called *Mampalane* of the *Mswembezi* family. The local people recognized the Trappists immediately as the people of God as they themselves were actively practicing monotheism, relating to *uNkulunkulu*, “the one who made everything and then left”(Schimlek: 1950: 44). The term Christian did not exist in those days.

The Trappist identity was not clear. To the Zulus, they were superior because of the colour of their skin. *Mampalane* handed the newcomers to the local *induna* of chief *Manzini*, *Mphathwa Phewa*, who then in turn informed the chief *Manzini* who finally allowed the Trappists to stay on the land”² The Diocese of Mariannahill whose geographical boundary includes the greater Pinetown area, *Umlazi*, *Makhutha* Locations, the South Coast area, Ixopo, the Midlands and the Underberg areas owes its evangelization and Catholicism to the Trappist monks of the Cistercian order led by Abbot Francis Pfanner.

¹Mariannahill Monastery Archives Box 1, File Folder 15

² Mariannahill Monastery Archives Box 1, File Folder 4

2.3 Monks needed a site to build a Monastery

Abbot Francis looked for a site to build a monastery. He looked for a place where it would be easier for the monks to get building material. He was at the mercy of Bishop Jolivet who was the bishop of Natal that time.

Helen Gamble who wrote the book *Mariannahill 1882 – 1982* states “Bishop Jolivet of Natal gave permission for the Trappist monks to work in Natal”(Gamble 1982:36). Bishop Jolivet lived at St. Michaels thought that it would be a good idea to have monks close by. Helen writes thus: “He offered land inland 130 kilometres St. Michael for the establishment of a mission” (Gamble 1982:36). Although this was an offer but Fr. Franz as he was called did not accept the offer. He asked the bishop to give permission for the monks to find the suitable site to build a mission within the surrounding areas of Westville and Pinetown. Eventually the site was found and bought with the help of “Dr. Julius Schulz who had arrived in Natal from Germany during February 1856 and a land agent, Mr. Grant”(Gamble 1982:36” Helen recalls the announcement of the name of the mission that was in progress in the area in her book by Fr. Franz “The name shall be Mariannahill”(Gamble 1982:39)

2.4 Trappists in the area of Mariannahill

The Trappists were not meant to evangelize because they came as monks not as missionaries. They came to the area in 1879 with the motto “work and pray”. For three years, they were concerned with the building of their monastery. During this time, local people mainly Blacks joined them in their work as laborers. Balling indicates that they were surrounded by the Blacks: “Our whole neighborhood is almost totally Blacks and we live right among them” (Balling 1999:66). If evangelization would take place, it would be Blacks that would be evangelized about Christ in this area.

Though language was a barrier, it seems as if this was not a problem for the Trappists because, when Abbot Francis wrote a report to Germany he said “No language is needed to teach the Blacks how to work or learn a trade: signs are sufficient to do that” (Balling 1999: 76). For three years they worked with local people familiarizing themselves with them using signs. They saw themselves as “silent preachers in the desert” (Balling 1999: 63).

Most things were surprising to Abbot Francis, who wrote to Germany asking for prayers. Fr. George Lautenschlager in the book *Our Spiritual Father Abbot Franz Speaks* to us stated that

prayers were asked “Let us every day call upon the Lord in the words of the Benedictus “enlighten those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death” (Lautenschlager 1999:76). This prayer was answered because Adalbert Balling reported that “Our neighbor, an African, decided to visit our church. He brought with him three other Blacks who come now regularly with him to our Sunday service. All day long they sit in the church and play with their rosary beads given to them unblessed, or listen attentively to the chant of the fathers and brothers, or engaged in peaceful conversation. In the afternoon they attend religious instructions.” (Balling 1999:66). Fr. George used Abbot Francis Pfanner’s remarks from his letters to Germany: “It was a pleasure to see such healthy and happy people. Would that these people would soon realized that they were still lacking a far more precious gift, the well- being of their soul”. (Lautenschlager 1999:77).

“After this experience, Francis Pfanner was no longer keen to keep within the usual monastery walls. From then on his desire was to pierce through the solid barriers and touch or be touched by his black neighbors. The Abbot was challenged by the silent yet very loud demand of the African neighbors to be taught the monk’s religion” (Balling 1999:66). As a result religious instructions were taught in the monastery grounds on Sundays for those who were attending Church services. Already the so called Trappists were moving towards being missionaries. This was before permission was obtained from Trappist superiors overseas.

The basic assumption of the religious instructions that were given to the blacks was that local people knew nothing about God as Abbot Francis Pfanner wrote to Germany: “The Africans have known little or nothing about an Invisible, Omnipresent, Almighty, Omniscient God” (Balling 1999: 66). Later, probably as a result of the observable outcome of the instruction given by the monks, the Abbot wrote:

“Since they have lived among us and seen how our brothers kneel in prayer seven times a day, whether they are behind the plough or up on scaffolding, at the washtub or the anvil, they can see quite clearly that this Omniscient and invisible God is indeed everywhere” (Balling 1999: 66).

From 1882 the Catholic tradition began in earnest in Mariannahill. The first baptism took place on 6 December 1884. From then on the charism changed from being Trappists to being missionaries. This was a struggle. It was not easy for the Abbot to get things going. He had to find other ways of getting Africans to convert to Christianity. What were those ways? Abbot

Francis knew that the education of Africans would play an important part and be an essential element in the Christianization of Africans in the Mariannhill area. This was not easy; sometimes Abbot Francis was accused of building unnecessary buildings and wasting money in doing so. He wanted the Zulu people evangelized, if not the adults, at least the younger generation. In 1890 Abbot Francis was “suspended from his position” (Gamble 1982:64). His ideas were confusing to his superiors.

One can contend that if the starting point for any evangelization is built upon an understanding that says people have no idea of God, then the approach will be negative. Since all is pagan nothing is usable as a starting point. The process is not that of eliminating what is wrong but rather total destruction or total construction. The conclusion had already been made: Zulu people in the area knew nothing about God, let alone about Christ. Far from their minds therefore would be any concept of the Trinity. This meant that the monks who did not know the Zulu language would further be burdened by the construction of *African Christian Theology* in isiZulu. *Mugambi* argues that “Generally, therefore, African converts were expected to adopt the new ‘Christian’ way of life, without necessarily being taught that this new ‘Way’ was a product of a particular denominational interpretation and expression, developed in the context of particular Western cultural backgrounds” (Mugambi 1989:42).

The Trappists bought a farm which was owned by the “Land Colonisation Company” (Gamble 1980: 38). The procedure of the colonial government was to evacuate the residents. Abbot Francis Pfanner did not evacuate them because he was going to use them in future. The farm had 18 men and 60 women. These were the people who were to be evangelized later and given Christian names. These were the people whose generations would be Christians and educated. The Trappists cultivated their surroundings and not only reproduced material European structures in their new environment, but textually assimilated land and people by immersing them into their own terminologies (Balling 1999:40). It is generally told that from the beginning of the cohabitation of Zulus and Trappists there were quarrels and tense relations with the local chief *Manzini* over the land issue and lifestyle generally. As in several other reports on visits to heathen kraals as they called them, the Trappists constructed a situation in which they were the controlling forces. When *Manzini* was sick to the point of dying, the Trappists decided to pay him a visit in an attempt to make him a Christian by baptizing him but he refused. His son *Lokothwayo* who took over after his father’s death agreed to education of the children but not to Christianity. The present chief from this

generation is not a Christian even today. People had to choose. Those who followed the monks' religion remained on the land and those who did not want to become Christians withdrew to far distant areas. Chief *Manzini* withdrew to the place called *KwaNdengezi* today. Evangelization started while the Abbot Francis and his followers were still Trappists. Seeing the need for evangelization, Abbot Francis forced the change from Trappist to missionary.

Mariannahill was separated from the Trappists Order in 1909 as Gamble shared in her book that "The Holy Father Pius X made the final decision, and in February, 1909, decreed that Mariannahill be completely separated from the Trappists Order" (Gamble 1982:89). It was only in the year "1920 that the constitution of the new Missionary Congregation of Mariannahill was finalized" (Gamble 1982:92). At last with the official recognition of the Mariannahillers as missionaries things began to happen. A Congregation of African sisters, was founded in 1922. More churches, hospitals and schools were built. St. Francis School and Mariannahill hospital were the first ones to be built. Several other hospitals, schools and churches were built later. Missionaries were called near and far to teach the children to read and write. This teaching went hand in hand with evangelization. Old people were satisfied with their lifestyles. They did not need to convert especially because conversion meant abandoning other wives for those who had more than one wife. Therefore conversion was left to the children. Those children, who would go to schools, were the ones who would become Christians in future. Civilization went hand in hand with evangelization. The requirement for Admission at school was the baptismal certificate. Education was based on a German lifestyle while evangelization based on Jesus Christ. Children had to be taught about Christ and German etiquette to prepare them to be good Christians in future.

2.5 Conclusion

The Diocese of Mariannahill whose geographical boundary includes the greater Pinetown area. *Umlazi*, *Makhutha* Locations, the South Coast area, Ixopo, the Midlands and the Underberg areas owes its evangelization and Catholicism to the Trappist monks of the Cistercian order led by Abbot Francis Pfanner. The schools were there as the ground for Christianity to continue especially for the young generation. What would happen with the adult converts who would at the same time visit the *izinyanga* and the *izangoma* for their health issues? The following chapter will discuss the pressure that led missionaries to call upon white doctors from overseas.

Chapter Three

Medical missionary work in Mariannahill versus *Izangomaa* nd *Izinyanga*

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss the causes of friction between *izangoma* and *izinyanga* (traditional healers) and the missionaries in Mariannahill as an area of operation for both the traditional healers and the Christians. The negative attitude of the missionaries towards *izangoma* as traditional healers, who attended to the sick both physically and spiritually in the area, became a matter of concern for the missionaries. The converted found themselves caught in between, since according to the new religion, they were not allowed to be treated by *izangoma* and *izinyanga*. A stalemate occurred because, while the missionaries prevented their converts from attending to their ailments through *izinyanga* and *izangoma*, they could not help them medically either, since they were not trained in medical or psychological matters. For the missionaries, this became an emergency which required urgent attention.

3.2 Attempts to resolve health issues.

Evangelization had begun in the Mariannahill area, but the progress was slow, because the Zulus were comfortable with their traditional practices e.g visiting *izangoma* and *izinyanga* for their health issues. According to the missionaries, this was paganism and unacceptable in the Christian tradition. A conference was necessary for the discussion of the way forward with regard to the health problem that had arisen.

The Conference which consisted of Abbot Gerhard Wolpert, the Provost of Mariannahill, Father Augustine Specht, Father Innocent Buchner and Father Albert Schweiger took place in 1914 at Mariannahill. At the conference the Missionaries argued about *izangoma* saying that they never ever heard of such prophets. They even declared them to be the prophets of the devil.

This was an insult to the *izangoma*. *Izangoma* were never called prophets. The term „prophet’ came with the Trappists from the bible. It was never heard of those days in African language and culture. The conference made a further observation that the “Christian religion in the hearts of our converts is far from being perfect, and the practices to which many of them secretly resort are evidence that paganism is still a strong force in their daily life”(Schimlek 1950: 14). Since the conference was aimed at discussing the way forward for the missionary work in terms of evangelization, its great concern was about the Bantu Christianity which

was seen to be taking shape but simultaneously being confused by the so-called evil practices of *izinyanga* and *izangoma*. The Missionaries contended that, if nothing was done, their missionary work would soon fade away

In his address Fr. Albert Schweiger as the host said: “Our intensive missionary method must set about the destruction of superstition, and if we fail in this, we have failed in the elements of Christian teaching. But here we have to face the terrific power of the *isangoma* or witchdoctor [their term for a traditional healer] who still holds the people in the firm grip of his terror, because he at the same time poses as healer of bodily ailments and also of mental disorders – and he is quite successful in many instances” (Schimlek 1950: 15).

Izangoma were a threat to the missionaries. Karen Flint and Julie Parle in the book *Zulu identities: Being Zulu, past and present* highlight the misunderstanding that existed between Zulus and Whites generally by saying that “As in much of Africa, most healers in Natal and Zululand were outlawed through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and white missionaries and settlers commonly misunderstood the nature of many local therapeutic practices and idioms, mistakenly believing for example that diviners (*Izangoma*) practiced the evils of witchcraft (*ubuthakathi*) rather than the healing arts” (Flint and Parle 2008:313). Frowning at *izangoma* and *izinyanga* is as old as the coming of the settlers and Christianity to Africa. For both, witchcraft was more welcome than *izangoma* and *izinyanga*. Chief Phakade complaining before the Natal Native Commission said: “The Government does not believe in the efficacy of witchcraft to kill people, and the *Abathakathi* rejoice at this, because they see, they can perpetrate their designs without molestation, and under its protection” (quoted in Flint and Parle 2008: 314).

These common points still exist in the church today. No one can talk openly about a witch in the church, even if she / he is known by the residents in the area. The church will call that judging a person and as such, a sinful thing to do. “Within Zulu speaking communities, maintaining social and political order fell squarely on the shoulders of chiefs and *izangoma*” (Flint and Parle 2008: 313). *Izangoma* were known and accepted by the communities and their work was acknowledged even by the authorities but not that of the witchcraft practices.

In the context of this research, Western medical practitioners faced stiff competition because not all African Christian gave up his/her traditional beliefs easily. Some would first go to an

isangoma for a consultation before going to the doctor if necessary. The doctor's interpreter being a Zulu knew about this, so the first question for him would be, "*Sathini isangoma?*" ("What did the *isangoma* say?") (Shimlek 1950: 9). This system works the same way today.

Western doctors are trained for different health conditions. This is why they transfer patients to different hospitals for further treatment. As doctors work in teams, so *izangoma* and *izinyanga* were doing the same. In the olden days unlike today, people were going to *isangoma* for consultation and to *inyanga* for medication. *Izangoma* were good at diagnosing and thus sent their patients to *inyanga* for medication. Unless the patient was called to be an *isangoma*, in which case they would handle the call themselves, in all medical matters they referred people to *izinyanga*. In the event where everyone wishes to collect as much money as they can, *isangoma* plays both roles; there are no more referrals. In this regard, Magesa notices this: "Specialists in medicine, known as herbalists or medicine doctors are people with knowledge of herbs, roots or even fruits with the power to prevent or cure disease or rather afflictions. Because medicine doctors, men and women, often rely on divination for their practice, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between diviners and "pure" medical doctors" (Magesa 2008: 188).

3.3 How did *izangoma* and *izinyanga* win the local people?

For all intents and purposes, *izangoma* and *izinyanga* were operating in the same locality. Everybody in the area grew up among them and sometimes with them. They had been overseers of health issues for a long time for the neighborhood. They were trusted by everyone. They were accepted by the locals as specialists in enhancing peoples' lives, and in warding off anti-life forces. They knew the difference between a traditional healer and a witch a point of correction for some, not a witchdoctor but a witch. In Zulu a traditional healer and a witch are two different persons.

