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**THE INFLUENCE OF NUMINOUS POWER IN THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL  
RELIGION AND THE ZIONIST CHURCHES IN SOWETO — A COMPARATIVE  
STUDY**

by

**SELLO ISAIAH MABOEA**

Registration No. 9707428

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Promoter: Professor IA Phiri  
Professor GC Oosthuizen

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## FOREWORD

This thesis is the result of much soul-searching and personal concern about the source of the dynamic growth of the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC) that is basically ascribed to the power of the Holy Spirit. The historical churches cannot remain unaffected by this rapid growth and progress while they continue to lose members to the ZCC. This challenges the historical churches more than ever to take account of this dynamic force in the ZCC. Historical or mainline churches refers to those churches who were initiated by the missionaries or follow the Western, individualistic approach in their ministry. According to Makhubu (1988:24), in these churches the church leaders promote and teach White civilisation.

It is the researcher's observation that the ZCC has learned to understand the influence of numinous power as defined in the Scriptures and to apply the biblical message holistically to society. Consequently, the gospel message would appear to address the basic needs of the Zionist community adequately.

This topic was chosen from the conviction that not all the members of the so-called historical churches have discovered the implications of a holistic gospel that is all embracing. The reader has to understand the concept of numinous power as explained in the gospel and its holistic dimension and its implication for the life of a believer. In the typography approach of the AICs the gospel message addresses all a person's needs. The gospel speaks to a person's spiritual and physical ailments. This approach makes sense to Africans. Churches which value Western ideology and scholarship often undermine African culture and heritage (Oosthuizen 1997:8).

An area that has made the ZCC popular and attractive to people, including many from the historical churches, is healing ministry. This issue is dealt with at length in this study. The intention is to demonstrate how through healing services the ZCC wins more members by presenting a holistic dimension of the numinous power of God in the name of Jesus.

This study is intended to serve as a guideline to most of the so-called historical churches, who

seem to have fallen victim to a misinterpretation of the concept of numinous power as perceived by Africans and to their unholistic approach in presenting the gospel message. These churches can learn from the ZCC and adapt their presentation to the context of the receiver so that they become relevant to those whom they serve. A comparison of the influence of numinous power in the African traditional religion and in the ZCC should serve as motivation for the historical churches' approach to and understanding of God's numinous power in motion.





## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used in this thesis:

ZCC = Zionist Christian Church

AIC = African Independent/Indigenous Church

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 SUPERNATURAL POWER

Traditional African life is void and meaningless without the presence of the ancestors and supernatural power. The concept of numinous power, life force, in African traditional religion and its role in and influence on the ZCC can no longer be ignored or overlooked by the Christian community. This continuous urgent yearning for more power to cope with life calls for in-depth research on the concept of numinous power in African traditional religion and the ZCC. Commenting on the indispensable role of numinous power among Africans, Anderson (1990:67-68) says, "All people need the power to become. Without power, life cannot become what it must be ... power is basic to life."

The purpose of this thesis is to affirm that numinous power, life or vital force from God or the Holy Spirit, has more than just spiritual significance. It is the very dynamism required by all Africans for their survival. This thesis will indicate that the power of the Holy Spirit also has to do with the dignity, problems and, in particular, the often threatening magical forces which are so real to Africans.

Although traditionally the ancestors were not worshipped but respected, they occupied and still occupy a central place in the traditional African community because of their judicial, sociological and metaphysical significance. The ancestors do not merely survive but take an active part in the affairs of the living. According to African tradition, the ancestors determine the destiny and influence the life of the living. They protect and watch over the living. Because of their metaphysical power and their symbiotic relationship with their descendants, ancestors are described as guardians of the living (Oosthuizen 1992:66).

According to *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (1981:989), the word "numen" (from the Latin: a nod, command, divine will, power or being) means "divine power

or spirit; a deity, esp. one presiding locally or believed to inhabit a particular object" and "numinous" means "spiritual or supernatural; mysterious; arousing one's elevated feelings of duty, honour, loyalty, etc.". Otto used "numen" and "numinous" to mean "wholly the other" and to express mysterious power. Otto used "mysterious power" to emphasise a person's subjective feeling as something that leads to the state of empowerment (i.e., possessing power). His emphasis was always on the objective reference and on the subjective feeling only as the indispensable clue to this power. Many theologians, however, accepted the word "numinous" in a Christian context and as a positive contribution to the theological vocabulary. It represented that aspect of deity which transcends or eludes comprehension in rational terms thus numinous received a meaning of power rather than a feeling in the Christian community (Otto 1975:16-17 and 29).

Given that the concept of power forms the basis of belief, worship and expression among African society, a survey became necessary for a better understanding of this power and its influence in the ZCC in Soweto. The dynamic growth rate of the African Independent Churches (AIC) in South Africa, of which the ZCC forms the biggest part, which is basically ascribed to the work of numinous power, the Holy Spirit, makes this research indispensable. In this study, both terms AIC and ZCC are used, but the research itself concentrated mainly on the ZCC.

A general criticism of the ZCC by the historical churches concerns their concept of the power of the Holy Spirit. Tempels gives more insight into the African concept of power when he refers to it as "life force" or "vital force" and explains,

Supreme happiness, the only kind of blessing, is, to the Bantu, to possess the greatest vital force, the worst misfortune, and in very truth the only misfortune, is ... a diminution of this power (Tempels 1952:32).

This statement of Tempels is relevant to the African concept of numinous power because African traditional behaviour is centred on a single value, that of acquiring more power or strength to ensure perpetual security and success. According to traditional African belief,

people's life and existence are inseparable from their power. Based on this concept of power, whenever trouble arises, Africans consult traditional healers, specialists in the spirit world, for solutions. African traditionalists believe that unseen evil forces are responsible for bad relationships and abnormal situations in the community. They also hold that to normalise an abnormal situation, these evil powers need to be counteracted with a more powerful force. For this reason, traditional Africans turn to the diviners, who are believed to be able to diagnose the cause of the affliction and to prescribe the relevant medication. As Anderson (1990:67) points out, the traditional African community respect traditional healers very much because of the role they play in African society.

To protect and safeguard the afflicted, traditional healers also provide medicines which are meant to counteract further attacks by mystical evil powers. Tragically, the western-oriented churches offer no relevant alternative solution for these basic and real problems and fears encountered by many Africans. The researcher is firmly convinced that there is a need for the historic churches to learn about the operation of numinous power, the power of the Holy Spirit, as understood, accepted, practised and expressed on a daily basis in the ZCC. Moreover, it is the researcher's belief that the power of the Holy Spirit as contextualised in African life by the ZCC projects a dynamic Christianity which meets the very basic needs of most Africans. Therefore, it is essential for modern theologians to attempt to grasp more clearly the concept of numinous power in African context.

The African traditional concept of numinous power was that supernatural power comes from the Supreme Being. Tempels (1952:22) confirms this when he says that it was discovered that primitive people originally believed in and worshipped the Supreme Being, "the Creative Spirit". Makhubu (1988:28) adds that when the missionaries came with the gospel, the blacks knew and worshipped God, not the ancestors, but the only true living God.

The African Traditional world-view distinguishes three sources of the manifestation of power: the ancestors, traditional healers or diviners, and medicines and herbs. The ancestors are described as the most powerful. As such, traditional African religion holds that sacrifice to the ancestors is necessary for their blessing. The second category is traditional healers or diviners. They occupy a prominent position in the traditional African community because of



their personal involvement with the daily happenings in people's lives, and they are consulted for solutions to any adversity affecting members of the community. Medicines and herbs are considered the third major manifestation of power in African traditional religion. Traditional healers prescribe medicines for patients to counteract the evil powers responsible for the illness. Medicines heal and strengthen the afflicted because of the power in them.

However, both traditional and non-traditional Africans maintain that all three manifestations of numinous power originate from the Supreme God (Tempels 1952:24).

## 1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The growth rate of the ZCC in South Africa is much higher than that of the so-called historical or mainline churches. One reason given for this is the ZCC's correlation with African traditional religion. We are living in a climate of tension which is affecting our country and there is an urgent need for more power to cope and survive. Anderson (1990:67) emphasises the urgency of understanding the influence of this power in the lives of Africans when he says that power is basic to life.

This study examines numinous power as understood in African traditional religion and its influence on the ZCC in the light of God as the Supreme Being and the power of the Holy Spirit as explained in the Bible (Acts 1:8). As the ancestors still occupy a central place in the lives of the African community because of their judicial, sociological and metaphysical significance, knowledge of their role in the ZCC is important. The influence of numinous power and ancestral power is also examined. There is a need to know which power existed first and from whom it came. Can the historical churches learn something from the ZCC? Considering the significant service the ZCC renders to the African community by meeting their basic needs and its rapid growth rate, one wonders whether these churches still fall outside the historical churches and whether the ZCC are still the objects of the mission churches (Makhubu 1988:77)?