Izinyanga recognize the healing energies that are contained in both animals and plants. According to the knowledge of *izinyanga*, some plants are burned and ground up until they are fine and look like black mealie meal. These are mixed with water to cleanse the poison and thus lead to the healing of the wound. Some are licked to counteract the snake bite poisons and other enemies of health. Little cuts are made sometimes to allow the coming out of the blood. The medicine put there would deal with the poison in the circulation. Interaction that was taking place between patients, *izinyanga* and *izangoma* was satisfying to the local

people. To this *Ntandoni Gloria Biyela* said “Combinations of a variety of ingredients are used in formulas correlated to each individual’s pattern of physical and emotional disharmony. The multi – ingredient formulas may be decocted and drunk or inhaled or licked” (*Biyela* 2003: 55).

One cannot visit an *inyanga* if it is not for health reasons. *Izinyanga* always provide primary health care as it is done by the clinics today. This provoked thoughts in the missionaries and they asked themselves, I suppose,” How are we going to win these people over if we do not touch them physically?” This led them to think of the hospitals. They could see that they were approaching the problem from its spiritual angle only, and unable to touch the bodily ailments. To this Fr.Schweiger, said “We must pay more attention to the physical needs of the people and dislodge the wizard in his own sphere of activity” (Schimlek 1950:15). It is from this background that the missionaries thought of the Mariannahill and Centocow hospitals which still stand today.

3.4 How did the Conference solve the medical dilemma?

Discovering that traditional healers touch both spiritual elements and physical needs of the people, missionaries called upon help from medical men overseas to come to their rescue. Fr. Schweiger with his experience among the Zulus, advised his confreres and said:“What we need is the help of experienced medical men with a sympathetic attitude towards our missionary work. Let this be the first and most important step in our intensive method of missionary work. Let us build hospitals alongside our many churches and treat the indispositions of the Bantu in a recognized professional manner” (Schimlek1950: 16).The people who would be admitted into the hospitals would be the baptized persons.

This kind of attitude has given birth to the present problem in the Mariannahill diocese. Zulus were baptized before proper initiation into the Christian religion. The new terms of safety doctors and witch doctors came into existence from that time. This research aims at learning as well whether the Catholics in the Mariannahill diocese are not influenced by these terms. Do they still feel safe on the hands of traditional healers or not now? Though they are Christians.

It was clear in this conference thatthe enemies of the work of God were *izangoma* and *izinyanga*, because the so called Bantu Christians were going to them for both spiritual and

physical sicknesses. For the missionaries, this obstacle prevented Zulus becoming full Christians. The Christian religion and missionary doctors had to join hands to win the battle. K. E. McMutrie was sent to South Africa from Germany, to be the founder and promoter of the medical service in the Catholic missions in South Africa in 1925. He was convinced by the National Health Service Commission statement which, talking about mission doctors, stated that “Our mission doctors give the utmost skill and knowledge they possess to the patient; we believe that ignorance and superstition and the belief in witchdoctors are most real and powerful obstacles to the spread of sound health teaching” (Schimlek 1950: 64).

Health teaching was used as a tool to fight against the use of traditional healers. The mission doctors worked without fail to prove their skill in attending to the sick. Within a few years the Mariannhill and Centocow hospitals were known for their effectiveness in treating the sick. It is in this way that a negative attitude was implanted in the hearts of the Christian Zulus in the area. Schimlek emphasizes consultation of *izangoma* and *izinyanga* by the local people. White doctors, on a fact finding visit, inquired of *izinyanga* what treatment was given to their patients. White priests were part of the group: “Eh, *Manqoza*, show the white doctor your medicine,” said Father Fischer (Schimlek 1950: 84). Traditional healers innocently shared their knowledge with the white doctors and priests. *Izinyanga* were not aware of the study being done by the white doctors on their practices. The medical doctors were determined to prove that there was no hygiene and formula in the traditional practices. This criticism discredited the traditional healers.

3.5 Conclusion

According to the misunderstanding on health issues and healings on the part of the locals in Mariannhill area, on the arrival of the Christianity, local people suffered and continue to suffer from the loss of their identity in terms of their African religion constructed from their intimate ties to land and place. From the day they embraced Christianity, everything was expected to change for them. They had to dismiss any aspects of traditional knowledge in favour of the new religion including their own understanding of relationships. This loss has been accompanied by neglect and marginalization of their practices and beliefs. The new religion excluded integration of local knowledge and local religion. This led the converted Zulu people to lose partially if not a total sense of belonging because the knowledge they had could not be recognized as something they could use to identify themselves and proudly share it with other communities. They were forced to steadfastly believe that Christianity was

enough. There was even a Catholic theme to this effect (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*) simply meaning “no salvation outside the Church”.

Zulus did not abandon everything. This led a Zulu Christian in the diocese of Mariannhill to live a double life that is, to be a Christian by day and a Zulu by night. Traditional practices remained a reality alongside Christianity. They were practiced behind the priests. The Christian religion was threatened by the presence of *izangoma* and *izinyanga* who kept on attending to the sick in both areas i.e physically by giving them treatment and spiritually by attending to their relationships with their dead. According to the missionaries, there was no need for the converted Zulus to continue consultation with the *izangoma* or *izinyanga*. It was not only religion that brought about this problem, but health issues as well.

Missionaries had no knowledge of handling diseases but traditional healers did. This contradicted the Christian religion where one was expected to rely on his/her faith in Jesus Christ. The solution to this was to get white medical doctors who would teach about health issues and attend to them. People used both the white doctor and traditional healer without a problem. The following chapter will discuss what the Africans understood about God. Africans had always understood God as the Creator, *Umdali/Umvelinqangi*. They knew God as the Source of Life. For Africans, God is the God who heals and cares for God’s people. Since Africans knew God, I am going to present a biblical understanding of healing powers to investigate whether God can share God’s power of healing with human beings and how can that happen.

Chapter 4

Biblical understanding of the healing “powers”

4.1 Introduction

Illness and healing are as old as the creation of humanity. There have always been invading forces in the life of a human person. Some forces are evil and some good. The book of Job is a good example of this where Satan was an agent of suffering. It has always been a wish for God that people may be well and at peace within themselves. The healings therefore have been a practice even before the coming of Christianity. God uses God’s power to reach out to people for healing purposes. Aylward Shorter and Joseph N. Njiru in their book *New Religious movements in Africa* take us back to the Second Vatican Council when they say “At the Vatican Council, it was clearly stated that those who do not know Christ and his Church, but who sincerely seek God, and try to do his will according to their conscience, may achieve eternal salvation” (Shorter and Njiru 2001: 48). Whether a traditional healer is a Catholic or not, if he/she follows her / his good conscience in healing people and is given that power by God he / she should be recognized by the Church. This statement of the Second Vatican Council contradicts the Bishops’ statement that says “In times of difficulty Christians turn to the traditional healers seeking help”(SACBC (2001 – 2009: 1). It is in God’s power who and how to delegate people to do whatever God wants. Can the traditional healers be the instruments of God in this context?

The concept of God as a divine being has proved to be a reality in the African religion. Apart from the engagement of ancestors in healing activities, God is the Creator and thus the source of life for an African. The high level of involvement of Catholics in the healing ministry especially African priests, religious, and lay people calls for immediate attention today in the Roman Catholic Church. Why? What has happened? Is the Christian vocation confused? If there is confusion, what can be the cause? To answer these questions one needs to turn to the scriptures. What does the scripture say about God and life? Sickness and healing? Who heals in the Bible? How does he or she heal?

4.2. God is the source of all powers and life.

God is the source of all powers of life and issued a command by the word of mouth. “Let there be light” (Gen 1: 3). God used God’s power directly to intervene in situations by using animals, “But now the Lord opened the mouth of the ass.....” (Nm 22: 31a).

In the Franciscan world view God used the wooden cross to speak to Francis when called to conversion. The voice told him, “Go and repair my house, which as you see, is falling completely into ruin” (Francis and Clare 1982: 103). Did the crucifix really open its mouth and command Francis to do this? Can one judge this incident as the power of God?

In the Bible one discovers that the major concern for God was the creation of the world and life for its inhabitants. Life in its existence is a gift from God. Bujo says, “Long before the arrival of Christianity in Africa, African religion recognized God as the source of all life, especially human life” (Bujo 1986: 17). It begins with God and ends with God. All creation has a mission from God to produce Life. Life is understood within the Life Giver; the mission of being fertile and multiplying was given to human beings. In other words God gave power for fertility and multiplication. In this way Adam and Eve received God’s blessing that empowered them to transmit the life they have received from God in order to participate in God’s creation. (Gen1:28a)

Human beings became preservers and protectors of the life given to them and the whole creation. Bujo realizes this and wrote thus: “We may recall that the human vocation, in the African traditions, is simply to preserve and transmit the all embracing life which each receives from the ancestors” (Bujo: 1986: 96). All generations have agents to preserve life from clan to clan from family to family. In this way, illness or sickness is contradictory to life. Health is the sign that relationships are in harmony and life is preserved. Thinking with the African mind, Bujo says that life is received from the ancestors, although he knows that the source of life is God. If one is sick, sickness calls for healing and to heal is the human vocation. A human person can never heal on his or her own. The power to heal comes from God the Life Giver. As the scripture says “ So extraordinary were the mighty deeds God accomplished at the hands of Paul, that when face cloths or aprons that touched his skin were applied to the sick, their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them” (Acts 19:11-12).

To understand the Roman Catholic Church's healing practices, one needs to acknowledge the process of casting out evil spirits and miraculous medical cures, through prayer, sacraments and sacramentals, e.g holy oils, holy water, incense, medals and rosaries. This is seen by the Catholic Church as God's direct intervention. Priests and religious use these sacramentals often. The African cultural tradition looks to healing in order to restore someone to fullness of life, to move from unwellness to wellness in all spheres of life. Healing in African culture is relational. It is an appeal for parental, brotherly, sisterly and ancestral love. Witchcraft therefore was never a welcome practice in African culture, but because it is part of evil that all cultures experience it was practiced as it is practiced today in many cultures.

In the Christian worldview, there is no confusion in the understanding of God. John's Gospel states very clearly that Jesus is the Word who came to bring life and to bring it in abundance (Jn. 10:10). The letter of St. James encourages Christians to pray for the sick with the belief that ultimate healing power comes from God (Jas 5:13 – 15).

The concept of prayer is broad, though one can never cover the whole spectrum of Christian prayer, it might help to mention a few forms of prayer to illustrate what is actually meant by saying that people are urged to pray in the Catholic Church. Sacramental forms of prayer: Communion of the sick, Confession and extreme unction, Physical forms of prayer: laying of hands, rubbing with the oil of gladness. Socio-medical healing of prayer: the visits by sodalities, reading and commenting on scripture, collection towards securing medical needs (*imali yebhodlela*), money to buy a bottle of medicine.

4.3. Definition of Central Concepts and the Personnel involved in Healing

Most African situations of ailment and to some extent even those of health and boon are checked against two back-drops that of the (i) propagation and preservation of life in general, human life in particular; and that of (ii) warding off of anti-life forces. These two central themes are further discussed in relation to three topics that of the (i) evil forces (*abathakathi, imimoya emini, izilwane etc.*) (ii) Ancestors (the good spirits of the dead elders both paternal and maternal, tribal and national) and (iii) nature (floods, thunderstorm, fires, tornados, natural sickness). The anti-life forces have to be warded off in the most ruthless a way as possible, the Ancestors and their demands have to be responded to as quick as possible and natural forces have to be succumbed to quickly.

I feel that for elucidation purposes it will help the reader to have some short description of how the above categories of ailments are attended to and by what kind of person(s). To do this the writer has resolved to present this section of the study in the following format:

4.3.1. *Isangoma*/ Prophetic Healing: Those who have power of divination.

4.3.2. *Inyanga*/ Traditional Healers: Those who use traditional herbs *imithi* for healing.

4.3.3 *Umthandazi*/ Spiritual Healers: Those who mainly pray for the healing using candles, water or ashes for cleansing people *iziwasho*

4.3.4. *Umthakathi* witchcraft and *ubuthakathi* /Corcery: Those who use anything for destroying people's lives, or simply for evil purposes. They are anti-life.

4.3.5. Inculturation as a way forward. This is a process undergone by a culture receiving and accepting the Gospel which acts as an endogenous factor and transforms it from within. In the real sense of this word Power says "Inculturation is the genuine and original response that a given culture gives to the first and the ongoing proclamation of the Gospel" (Power: 1987:148)

In African cultures, there are ancestors whom people believed even before Christianity that they intercede with *Umvelinqangi* (God) For example: If there was a plague, the elders would go to the mountain to ask for the removal of it from *Umvelinqangi* the One who appeared first) or *Umdali* the Creator because *Umdali* was the source of life and the protector of all creatures as God created them. It is from this understanding that ancestors are not only the dead people but the elders in the community the carriers of wisdom. Ancestors therefore would be "considered to be the guardians, protectors, and the conscience of the community" (Sikhakhane 1999: 4).

Izangoma are the agents of ancestors. Stuart Bate puts it this way "The same applies to African Traditional Religion. Real life consists in knowing the ancestor's business whose agents *izangoma* are" (Bate 1999:15). In the Roman Catholic Church there are saints who do the same. This takes us back to the time of Jesus on earth when faced with the question in Luke's gospel: "Tell us by what authority are you doing these things? Or who is the one who gave you this authority?" (Lk 20: 1–2) This attitude echoes the Gospel of Matthew: "But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons" (Mt 12:24). It should be clear to us that even during Jesus' time, there were other powers besides God's power. They were attributed to Jesus as well. Is

it possible that even today the bishops' minds are pre-occupied by the thought of evil concerning *izangoma*? If Christ was and still is a *sangoma* in terms of revelation he does to his followers with divine power, is it not possible that Jesus shares this gift today with the Catholic *izangoma*? The question of whose power in dealing with sicknesses is not new, if these texts are taken into consideration.

While I am positive about the *izangoma* as the traditional diviners, I am also very much aware of the negative attitude found in the bible about divination. Scripture texts like Deuteronomy 18: 10 -12, Leviticus 20:27, Leviticus 19:31 etc. all are negative towards divination mainly about consulting the dead. *Izangoma* I am discussing in this thesis are Christians. These are *zangomas* who seek God's guidance and direction for what they do. The negative attitude stems up from the reliance on the mediums more than God. (1 Chronicles 10: 13 – 14). The New Testament has changed all this understanding. Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is the Power of God. No action can take place without Jesus' approval. *Izangoma* as traditional healers and as Christians are under the direction of God. Paul Decock says "Divination as such was not condemned; only divination which seeks knowledge and power from other beings besides God was seen as an affront to God" (1999:40). In the context of this thesis, this kind of Christian *izangoma* divination is challenged by the Holy Spirit since it is only the Holy Spirit who enables people to speak the language of God.