### 1.3 RESEARCH METHOD

This study falls mainly in the field of history of religions. The comparative method was used to study the influence of numinous power and understand the development of the ZCC in its social and political context. An historical approach was necessary because the ZCC must be studied within the wider developments in political, religious and social structures, most of which were oral reports.

Use was made of secondary material. Relevant information was obtained by means of a structured questionnaire and two hundred and two personal interviews. A copy of the questionnaire is attached at the end of this thesis after the bibliography. The respondents were religious leaders, theological institute leaders, executive church council members and a cross-section of ZCC members. Differences and similarities in the influence of numinous power in traditional religion and the ZCC were compared to determine whether the ZCC's approach to the gospel message to society is holistic or not.

### 1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The researcher is of the opinion that numinous power and traditional African religion still play a vital role in the ZCC as seen in ZCC church services and prayer meetings. The researcher wished (1) to clarify the concept of numinous power as manifested in the ZCC in the light of the Bible, (2) to discover the difference in the concept of numinous power in African traditional religion and the ZCC, and (3) to find out what the historical churches could learn from the ZCC that could accelerate their growth.

Accordingly, the study aims to

- examine how the ZCC understands the influence of numinous power as practised in traditional religion and how this influence affects ZCC members
- find out whether numinous power originates from the Supreme Being or from the spirit world
- examine how the influence of numinous power as practised in the healing

ministries of the ZCC contributes to its dynamic growth

- examine the relationship between numinous power and death in traditional religion and in the ZCC

The findings of this study are expected to make a valuable contribution to the historical churches' understanding of the role of numinous power as experienced in the ZCC.

## 1.5 PROBLEMS

Several problems were encountered during the study. Not all the people interviewed cooperated with the researcher's requests even though he tried to explain the purpose of the study. Ninety-five percent of the respondents were cooperative and helpful, however. It appeared that some people were afraid of being arrested after giving the required information. Some interviewees found certain questions too sensitive or personal and did not respond fully. Some people seemed to view the researcher with suspicion because of the nature of the study and also the fact that he is a minister of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, a sister church of the Dutch Reformed Church — one of the so-called historical churches. In some instances, then, the researcher had to declare his bona fides.

Difficulty was also experienced with arranging interviews with church leaders. On several occasions interviews had to be postponed and rescheduled, which proved very time consuming.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE RISE AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE AIC MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA: ORIGIN AND FACTORS LEADING TO SECESSION

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The African Independent/Indigenous Church (AIC) movement in South Africa basically resulted from an attempt by Black Christians to gain ecclesiastical and theological autonomy from the white mission churches. These churches have been criticised by the left wing for being apolitical and by the right wing for being political. Both these criticisms reflect a lack of understanding of the complexity of the plethora of AIC in South Africa. In this way, the values and perspectives of black Christians were being affected by ignorance (Oosthuizen 1997:8). The sprouting of this movement was often a response to the deprivation and alienation caused to people by discrimination (Sundkler 1976:38).

According to Sundkler (1976:38), the AIC tended to emerge in urban settings as a result of socio-economic stress, which was caused by the fragmentation of Black family life, lack of decent and adequate housing and health care and a sense of personal isolation caused by a socio-political dispensation that denied Black people their fundamental rights and humanity. The AIC were also spawned in direct response to Western theologies' irrelevance to and detachment from African (Black) life, especially in the areas of material wellbeing and spiritual fulfilment (Kunnie 1994:87).

Nehemiah Tile was the first African in the history of the church in South Africa who publicly and permanently broke away from a historical church. He established the first AIC in South Africa thus pioneering a church organisation. He was criticised by Western missionaries for his strong Thembu-nationalistic sympathy in the Wesleyan Mission Church. He formed the Thembu Church with Ngengelizwe, chief of the nation, as ecclesiastical head. In 1882 Reverend Mokone, another Wesleyan Methodist minister, protested against what he called racial discrimination in the church and also resigned from the Methodist Church to lead the

Ethiopian Church. Psalm 68, verse 31: *...and Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God* was the biblical text on which the church was founded. Ethiopia symbolises the "whole of Africa, a free black Africa, liberated from colonial overlordship and to be led by the Africans themselves" (Sundkler 1976:39; Pretorius 1993:19).

Another significant figure was Dwane. Amidst tension and dissent with the AME Church, formed by the African American, Henry Turner, Dwane established the Order of Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Church was characterised by a nationalistic political fervour, articulating the slogan "Africa for the Africans", which the AME Church did not embrace. PJ Mzimba, originally of the United Free Church of Scotland, founded the African Presbyterian Church in 1898. The issue of ecclesiastical leadership, such as the position of bishop being denied to Black people by missionaries, was a major cause of dissatisfaction among Black members of White mission churches (Kunnie 1994:87-88; Sundkler 1976:41).

## 2.2 THE GROWTH OF THE AICS

In recent years the AIC movement has grown into the most dynamic church in South Africa. It is proliferating among Black South Africans, attracting adherents of traditional African religions and drawing into its fold many former members of mainline churches (ie, churches that trace their origins to Western churches and missions). In 1950, seventy-five to eighty percent of all Black South African Christians were members of the mainline churches and only twelve to fourteen percent belonged to the AIC. By 1980, only fifty-two percent of the Black Christian population belonged to mainline churches and twenty-seven percent belonged to the AIC, and by 1991, the figures were forty-one and thirty-six percent, respectively. This dramatic shift occurred despite the absence of any kind of AIC missionary programme. Members of mainline churches and traditional religions appear to be flocking to the AICs for what they are and do. If the present trends continue, by early in the twenty-first century, most black South African Christians will be members of the Zionist congregations (Oosthuizen 1997:8)

### 2.3 THE THEOLOGY AND PRACTICES OF THE AICS

There are more than 7 000 AIC churches in South Africa. Theologically, they range from evangelical to syncretistic. Some mix Christian belief with ancestor reverence and other animistic practices. Their distinguishing mark is a Christian sense of sharing and caring (Oosthuizen 1997:8). Many of these churches gather in houses, garages, shacks, shelters made of wooden boxes, under bridges or trees, or in open spaces in cities and towns. Here the spirit of the traditional extended family finds expression in an ecclesiastical context, along with the basic aspects of traditional culture and religion. During the church services what is important is not the venue, but spontaneity in worship, expression of fellowship, mutual caring and sharing of each others' problems, the healing service that provides physical and spiritual healing, and the empowerment of rituals that deal with malevolent social and spiritual forces. A spirit of belonging and feeling at home prevails at such worship services (Oosthuizen 1997:8).

### 2.4 AIC STRANDS

There are two major strands in the AIC movement in South Africa: *independent* and *indigenous*. *Independent* refers to churches that split (separated) from the Western-oriented missions and *indigenous* refers to churches initiated by Africans themselves, which never had ties with Western missions. The independent churches tend to retain some features of the churches from which they seceded and the indigenous ones are more oriented to traditional African religion (Oosthuizen 1997:8).

The AIC are also characterised by three types: Ethiopian, Zionist and Apostolic. The Ethiopian churches were inspired by Ethiopian churches in the United States of America, especially the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Nehemia Tile was the first to found an independent church. South African Ethiopian churches reacted strongly at the end of the last century to ecclesiastical colonialism; they also played a part in the formation of the African liberation movement (Oosthuizen 1997:8). The Zionist churches, the second and largest type, resulted from contact with the Christian Catholic Church based in Zion City, Illinois, USA. John Alexander Dawie founded Zion City at the turn of the century and as a Christian

"restorationist" practised divine healing for the community. The Apostolic AIC were the third type. These were initiated by John Lake and Thomas Hesmalhalch of the Apostolic Faith Movement in the United States of America. Arriving in South Africa in 1908, they established the Apostolic Faith Mission and brought with them the Pentecostal Christianity exemplified by the Azusa Street Mission of Los Angeles. Of these three movements, the Ethiopian AIC is the smallest and ecclesiastically the closest to the historical churches while the Zionist and Apostolic AICs have assimilated more of African traditional culture and religion (Kunnie 1994:88; Oosthuizen 1997:8).

The most significant aspects of the AICs are their rapid growth in membership; the dynamic force realised in their church services; their holistic approach, which takes the African context into account, and the attraction they have for African people. Their submission to the influence of the power of the Holy Spirit, which is mainly expressed in their divine healing sessions, even attracts adherents of the historical churches. The AICs are thus a dynamic movement to be reckoned with and which can no longer be overlooked by the historical churches in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **NUMINOUS POWER AND THE SUPREME BEING**

#### **3.1 NUMINOUS POWER AND TRADITIONAL RELIGION**

To Africans, power is essential and an indispensable requirement for existence. According to Anderson (1990:67), "To Africans, one's life, one's very existence — in other words, one's being is inextricably tied up with one's power. To live is to have power, to be sick or to die is to have less of it."

This power or force can be used, applied and even manipulated in various ways through agents. The following manifestations of power will be discussed: the power of the ancestors, the power of witches and sorcerers, the power of traditional healers and their medicine, and the power of God.

##### **3.1.1 The power of the ancestors**

African traditional religion maintains that the ancestors perform an important role in the life of society and the individual. They wield power in so far as they can influence the course and quality of life. "Ancestor worship of the Pedi is based on the belief that the living and the dead can mutually influence one another. The influence that the living have on the ancestors' spirits, although not great in its effect, forms the basis of all rites connected with the ancestors' spirits" (Mönnig 1955:54).

Traditionally, Africans hold that to experience good health, prosperity and success in life one needs to be subordinate to the ancestors. By doing so, one contributes to what will make life worthwhile and will enjoy success and stability. Numinous power, that is the life force required for survival, can only come from God and the way to approach God is through a mediator. African traditional religion holds that the ancestors are the only mediators with God. Appeasement of the ancestors by Africans, especially in time of trials, is done as a traditional



act so that God, the source of numinous power, may have mercy on those affected. There is nothing that numinous power cannot overcome. However, for the community to experience wellbeing, security and stability, it is imperative that the members comply with the norms and requirements. An important requirement is to maintain a sound relationship with the ancestors. Constant fulfilment of this requirement assures the blessings of family good health, good rains and harvests, and healthy livestock. The ancestors' "main desire is to be remembered by their descendants". If this is done faithfully, the ancestors will reward the living. Blessings are reckoned as signs that the ancestors are happy with the community. The ancestors must be respected, honoured and obeyed. Moreover, they must be thanked time and again through sacrifice for their blessings (Mönnig 1955:54).

Africans also believe that if proper attention is not given to the ancestors, if they are not honoured and respected or are forgotten or disregarded, they will withdraw their blessings. Those who disregard the ancestors will receive no protection and will be struck by instability, poverty and even death. Drought and other calamities will destroy their crops and they and their families may be bereft of their possessions. Africans also traditionally believe that the ancestors have more power and authority than the living. The ancestors are more feared and respected by their descendants than when they were still alive.

Traditionally, Africans know that the powers of the ancestors are limited. This is often confirmed by traditional healers when diagnosing patients or giving prescriptions. They usually tell their patients that if God so wishes, they will be cured. This expression is common to all Africans who consult traditional healers for any illness or problem. It is evident from this saying that even the traditional healers admit that power originates from God. Anderson (1991:65) confirms this when he says, "even the traditionalists know that all power comes ultimately from God".

In the African traditional community, the term "power" is associated with numinous power or life force. The fact that the ancestors are venerated, appeased and not worshipped is a confirmation of their inferior status to God, the Creator. African traditional religion believes that the ancestors' power to protect, secure and cure depends entirely on God, the source of numinous power. Unfortunately, most Western missionaries have not always understood this

African world-view and as a result categorised this numinous power as personal or impersonal. "The western approach to the African world-view has categorised 'life force' as an important manipulable force. The African, on the other hand, objects to such a dualistic categorisation that labels 'impersonal' something which is often and at the same time, personal" (Anderson 1991:66-67).

The power that was made available to the early Christian church (Acts 2:1-4) is close to the African traditional concept of numinous power or life force: "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." African traditionalists accept that power which makes things happen only comes from God. The Holy Spirit also made people speak in tongues, proclaiming God.

Africans who have adopted Western civilization turn to their traditional practices when the new tradition fails to provide solutions for their basic problems. It is a deep-rooted African culture to sacrifice to or venerate their ancestors, the purpose being to maintain a sound relationship with the ancestors and gain prosperity.

In the African tradition, the ancestors manifest themselves in different ways in the experience of their living kinsfolk. When this happens, Africans usually know that they are protected from danger. When their ancestors relate to them, Africans feel that they are blessed. But the appearance of an ancestor can have different meanings. While such a manifestation usually denotes welfare for the kinsfolk, it can also be an indication of the ancestor's dissatisfaction. In that case, the ancestors express displeasure by causing misfortune to the living kinsfolk, who are thus made aware of their unsatisfactory behaviour towards the ancestor(s). This situation immediately points to the need for the performance of a ritual. Traditionally, Africans maintain that the ancestors visit the living during the night while they are asleep and often appear in the form of dreams. Some people claim to have been visited by ancestors physically and visibly during silent moments.

Nevertheless, the possibility of the ancestors turning their backs on the living, in which case they would not speak to the living, is a grave one. This would be taken as a sign that the ancestors were dissatisfied with the living. A visit would then be taken as a warning to the

living to restore the relationship by offering sacrifices to the ancestors, failing which the living would be struck by illness and other calamities because of the disrupted relationship. Visits by the ancestors are usually interpreted positively and regarded as very special events. Unless the ancestors indicate discontent, the living accept their visits as good omens. Africans who are traditionalists hold this view. They consider any visit by the ancestors as a token of fortune to the living. Pauw (1975:153) cites a respondent as saying,

Generally any visitation, whether experienced in a dream or otherwise, is regarded as a portent of good fortune unless the contrary is obvious. I took this visitation to be a blessing (*ithamsanqa*); I am loved by the ancestors of my home! He still loves us, since he came to visit us! My *amawethu* (kinsmen) of the home are still with us.

Africans traditionally maintain that the specific meaning of the visit must be deduced from the words and behaviour of the visiting ancestors. For example, if the ancestors ask for food or a drink, or complain of hunger or thirst, or are holding a plate or a cup, this is interpreted as a demand for appeasement or sacrifice from the living. If the ancestors say anything during the visit, the words are taken literally. The ancestors can express displeasure by unhappy faces or by turning away from the person(s) visited. In that case, it is understood that the relationship between them is unsatisfactory. This means that unless those visited respond immediately to normalise the relationship, they might soon experience misfortune. Displeasing ancestors is very serious and should be avoided. Sundkler (1976:21) reminds us that ancestors act through dreams in order to warn and lead their descendants, and guide (guard) them against danger and unpleasant experiences. According to Pauw (1975:154), ancestors may also visit to comfort the living in times of trouble. Ancestors may also visit in the form of an illness. The only way to determine whether the illness is caused by the ancestors is for the sick persons to be diagnosed by traditional healers. If it is found that the ancestors are responsible for the illness, the traditional healers will advise the performance of rituals to appease the ancestors. To disregard this advice can only be disastrous. It is a serious offence to neglect the ancestors that will result in evil. Evil is regarded as bad luck, which is a continued bad state that affects all aspects of the victim's life. Appeasement of the ancestors is the only solution to this unfortunate situation.

To Africans, such a situation is unwanted, unusual and abnormal, and actually warrants counteraction. They observe that people living under evil conditions commit careless mistakes in whatever they try to do. Such people discover that, in spite of the genuine effort they put into their work, they suffer one setback after another and are unable to succeed at anything. They then feel disappointed, frustrated, helpless and psychologically troubled. Their families might become sick and some of them might even die. They might lose their livestock because of the ancestors' dissatisfaction. Although sickness, death and loss of cattle can come to anyone at any time, those who have incurred the dissatisfaction of the ancestors are made aware of this and thus of the cause of their misfortune (or suffering). African traditional religion also regards a miscarriage as a state of evil. Pauw (1975:149) puts it as follows:

One of the stereotypes of ancestrally caused misfortune, then, is that of efforts that always fail, whether in the home or at work, in family life or economic activities. The man who neglects the mourning observances for his father will find that his work does not go forward, or he is dogged by inefficiency (*obubhutyu*). He does not succeed (*phumelela*).

He also mentions some of the undefined conditions of diphtheria which are closely associated with a sense of evil, namely dissatisfaction, endless problems, constant worry, sleeplessness, unfulfilled desires and unhappiness. Typical examples of evil due to the dissatisfaction of ancestors are an inability to save money, squandering of wages, failure to make a profit in a business, and losing one's job and consequent unemployment.

Yet other symptoms of the ancestors' dissatisfaction include family misunderstandings (which cause tension and strain), severe illness, death, robbery, assault or even arrest by the police, being knocked down or run over by a car, and unpopularity. Someone may be disliked or hated by the community for no apparent legitimate reason; may be struck dumb and become the butt of teasing and scorn; may become a drunkard or even a murderer. When people experience these things, the traditional remedy is known to all: those affected have to consult the traditional healers, who are specialists in determining the source of the evil and in addition are equipped to prescribe the remedy. The fact that African traditional belief holds that no disease, misfortune or evil can attack one without a cause indicates the prominent role

traditional healers play in African traditional society. In most cases, a sacrifice to the ancestors, as prescribed by the diviner, remedies and thus normalises the situation. Being able to meet the needs of African traditionalists, then, accounts for the prominent position of traditional healers in African society (Mohlolo — interviewee no. 26).