4.4. A Possible Synthesis of African Traditional Healing and the Catholic Church

Inculturation: Many African Catholics cry for the implementation of the term inculturation in their lives. John Mary Walligo defines it this way. "Inculturation means the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation evermore understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time" (Walligo 1986:12). This definition gives hope to the Zulus who thought that accepting Christianity means discarding their culture and their understanding of the way of life of their religion. Jesus is truly man and truly God according to the scriptures. The incarnation of Jesus made him become a perfect man while remaining perfect God. This understanding of Jesus is the clearest guiding principle of inculturation in the context of this thesis. Inculturation therefore means putting 'in' culture something from outside one's culture. 'In' represents Christianity or The Gospel of Christ. Pope Benedict XVI has recently issued Africa commitment where he said about inculturation: "We must always remember that the Holy Spirit is the true agent of inculturation, presiding in a fruitful

way at the dialogue between the word of God, revealed in Christ, and the deepest questions which arise among the multitude of human beings and cultures” (Pope Benedict XVI 2011: 24) This flows from the following theme that Jesus in African mind set who is a Catholic is a healer. With this understanding, I believe that working together of the Zulu traditional healers in this context and the Roman Catholic Church can give better results in people’s lives both physical and spiritual. I think that the meeting that took place between the Administrative Board of the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference and the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference of Consecrated Life, (Southern Africa) held on 8 May 2008 is heading towards this solution.

4.5. Jesus as the healer

The four gospels reveal Christ as a healer. Because many who were sick or possessed with demons were cured (Mk 1: 32- 34) this, as I argued earlier about God and life, is an indication that Jesus came to take care of people’s lives. Health in Jesus’ mind is the wholeness of a person. Fernando Domingues states clearly that “Like other healers of his time, Jesus, profoundly embedded in the Jewish cultural and religious mentality, seemingly accepted the current understanding of sickness and healing” (Domingues 2000: 75).

This shows that every culture has its own way of dealing with sickness. There is a certain pattern that must be followed in healing people and people can identify themselves with those patterns. The Gospels record that Jesus used material things that anyone could use if he/she understood its function. He used pure saliva (Mt. 8:23) or saliva mixed with soil (Jn 9: 6). Mark 6: 5 records physical contact with the sick by the laying on hands. Jesus used many other practices that were known to be used by healers but he was a different healer. He was able to touch both the body and the spirit. By the power of God, Jesus could do anything. In terms of understanding that Jesus received healing powers from God, Domingues states, “Generally speaking, the biblical religious mentality sees human healing as one of the exclusive prerogative of God himself, to him alone belongs human life.If any human being is able to heal another, it is certainly because he has received such power from God” (Domingues 2000: 77). Chapters eight and nine of the Matthew’s Gospel record many incidents of the healing ministry of Jesus.

Christ is the core of African Christology. My research is based on Zulu Catholics who share Christian spirituality and its gifts. The question which comes to mind is whether or not it is

possible for Christ to share the gift of healing with Catholics, as Christ did with his followers in the Bible.

4.6. The Power of the Holy Spirit

If one speaks about the Holy Spirit, one speaks about the “Power” of God. To differentiate between God and other spirits, one needs to mention the word “Holy”. Mununguri says: “Between God and us there exists the ‘spirits’ good and bad, but all created by God and inferior to him” (Mununguri 1998: 46). This statement denotes that the Holy Spirit is not one of these spirits. But as God, the Holy Spirit is superior to all other spirits. According to the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit speaks. “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them. (Acts 13: 2 –3a). The Holy Spirit calls people and empowers them to do certain works in the community (Phi 2: 30).

4.7. The Holy Spirit enables people to speak the word of God.

“As they prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4: 31). The Holy Spirit penetrates the minds of people and encourages them to do good for the people of God. What the bishops say about the indigenous religious belief in that it attributes the power of healing to ancestral spirits, can be true (SACBC 2001 – 2009: 16) but this is not expected from Catholics who know the role of Christ in their work. Before one converts to the Catholic Church, he/she opens up the door for the Holy Spirit to operate in his /her life through the sacraments of the church. This is the time to deepen faith in Jesus Christ whom he/she follows and in whom her/his faith is placed. From faith stems all other virtues and gifts.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is the holy one of God (Lk 1: 35) Members of the church are gifted people of God. The Spirit of God plays a special part in showing them their special gifts (1 Cor 12: 28). They share this ministry in the Church. The Church can only believe that they have purified their faith in Christ to the extent that they are able to direct their healing ministry to Christ through the Holy Spirit. This kind of healing calls for faith from the sick and belief in the ritual that is performed. In other words, faith and belief in what is done to a sick person plays a very important role in the healing of the sick (Jas 5: 13 – 15).

To understand healing, one needs to acknowledge the power of different cultural systems of illness and health. Healing in African culture is a direct intervention of God through the

mediums of words, ancestors, rituals and medicines to restore life. This works for both the baptized and unbaptized. Mununguri believes that “even if the ancestors were concerned, it is finally to God that the ultimate recognition goes” (Mununguri 1998: 53). There are many ways of healing. There are different kinds of illnesses. Jesus pointed out that some kinds of illnesses need the power of faith and prayer: “This kind can only come out through prayer” (Mark 9: 29). This was an exceptional kind.

Healing in African cultural tradition deals mostly with relationships between God and humanity - is the Nation in a good relationship with the Creator? Why this incurable disease? Why drought? Why starvation? In response to these questions, the elders would invite a pilgrimage to the mountain to cry for intervention of the Creator. Africans believe that “sickness, and particularly serious sickness, is always a symptom that the truth of the world has been disrupted by morally wrong behaviour” (Domingues 2000: 46). Morally wrong in the African worldview is the absence of the good relations between God and the people, the living members of a family and their dead members. If this is overlooked it can cause illnesses and provoke violence in the community. This is treated ritually rather than medically. In this situation, Western treatment cannot help.

4.8. Conclusion

Discovering how God in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit has made healing possible, one can without hesitation accept the possibility of anything happening with God. But even though, not everybody can heal. Healing as a skill or a gift is for those who are called in to it. Jesus had this gift to bestow health on a number of persons. All those who are given this gift do the same including the traditional healers. It should be noted that Jesus’ healings are linked with faith and prayer, so the traditional healers who are Catholics cannot escape these two pillars in healing.

The Almighty God knows that different diseases require different healers. In a way the root cause of each disease is identified and eradicated. Jesus demonstrated this very clearly in his ministry. In concluding this chapter I may say that in this context, the imagination of Jesus as the medicine man (*inyanga*) and (*isangoma*) (diviner) *umthandazi* (faith healer) may well prove to be the most popular, and the one with which African peoples can most readily identify. Chapter five will describe the results of the interviews with Zulu Catholics who are healers within the diocese of Mariannhill to identify their beliefs and understanding of their work. What is the role of Christ in their work?

Chapter 5 Interviews

5.1 Introduction

A Conference about *ubungoma* and *ubunyanga* was held in Mariannhill in 2006. Present were Bishops M.P Dlungwane, Jabulani Nxumalo and Bhuti Thlagale and several priests, religious and lay people. *Izangoma, and izinyanga* were invited to this seminar. The way the seminar was motivated was encouraging for those concerned and gave them the hope that the outcome was going to be positive. *Ubungoma* and *ubunyanga* are a reality for some priests and a pastoral problem as well for many priests. This calls for the Catholic Church to do something about the *ubungoma* and *izinyanga*. The pastoral letter of 2006 that was circulated by the Bishops to the South African Catholic dioceses shocked many participants including other priests, especially those who encountered problems in their parishes who thought that it will give a clear direction as what to be done about this issue. The Catholic *izangoma* and *izinyanga* gave up hope in the Church. African Catholics also lost their zeal in the Church when they read that “We notice with a measure of concern that many African Christians, during difficult moments in their lives, resort to practices of traditional religion” (SACBC Resolution 2.5.2).

5.2. *Isangoma* one: (Male diviner)

The first person to be interviewed was a practising male *isangoma* at the Mariannhill Cathedral. He said that the Bishops are not shepherds of their flocks if they close their eyes to these issues. These gifts are a reality. The following is his story of how it all began:

“I was thirty years when I got sick from this gift. As I was a practising Catholic myself, I resisted accepting it until my aunt reassured me that this is the gift of the family in my mother’s side. As I wanted to prove the point whether this was a gift or not, I started to read the Bible. As I read the Bible my dreams became very strong. My grandfather on my mother’s side began to show me bushes in the forest and their use. The gospel of Mark was very useful to me. It explained the healing mission of Jesus. In my dreams most of the symbols were pointing at the Church. Many times, I saw myself participating in the Church service. Slowly, slowly I began to believe in myself that I am called to heal people in this way. I did undergo initiation as this was a necessity. My grandfather on my mother’s side was an *isangoma*.

My initiation was to understand the power of Christ in me as the follower and accept the method Christ was using to me in order to touch the people in healing them. I had to be an *isangoma*. My experience in healing is that, I can do nothing on my own. Jesus is my direction. This is the only thing that keeps me going on in the Catholic Church, is that I need Jesus, the One who heals people both physical and spiritual. In supporting my physical healings, I help my clients with reconciliation rituals. This kind of healing touches the spiritual components in my clients. If they are not healed physically, at least spiritually they are free.

My ancestors on my father's side were Catholics. My grandfather on my father's side was a very devoted Catholic. This is the man who convinced me about God as the source of life. This call did not come to a person who was blank about God. As a result, it does not disturb me as a practising Catholic, except that I know that the Church leaders do not support healings that come through African culture. I do consultation for information in prayer. I take my consultation as a revelation from God through the Holy Spirit. To me *Ubungoma* is the word like gynaecologist which is the word used for a doctor who is specialising in a specific field and treatment. This doctor uses different methods from the rest of the doctors to treat the problems of his/her clients. This is the same with *isangoma*. I have listened to Bishops' complaints about *ubungoma* in their statement. It does not bother me at all. If what I do is a sin, God will be my judge not the Bishops. Until one experience this call, he/she cannot understand it. I pray that our African Bishops can be honest with the African Catholics.

5.3. *Isangoma* two: (female diviner)

A female *isangoma*, Mrs Mntambo (not her real name), admitted to being angry with this issue because the conference made them fools. She was present at the seminar meeting at Mariannhill. She was not called to give testimony but she was invited to be a participant and was pleased to be invited to such a rich meeting concerning *ubungoma*. She reported that Bishops are not talking about healing gifts nor about the call to the *ubungoma* as such. They are not concerned about those that have the gift of *ubungoma*. They are inaccurate. Their statement says that the Bishops feel with the people who suffer from grave and painful sicknesses, but they must go for medical help. They would never have issued such a statement knowing very well that African people, Zulus in this context, are sick from *ubungoma*, as *ubungoma* cannot be treated by the Western medical doctor. They would be really sympathetic with the Catholics who are *izangoma* and come up with a better solution.

Their statement is not a solution for the Catholic *izangoma* and the African Christians in general.

The Church is a community that is formed by multiple cultures. People in this community are sick from different illnesses, some pertaining to their culture. All of these illnesses can be cured by God in many ways. The Bishops talk of Jesus as if Jesus was working outside his culture and independently of symbols. Her story is as follows:

“I know as *isangoma* today, that all that come to me in my dreams are symbols. Jesus the healer and *isangoma* is behind them (I love to call Jesus *isangoma* because what Jesus did in the last supper to Judas was what *isangoma* would do. We call it *ukushaya umhlahlo* (to smell a person). I draw my healing power from Jesus the healer and *isangoma*. If I was a witch, I would be guilty of my work and I would do it at night. I do it during the day. I stop working at 5 before sunset. I believe that I live with the Catholics around, they know me. I am a very good help to everybody near and far. God is my judge not the bishops. I do not contradict the gospels because Jesus in the scriptures was a healer but I do contradict the bishops’ statement. I do not know what this statement wants. Jesus uses anything to reach out to the sick no matter what causes that illness. For one to be able to heal a particular illness, sometimes one has to experience the illness himself/herself. To be initiated in to the *isangoma* is to be at school, the disciplinary school where one is taught to do work in a correct manner. It is the same like to be in the training college for any profession.

I was 19 years old when my call was discovered. My late mother was a Saint Anne’s sodality, a very prayerful woman. I did not believe my ears when I heard that she is the one who is behind this call, until God allowed her to talk to me and informed me about it. It was not easy as I was 19 years and about to get married. I did not know how my future husband was going to react to the situation. As a woman, I was not sure whether my future husband will take a wife who will sometimes confront him if necessary, since our culture forbids us women to confront our husbands especially if he has done something wrong. The proverb says (*Indoda ayibuzwa*) meaning that the man is not asked. It was clear that if I become an *isangoma*, I would confront my husband or my in laws sometimes. My mother reassured me in the dream that Jesus the heavenly *isangoma* would be with me in my journey; as long as I pray and believe in Jesus nothing will happen to me. I won’t leave the Catholic Church, unless the Church asks me to leave. It looks as if the power that controls the Catholic Church is human power in leadership not God’s power. I conclude that the Church leaders do not practise what

the Bible says about Jesus and Jesus' ministry. No one can stop Jesus from sharing Jesus' power with Jesus' disciples. This was Jesus' intention from the beginning.

5.4. *Inyanga* one (Male traditional healer)

Mr. Cele is a known Catholic traditional healer in the Mariannhill diocese. He is now 67 years old. He grew up with his grandfather on his mother's side who was not a Christian but everybody else in the family was Catholic. He was born before his mother got married to his father. He was helping his grandfather with digging *imithi* in the forest after school and over the weekends. He tells his story thus:

“As from my early years I was an assistant of my grandfather. It is in this way that I learned the names of *amakhambi* (herbs) and how and when to use them.” He said, “The love of healing people this way, grew out of my experience.” His initiation is different from others because his grandfather actually worked with him in his lifetime. “I was trained into doing healing sessions by my grandfather,” he said. His grandfather used to ask questions to learn what was wrong with the client. There was no divination. He does the same. He asked questions to diagnose and give relevant treatment. He does believe in his grandfather's presence and motivation in his work.

“I have advanced myself in this work as a traditional healer by reading books and consulting other old traditional healers” he said. Today we traditional healers have a better chance to develop ourselves as traditional healers since Government has taken us seriously in terms of trainings and instructions explained Mr Cele. Sometimes he dreams of his grandfather showing him *amakhambi* as he did many years ago. In this way, his grandfather is his ancestor.