The ancestors may communicate what they expect and what rituals are to be performed in various ways. In the course of this study the researcher encountered a man living in Mapetla, a suburb of Soweto. This man's father had died and been buried on 11 February 1990 and no tombstone had yet been erected on the grave. This man was contemplating calling the family together to decide on a date for the erection and unveiling of the tombstone. In African traditional belief, the erection and (especially) unveiling of the stone is a ritual ceremony. Generally, the ritual ceremony is conducted twelve months (one year) after the burial. Before contacting the family to decide on the date, this man's uncle visited him to enquire about the tombstone. A few days later the man's elder sister also telephoned him about the same matter. These enquiries, which coincided with his idea of calling the family together, served as confirmation to him of the ancestors' desire that a tombstone be erected for his late father. Without further delay, he called the family members together (Mkhize — interviewee no. 27).

Some people maintain that the ancestors sometimes tell the living verbally what their needs are. Pauw cites examples of ancestral visitors asking for a goat to be slaughtered or for something to be made for them. Traditionally, Africans believe that if one dreams of the ancestors holding a utensil like a calabash or any other drinking vessel, it is a demand for a sacrifice to the ancestors (Pauw 1975:154).

Africans traditionally also believe that some visits by the ancestors are for the welfare of the descendants. For example, that as a result of the visit, a descendant who is ill will be cured. The ancestor might give the patient a prescription during the visit. In cases where the ancestors visit people for the intention of healing, the visit is accepted as contributing to the restoration of health, without any ritual being performed. Pauw (1975:155) cites the case of a woman who was ill with a stiff neck being visited by her late mother. The ancestor (her mother) diagnosed the illness as black fever and instructed the woman to go and dig for medicine at the river. The woman did as she was instructed and was cured.

Some of the respondents interviewed during this study also recounted incidents of visits from ancestors which contributed to their recovery without any prescription of medicine. Hence some believe there is a close relationship between healing and ancestral visits. Some also said they were instructed to do something, like drink water or just to get up, after which they were cured. Pauw (1975:155) also relates the incident of a girl who was ill on the eve of her final examination. That night the girl dreamed her father came to her, gave her a pen and instructed her to go and write her examination. The following morning when she awoke, she felt much better and was even able to write her examination. She ascribed her recovery to her father's visit. Ancestors' appearances to their families and kinsfolk are understood as evidence of the caring relationship the deceased had with the family during life. Several of the respondents in this study mentioned that during their visits the ancestors enquired about the welfare of their descendants. Ancestors are also said to reprimand descendants over family disputes and to admonish them to live peaceably. Ancestors also encourage dialogue and peaceful negotiation to resolve differences and overcome stumbling blocks, and urge all to treat one another fairly as one family. Pauw (1975:156) cites the following example of ancestral concern for their families: "Husbands visited their wives: one to ask why she was wasting the children's money; another to ask where his children were since she was not staying with them. One father visited his daughter, telling her to bring back his wife, presumably a stepmother to the informant, who had been driven out of the house. Another daughter was told by her father to care for her mother, since he did not have a brother."

Mkhize and Mbenese (interviewees nos 27 and 28) agree that during the visits the ancestors were greatly concerned about family affairs, friction and quarrels. For example: the ancestors — asked their relatives to care for their children properly; asked some newly married mothers why they no longer visited their homes since they were married; expressed concern and a desire for a balanced life for their descendants and their entire community; were disturbed about alienation, disorder and disharmony in the family. Pauw describes an occasion when the ancestors appeared to a mother about a dispute in her family and urged her to act in a way that would promote peace, bring order and thus restore the situation to normal. African traditionalists believe very strongly in living as a family hence the saying: "A married woman must be buried at her in-laws." Its basic message is that, through marriage, the bride becomes part of her bridegroom's family. When she encounters problems in her marriage, she must try

to resolve them as one of that family. Never should she ever think of divorcing her husband because of family problems in the marriage. The parents of her marriage (i.e., her parents-in-law) are the only people she must approach. If a settlement cannot be agreed on, the bride's in-laws can contact their daughter-in-law's parents for advice. Africans traditionally encourage the bride to persevere in such problems and handle them like a mature person, to respect her husband and all her in-laws and obey their advice. According to the respondents, the reason for this is the status of married people, especially mothers, in the African traditional community. They also pointed out that, because of the saying, "A married woman must be buried at her in-laws", even after the death of her husband, according to the African traditional religion, the widow should not remarry, but remain with her in-laws. This concept is also supported by the ancestors. Pauw relates how a widow was visited by her father, who advised her to remain as she was, thereby implying that she should not remarry. The bond and power of marriage between husband and wife is so solid and permanent that, according to African traditionalists, not even death can affect it (Pauw 1975:156).

One man told that after he had joined a church, he was cured of his illness. Others stated that they had joined a church because of ancestral visits since that is what the ancestors told them to do. Mrs Boikanyo, a respondent, told how she had founded a church upon the advice of the ancestors. She had had nightmares and restless and sleepless nights. Doctors could not help her. Then one day the ancestors visited her and instructed her to found a church. The uniform of members was to be blue and white. Drums were to accompany the music during services. On special Sundays, members of the church were to enjoy a meal together during the service. Within a few weeks she had founded a church in her house. She bought trumpets and drums for the choir. The uniform was according to the ancestors' instructions. She was then cured of her congestion and could sleep peacefully at night (Boikanyo — interviewee no. 54).

Bishop Mlangeni and Reverend Mofokeng stated that it was not easy to leave their African traditional culture for Christianity. They had to break with wrong practices and bad friends. When they told their friends that they had joined a church, their friends mocked them and told them they were crazy to join an organisation that would not provide them with money (Mlangeni — interviewee no. 52; Mofokeng — interviewee no. 31). One respondent

described how his friends laughed at him when he told them to stop stealing and drinking alcohol. They scolded and cursed him and warned him that they would deal with him if he continued telling them about the church and his "stupid" church activities. Nevertheless, this experience could not and did not prevent the respondent from attending church, reading the Bible, praising God through music, and praying.

Many Africans respect and admire the ancestors for various reasons. The ancestors are regarded as the source of a community's well-being and prosperity. Because traditional Africans suspect anything that might threaten their lives, protection of life is one of their basic needs. The ancestors' warnings are related to recovery from and treatment of disease and avoiding danger. In many instances, the ancestors' advice demands radical change in the person. The power the ancestors have over the living compels them to appease the ancestors for their prosperity (Sundkler 1961:21).

As a token of appreciation for the ancestors' visit, a fowl (chicken) or goat is usually sacrificed. In addition, many brew beer for the same purpose. Some people invite close family to participate in this celebration while others invite all their kinsfolk. The ancestors are also appeased by pouring the last few drops in the calabash out for them. African traditional believers hold that when all this is done, the ancestors are satisfied. Traditionalists accept that the ancestors' power makes them successful (Ngada — interviewee no. 29).

African traditional believers hold that when the ancestors are appeased, general welfare is experienced through good health, protection, freedom from accidents and disease, more business profits, mutual understanding between employer and employee, love and good relationships in the family, good crop yield and healthy livestock. When anyone succeeds in business or any area of life, Africans naturally say, "The ancestors are with him." If the relationship with the ancestors is disturbed, nothing the person does will be a success. For this reason, many Africans always strive to have good relationships with the ancestors through sacrifice and veneration. African traditionalists hold that their dependence on the powers of the ancestors urges them to constantly appease the ancestors.



### 3.1.2 The power of witches and sorcerers

Traditionally, Africans believe that witches and sorcerers have supernatural power. This power is believed to be so great that ordinary people can do nothing against it. Only the traditional specialists are believed to be able to deal with it. Consequently, if a member of the family happens to be bewitched, the traditional healer must step in. Africans consider witches to be people who bring misfortune to society with the ultimate aim of harming, destroying or even eradicating the victims. It is difficult to understand and describe how witches operate in performing their duties. Witches perform no rites, utter no spells and possess no medicine, and an act of witchcraft is a psychic act (Daneel 1971:156).

According to African traditional religion, witches and sorcerers are agents of disruption and destruction in the community. Their work includes black magic, which cannot be explained. Both witches and sorcerers are involved in evil activities. Witches are predominantly females and sorcerers are usually males. Witchcraft is usually associated with a fatal illness or death and as a result is feared and totally disapproved of by the African community because it poses a serious threat to the community (Maseko — interviewee no. 37). Daneel (1971:158) notes that, on the whole, witchcraft "is regarded as more dangerous than sorcery and women alleged to have indulged in such action are usually exposed to drastic punitive measures by the community, which considers its well-being threatened. A sorcerer's acts can be as malicious and destructive as those of a witch, in which case the evildoer will be severely punished."

Africans consider relationships (and bonds) between family, the community and society as serious. It is believed traditionally that this situation is interrupted by the work of witches and sorcerers (wizards). Witches and sorcerers usually inherit their ability from their parents. It is strongly believed that if a mother practises witchcraft, there is a great chance of her transferring it to at least one of her daughters. Some people involved in witchcraft allow witchcraft medicine to be rubbed into their bodies. A witch is therefore an unwanted person (*persona non grata*) in society. When people die in a mysterious way and the involvement of witchcraft is suspected, traditional healers or diviners are consulted. A day is set for all the traditional healers and all those suspected of being responsible for the deaths, including witches and sorcerers, to meet. Such meetings usually take place at the chief's kraal. In urban

areas they are conducted at any suitable appointed place, which in most cases will be the house that was affected by witchcraft. In the presence of all gathered there, the traditional healers will identify the culprits through divination. If the majority of the traditional healers identify a particular witch or sorcerer as responsible for the evil act, the community accept it as true. The traditional punishment, which is stoning to death in public, is applied. Witches and sorcerers are not tolerated by the community. Once witches or sorcerers realise that they are under suspicion and investigation, they migrate to live elsewhere, taking their whole family with them. The migration takes place secretly and no one is informed of their plans. All that their neighbours will notice is their deserted houses, sometimes with no doors or windows. If, during the investigation, the majority of the diviners identify someone absent as responsible, a delegation will be sent to fetch the person. The main purpose of this is for the community to know who the person is who is causing witchcraft and for the punishment, that is stoning to death, to be applied in their presence (Mashao — interviewee no. 36; Mokoena — interviewee no. 32; Daneel 1971:160).

Hereditary witches and sorcerers are often regarded as the most dangerous because of the compelling force of the spirit that drives them to destructive actions. Commenting on their eagerness to carry out their evil duties, Daneel (1971:161) states that hereditary witches have evil in their blood which they cannot get rid of. Such witches cannot live without bewitching others.

Sorcerers (wizards) and witches manipulate the evil forces in various ways — either directly and personally or by making use of instruments. In African traditional religion, the animal commonly associated with witchcraft is the **hyena**. Baboons or owls are also traditionally connected with witchcraft and its consequences. On the subject of witchcraft in action,

The majority of people seem to think of the nocturnal operations of witches in terms of a psychic manifestation, and it would be safe to say that they consider any female witch capable of such action. This means that the witch's brute (shadow) can go out at night while her body remains at home. ... On the other hand, witches are also believed to move around physically at night. Several informants stated that they had actually seen single witches or a

company of them moving around at night, naked or riding on hyenas  
(Daneel 1971:162).

Daneel's (1971) findings on the work of witches in Zimbabwe correspond to those in this study in Soweto.

Sorcery is associated with people who cause harm to the community by using destructive "medicine" and other substances. Sorcery is believed to be practised during the day. Sorcerers use medicines against their enemies or opponents. When traditional healers use their medicine to the detriment of others, they are regarded as enemies of society. If exposed, they will no longer be considered traditional healers, but will be called witches or wizards. The ability to work evil through psychic acts is commonly ascribed to females. In the same way, familiars are used that are closely associated with such actions. For that matter, Africans refer to witches as predominantly female and sorcerers as male. This description is mainly to categorise, but there are exceptions in both categories (Hammond-Tooke 1986:161; Daneel 1971:162).

### **3.1.3 The power of traditional healers and their medicines**

Medicine is often made from shrubs and trees. Most traditional medicines are made from herbs, but medicine is also made from vegetable matter. Traditional healers use their skills and knowledge for healing while sorcerers use theirs to harm others. Sorcery can be performed by someone who is able to use the appropriate medicines. Such action is totally unacceptable to African society, and is considered a serious crime, with death as punishment. Despite the disapproval of society, sorcerers continue to secretly add "poison" to the food of people they wish to harm. The poison often causes disorders. Traditionally, poison can also be used for the benefit of society, if prescribed by traditional healers. "In treating snake bites, scorpion stings, parts from live snakes and scorpions are used in medicine. This gives man the same power to survive the poison that snakes and scorpions have. The same medicine not only cures a patient, but also strengthens" (Mönnig 1955:90).

The power of traditional medicine is well known. The Africans use certain types of medicines

to cure certain diseases, ailments and conditions. For example, for barrenness in a woman, the traditional healer uses medicines that are considered cool, such as bulbs, vegetable matter and roots. African traditional religion maintains that it is the heat that causes the patient's barrenness (infertility) and the cool medicine brings the cure. Africans use medicines in various ways: sometimes in liquid form and sometimes the medicines are burned and only the ash mixed with fat and applied to cure. Medicines are applied "in various manners. They may be taken orally or applied to the afflicted parts of the body. They are also applied anally or by inhalation of vapour and smoke, or may even be smoked in a pipe. They can be applied to the eyes or in the ears. Medicine is also frequently rubbed into incisions made in the body" (Mönnig 1955:91).

To cure a person bitten by a snake, the Sotho will hunt the very snake and kill it, and then rub the snake's poison into the patient's wound. Once the poison gets into the bloodstream, it is believed to neutralise the poison in the patient. Vaccination against smallpox was prepared in more or less the same way. The Pedi formally had knowledge of inoculation against smallpox. This was done through transplanting the live germ from one infected person to the other. As soon as they heard of an epidemic in a neighbouring tribe, a runner would be sent, she would make incisions in her skin into which she would rub the pus from sores of the afflicted people. She would then return and from her the whole tribe would be treated. In this way traditional Africans used the power of medicine to bring peace, stability and health to the community. Peace means freedom from illness and misfortune and success in all one's undertakings (Mönnig 1955:92).

Traditional healers or medicine men are usually consulted for the treatment of troubles and ailments caused by witchcraft. When deeply troubled, Africans will consult more than one diviner in order to make certain from more than one traditional healer what the real cause of the disease is. Traditional healers attend to patients suffering from the effects of wizardry (witchcraft) by removing the evil medicine from them. This is done by sucking or cutting the evil substance out of the body of the patient. Diviners as traditional healers are believed to possess the know-how to do this. Misfortunes and sickness are explained in terms of supernatural powers at work. Nevertheless, supernatural cause "does not absolve a person from responsibility for actions. A man accused of assault cannot in court claim that he was

bewitched and that the witch, and not he, is guilty. Even though it may be accepted that he was bewitched, he is still held responsible for his deeds" (Mönnig 1955:79).

Despite the wide range of supernatural forces that are conceived to be active in their daily lives, Africans are not ridden with fear or suspicion. The presence of traditional healers, their advice and their ability to counteract adverse powers assure a normal life to many African traditional believers. Naturally, they feel threatened and do fear witchcraft, and no doubt they are aware of the presence of supernatural forces at work, yet they know that the traditional healers do offer protection. This is the main reason for traditional healers' exalted place in the African community.

The great plurality of causes ascribed to various supernatural forces gives the diviner great prominence. His is the task of establishing, through divination, the exact source responsible for any misfortune. The Pedi *ngaka* has various roles. He may be described as diviner, witchdoctor, priest, medicine man and magician. His function is not only to divine the cause to which the even may be ascribed, but also to prescribe the remedy or preventative measure which should be administered. He establishes who are the witches and what measures should be taken for protection against them, or to remedy the harm they have done (Mönnig 1955:80).

Traditional healers apply different methods to establish the cause of the event, the most common being divination. They diagnose the cause of the disease by using a set of animal bones known as a divination set. Traditional Africans maintain that the diviners' divination set can divine the cause of any problem brought to them. When patients consult traditional healers, they are normally given a bag, traditionally made from the skin of a rock rabbit, containing the divination set. The patients have to blow air into the bag. Then either they or the traditional healers turn the bag upside down so that the divination set pieces are scattered on the floor. This action is called divination. When the set scatters on the floor, the traditional healers start reciting a poem, praising the set of bones and calling them by name, while picking them up and putting them down in the same positions in which they fell. The traditional healers continue murmuring words of praise to the set of bones while doing this,

to basically diagnose the cause of the problem or disease. They then give the patients the information they receive from the stones. This information is often given to the patients in the form of questions. Traditional healers usually insist that patients say "no" if the information is not true. The patients' responses to the questions assist the traditional healers to obtain more information (Makwakwa — interviewee no. 33; Mahlangu — interviewee no. 38).

Africans believe that supernatural powers operate through wizardry and sorcery. These powers cause misfortune, disease and other adversities. It is the task of traditional healers with their knowledge, skills and power to assist those affected by controlling and combating the evil. To accomplish this, traditional healers apply protective means that are able to destabilise the forces used by the witches. "Most unfortunately events caused by supernatural forces take the form of some disease. The use of medicine against this is therefore natural. Medicine has, however, a much wider use than merely in cases of diseases. It is also used, for example, to ensure success. The Pedi conception of medicine is therefore also synonymous with magic" (Mönnig 1955:88).