What stood up for me in our discussions is that he did not undergo an initiation as is usually done to *izangoma*. He was skilled by his grandfather. It was a kind of schooling. Mr.Cele as a Catholic is totally convinced that Jesus is the healer. This is mostly through reading of the scriptures, not the Church's teaching. “The Church has taught me to pray but not to touch people's lives traditionally or other ways. This is the knowledge that was revealed to my grandfather who passed it on to me. “My grandfather was not a Christian. He had a gift in healing using traditional medicines which he himself had inherited from his father. My grandfather knew God the Creator (*Umdali or Umvelinqangi*) but never oriented in to

Christianity as myself. As a Catholic, I know that Jesus Christ is the healer. I am doing what Jesus would do if Jesus was living today. The Church talks about science which is Western healing not African traditional healing. I know that the Church does not encourage this kind of healing because I suppose, it has ancestral elements. The Church does not believe in dreams and yet the Bible is full of dreams. “This is the only channel that my ancestors use when they want to communicate with me. This is my testimony about my healing gift. I know that this testimony is rubbish for the white minded people and some of the Catholics including the bishops.”

“I meet my clients at home after work. As a Catholic, I encourage my clients to pray and to go for confession and often receive the Eucharist. I draw the power of doing this work from these practices myself. I deal with my clients as a Christian who is endowed with the knowledge which has become a gift. There is no extraordinary method. I listen and treat. I am aware that the Church does not consider the scriptures in terms of healing. If she did there would be no problem with traditional healing since God can use anything and anybody to reach out to people in terms of healing.”

5. 3 Inyanga two(Female traditional healer)

Lindiwe is a female traditional healer in the *Impendle* area. She is 54 years old. She was training to be a nurse when she discovered that her nursing career was inherited from her grandmother on her mother’s side. She grew up with her granny who was a traditional healer. Her granny was good at treating babies. *Lindiwe* worked with her granny, helping her with doing procedures from the age of 13 years. She was taught to do what she does now.

Her grandmother passed away when she was 34 years old. She took after her grandmother and does the job. Her happiness is when she sees the patient well again.

As a Catholic and a member of the Sacred Heart Sodality, she believes that the herbs she uses are empowered by Jesus Christ the healer. “I pray for my clients to Jesus the healer to heal them, I believe in the prayers, and I am convinced that Jesus does the job. I am an instrument,” she said. People do come to her home after hours for consultation. She knows the illness from the symptoms like the Western doctors. There is no divination. *Lindiwe* too inherited her skill from her grandmother. She does not speak about her ancestors generally except about her late granny who taught her and who sometimes come through her dreams. She is more of a trained nurse in her work though she is using “*amakhambi*” traditional

herbs. “The Church uses sacraments as healing agents in much the same way that I use traditional rituals,” she said. “I like the sacrament of reconciliation very much because it keeps my relationship with God in tune.” Talking to her confirmed that she is positive about her work. Her conscience is clean before God.

5.6. *Umthandazi* one (female faith healer)

The faith healer describes herself very strongly in the following words:

“I do not see the need of doing this interview because the Bishops know about these things, but they purposely make fools of the people who have these gifts in order to hold their positions in the Church. They cannot tell us that God is conquered by evil spirits by allowing Christians to become faith healers in the name of Jesus Christ. As a Catholic, I was taught that prayer is the pillar of life. My grandmother used to tell us that without prayer one cannot move even his/her finger because life is dependent on God. I have a prayer corner with the symbols of the Church, a white candle and a yellow one. The white candle stands for the baptised in my work; yellow invites all who pray with me. The reason for inviting all the dead members of my family in my work is because of the Church teaching about saints and the dead. They pray for the people and with the people. I believe that I need their support in prayer as I would need the support of the living family. I was never initiated into *ubungoma*. My form of healing does not take after someone in the family. she said.

She said that one does not know what happens after death. “We all assume, including the Bishops, that death means going to somewhere since there are names given like heaven, hell and purgatory. I cannot judge the whereabouts of the dead. All I know is that, they are in the presence of God; they communicate with me important messages in prayer. I was diagnosed as having the healing gift through prayer, after several sessions with the one of the psychiatrics doctor in Mariannahill hospital. My husband passed away in a car accident before I developed this gift. This happened after six years of my mourning. Some members of the family thought that I was desperately in need of money when I developed it. This was clarified by the people whom I had prayed for, that I do not take money for praying for them. Besides candles that I use, I bless water for people. I do not use many things. I believe in prayer. This is where the power of Jesus the healer plays its role in my work.”

“I do not feel like making people pay for my work because I did not pay for it myself. People who come to me help me to pay for my own needs as well. To me they are like my

companions. I am happy if they get healed. I see myself as a tool of Jesus Christ the healer. I do not see any contradiction in my work because the Catholic Church is the praying community. Christ prays for the people, I have no doubt about that. The healing that takes place in my clients does not come from me as *Thoko* (not her real name) but it comes from Christ and through *Thoko* to God's people." She admitted that in the beginning she was very uncomfortable because she grew up knowing that only priests in the Church bless water. She was not sure of her call. As she blesses water for people, positive feedback came back from people thanking her for her water and prayers. This encouraged her, and the love of praying for people grew up till today. The Catholic Church is very rich because she has sacraments of repentance and extreme unction. "All sacraments contribute to healing" as Jesus play his role in them, but in my work I follow Zulu ritual as well for reconciliation because of its powerful images. The combination of the sacraments as symbols that point to the present of Christ and the Zulu rituals is very meaningful and powerful to me. It is faith that pushes me to the confession box because I was taught that it is necessary, and that behind a priest there stands Jesus."

5.7. Umthandazi two (male faith healer)

Mr. Mkhize (not his real name) is a known Catholic *umthandazi* (faith healer). He belongs to *Umhlathuzana* deanery. He attends church services in the Mariannhill Cathedral. He welcomed me very positively. He is a male nurse professionally. In his work he invokes the Holy Spirit as an opening prayer before attending to people. Asking about his work of healing, he admitted that although he uses prayer, he believes that his ancestors play an important role in terms of praying with him. He was not struck by lightning as happened with Saul. It was a process that needed initiation.

After initiation into *ubungoma*, he diverted into being a faith healer. He told me that there are people who believe that they are saved in the name of Jesus. "These people tell people that ancestors are demons. Once one is dead, it is finished. They come to me knowing that though I use candles and water in my healing, I underwent initiation into *ubungoma*. Believe me, my work is done in the daylight but they come at night. They do take my advice of doing certain rituals if necessary. All rituals in African culture have ancestral elements. People do know that there are ancestors. They also know that nobody worships ancestors. Ancestors are part of creation that is under God's direction like all other created things. To be truthful, even Jesus did nothing of himself. Jesus was praying to God. He was God's instrument to people.

He did not raise himself but God raised him. As a Catholic, I do not see a contradiction in my work. For me the dead members of my family especially my parents that I call to pray with me are part of God's creation and they are part of me. Denying their presence in my work can make me a liar. Africans call their relationship with us, ancestors, English calls it DNA. Church calls them saints. These are people who are dead but in communion with the living, at least I believe this.

Nobody in the family that I know or heard of was an *isangoma*. But when this gift came my way, I was told to use certain roots to cleanse my ancestors before going to the sea for prayer rituals. This was enough for me to be a faith healer. In the eyes of the community I am a faith healer because I do not wear the identity attire of an *isangoma*. I know what I did in order to connect my ancestors into my work. I do not have any problem working with people in the community and the priest that I am under in my parish knows that I pray for the sick and give them water to cleanse their ancestors if necessary but he has no problem. He advised me to be faithful to my call and to the Church by healing people of God. I am 60years old. I had this call when I was 47 years old. I know that the Church leaders do not accept our practices, mainly because the gift of healing is assigned to the priests through sacraments only.

As Catholics we are very unfortunate that this is so because it is not so in the Bible. This gift is assigned to the followers of Jesus. They manifested themselves to the apostles after Jesus' death and resurrection. Priests themselves are different; some have the gift of healing from their ancestors because it is inherited. I do not understand why the Church leaders do not accommodate this phenomenon since it is a reality in the African culture. The Bible itself which is the Word of God in the Church assigns the responsibility of healing to the disciples of Jesus. The question to be asked here is: Are Africans welcome into the Christian religion, since they accept and believe in the presence of their dead deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)? (This is the substance that shows the relationship between the living and the dead. Africans believe in this reality. It is found in the bones of the dead as well for confirming the relationship between the dead and the living members of the family) in their systems? If they are not, why did God give them the gift of faith in Jesus Christ? Why did God allow them to become Christians?" *Umthandazi* is happy in his work. He does not worry much about what the Bishops says. He believes they fool themselves as Africans. He won't leave the Catholic Church. He wishes to die a Catholic. He is very positive that God has no problem with his work because it is God's gift to people.

5.8 The Priest

The priest that I interviewed is known for his healing services in the diocese. He did not want to say much on this issue. He is one of those who were disappointed by the Bishops statement. He did admit that he invites his ancestors as well to his services to pray together with him especially his grandfather. He worked with him as a teenager and he was an *isangoma*. This grandfather is the one who encouraged him to be a priest in order to help the people of God in the future in the Church. He said that he does not know why the Bishops decided to write such a statement to the priests, religious and the Church at large. "I did not read it in my parish, because for me it did not make sense. I am not the only one who did not read it. I know other priests who did the same," he said. "As African priests, we would understand if this was said by the White Bishops.

To our surprise as the black clergy the present President is known as the "inculturation man" the Bishops are supposed to draw the way forward in the issue of ancestors because in African culture it is indisputable. Ancestors are part of our systems as Africans. Healing is healing. Whether one heals traditionally or westernly. Christ plays his role in all healings. We must not forget that Jesus healed within his culture. Priests too heal within their cultures which is Christianity and African.

5.9. Bishop of Mariannhill

The Bishop of Mariannhill where the conference was conducted put the issue of *ubungoma* as a problem in the diocese. He thought that the dialogue with *izangoma* and the priests would have a positive impact on this issue. Unfortunately it was ended immediately before any further way forward. He does not know how a priest can become an *isangoma* in the real sense of being initiated into it. Otherwise *idlozi* is the reality. Our meeting became a general conversation over the traditional healing and *ubungoma* but the two questions that I wanted Bishop to respond to was not attended, the questions were: Why do the Bishops have impression that there is no space for Christ in traditional healing? And why do the Bishops think that traditional healers are equating Christ with ancestors?

As I could not get hold of the President Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, I used his comment in his unpublished paper titled "Diviner Priest in the Catholic Church" where he has written thus "The Church in Southern Africa has not yet, in its evangelisation effort, made any link

between local cultures and faith” (Tlhagale: 2005: 23). I think that if this is true, this was the time for the Church in Southern Africa to use in order to pave the way forward about the local cultures and the Catholic Church. Since the discussion on the ancestor religion took place in 2006, the clarification of this statement came up in 2008 when the meeting between the Administrative Board of the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference and the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference of Consecrated Life (Southern Africa) took place. Since this is a problem for everyone in leadership in the Roman Catholic Church in Southern Africa, this statement was re-visited. It is only in that meeting that the tone changed and the agreement came out as follows “The debate on inculturation continues as the church continues to be enriched by the cultures of all who join it, and to enrich and purify the cultures it encounters. This on going process is led by the Bishops in collaboration with the leaders of the Institutes of Consecrated Life”. (SACBC: 2008)

Although this document is signed by President, Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference, President, Leadership Conference of Consecrated Life (SA), SACBC Secretary General and Vice President, Leadership Conference of Consecrated Life (SA) but it is not known by the people. Bishop of Mariannhill did not have it. It was signed on 23rd May 2008. It is now 2013. It was not read in the parishes as it was done with the ancestor religion statement. People are still struggling with the 2006 statement which was negative on African culture.

5.10 Conclusion

It was a touching experience to listen to my interviewees explaining their call in to healing people. What stood up to me was the fact that God introduces people to a certain experience before giving them a mission. Moses had to experience a burning bush (exodus 3:2). Eventually God gave him power to go to Pharoah and rescue his people. Is sickness not Pharoah who enslaved God’s people in this context? Are healers not necessary? It was important though that he encountered God in his life and be healed since he himself had killed a person.(Exodus 1:12) Ezekial experienced dumbness before starting his mission (Ezekial 3:26) Both *izangoma* I interviewed encountered God by experiencing sickness before accepting initiation process and eventually healing people.

Isangoma one admitted that he was thirty years when he got sick and he was reluctant to accept the call in spite of the dreams. It is clear that as a Catholic, he was running away from

this statement “*Ngingenwa idlozi*”-- I am being possessed by my ancestors. He started beautifully by looking up to God by reading the scriptures which did not help much because eventually he became *isangoma*. Today he is both a Catholic and *isangoma*. He has touched many people’s lives. My interviewees experienced sickness before responding positively to their call. When asked whose power do they use?” Their answer to this question as Catholics is that Jesus heals.”

Healing for them began with an encounter with God. Female *isangoma* believes in prayer as her late mother instructed her to pray. The element of fear was with her as this call was interfering with her future and her Christian religion. She does the work faithfully and she is happy that she responded to this call. Both *izinyanga* were taught by their elders to use *amakhambi* for healing. As Catholics, they understand their work as the one that Jesus did. They feel supported by the Church’s prayers in doing it. The question that faces them is who heals?

In the following chapter I am going to give out what I discover during my interviews. As my main aim was to find out whether Christ plays any role in their work as both traditional healers and Catholics, this is what I discovered.

Chapter 6

Research findings: *Izangoma, Izinyanga and Abathandazi* as healers versus Jesus Christ the Healer

6.1. Introduction

This research stemmed from the pastoral letter that was issued by the Southern African Catholic Bishops in 11 August 2006. The Bishops were provoked by the rumours that there are Priests and religious who are *izangoma* since in this letter they say “Some priests act as *sangomas* and call on the ancestors for healing”(SACBC 2001 – 2009:15). Before giving my findings of this research, I still wish to remind the reader to keep in mind that Bishop’s concerns were provoked by questions pertaining to sicknesses of the so called Catholics who being hesitant to seek help from traditional healers, went to the priests for advice. African clergy who knew the sicknesses that are caused by cultural elements did not hesitate to confront them with cultural questions. Not because they are *izangoma* but because they are Africans more so Zulus of the Mariannhill diocese. This is why the priest I interviewed denied that there are priests who are *izangoma* per se. Sicknesses can be handled by the priests, religious, doctors and nurses by reversing to culture and its methods of handling certain sicknesses not because they are *izangoma* in terms of being initiated.

Whatever the priest can say or do, it can be because he knows that it works for that particular sickness. This understanding is missing in the Roman Catholic Church. Pope Benedict XVI has highlighted the importance of this by saying that “It is imperative therefore to make a commitment to transmit the values that the Creator has instilled in the hearts of Africans since the dawn of time” (Pope Benedict XVI 2011: 25.) This cultural knowledge is a value that contributes to healing.