The traditional Africans are in no doubt that traditional healers recognise the physiological effects of medicine on the human body because they usually have a wide knowledge of plants.

The witchdoctor can explain how a certain medicine operates to cure a disease ... While much of Pedi medicine can be described as purely magical, there is much which definitely has beneficial physiological chemical ingredients and does heal some diseases in a logical physiological manner. These medicines have been accumulated over the years by a process of trial and error. When accompanying a witchdoctor in his search for medicines, it immediately becomes clear that those plants which are not used have been tested. The witchdoctor has a very wide knowledge of plants and can tell which are poisonous or have no effect on any disease at all" (Mönnig 1955:92).

Protection against the power used by witches is essentially the work of traditional healers. Africans traditionally accept that no disease or misfortune occurs without a cause. Very often

wizardry is seen as the cause for the belief in witches has remained unshaken. Traditional healers are the only people known to traditional Africans who have the ability to determine the cause and the power to deal with the effects of wizardry successfully (Mönnig 1955:94). It is the task of the diviner to explain what events led to the misfortune and to prescribe the remedy. Consequently, traditional healers are highly respected members of traditional society and command respect (Kitshoff 1995:2).

### **3.1.4 The power of God**

Traditional Africans know that the ancestors' powers are limited. This is confirmed by traditional healers' response when asked by those who come to them for healing. To this question, traditional healers respond, "If God so wishes, you will be cured." This expression is known to all African traditionalist believers who consult diviners for serious problems or diseases, and is a clear indication that even the traditional Africans hold that life-giving power originates from God, the Creator, and not from the ancestors. Even the traditionalist knows that all power comes ultimately from God. Though highly feared by Africans, the ancestors are known to have limited power. The power they do have comes from the source of all power, who is God (Anderson 1991:65).

African traditional religion holds that life originated from God who is above every creature. He is the creator of heaven and earth. This God is the source of all power. He is the provider of life to all human beings. All other powers depend on him (Tatai — interviewee no. 39).

Traditional Africans maintain that the ancestors' power is limited and on this basis venerate and honour the ancestors, and do not worship them but God. Accordingly, to the traditional Africans, this unseen, yet traditionally accepted God is still accepted as the only God responsible for their welfare and success. Traditional healers also admit that healing, protection and success are not possible if God does not so desire. When traditional healers give the well-known response, "if God so wishes, you will be cured", it is clear that they know that the power of healing is not vested primarily in the medicines used. It is commonly believed that it is God's power that ensures protection and brings about healing (Sibeko — interviewee no. 40).

According to the African traditional religion, the word "power" is associated with numinous power or life force. The fact that the ancestors are appeased and respected but not worshipped confirms that they do not have the same status as God. Westerners have not always grasped this African world-view. Their approach to the concept of power was (is) in terms of "personal" and "impersonal", something which does not exist in the African concept of power. The Western misconception of power is that the "western approach to the African world-view has categorised 'life-force' as an impersonal manipulable force. The African, on the other hand, objects to such a dualist categorisation that labels 'impersonal' something which is often and at the same time personal" (Anderson 1991:66-67).

African traditional spirituality believes that the power in medicine and of the ancestors comes from God. God is accepted as the supreme life force — power. Most Westerners do not understand the African spirituality, which affects human beings always. The Western understanding of power is that it can be manipulated by human reasoning. For Africans, spirituality and power are beyond human reasoning. All power originates from God, who is the life-giving force.

In order to acquire or use this power, Africans maintain that prayer has to be offered to God. However, the traditional Africans hold that an intercessor is indispensable in communication with the High God. Just as the chief cannot be approached directly by anyone without one of the chief's councillors serving as an intercessor, God, too, cannot be addressed directly.

The custom of not approaching the king or any senior person directly creates the mental attitude with which an African would approach God. No ordinary man could talk to the king or chief face to face. This was considered to be extremely disrespectful and carried a heavy fine or the death penalty. In the same way, God cannot be directly approached, someone must act as the go-between (Makhubu 1988:59-60).



God is known to be the source of all power. As for the role the ancestors play when prayers are extended to God:

The idea that the ancestor spirits stand in intercessory position between the living and God, the Supreme Being, does not seem to be a modern innovation. However, it is probably much more prominent than before, even among non-Christians ... "We look to God to give us rain" or "God has helped us with rain" are expressions often heard during the summer months (Pauw 1960:31-32).

While traditionalists respect and honour their seniors, they believe that God is the provider of all powers. Hence they pray to God. "God's power is the source of all powers existing in the world and elsewhere. The diviner's power depends on God's power. The ancestors and medicine owe their power to the life-giving source, God's numinous power" (Sihlango — interviewee no. 41).

The ancestors are dispensers and manipulators of power. For this reason, the relationship between the living and their ancestors must be healthy and harmonious, which calls for continuous appeasement of the ancestors. The channel must be kept open so that good health, security and stability, the basic needs in African traditional religion, may prevail. When this happens, the community acknowledges that all these blessings come from God, the source of all power. "The Supreme Being, then, is seen traditionally as the source of all power. The African world abounds in spirits of all descriptions. Behind all of these spirits and powers is the source of all, God" (Anderson 1991:67).

## **3.2 NUMINOUS POWER AND THE SUPREME BEING IN THE ZCC**

### **3.2.1 The power of God**

Belief in the existence of power and its impact on the ZCC is a reality. "To Africans, the spiritual world is so real and near, its forces intertwining and inspiring the visible world that, whether pagan or Christian, man has to reckon with 'things invisible to mortal sight'" (Parrinder 1954:10).

The main questions are how do the members of the ZCC live successfully amidst the power of magical forces without being affected? Does a constant yearning for the solution of problems, associated with the influence of these powers, not create a challenge to the church? To what extent does this power issue affect the ZCC's concept of God?

All Africans believe in the ancestors as ever living and watchful.... The ancestors were human, but they have acquired additional powers and man seeks to obtain their blessings and avert their anger by due offerings. Above all, there is the Supreme Being ... in time of great distress many Africans turn to God in desperation. He is the final resort, the last court of appeal. The power of God is supreme, all flows from Him, inheres in Him (Parrinder 1954:24).

The ZCC, which are strongly traditionally oriented, believe in God's numinous power as the solution to all problems. Aware of these powerful forces, they find the solution in God through prayer in the name of Jesus. The ZCC hold that Christianity came to Africa with the message of power from the Supreme God, who is the Creator of all things and the source of all power. "Long before the white man came to our country, our forefathers believed in God. He was worshipped as the Great One, and they depended on him for their welfare" (Bishop Mshalintshali of Meadowlands — interviewee no. 42). The ZCC confess that this Supreme God revealed Himself to the world through His Son, Jesus Christ. From the Bible they learn that God protects and watches them and also that the Supreme Being, as the source of all, is numinous power by nature.

The ZCC's concept of God's power is based on their interpretation of Acts 2:1-4, where they see the Holy Spirit as the life force which gives people power to stand firm against evil forces. This power is able to protect people against enemies. It makes people alive because it fights any weakness, like illness, which is ascribed to the urgings of the devil. This power cures diseases, which weaken people, and is even able to cast out demons from the sick. However, this also comes close to the traditional concept of power. The power we read of in the Bible was made available to the first Christian church: "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." While African traditional religion believes that neglect of the ancestors (who then are unhappy)

results in some evil to the descendants, nowadays Christians seldom consider ancestors to be the cause of all the evil or misfortune that people experience. Some realise that some of their misfortune can be ascribed to their disobedience to God. Others suspect the power of witchcraft and sorcery. The church believes that the devil and all who oppose God are the real cause. Christians realise that the power of the ancestors, traditional healers and herbs is inadequate to withstand the magical powers surrounding them. Members of the ZCC believe that God is the only source of numinous power and pray to Him in the name of Jesus for help when confronted with problems. "Force, the potent life, [and] vital energy are the objects of prayers and invocations to God ... In calling upon God ... ask above all, 'give me force'" (Tempels 1953:31). The ZCC's concept of God as the strong one underlines that all must worship Him. People pray to God, admitting that their life not only comes from God but depends on Him. They go on to tell God that good health, wealth, rain, harvest and children come from Him and without Him, they could have neither water nor food. The prayer closes by acknowledging that it is God who determines people's destiny and protects them against all who want to harm them. The concept of God as the source of numinous power encourages the ZCC to glorify His Name (Mbiti 1986:95).