My research was limited to two *izangoma*, two *izinyanga* and two *abathandazi*. Their responses were as follows:

Isangoma one said that he was thirty years old when he got sick from *idlozi* which was his grandfather on the maternal side. By this time he was already a Catholic. Trying to find help about his sickness was in vain. Taken to three medical doctors could not help him. They could hardly see anything. He started to dream his grandfather who showed him herbs and stated that he was going to be *isangoma*.

As a Catholic this was not good news to him. He liked to be a Catholic but he was not sure whether *ubungoma* and Catholicism can work together. Eventually everything worked well for him as he is now healed and worked for God in the Church. I decided to interview a male and female *izangoma* to check whether the manifestation of the sickness is the same or one can just become an *isangoma* without getting sick. I discovered that they both got sick.

The female *isangoma* related the same story: She was nineteen. She was a Catholic. She got sick. She could not be healed by the doctors. Eventually she dreamed of her late mother asking her to accept the call. She then went for initiation. She learned during her initiation to analyse the dreams and interpret the cultural elements. Most illnesses are caused by the lack in attending the cultural rituals. “On top of all the trainings that I have undergone but I still believe in the power of Christ in the Catholic Church that reaches out to people through me” she said. There is no problem in the Church except the bishops’ letter which fought with us *izangoma*. I receive the Eucharist for my strength.

Both *izinyanga* admitted the skill. They were trained. Mr.Cele was trained by his grandfather, and *Lindiwe* by her granny. There was no mention of dreaming in the beginning. Both were taught how to dig *imithi* and to serve the clients. As a Catholic, she prays as well. She believes in the sacraments and in the prayers. She feels supported very much by the sodality of the Sacred Heart since she is a known member in this sodality. As a catholic she is not afraid. She loves the Church. She does not divine. She knows the work as a nurse would know what to give to the patient with certain symptoms.

Although he is faith healer, Mr. Mkhize underwent initiation into *ubungoma* and diverted into being *umthandazi* later. He was called when he was forty seven. He started off by using roots and the *imithi* before diverted his call in to prayer. He believed in the ancestors as to pray with him for healing people. He also believed that he is the instrument of God. He is a devoted Catholic.

Umthandazi one was never initiated into *ubungoma*. She was just called into praying for people and nobody in the family was any of the two, either *isangoma* nor faith healer. She follows though the Zulu rituals where necessary because she knows them but in most cases she prays and gives water (*iziwasho*). She received this gift after her twenty six years of her

marriage. She married when she was twenty. Before that she was a faithful and a parishioner like all others and she enjoyed it. All of my interviewees are practicing Catholics.

What did all this tell me about the ubungoma, ubunyanga and ubuthandazi?

This call has no age. One can be called at any age, and from any work. One has to experience sickness her/himself with *ubungoma*. *Izinyanga* are trained like the nurses and doctors. They become part of the work. They all work towards healing of the people. I do not see the hatred between *izangoma*, *izinyanga* and *abathandazi* because their goal is to help people. *Izangoma* that I interviewed are influenced by the Church. They all operate outside Western training. They are Catholics therefore they follow the teaching of the Church. Their dream is that the Catholic Church may change her mind and accept this phenomenon in the Church. They do not see how this call can be disputed in the Church without violating Jesus' love towards the sick. Although their call is traditional, but I feel that they need orientation in Western methods, for example they need orientation in terms of hygiene because (*bayagcaba*) they make small incisions or cuts to put in their medicine depending on what they want to do for their clients. Things like gloves can be introduced for them to use. They also need to be warned about people with diabetes that they must not make these incisions in case they complicate. I was glad to hear though from Mr. Cele *inyanga* that Government has taken them seriously and does something about them.

It is my wish that *izangoma*, *izinyanga* and *abathandazi* work hand in hand with the doctors or clinics to handle certain issues. Indeed there are sicknesses that can be treated by *izangoma* and *izinyanga* but not by the doctors.

Since God is generally understood to be the giver of life and its propagator and preserver thereof, it is assumed that the majority of those who attend to the sick are empowered by God to do so more especially because ancestors today are Christians like in the case of my interviewees. Good *izangoma* and *izinyanga* as traditional healers, hence the preservers of life and its processes fall into this category. Nevertheless one has to contend with the fact of the existence of evil, one cannot deny that some healers, traditional and Christians do fall under the spell of evil and thus end up using evil methods in dealing with sick people.

This research was done among the Catholic traditional healers of different categories as one would do with the different doctors of the different categories in medicine. They all expressed their faith in the language of their culture. Did Jesus not do the same? As Catholics, they associate their healing with Jesus Christ.

Although traditional healers believe in the role played by ancestors in their work as traditional healers, they also have faith in Jesus Christ. To this Bujo noted that “Christian message encounters every human person in that persons historical, social and cultural situation and environment and does not compel him/her to abandon his /her identity”(Bujo 1990:103). Kelsey in his book *Healing and Christianity* noted as well that “ But only in the New Testament tradition have we found a consistence practice of healing based on a fully developed understanding of God’s love and a divine will for men” (Kelsey 1973: 345)

To offer healing including traditional healing by those who are Christians like in this thesis is one way in which Christians can express the love that is so much needed by people today. I refer to the Scripture text as well, where the disciples forbade one who was driving out demons and stopped him. Jesus acted very much against the stopping of these people by saying “Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us”(Mk 39 -40). This was very relevant to my interviewees because as Catholics they are for Jesus and they love the Church, but their call to serve the people of God is not accepted by the Church. The pain they have is that they use the Church culture which is prayer.

Although prayer may mean different attitude to different Christians but mainly it calls for a growth in Christian understanding of love of God who according to them is the source of all powers. In all of their activities the priority is prayer mainly because their work is within the Christian era. Even if it was not, Bujo would still insists that “in judging aspect of African life, attention must be paid to the concept of life handed down by the ancestors which the principle was do not harm life, for life is for everyone”.(Bujo 1990:102). The Christian message cannot ignore this fact without exposing itself to failure because Jesus’ mission was to heal people in all aspects of life.

Isangoma one admitted to be very sad about what is happening to them as *izangoma* in the Catholic Church. This is due to his understanding of the role of Christ in healing and the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian life. To be a Christian is identical with being under the direction of the Holy Spirit, to know the Master’s business. Although the future of *izangoma* in the Roman Catholic Church is not clear, but they are present and they participate in the Church structures. The *isangoma* two is a member of the liturgy team in the parish.

It should be remembered that God has revealed God self through history and expressed God self through human words and actions. God operated using prophets. Christian *izangoma* continue this work of translating God's words into different languages of the world and adapting it to the different cultures. In the context in which I have done my research, Christ continues God's work through Christians (Catholics) in this context so that he affects every cultural age. In this way Christ reaches all people of all times and cultures throughout the world. This is my interpretation of their work in the community and the agreement made by the leaders as I have stated agreed with me. Pope Benedict as well does not overlook the culture. He said "In this process of inculturation, it is important not to forget the equally essential task of evangelizing the world of contemporary African culture" (Pope Benedict XVI 2011: 25).

I argue that nothing can prevent God to heal within a culture. Culture becomes a vehicle that transports a healing message to the sick. People from different cultures use and understand the world differently. This applies to illness and healing as well.

Isangoma one and two as Catholics believe in the power of Christ as they work with the good spirits under the direction of Christ in the Church. *Izinyanga* understood their powers as inherited from the spirit of their ancestors but they claim that Christ is the source of all. Two worked with the holders of the healing gifts in the family and later on they developed their own gifts. Faith healers accepted the fact that Christ is the healer. While the Southern African Bishops are convinced that "in local cultures superstition abounds" (SACBC 2001 – 2009:19), If this is what the Bishops believe, inculturation will never take place in Southern Africa. In my interviews I found that Catholic *izangoma* and *izinyanga* fully accept the supreme power of God who is without rival.

I discovered the difficulties that *izangoma and izinyanga* or anyone else who has a healing gift in the Church have. Parishioners who are sick do not suffer because they go to *izangoma* and *izinyanga* whenever they want to get help nobody cares about *izangoma and izinyanga*. Nobody sympathizes with them. They are abandoned. Do they not need healing as outcasts in the community of God, the Church, because of their gift? To be an *isangoma* or a traditional healer needs initiation in a cultural way in terms of undergoing a ritual. For some it comes through the dreams without rituals or initiation. In this sense it is a gift. This concern is extended to the priests and the religious "Priests and religious desist from *ubungoma*

practices involving spirits, and channel their ministries of healing through the sacraments and sacramentals of the Church (SACBC Resolution 2.5.2). The bishops said this in their statement. In other words, priests and religious should stop healing the people of God in a way God wants them to do. Who has the power to stop them? In the context of healing, who gives them the power to heal? Is it the Church and her sacraments or God the giver of life through Christ? It is not clear from what kind of healing they are stopped because prayer heals, counselling heals. Listening heals, water heals etc. Healing is the “power” given by God.

6.2 Conclusion

In African villages disease and misfortune are religious experiences. In most cases a religious approach is important to address these conditions. *Izangoma* as traditional healers of the local community are aware of this and thus use means to address them for the patients whenever it necessary. The cause of a disease or misfortune is usually interpreted against the background of a patient. It can be a psychological, religious or spiritual background. The healing can be effected by the truth that an African is a communitarian being by nature and thus needs a cultural approach to his or her illness. This is the area of focus for *izangoma* and traditional healers. One may as well say that God takes care of the people of different cultures through the healers of different categories in the community.

The following chapter will address the theological and cultural questions of the research.

Chapter 7

Theological and Cultural Analysis

7.1 Introduction

According to the Gospel of Mark Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Jesus was born into a community and grew amongst the certain culture. He learnt the doings of the community. He shared his gifts with the community. This chapter stems from my observation and listening to the *izangoma*, *izinyanga* and *abathandazi*

The *isangoma* one and two that I interviewed were called as Catholics to be healers. The sad situation of a Zulu who is a Christian is that he/she can never be understood by an outsider and yet the Christian religion came with outsiders who did not know people's cultures. The missionaries brought their God to people who were traditionally religious but they did not take that in to consideration; instead they imposed their Christian religion and its cultures.

7.2 Traditional healing (*ubunyanga* and *ubungoma*) is a call

This is a call for one to be a tool to do God's work of healing to God's people. Before Christianity came to its existence in Mariannhill there were *izangoma* and *izinyanga* in the African culture who practiced traditional healing. They healed people with a clean conscience. When Christianity came to Mariannhill, some people accepted it reluctantly because it opposed the traditional culture especially *ubungoma* and *ubunyanga*. They accepted it because it had a future since it introduced schools for their children. It is in their Christianity that people are called to heal people. They heal traditionally because they have been taught or inherited it. Tradition is the way of life that is born by the community. Christianity also is the way of life taught by the Church. In this way there is a relationship between the tradition and the Christianity. They are both taught for the benefit of the community. Normally the gifts are inherited from the families or taught by the members of the family for the use of the community.

In African culture gifts are for the community. *Ubungoma* is a traditional means of attending to the health issues of the community. The Scriptures share the same element in the Acts of the Apostles by saying "The community of believers was of one heart and mind, no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own"(Acts 4:32) In my research I was trying to discover whether there is a place of Christ in the *izangoma* Catholics who practice as traditional healers, I found that the answer is yes, they believe that Christ lived justice and they are expected to follow Christ in their doings. The teaching of the Church and the

scriptures upon which their faith is grounded has formed their conscience into Christ like way of life. From what I learned from my interviews, I turn to Fernando Domingues who wrote thus “if the salvific encounter is to happen, the ‘full Christ’ in the human mediation he choose, and the ‘full African person’ in one’s historical, cultural and religious identity, must be present” (Domingues 2000:17). This is evident in the interviews that Christ is not equated with ancestors in traditional healing as the Bishops stated that “traditional healers put their total trust in ancestors equating them with Christ or leaving no place for Christ” (SACBC 2006:15). Ancestors are creatures and Mununguri would say Christ “cannot be discerned as a secondary divine being, but as having the same divine essence as the God of our ancestors. And everything that he says emanates from the will of the Father. At the same time, consequently, he has something in common with man because in his quality of ‘organic Medium’ that is of ‘visible Mediator’ between God and man, he is the fulfilment of the human search for God” (Mununguri 1998: 68).

I agree with Aylward Shorter who noted that:

The teaching of Jesus Christ and his redemption are in fact the complement, the renewal, and the bringing to perfection, of all that is good in human tradition. And that is why the African who becomes a Christian does not disown himself, but takes up the age-old values of tradition in spirit and in truth (Shorter 1997:207).

My interviewees who are all Catholics received the call of *ubungoma* when they were already initiated into Catholicism. This was a good ground for them to take this call in the spirit of Christianity and in truth as it is expressed in the Gospel of John “God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:24.)

7.3 Culture and Christianity

7.3.1 Theology of Jesus Christ versus African theology

The theology of Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Mk 1: 1) is alive in a Catholic who is a traditional healer and it keeps him/her going in his/her work as a healer. When theology is not alive, faith loses its touch with culture and is no longer a dynamic force in the society. In the case of my research I discovered that the faith of my interviewees is intact within their culture and is therefore a dynamic force in the society. It is this faith that addresses the pressing concerns of humanity who is sick and therefore needs healing. This faith stems from the understanding of God the Creator and the lover of humankind and Christ as the healer, as the

scriptures point at this reality about Christ. Unfortunately the Church has compartmentalised faith and so that it is no longer addresses the pressing concerns of humanity.

Africans are religious by nature, in terms of considering the element of spirituality as an important factor relating to God. In as much as there are spiritual leaders in the Church, the *izangoma* are the spiritual leaders of the communities where they belong in different cultures. But the Zulus in the Mariannhill diocese, especially my interviewees, feel that the Africans, Zulus in this context, were not taken seriously by the missionaries who, when bringing evangelisation, began by attacking the African religious system supposing that the Zulus were worshipping the “being that somehow has been remembered by their forefathers” (Schimlek 1950:14), and had no concept of God. There is no doubt that missionaries did this without observing and appreciating the good values in the practice of healings amongst the Zulus in the Mariannhill area. This is not the idea of the Second Vatican Council since James Kavanaugh in his book *Man in Search of God* stated that:

Thus, the Second Vatican Council tells us that Christianity is not limited to the Churches that claim its name. Nor is the power of grace restricted to the sacrament or the traditional religious rites. God is searching out to men in many forms, and the champions of man’s dignity, Christian or unbeliever, are in some way doing the special work of God made clear in Christ (Kavanaugh 2000 : 61).