While traditionally Africans venerate, respect and remember their ancestors without worshipping them, but only God, some members of the ZCC (and of the historical churches, too) at times mix veneration of the ancestors with worship of God. Although that is so, it is contrary to the policy of the ZCC, which is founded on the Bible. When the church discovers this, it urges those people to worship God only. Ancestors should only be respected, venerated, appeased and remembered (Sampo — interviewee no. 43). "Although most of the AICs believe in the existence of ancestral spirits, they do not worship them. There are those who mix Christian religion with ancestor worship. Their syncretic worship uses the ancestors as mediators to convey prayers ... to God, instead of Christ. Most of the Africans ... honour and respect ancestors. This is something that is deeply rooted in African people" (Makhubu 1988:60). Also, in the luxurious houses of the elite black townships, where the educated normally reside, goats and sheep are secretly brought home in the boots of cars for sacrifices to the ancestors. Only Westernised Africans would do this in secrecy. Sometimes these rituals are camouflaged as parties or other social gatherings (Makhubu 1988:61).

The ZCC maintain that the ancestors and medicine have no enabling power. Numinous power, life force, enabling power can only be received from God if approached through prayer. In the traditional African world-view, however, people consulted traditional healers for problems related to magical power. Now that Africans have accepted the Christian culture, they become frustrated if Christianity fails to address such basic problems adequately. This gap causes some church members uncertainty and fear. It is during such crises that they practise syncretism. It is in this gap that the ZCC come with a holistic approach. The power of God is presented to the flock by calling on the name of Jesus. With regard to how the members of the church relate the Christian message to their fears and frustration, the "phenomenon is not so much a sign of lack of Christian commitment as an expression of the fact that Christianity, as transmitted to the African, has not been made to respond fully to his culturally-based religious aspirations. Christianity and particularly pneumatology must respond to the culturally-based religious aspirations of the African" (Anderson 1990:91-92).

Africans feel that their basic needs form the core of their religion. A presentation of the Christian message that fails to address these needs effectively remains inadequate to an African. The concept of God's power that fails to address basic needs causes frustration. Instead of providing the members with the warmth of love, it turns into a thorn. Unfortunately, to many African Christians, the message presented by some missionaries was not relevant to life's situations. God's power, which was realised in the activity of a traditional healer in African traditional religion, was revealed completely in the ZCC. For any problems, the ZCC pray to God for a solution (Khambule — interviewee no. 44). The worst was the impression created that traditional healers' powers are more effective than God's power. As for the concept of the power of Christianity that many missionaries present to Africans, "White Christianity" suppresses, western manners that control people in daily life and even before God are presented as Christianity. You must also dress in western mode to be a Christian" (Makhubu 1988:19). Though this is a general statement, it is based on the experience of Blacks.

Nevertheless, from the Bible, ZCC leaders discovered that God cares about them (and people) as they are. They also discovered that there is agreement between the Bible and the African culture. Daneel (1987:85) mentions that an African discovered himself from the Bible, that

there is agreement between an African world-view and that of the Old Testament, and this was striking to an African. Why? "We observe that the culture and customs that we read about in the Bible are far closer to our culture and customs than to the Western culture of the White churches" (*Speaking for ourselves* 1985:21).

The ZCC attaches tremendous value to the Bible as the Word of God with numinous power. This was a discovery made when the Bible was first translated into the vernacular. African people's concept of God as the Almighty, Supreme Being through the Bible contributes to the self-awareness and appreciation. To many ZCC members, the Bible is the powerful Word of God and the source of hope because it puts them in touch with God's numinous power. Hearing the Word of God directly from the Bible, Africans discovered something different from the message delivered to them by a missionary. Some missionaries presented the gospel message to Africans in a way that left many African Christians with the impression that the doctrine of the church was on the same level as the Bible. Furthermore, African Christians were left with the impression that anything African was heathen (pagan). When consulting the Bible in the vernacular, Africans discovered something authentic, meaningful and new, and contrary to what they learned from Westerners.

The appearance of the first portion of Scripture in the vernacular heralded another significant change; now for the first time it was possible to distinguish between the missionary and the Scripture. The Scripture passages translated into the vernacular became an independent standard of reference; an intelligent Christian soon began to realise that certain things in Scripture sounded different from what the missionary had told them; that the missionary was silent about certain Scriptural values whereas others he exaggerated. There was, for example, the discovery that the Bible does not only speak of the soul and its redemption, but also of social justice in a way that the missionaries tended to conceal; that there was in Scripture a spontaneity, a vitality and a dynamic which was apparently largely lacking in the rigid structures of the missionary agencies, particularly striking was the agreement between the African world-view and the Old Testament (Daneel 1987:84-85).

Reading the Bible, the ZCC discovers God who loves the world and people whose cultural background is disregarded. God cares and preserves all through His power. The ZCC appreciates itself and its worth because of what God says and does to it, in His word of power. The importance of the vernacular as a language recognised by God and the African culture enhances the significance of God's power on Africans as worthy people. Studying the Bible with the ZCC, the people realised God's power, which anoints and blesses them more than any other power. This led them to value themselves because of the power that God reveals to them in their church, at home and in society. As such, reading God's Word, sharing, worshipping and praising the Lord is always a special opportunity to them. They do it out of gratitude and the love that God reveals to them through His power. Many African people attend ZCC services for what this church provides, especially warmth to the community through the power of God. ZCC members are united by God's love revealed in the power of the Holy Spirit during assembly. The meetings of the Mothers' Union and the youth as a family of Christians is an example of their search for God's power. This power is revealed when they pray for their daily hardships (Brandel-Syrien 1962:27). A similar concept was noted in the course of this study in Soweto.

According to African traditional belief, religion affects all aspects of life. It is a daily process, influences one's physical and spiritual aspects of life, and involves one's entire life, the family and the community. The experience of God as numinous power by the ZCC also affects the lives of individuals, their families and the community. From this concept of God and His complete numinous power, the ZCC discovered that God's power does secure, provide stability and respond to all problems. "We (Africans) know that there are evil spirits or demons and that they can take possession of a person and that they can cause illnesses. But we believe that the Spirit of God is more powerful than any other spirit. And that is why so many of our people have demons cast out of them and are healed of their illnesses in exactly the same way as we read in the gospels. Our African spiritual traditions and our experience of the Spirit as Christians makes it easy for us to appreciate the style and symbolism of the Bible" (*Speaking for ourselves* 1985:26 and 27).

The church ministers to the entire community and uses the Bible as the source of numinous power from God. Members of the community with problems go to the ZCC for help.

Problems addressed include guidance against the adverse forces responsible for bad relationships, retrenchments, killings and any misfortune that clouds the future. Prayer is the powerful vehicle used. Since God answers prayers, the community is encouraged. It is because of the impact of the power of God that the ZCC experience that they are one of the largest African church groups. Self-experience of the power of God and its influence on Africans from their African context enhanced the proliferation of the ZCC. After discovering the power of God from the Bible, they understood the gospel message the Scriptural way and no longer the Western way. Christianity brought liberation and peace and was no longer suppressive. God's power, which apparently could not deal with or solve African problems according to Western theology, does so effectively in the ZCC. In the ZCC some African cultural problems, such as calling African traditional healers witchdoctors and rejecting our showing respect to our ancestors as pagan superstition, which were declared evil by missionary "Christianity", are being addressed by God's power from the Scriptures (*Speaking for ourselves* 1985:21). This church's approach to God's service is relevant to the African. Regarding the impact of the ZCC ministry on Africans, the "independent churches are in a sense an expression of the desire to worship in freedom. It is the only place where a black person can express freely his or her feelings emotionally, in singing, dancing, shouting, laughing and even crying" (Makhubu 1988:19).

Christians confess that their lives depend on God and that without him, they are nothing; that it is God who looks after their wealth, provides their food, harvest, rain and children. They also acknowledge that without God, they cannot live because they will have neither water to drink or food to eat. They confess that God is the source of life and that they depend on his protection against harm (Mbiti 1986:95). People flock to the ZCC for help, which they believe these churches can offer. The ZCC are seen as churches who can bring the numinous power from God to people who are powerless, desperate and hopeless.

### 3.3 COMPARISON: NUMINOUS POWER AND AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION, AND NUMINOUS POWER AND THE SUPREME BEING IN THE ZCC

#### 3.3.1 Differences

- (1) African traditionalists maintain that life, existence and power are interconnected. To live is therefore to have power. They say that without the required power which enables one to cope with the cosmic powers, normal life is not possible. People's constant striving for more power is based on this concept. A lack of this power is considered a token of weakness, which can lead to fatal illness and death.

The ZCC believe in the power of the Holy Spirit in their mission. The life and witness of the churches depend on this power. The ZCC base this belief on the Book of Acts (1:8), "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." They believe that it is through the inspiration and operation of the power of the Holy Spirit that the founders of their churches were appointed and their churches founded. For them, no healing is possible without the power of the Holy Spirit.

- (2) African traditionalist belief accepts that all people who die go to another world, known as the territory of the dead. Traditionalists are not certain about the conditions in this place. They perceive it to be a beautiful, ever green and wonderful place.