From my research I conclude that there is no doubt that Catholics who are traditional healers do the special work of God whom they have learned through Christ in the Catholic Church. It is a world Church, in which all the cultures of the world must be evangelised and thus come to feel at home in the Roman Catholic Church. In the case of my interviewees, they all have faith in Jesus Christ as Catholics. Their theology is that of the community or of a local understanding of God the Creator and Christ the healer.

7.3.2 Mariannhill area as an African village

In the context in which the research was done traditional healers feel that they are not at home in the Roman Catholic Church to which they belong. It is possible that the Church is disturbed by the mention of the ancestors and their involvement in the African healing processes as we have heard in our interviews. To this Stinton calls Jesus Christ the Proto – Ancestor when she wrote:

Jesus Christ the Proto – Ancestor wants nothing more than full life and the total comprehensive development of the New People of God in Africa who, setting out from a remote past, and the drama of the masses of refugees in so many places, continues on its way to eternity, searching for greater autonomy and true identity (Stinton 2004:144).

For Africans, Zulus in this context, culture and the religion cannot be separated. The umbrella of African religion understands that ancestors are not worshipped as Catholics worship God but venerated. The Roman Catholic Church does not worship saints but venerates them. Bujo in his book *African Theology* states this clearly when he says “Tradition and religion have an importance in African life which may not be ignored” (Bujo 1992:75). All my interviewees pointed to the importance of their ancestors in their healing gifts. Domingues noted that Jesus followed Jewish culture in his healing when he wrote, “Like other healers of his own time, Jesus profoundly embedded in the Jewish cultural and religious mentality, seemingly accepted the current religious understanding of sickness and healing (Domingues 2000:75).

Oliver Onwubiko quoted Mbiti who said, “African peoples do not know how to exist without religion”. Onwubiko thus noted that “the last sentence of this quotation shows the importance of religion in the African community. It shows, from the traditional African background, that atheism, which some African intellectuals are joking with in Africa, is an anti – African phenomenon. It also emphasizes that African life is a cultural life lived through religion” (Onwubiko1991:82).

For a Christian, Christianity as a religion is a way of life. A Christian worships and believes in Jesus Christ. As human beings, the members of this religion follow a certain culture. It is this culture that Christian Africans have adopted in their lifestyle. Inculturation has taken place. African culture has shared its good values in worshipping Christ as Christ’s followers. In this way, Christianity is cultural. Africans have always been worshipping God the Creator, unlike in the scriptures where we hear that God called people out of their countries in order that God becomes their God. The residents from Mariannahill that were found by the Trappists were not immigrants. They were citizens who worshipped God the Creator.

7.3.3 African God versus Tribal gods

Bible says that God called Abraham from the community that was worshipping gods “God said to him: “Leave your country, your family and your father’s house, for the land I will show you,” (Gen. 12:1).

Abraham was asked by God to abandon the tribal religion of his forefathers; he believed in God and was justified for because he had faith in God. Are the Zulus expected to believe that God is asking them to abandon their culture today? Was the tribal religion of Abraham the same with African religion or ancestor religion as the bishops call it? Zulus had no gods in the sense of *izithixo* as the bible describes them. Zulus had One God (*Umdali* or *Umvelinqangi*) For Abraham this was a call to worship one true God instead of the many gods of the country. Zulus were initiated from God the Creator to the God the Son whom later was called Christ. As the followers of Christ, they are still Zulus who are Christians (Catholics in this context). Bishop Nxumalo in his unpublished paper stated that “Abraham had to make a clean break from the religion of his ancestors through pure faith. It is through the legacy of pure faith that a Christian has Abraham as an ancestor because of his total and exclusive adherence to God” (Nxumalo 2009:3). This is true. Abraham heard the voice of God calling him. Comparing to what was happening in the country he chose to listen to the command of God and adhere to God. This was the beginning of One True God for the Israelites. The Zulus called God *Umvelinqangi* and *Umdali* before they knew something about Abraham and his call to worship this One and True God.

Jesus was a Jew but he proclaimed the kingdom of God. Zulus as Christians are called to proclaim the kingdom of God since they know what it means to be a Christian. That a Zulu is a Christian does not call him or her to lose his/her identity as a Zulu. But he/she is called to live the good life as a follower of Christ. Catholic traditional healers do adhere to God the Creator and the author of life. By being Christians they submit themselves in the hands of Christ the head of the Church in which they belong.

7.3.4 Family and blood relations in African culture

In African culture family is part of one’s blood. How can one abandon his blood without putting on a pressure to the one called to serve God in religious life? Can this happen in real life that one forgets his/her family totally? In Zulu culture ancestors are part of the family. Members of the family inherit gifts from them including healing gifts. One day Jesus fought

over the attitude of deserting the parents by saying to the Pharisees and Scribes “Why do you break the commandments of God for the sake of your tradition? For God said, “Honour your father and your mother, and “whoever curses father or mother shall die’ but you say, „Who ever says to the father or mother,’ Any support you might have had from me is dedicated to God,” need not honour his father.’ You have nullified the word of God for the sake of your tradition”. (Mt. 15: 3b – 6).

It is human for the Zulus to honour their parents; whether they are alive or dead. This is where Catholicism resembles Zulu culture by saying Masses for the dead and exclusively puts aside the November month as the month to celebrate their dead. Stinton insists that:

It is important that Christianity show the Africans that being truly Christian and being truly African are not opposed to each other, because to be a true Christian means to be a true human being, since it was Jesus himself who was truly human and who humanised the world. Once however we have established that the legitimate yearnings of the African ancestors are not only taken up in Jesus Christ, but are also transcended in him, can we not use the concept of Proto Ancestor starting point of a Christology for which the enthusiasm of the African will be more than a passing fashion? (Stinton 2004:144).

With such moves as the process of inculturation began by Blessed John Paul II we are beginning to engage the Catholic tradition in a healthy dialogue with cultures and traditions of Africa. I think that carefully done, this is likely to assist the Church in its efforts to incorporate values of family life using African traditional motifs. At least the SACBC document of 2008 carries this hope.

I still believe that traditional Catholic theology needs to welcome African traditional world-view. This will help in the dialogue that is necessary if the two religions are to successfully work together to bring wholesomeness in the lives of the clientele they inevitably must share. Both traditionalists and Christians are condemned to live together till death do them part.

7.3.5 *Ubungoma* as a spiritual manifestation

The great concern of the Bishops statement is in that divination took place through the ancestor and yet according to them they are equated with Christ “On the other hand traditional healers put their total trust in ancestors equating them with Christ or leaving no

space for Christ” (SACBC 2001 – 2009: 15) It is very difficult to speak about healing in the Christian world view because the only answer one gets is that of the Holy Spirit or of the Spirit of God. This language already screens of other methods of healing through good spirits which God can use since God is not limited to use anything. It then concludes that healing came with Christianity. It sounds as if healing never existed before Christianity it only came with the Church. Evil spirits are known in African culture. They are known as anti- life spirits. The spirits that damage people’s lives, the spirits that hurt people, the spirits that do all kinds of evil. These spirits were screened of in African culture as to remain with the good spirits of the ancestors. The term “demon” is not in African language. It came with the Christianity because it is found in the bible.. In all ages healing has been a mystery and therefore not understood. People understand healing from their background. Church understands healing from her background in as much as anybody will understand it from his/her background. That is why inculturation is necessary if people have to be full in Christianity.

Kelsey said:

In different ways, the thinking of both pagans and Gnostic Christians shut out the idea of healing accomplished directly by God. Magic they could accept, but the idea and experience of what is simply a divine gift was as effectively blocked as it is for most people today (Kelsey 1973:138).

In my discussion with the Catholics who are *izangoma* I noted that they all believe in the power of God through Jesus Christ. This is their understanding as Christians inspite of the African religion they possess. They verbalised it themselves that without God our ancestors are powerless. I think that the Bishops make a mistake if they compare the Catholic *izangoma* and those who were not Christians because their experience and language is not the same. The *izangoma* outside the Church may have this attitude of putting the ancestors higher than Christ but I did not pick this up from the Catholic *izangoma*. Their work begins with prayer and evening they pray like the Christians. Because they also read the scriptures, they are aware of the different scripture passages that link their work with God and God’s spirit. I ended up believing in what they themselves as *izangoma* believe in that everything is possible with God when reflecting on this scripture passage:

The Lord then came down and spoke to him (Moses). Taking some of the spirit that was on Moses, he bestowed it on the seventy elders; and as the spirit came to rest on them, they prophesied. Now two men, one named Eldad and the other Medad, were not in the gathering but had been left in the camp. They too had been on the list but had not gone out to the tent;

yet the spirit yet the spirit came to rest on them also, and they prophesied in the camp (Nm 11:25 -26).

These men were possessed by the spirit that was given to them by God to prophesy. God called them in to this ministry. This is a clear indication that God can use anything and anybody he wants with the spirit. Joshua did not like this idea of God. He said to Moses, "Moses my lord stop them" (Nm 11: 28b). *Izangoma* inherit this kind of the spirit from God the source of everything. In this incident God used Moses in African culture God use members of the family.

My interviewees as Catholics love the Roman Catholic Church. They all confess that they would love to die as Catholics because their power of healing is supported by the scriptures and the common prayers of the Church. While the Southern African Catholic Bishops are convinced that "In local cultures superstition abounds" (SACBC 2001 – 2009:19), in my interviews I discovered that Catholic *izangoma* and *izinyanga* are in full acceptance of the supreme power of God who is without rival.

Discussion about *izangoma* and *izinyanga* and healing in the Catholic Church faces a huge challenge. This is not new. It is as old as the arrival of Christianity in to the lives of Zulu people in Mariannhill. Dr. Kohler who came to save the Zulus' lives as a doctor, ended up hunting the so called according to him "witches" to kill them. Father Gregory, a priest, accompanied Dr. Kohler in the hunting of the witches.

It is written in the book *Medicine Versus Witchcraft* that a doctor was heard complaining during the hunting:

What on earth ever made us think of coming to these witches' cauldron; to waste two nights and a day on this idiotic tomfoolery," grumbled the doctor. "To think that these madmen, these hooligans, these perfect images of the darkest devil himself, have kept such a splendid race as the Zulus in spiritual bondage for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. Spirits or no spirits, devil or no devil, the fact alone that such a subhuman crowd has the effrontery to maintain spiritual control over decent human beings and succeed in doing so, proves to me that the whole system of witchcraft among the Bantu must be an invention of the chief of all devils himself (quoted in Schimlek 1950:106).

I do agree with this attitude because it was before Christianity took place but not now when the ancestors themselves are Christians, it does not apply. When the missionaries thought of

bringing in the doctors from overseas, the main aim was that they would help them in saving people's lives from the *izangoma* and *izinyanga* for these were destroying the converted Zulus. In their minds people would never be Christians amongst the *izangoma* because *izangoma* were both witches and doctors as the term *witchdoctor* is applied to them. It was their intention to bring the native men and women and their children in to personal touch with Jesus Christ, to inspire the indigenous Church with true ideals of Christian life and service for this to succeed, the witches had to be eradicated.

Today most of the parishes in Mariannhill have celebrated their hundred years of Christianity, some more than hundred years. The question is, did *ubungoma* vanish after Christianity took root in the Mariannhill diocese?

Western doctors could not see God in the Zulu people. For them they were the products of the devil. The priest was to go out to look for and kill the devils. Evangelisation was greatly disturbed. The attitude that is heard and seen today in the Catholic Church stems from this background. The question that faces the people who possesses the power to heal is "Who heals or whose power do they use? Is it the Christ, Ancestors or both? The high level of involvement of Catholics in this call is a matter of concern for the Bishops. Why is this so? Are these people not good enough to be possessed by the Holy Spirit of Christ the healer? Is Christ forbidden to use them and share with them his ministry? Father Gregory confessed to Dr. Kohler that *Izangoma* respected him and called him the messenger of „*UNkulunkulu*’, the highest Lord of all spirits. If the *izangoma* understand this, who can be convinced that they know nothing about God?

Today there is a need of on going dialogue. Domingues notices the possibility of this when he said,

We share the belief of many modern African theologian and pastors who hold that the encounter between Christ and the African person will remain radically incomplete and in the long run, with little transforming power, unless it takes above all in the profound sphere of the ultimate cultural and religious meanings. Conversely, the African person's answer to Christ in faith will remain only skin-deep, unless it makes use of, and includes, the whole of his own traditional cultural and religious experience (Domingues 2000: 16).

Jesus through the Holy Spirit still calls the people in to the Church with the intention of Christianizing their cultures. Alyward Shorter states "The risen Christ adopts a multiplicity of

cultural identities when members of these cultures become his members through faith and Baptism”(Shorter 1997:85). This is true for the traditional healers who are Catholics. In their faith in Christ they believe that they are instruments of Christ.

Catholic *izangoma* like all other Christians are called by Christ to follow him in all his goodness. Alyward Shorter sees the possibility of continuity with one’s culture in Christianity when he said, “On the other hand, there is a real continuity with the pre – Christian culture. After evangelization a culture is identifiable the same culture that it always was. If anything it should be more recognizable, more authentic. Its positive values and insights become clearer and more attractive, as a result of an access of meaning” (Shorter 1997:84). Is healing that occurs through a traditional method not a positive outcome? Why should people who perform healing based on the cultural elements be stopped? It is clear that for a person that is called by Christ to do his will, his/her culture is called upon by Christ to die to everything that is opposed to the ultimate good of humanity.

The present tension between Christian theology and African theology would have been avoided if some African traditions like prayer were inculturated and became part of Christianity especially because the traditional faith of the African was centred on the value of life, of the solidarity and of respect for the elders. Africans prayed to God the Creator (*Umvelinqangi*) in a unique way when Christianity came. The Son ship of Jesus would be easily introduced in to prayer. Africans believe in the heritage of sons after their fathers. The destruction of African tradition with the intention of Christianizing African people only led to pretence. Without grasping the Christ of the Whites, they pretended to be Christians. They failed to divorce themselves from their traditions which were good and life giving.

This pretence has gone a long way and has become a lifestyle for some Africans in their Christian life. One of the Bishops asked in his unpublished paper the following questions pertaining to the African priests who believe in themselves to have healing powers from their family background as in the case of *ubungoma* “What happens to the Biblical and theological foundation of the Christian faith? What happens to the power of the Gospel in their ministry” (Nxumalo 2009: 5) It is easy to answer these questions if one remembers that the instruction to read the Bible was never part of the Catholics until recently. If it was, there would be no problem with healing as it is today, since the Bible is full of Jesus’ healing stories. The Bishops know that Christ in his love can use anything to reach out to people and even the

ancestors can be empowered by Jesus' word through anybody to do Christ's will. There would be no question of who heals? Or what heals? With Christ there is no law above love. Christ puts persons first and law in the end. The Bible is a tradition. It derives from the oral stories passed on about people's lives. It is an inculturated book that is often separated the material from the spirit and yet Africans are known for their holistic view of life. People are formed by their different cultures and yet Christ remains the same in all cultures.

7.3.6 One ministry of evangelisation but different ideas

The priest that I interviewed remarked in relation to the Bishops' statement that the "Bishops do not know what they talk about. I suggest that they read the apostolic letter *Maximum Illud* issued by Pope Benedict XV, dated 30 November 1919 they can understand the call that has been preached by this Pope." This is the Pope who was preoccupied with the training of indigenous priests. He called them forth to take the responsibility for the running of their own local church. The local priests are called to minister to their own people in their own language and culture as Christ did. People need to be challenged by the Gospel in to living their Christian lives under any circumstances. The only people who can manage to challenge them are the people of their own, who know their culture.

This priest does not see anything wrong with the priests who try to understand their parishioners in their problems as long as the faithful in their faith in Christ get healed.

From the readings, interviews and my background as a Zulu woman and a Catholic I assert that there is much to be done in the Catholic Church to open the doors for the Zulus to enter to the reality of the present of the Word of God in their lives if they would be called Christians. The Church has a challenge to preach the truth about Christ. Who is Christ in the daily lives of the Zulus? It appears as if the Church has failed to evangelize the Zulus. Until Africans are introduced to the Jesus of Africa, they will always live the double lives of differentiating the Christianity from their Zuluness. The Church is celebrating fifty years after the Second Vatican Council where the doors were open for people to feel at home in the Roman Catholic Church and the term inculturation came into existence. This happened so that the word of God is born into the cultures of the people of God. Are the Zulus in the diocese of Mariannhill experiencing inculturation in terms of healing?

7.4 Critique of the Bishops' Statement

The Bishops emphasized that Christ alone can give total healing. He told us: “You can do nothing without me” (Jn 15:15). It is through Jesus that people are healed. This is evident in the scriptures: “Peter said, “I have neither silver nor gold, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, (rise and) walk.” Then Peter took him by the right hand and raised him up, and immediately his feet and ankles grew strong. (Acts 3: 6 – 7). Peter did not promise to heal the man through his own power but he did it in the name of Jesus Christ. This is true for the Catholic traditional healers who understand their gift of healing as from Jesus Christ whom they ask when they pray for their clients. I agree with the Bishops in their saying that only Christ can give total healing. Medical remedies and hospitalisation are means to be used but their power is limited. The healing of Jesus Christ is the one that saves.

The Bishops have taken a decision for the priests and religious who heal people to stop doing it by writing in their statement that “Priests and religious desist from *ubungoma* practices involving spirits, and channel their ministries of healing through the sacraments and sacramental of the Church” (SACBC Resolution 2.5.2). The problem with this resolution is that it does not state the kind of the spirits they speak about because there are saints that the Church venerates who are known by their healing powers. The priest that I interviewed prays for people diagnosed with cancer and undiagnosed lumps every Wednesdays. He uses the prayers of Mary of the green scapular and St. Peregrine. He concludes his sessions with the Holy Mass. Because this priest has faith in Jesus who heals his people through these saints, and through the holy Mass his clients get healed. He supplies them with pamphlets to pray at their homes. He encourages his clients to have faith in Jesus Christ while he prays with and for them.

This priest indeed practices his ministry involving spirits and the sacrament of healing and holy Mass. People call him a healer. He does not like the title given to him by the people but people call him by what they see happening to them through him. How do we interpret his healing services? Is this an *ubungoma* according to the Bishops? Must he stop these sessions because he involves the spirits of the saints in which he believes they are used by Christ?

The Bishops are concerned with the doctrines and dogmas as they state that “They (priests) receive authority and power from the Church and not from undergoing a ritual to become a

diviner – healer” the claim to a double source of power and authority confuses Christians and undermines the image of the priest because the one contradicts the other”(SACBC 2.5.2.1)

This is not true for the indigenous clergy who understands the local culture. Priests are Christians. Priests believe in the healing power of Jesus Christ. People get healed especially if they are Christians from calling upon of the name of God in Jesus Christ and they are convinced that Christ the healer is at work with the priest in all that he does for them. This alone raise hopes for the sick. People are very conscious about the healing in prayer to God through Jesus Christ.

I disagree that the assumption that the bishops make that they claim to a double source of power. In my interviews I did not hear this understanding. It all depends on the priest’s faith in Jesus Christ and the faith of the sick in Jesus Christ. The explanation that was given to me by the priest I interviewed excluded all what I call assumptions in the bishops’ statement. I conclude that the research that was done by the Bishops about the issue of *ubungoma* was insufficient.

According to the priest I interviewed, it is not true that the sacrament of the sick pales into insignificance in the eyes of the afflicted because faith in Jesus Christ does not play any role, at least not in his parish. The Catechist knocks at his door anytime for the anointing of the sick. “I do not know where the Bishops got this information from” he said.

7.5 Creation and “powers”

7.5.1 Objects or materials with power in themselves

There are plants that have powers in themselves. In the village where I grew up, there was a plant called *Ulovane*. Without seeing it, the wind from its direction would cause the inflammation of the eyes. In no time the eyes would be tearful and closed. It had its own power to harm. It is not uncommon to hear one requesting the uprooting of a plant in the yard for the same reason that it will have a negative effect to the lives of the residents if it grows.

Powers like these are natural to that particular tree or plant. In as much as these plants have harmful or dangerous powers, there are other trees and plants which in themselves have healing powers. These are the plants that are normally used by the traditional healers in their ministry. By the power of the plant itself they heal. What is needed is knowledge of these plants. Normally this knowledge is inherited as I have heard from my interviews. These plants and trees are dangerous because they can kill. Although these plants have the powers

but the word spoken upon them plays a very important role for them to act. They act according to the intention of the user. I presume that healers are healers only if they use their gift to heal.

7.5.2 Material or object “empowered”

Water is neutral by its nature. For water to work for healing or for any other results it has to be blessed. This gesture empowers water to work for one’s intention. Priests bless water to get rid of the evil spirits at homes and anywhere else by sprinkling, drinking or washing. There are many other materials that are empowered for one or two reasons. In the Church there are sacraments and sacramentals. These objects and materials are empowered by the priest with his word for them to be effective in whatever use they are needed for. Ashes, oils, salt, candles, rosaries and anything to be used for religious purposes are empowered in order to be effective in their use.

7.5.3 Persons “empowered” by God through Jesus Christ in faith

Power in the human person depends in his /her encounter with Jesus Christ “The Power”. This is clearly demonstrated by the disciples to Emmaus. They were powerless, afraid, and distressed. It was only after meeting Jesus that they were empowered and regained the strength to go back home and report the good news of their meeting the Lord to others. Therefore, since the revelation of Jesus Christ as the divine envoy it has become standard that for anything to work in the process of healing and advancing human life and its processes, Jesus’ power is needed. It is through faith in this Jesus that Traditional Catholics of Mariannahill claim to possess and use the gift of healing effectively.

7.5.4 The role of a priest

“Priests should not be *sangomas*” (SACBC 2006: 2) was one of the requests in the bishops’ statement. The great concern of the Bishops is the term ‘*sangoma*’. Since the term *isangoma* has been already defined, one would be interested to know whether the bishops would still maintain their stance that some priests and religious are operating as *sangomas*. Again, now that the writer has contended that in view of God using certain people towards his creative and redemptive purpose there can be such people as *sangomas* working through the divine power, it may be very interesting to know whether the Bishops will maintain their stance that *izangoma* are generally using other powers other than God’s. A priest is empowered by Jesus Christ to heal through the Church. Jesus Christ heals in the Holy Mass which the priest

celebrates. *Izangoma* use the mediums. He/she uses words to empower the medium. The medium can be the bones, the root, the leaves and any other created objects. The ancestors as spirits act as mediums. These spirits are allowed by God to help the people through the *isangoma* as God did with Moses. A chosen person in the family or in the village and in the society can be allowed by God to heal. The general understanding of the powers to heal is that they are given by God the author of life to those concerned. All mediums are empowered by God to work for people. It can be roots, leaves, water, ashes and spirits. Anything that acts upon the words of someone else is a medium. The word can come in the manner of prayer or talk.

When an individual is ill, a particular kind of healing is sought. *Izangoma* and *izinyanga* are responsible for the handling of different kinds of healing in the community. The Church as the community of God that operates upon the culture of the Church is grounded on the sacraments. The faithful are the members of the community at large who have inherited the culture of the community in which they first belong before they are Christians.

7.5.5 Priests and religious in healing ministry

The priest is from the community. The other possibility with the priest is that he himself is the product of the community with a culture and of a family with these gifts. But since he is called in to the community of the Church he learns the culture of the Church as well and follows it. When the priest is ordained, he receives the authority and power from the Church to act in the name of the Christ the healer. He learns to communicate with God through Jesus Christ for healing to take place. He uses the sacraments and sacramental of the community in which he belongs as he was taught to heal. He is empowered to do the work. He in turn empowers objects and materials to heal. The priest becomes the instrument of God. How do we reconcile the *ubungoma* issue in the priest and religious with such a background? The priest who was interviewed denied the *ubungoma* initiation by the priest and religious. What happened he said is that “the healing powers manifest themselves in prayer”. The priest and the religious in their encounter with Jesus Christ in prayer do healing.

7.6 Conclusion

It is unfortunate that the Southern African Catholic Bishops produced the statement that prevented deep investigation in to the matter of *izangoma as one of the healing methods*.

Healing is one of the gifts that God through Jesus Christ and people's culture has blessed many nations. It is evident from the people who hold this gift that it is a call. The six people whom I interviewed resisted the call at first. But because it gave them no peace they ended up accepting it. Although it is a divine call it is built upon a person's culture. The Church finds it difficult to accept people with this call and has no way of handling it except to ask the people concern to desist from it. Which is the best way to handle this issue? Is it to forbid them or to intervene and see what can be done?

Chapter 8

8.1 General conclusion

This chapter is the general conclusion of the thesis. The thesis investigated the beginnings of the Mariannahill Monastery. Were there inhabitants in the land when the Trappists came? What happened to them? It was noted during the research that there was a conflict between the Trappists and the local people especially the chief. Some of the laws and expectations from the inhabitants were not accepted. This led to a division. Although the Trappists had given the people permission to stay on, Chief *Manzini* left the place for the sake of peace and went to reside at *KwaNdengezi*. Social development took place. Schools, hospitals, churches and clinics were built. Spiritual development was the priority for the Trappists.

The pressing problem was spiritual development. Although they started evangelisation, the Zulus were in favour of visiting *izangoma* (diviners) and *izinyanga* (traditional healers). They attended the church services on Sundays but for their health issues they would go to the traditional healers. This became a concern for the missionaries. The solutions for this would be getting white doctors who would be able to attend health issues for their converts. This never came and passed without complications because the priests and doctors ended up in war with the *izangoma* and *izinyanga*. There was a time when the priest and a doctor hunted the *izangoma* to kill them all. For the white doctors and some of the priests the traditional healing played the same role as witches.

I turned into the scriptures to discover the truth about the healing as an act of God. The research on scriptures pointed to Jesus as the healer. It was clear that everybody who is a Christian is called by God through Jesus Christ to heal people.

The discovery that priests and religious as well as the lay faithful use the gift of healing in many different ways created the tension in the Church. The priests and religious in particular were ordered to stop the practice of healing the people in whichever way.

According to the statement of the South African Catholic Bishops this was contradictory to the ordained and was misleading the faithful. The priests are expected to use the sacraments in healing, not other powers which according to the bishops belongs to the ancestors.

The research was limited to Catholics in the Mariannhill diocese who heal people traditionally and through prayers. In the interviews it was discovered that the Catholics believed in the presence of Jesus in their work of healing. It is in their encounter with Jesus Christ in faith that they are able to heal people. Healing, they said,, is the act of Jesus Christ. No one can claim it. They all agreed to the relationship with their ancestors. Their ancestors were *izangoma* and *izinyanga*. They believed that the gifts were inherited from them.

The outcome from the interviews pointed at the very strong belief in Jesus Christ as the traditional healer. Nothing could prevent Jesus Christ from healing the people or from attending to the needy. Jesus Christ would use anything to reach out to the sick. It does not matter whether Jesus uses the ancestors. What is important for Jesus is to touch people's lives.

The relationship between culture and Christianity could not be overlooked. If faith had to be strong, it needed a firm background of culture. Culture plays a very big role in forming and developing a person before a person becomes a Christian he/she is a human being born in a culture. The chapters below give the light of what each chapter discusses.

8.2 Summary of chapters

Chapter one dealt with the research area, methodology and the position of Christ in African Catholic healing ministries It includes the history of the area before the arrival of the Trappists who later became missionaries.

Chapter two discussed the situation after the arrival of the Trappists. Before anything could take place, acquiring land was the priority for the Trappists in order to build the Monastery. The plot was bought from the Government which was occupied by the blacks. *Manzini* was in charge of the plot as he was an *induna*.

Chapter three discussed the issue of *izangoma* and *izinyanga* who practised traditional healing in the area of Mariannhill and the introduction of Western medicine by the Mariannhill priests.

Chapter four discussed healing in the Scriptures. According to the scriptures God is the source of all powers, including healing. In this case nothing can happen outside the power of

God including healing. It is for this reason that God sent Jesus with the mission of healing. Jesus is the healing power of God.

Chapter five focused on the interviews which were the necessary tool for this thesis. *Izangoma*, *izinyanga* and *abathandazi* talked from their own experiences about their call to healing ministries. All admitted the power of Jesus Christ is behind their gift. My interviews were limited to the Catholics of Mariannhill diocese.

Chapter six. This chapter analysed the content of the interviews. All those who were interviewed stressed that no one can attend to the sick successfully if she/he is not sent by God through Jesus Christ to do so. These Catholics believed in the reality of the ancestors as part of their work because while they were still alive they specialised in the healing services but what they emphasized is faith in Jesus Christ the Healer.

Chapter seven discussed theological and cultural issues in the research. It was shown that the healing ministry in the Catholic Church faces a dilemma because of the relation between faith and culture. It is in the understanding that traditional religion and culture can be seen as the way of life that bonded together with Christian religion.

Chapter eight summarised all seven chapters

8.3 Topic for further research

From this research I suggest that this area needed further study: The blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross as salvific mystery versus bloodshed in everyday celebrations in African culture.

APPENDIX 1

Ancestor Religion and the Christian Faith

Pastoral Statement of the

South African Catholic Bishops' Conference

11 August 2006

There are Catholic Christians who search for healing from traditional healers. Some Catholic priests act as sangomas and call on the ancestors for healing.

We Bishops deeply feel with people who suffer from grave and painful sickness. We understand their desperate search for healing.

However we should remember that we need more than healing of the body. We need healing of body and soul, healing which brings us eternal health, eternal life and happiness. We need total healing.

This total healing Christ alone can give. He told us: "You can do nothing without me." (Jn 15:15)

Christ is our great Healer who wants to heal people – more than the healing for which they yearn. He wants to share with us everlasting life and never ending health.

Before Jesus healed the paralyzed man who had been lowered through the roof, he said to him:

"My son, your sins are forgiven." (Mk. 2:5)

In other words Jesus was announcing the good news: I heal you from within. I heal you totally. I give you what no doctor can give. I give you health and life everything. Only then did Jesus give the man the order: "Get up, pick up your mat and walk." (Mk 2:9)

On the other hand traditional healers put their total trust in ancestors equating them with Christ or leaving no place for Christ. In doing so, they look at ancestors as being more than creatures of God. Whereas our Christian faith acknowledges that ancestors live only because God holds them in his hands. Without God our ancestors are powerless.

Therefore with regard to priests who practise ubuNgoma, we your bishops, have taken the following decision that:

Priests and religious desist from ubuNgoma practices involving spirits, and channel their ministries of healing through the sacraments and sacraments of the Church.

(Resolution of the August 2006 Plenary Session of the SACBC. Resolution 2.5.2)

We notice with a measure of concern, that many African Christians, during difficult moments in their lives, resort to practices of the traditional religion: the intervention of ancestral spirits, the engagement of spirit-mediums, spirit-possession, consulting diviners about lost items and about the future, magical practices and identifying (smelling out) one's enemies, etc. Fear of the spirit world has become intensified instead of the love of the ever-merciful God definitely revealed by Christ through his death and resurrection. What is even more disturbing is the fact that some priests and religious (and lay people from other professions; teachers, doctors, nurses, etc) have resorted to becoming diviner-healers.

It is against this unsettling background that we, the Bishops, have decided to issue this pastoral statement in order to present anew the teaching of the Catholic Church and to renounce those aspects of culture that contradict the message of the Gospel, perpetuate fear in human hearts and undermine the centrality of Christ in our Christian faith.

1. Priests should not be sangomas

Christ, whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world (see Jn 10:36), through his apostles has made their successors, the bishops, shares in his consecration and mission. They in turn have lawfully handed on to different individuals in the Church in varying degrees a participation in this ministry. Thus the divinely established ecclesiastical ministry is exercised at different levels by those who from antiquity have been called bishops, priests, and deacons.

Priests act in the person of Christ and not in the persons of their ancestral spirits. They receive authority and power from the church and not from undergoing a ritual to become a diviner-healer. The claim to a double source of power and authority confuses Christians and undermines the image of the priest because the one contradicts the other.

By virtue of the sacrament of orders, in the image of Christ the eternal High Priest (see Heb 5:1-10, 7:24, 9:11-28), they are consecrated to preach the Gospel, to shepherd the faithful, and to celebrate divine worship as true priests of the New Testament. Partakers of the function of Christ, the sole Mediator (see 1 Tim 2:5), at their own level of ministry they announce the divine word to all. They exercise their sacred function above all in the Eucharistic worship or celebration of Mass, by which, acting in the person of Christ and proclaiming his ministry, they unite the prayers of the faithful with the sacrifice of their Head until the Lord's coming (see 2 Cor 11:26) make present again and apply in the sacrifice of the Mass the single sacrifice of the New Testament, namely, that of Christ offering himself once

to the Father as spotless victim (see Heb 9:11-28). For the repentant and the sick among the faithful they exercise the ministry of reconciliation and alleviation and they present the needs and the prayers of the faithful to God the Father (see Heb 5:1-3). Exercising within the limits of their authority the function of Christ as shepherd and Head, they gather together God's family as a community all of one mind, and lead them in the Spirit, through Christ, to God the Father. In the midst of the flock they adore him in spirit and in truth (see Jn 4:24). Finally, they labour in word and teaching (see Tim 5:17), believing what they have read meditatively in the Law of God, teaching what they have believed, and putting into practice in their own lives what they have taught.

2. It is God who heals

Indigenous religious belief attributes the power of healing to ancestral spirits. In this context, the sacrament of the sick pales into insignificance in the eyes of the afflicted because faith in Jesus Christ does not play any role; rather it is the belief in the good disposition of the ancestors. This practice and belief therefore contradicts the teaching of the church on healing.

The Lord himself showed great concern for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick and commanded his followers to do likewise. This is clear from the Gospels, and above all from the existence of the sacrament of anointing, which he instituted and which is made known in the Letter of James. Since then the Church has never ceased to celebrate this sacrament for its members by the anointing and the prayer of its priests, commending those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them (see James 5:14-16). Moreover, the Church exhorts them to associate themselves willingly with the passion and death of Christ (see Rom 8:27), and thus contribute to the welfare of the people of God.

Those who are seriously ill need the special help of God's grace in this time of anxiety, lest they be broken in spirit and, under the pressure of temptation perhaps weakened in their faith. Above all this faith must be made actual both in the minister of the sacrament and, even more importantly, in the recipient. The sick people will be saved by personal faith and the faith of the Church, which looks back to the death and resurrection of Christ, the source of the sacrament's power (see Jas 5:15), and looks ahead to the future kingdom that is pledged in the sacraments.

This is why, through the sacrament of anointing, Christ strengthens the faithful who are afflicted by illness, providing them with the strongest means of support.

The celebration of this sacrament consists especially in the laying on of hands by the priests of the Church, offering of the prayer of faith, and the anointing of the sick with oil made holy by God's blessing. This rite signifies the grace of the sacrament and confers it.

3. Only ONE God

The belief that ancestors are endowed with supernatural powers borders on idolatry. It is God, and God alone who is all-powerful while the ancestors are created by him. They can only be helpful to us by interceding for us. When we speak of ancestors or of saints, we should therefore use the phrase "pray for us" and not "do this for us".

The first commandment forbids honouring gods other than the one Lord who has revealed himself to his people. It proscribes superstition and irreligion. Superstition in some sense represents a perverse excess of religion; irreligion is the vice contrary by defect to the virtue of religion.

4. We venerate ancestors; we do not adore them

Ancestor veneration suggests that ancestors are some sort of divinities – even if some people may suggest otherwise. In practice, among Christians who also embrace traditional beliefs, there is no doubt that ancestral spirits enjoy more recognition than Jesus Christ. It is therefore misleading if in Church meetings the ancestors are accredited with power greater or equivalent of Jesus. Those who lead Christian prayer should always attribute all power to God alone.

In local cultures superstition abounds. This is also so when people have not purified their faith in Christ to the extent that they are able to pray "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done ..." in the full acceptance of the supreme power of God who is without rival.

Christian rituals are only fruitful when they are followed by personal conviction. Traditional cultures do not demand the same interior disposition towards Christ and it is therefore a disservice to the evangelising mission of the Church if a priest or minister enrolled in the service of the Church also practices out of convictions not integrated into the Christian faith.

5. NO to fortune telling

God can reveal the future to his prophets or to other saints. Still, a sound Christian attitude consists in putting oneself confidently into the hands of Providence for whatever concerns the

future, and giving up all unhealthy curiosity about it. Improvidence, however, can constitute a lack of responsibility.

All forms of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satan or demons, conjuring up the dead or other practices falsely supposed to “unveil” the future. Consulting horoscopes, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots, the phenomena of clairvoyance, and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history and, in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honour, respect and loving fear that we owe to God alone.

6. NO to witchcraft

All practices of *magic* or *sorcery*, by which one attempts to tame occult powers, so as to place them at one’s service and have a supernatural power over others – even if this were for the sake of restoring their health – are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion. These practices are even more to be condemned when accompanied by the intention of harming someone, or when they have recourse to the intervention of demons. Wearing charms is also reprehensible. Spiritism often implies divination or magical practices; the Church for her part warns the faithful against it. Recourse to so-called traditional cures does not justify either the innovation of evil powers, or the exploitation of another’s credulity.

7. NO to simony

Simony is defined as the buying or selling of spiritual things. To Simon the magician, who wanted to buy the spiritual power he saw at work in the apostles, St. Peter responded: Your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God’s gift with money!” Peter thus held to the words of Jesus: “You received without pay, give without pay.” It is impossible to appropriate to oneself spiritual goods and behave towards them as their owner or master, for they have their source in God. One can receive them only from him, without payment.

8. Ancestors are with God but do not have God’s power

A person’s deceased parents and grandparents are his or her ancestors. There is no basis for the claim that one’s deceased forebears gain enhanced supernatural power as a result of

death. The traditional African conception of personhood suggests that a person's body is porous and that the self can therefore be permeated by another person-like being. Thus an ancestral spirit can reside in the body of a descendent and through the descendent perform powerful deeds. Hence the claim that is made the possessed is empowered with the faculty to predict, divine and heal. The claim that descendants can be endowed with such mysterious and uncanny power is problematic but so too the claim that death enhances the power of the dead.

Christianity teaches that filial piety imposes a duty on the descendants to pray and make offerings on behalf of their deceased parents. They too are in need of God's mercy in order to enter into communion with God.

9. Herbs Yes, magic medicines No.

The use of traditional herbal medicines and the eradication of disease is not at issue. What is unacceptable is the use of magic, charms and recourse to ancestral spirits in rituals of healings.

10. Many live in God's presence – but NOBODY is like GOD

Article 11 of the Apostles' Creed states: "I believe in the resurrection of the body". The Catechism says "Nourished with his body in the Eucharist, we already belong to the body of Christ. For those believers who die in Christ's grace, it is a participation in the death of the Lord, so that they can also share in his Resurrection".

The new Testament affirms "that each will be awarded immediately after death in accordance with his works of faith. The Church urges believers to work of faith. The Church urges believers to work of charity and penance on behalf of the dead.

We pray for the purification of our ancestors.

All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified are indeed assured of their eternal salvation ; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.

This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: “Therefore (Judas Maccabeus) made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin. From the beginning the Church has honoured the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for the, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The church also commends almsgiving, indulgences and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job’s sons were purified by their father’s sacrifice, why should we doubt that our sufferings for the dead bring them consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer prayers for them.

5

12. We pray for our ancestors.

Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They like God for ever, for they “see him as he is, “ face to face.

13. All should long for heaven – no one should fear hell

This perfect life with the Most Holy Trinity – this communion of life and love with the Trinity, with the Virgin Mary, the angles and all the blessed – is called “heaven.” Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.

We pray for our ancestors that they too may be called to God’s grace and friendship.

4 cf. ibid. 2115 & 2116

5 cf. ibid. 2117

6 cf. ibid. 2121

7 cf. ibid 2214-2220

8 cf. ibid. 1003-1009

9 cf. ibid.1021

10 cf. ibid. 1013

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW (ZULU AND ENGLISH)

Questions to ask from a practising *isangoma* and *Inyanga*.

1. When did you realise that you have healing “powers”?

Waqala nini ukubona ukuthi unamandla okwelapha?

2. How old were you when it started?

Wawuneminyaka emingaki?

3. How did it start?

Kwaqala kanjani?

4. Were you already a Catholic when it started?

WawusuyiKhatholika siqala lesi siphopho?

5. What is your experience in healing people?

Ikuphi osukubonile ekwelapheni abantu?

6. Who had these powers in the family?

Ubani owayenalamandla emndenini?

7. If there is one, did you work with him or her at your early age?

Wasebenza naye ebunganeni bakho?

8. Where do you meet people?

Ubabonelaphi abantu?

9. What is your belief in these powers?

Iyiphi inkolelo yakho ngalamandla?

10. Where is Jesus Christ in your healing?

Umbekaphi uJesu ekwelapheni kwakho?

11. *What do the sacraments of reconciliation and of anointing mean to you as a Catholic and a healer?*

Asho ukuthini kuwena lama Sakramente:Lempenduko nelomgcobo?

12. Do you experience any conflict of your healing powers with the teaching of the Catholic Church?

Usuke wahlangabezana nenkinga nemfundiso yebandla eliKhatholika ngalamandla?

13. Do you sometimes get tempted to leave the Church over the issue of your healing powers?

Uke ufikelwe isilingo sokushiya iBandla eliKhatholika ngenxa yalamandla onawo ekwelapheni?

14. Where do you draw strength that what you are doing as *aisangoma*, *inyanga* is right before God?

Uwatholaphi amandla nesiqiniseko sokuthi njengoba uyisangoma, uyinyanga uyiKhatholika futhi loku okwenzayokuyamjabulisa uNkulunkulu?

These questions are directed to the *umthandazi* (The one who prays)

1. How old were you when you discovered that you had “power” of healing through prayer?

Wawuneminyaka emingaki uthola ukuthi unamandla okwelapha ngomkhuleko?

2. What do you use in your procedures?

Usebenzisani uma ubona abantu?

3. What is your experience when you heal people?

Ubonani kulo msebenzi wakho?

4. Where is Jesus Christ in your healing ?

Ukuphi uJesu emsebenzini wakho?

5. Have you experienced any conflict between your experience of healing and the teaching of the Catholic Church

Usuke wahlangabezana nenkinga kulo msebenzi wokwelapha nemfundiso yeBandla eliKhatholika?

6. Have you experienced any conflict between your experience of healing and the Bible?

Usuke wahlangabezana nenkinga kulo msebenzi wokwelapha ngokweBhayibheli?

7. Are you comfortable in the Church as a Catholic with these powers?

Ukhululekile ebandleni eliKhatholika nalamandla?

8. Do you sometimes feel tempted to leave the Catholic Church over the issue of your healing powers?

Uke ufikelwe isilingo sokulishiya iBandla eliKhatholika?

9. Where is the place of Christ in your work?

Umbekephi uKristo kulo msebenzi wakho?

10. What meaning do the sacraments of anointing and reconciliation have for you as a healer?

Asho ukuthini kuwena lama Sakramente: Lempenduko nelomgcobo wabagulayo?

1. Why do the bishops have the impression that there is no space for Christ in traditional healing?

Ingani ababhisobhi becabanga ukuthi uKristo akanandawo kubelaphi bendabuko?

2. Why do the bishops think that traditional healers are equating Christ with Ancestors?

Kungani ababhisobhi becabanga ukuthi abalaphi bendabuko balinganisa uJesu namadlozi?

APPENDIX 3

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

- *Isangoma* One (Male diviner). 20 May 2010. Mpola
- *Isangoma* Two (Female diviner)18 August. 2010. Mpendle
- *Inyanga* One (Male traditional healer) 29 April 2011. Kvelaer Mission.
- *Inyanga* Two (Female traditional healer) 30. April 2011, Umzinto Township.
- *Umthandazi* One (Female Faith healer). 21 July, 2011. Himmelberg Mission.
- *Umthandazi* Two (Male Faith Healer). 30 July 2011. Mariannahill
- The Priest,13 March. 2011. His Parish
- The Bishop, July 28, 2012 Mariannahill

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