The ZCC believe that only people who die believing in Jesus will go to a place known as heaven or the kingdom of God. The ZCC are certain of the conditions there. It will be a place where pain, hunger, strife and sorrow are no more. People will constantly praise God. According to the ZCC, people who die without faith in Jesus Christ go to another place, called hell. Hell is a dreadful place to be and was prepared for the devil and all who do evil. In hell people suffer pain like a fire for ever.

- (3) Traditionalists pray to God, but ask their ancestors to take their prayers to God. They



do so out of the respect they have for God's authority. Believing that the ancestors are closer to God than the living, because of their powers, traditionalists use the ancestors as mediators.

The ZCC pray to God in the name of Jesus. This is evident in their prayer and is based on the Bible.

- (4) Traditionalists worship God according to their culture. They approach God as they would a king and use other relevant senior people as intermediaries.

The ZCC worship God according to his instructions found in the Bible — in and through the name of Jesus.

- (5) Traditionalists rely on the power of the ancestors for prosperity, success and peace. They win the ancestors' blessing and approval by means of sacrifices in appeasement.

The ZCC rely on the power of the Holy Spirit for success, healing and peace. They offer sacrifice to God to express their gratitude to him for his blessings, and not in appeasement. They know that it is by God's grace that they are saved, as stated in Ephesians 2:8.

- (6) Traditionalists constantly perform sacrificial rites to the ancestors out of fear of incurring their disfavour and wrath. Disfavour with the ancestors would bring misfortune to the living, therefore the sacrifices are compulsory.

Sacrifice to God in the ZCC is optional, joyful and free. It is offered in thanksgiving and gratitude to God for all the good things he does for the people by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- (7) Traditionalists consult the traditional healer for help with their problems. The ZCC consult the prophet, God's servant, for prayer to God in their dilemma. They believe in the power of God for solutions.

- (8) Traditionalists associate power with the power of the ancestors.  
The ZCC say power comes from the Holy Spirit.

### 3.3.2 Similarities

- (1) Traditionalists believe that the ancestors' power is limited and originates from the power of God.  
The ZCC hold that God's power is above all power and is the source of all other powers.
- (2) African traditional healers hold that the power of the ancestors and medicine could not exist unless God allowed it.  
The ZCC say all power operate by God's will.
- (3) Traditionalists believe that life continues after death.  
The ZCC hold the same belief.

In the course of this study, the researcher observed that African traditionalists go to the traditional healer, the ancestors and medicine for power to cope with their problems. The ZCC approach God through his servant, the prophet, and Jesus Christ in prayer for the power of the Holy Spirit. While traditionalists approach the agents mentioned, they are aware that the outcome finally depends on God's will.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **NUMINOUS POWER AND THE SPIRIT WORLD**

#### **4.1 NUMINOUS POWER AND THE SPIRIT WORLD IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION**

The African traditional religion concept of the spirit world is that it is omnipresent, is forceful and may be harmful to the living with less power. This is a situation which demands that virtually all African traditional believers continue to acquire more power in order to cope with the magical spirits surrounding them. Thus sickness implies an imbalance between the metaphysical and the human world that is disturbing the expected normal flow of life (Mbiti 1975:134).

Contrary to Christianity, which believes that God ,the Almighty, is the source, provider and sustainer of all power, African traditional religion maintains that to live peacefully, one has to reckon with the impact of the ancestral spirit world in which one lives. Accordingly, failure to acknowledge and recognise these spiritual forces can lead to complete misfortune. African traditionalists assert that these magical powers manifest themselves to the living in the categories of the ancestral spirit/power; the power/spirit of the witch or sorcerer; and the diviner/medicine spirit (Mönnig 1955:54).

##### **4.1.1 Numinous power and the ancestral spirits**

The African traditional concept of the ancestral power is so tied up with one's life that failure to reckon with it implies no life to the living. African traditionalists hold that the magical forces which cause misfortune and sometimes death to the living can only be normalised if the living adhere to their ancestors. The ancestors are believed to possess supernatural power and are thus able to counteract the spirit that makes the living miserable, weak and restless. African traditionalists believe that the ancestors, through the power vested in them, control

the lives of the living and are able to perpetuate people's life after death. On this basis African traditional people continue to satisfy the ancestors. They hold that for people to live peacefully in this life, they are obliged to honour their ancestors who must be respected and appeased. In this respect, Makhubu (1988:61) states:

It is explained by some of the enlightened that black people do not actually worship ancestors, but merely venerate them as a continuation of the African custom of showing respect to the elderly and the departed.

African traditionalists usually feel the attraction or need to consult the ancestors when they encounter problems. The living approach the ancestors as they approach their seniors for advice, because they have gone through similar problems. The ancestors are viewed as capable of sorting out problems the living are not able to handle. As spirits, the ancestors are believed to have more powers and interest in the welfare of the living. There is a tendency among many African traditionalists to assert that the ancestor is the spirit of a fully-fledged homestead. It is the accumulated "power" of this category of ancestors that provides, as it were, the extra-human protection (Hammond-Tooke 1985:54). In an interview, Archbishop NH Ngada confirmed Hammond-Tooke's observation on the supernatural power of the ancestors. Ngada stressed that, because of the respect Africans have for God and the power which the ancestors have over the living, Africans approach God through the ancestors. Africans pray to God in the name of Jesus, yet African traditionalists hold that prayers to God should follow a procedure born out of sensitivity. This is also a sign of respect which the living show to the ancestors. The ancestors are not mediators or venerated — their power proceeds from God (Ngada — interviewee no. 22).

African traditionalists are constantly striving to acquire more power in order to be able to cope. The need for more power becomes more urgent in times of illness, misfortune and death.

African traditional religion believes that no events happen without a cause in the world; in other words, there is a cause and reason for every happening. Therefore, the factors leading

to and reason for or cause of an event must be identified. To achieve this goal, the affected need more "power". Since the ancestors are traditionally accepted to have more power than the living, the living consult the ancestors for help. The process of approach is through veneration. The living approach the spirits of the dead since African traditionalists maintain that the spirits have more power and control over the living. Makhubu (1988:65) puts it as follows: "To the black man, a dead person is respected more than the living one. That is why even total strangers are given a proper funeral."

Veneration of the ancestors is a major contact between the living and the spirits of the dead. In African belief, veneration of the ancestors is almost compulsory for all who desire contact with the ancestors. This concept is based on the belief that the living and the dead can mutually influence each other. The living hold that if they maintain good relationships with the ancestors, they will be blessed by the ancestors. The ancestors have to be respected, honoured and obeyed by the living, thanked for their blessings, and fed through sacrifices. African traditional religion maintains that the ancestors guard the community. It is believed that if an African is asked, "Which God is responsible for your well-being?", the reply will be "I am looked after by those who have borne me", referring to his ancestors. These include a person's deceased parents and grandparents. These ancestors are involved in the most vital affairs of the family unit (Mönnig 1955:54; Daneel 1971:92).

If a family encounters constant misfortune, such as illness, death and robbery, African cosmology is quick to interpret these things as signs of the family ancestors' unhappiness and dissatisfaction with them. The only remedy in such a situation is for the family to undertake sacrificial rites. The superior male member of the family or group concerned acts as officiator and intercedes for the members. When the rites have been carried out, the family are certain that they have shown the ancestors the respect and honour due to them and are confident of receiving the ancestors' blessings (Mönnig 1955:61).

According to African tradition, the ancestors have unlimited power over the living, who are encouraged to maintain a constant good relationship with the ancestors as the only way for the living to achieve peace. It is believed that the ancestors have power over life, death, poverty, misfortune, sickness and personal welfare as well as the power to protect the living

from evil and fear. African traditionalists generally maintain that nothing is impossible for the ancestors therefore close interaction between the living and the ancestors is encouraged. This is possible via veneration, which gives the living the assurance that the ancestors will protect them from evil (Tshabalala — interviewee no. 45).

Belief in the ancestors' power to protect and afflict is still strong among Africans and the need for unbroken communion with the dead remains. The African cosmology which says that anyone who breaks ties with the ancestors by failing or ceasing to remember them will not prosper, causes African traditionalists to maintain a constant relationship with them. Accordingly, those who view protection as a basic need that can only be provided by the ancestors constantly venerate them. The ancestors want and expect their descendants to remember them. If this is done faithfully, they reward the living with good health (Daneel 1974:318; Mönnig 1955:54).

According to African traditional religion, life continues after death and the ancestors are accepted as seniors who have died and gone over to the other realm of life, the place known to be the territory of the ancestors. Africans do not know exactly where this territory is and, besides, that is not particularly important. What really matters to Africans is that after death the ancestors advance to this place. Africans are content that the ancestors are for the living. There are two schools of thought on where the world of the dead is. The one group argues that it is underneath the earth and is the reason why, when venerating the ancestors, traditional Africans bow their heads down, to honour the ancestors, so that the ancestors can intercede with God for them. The other group holds that the supernatural powers that the ancestors receive after death prove that it is somewhere in the sky. People are known to have gone to be with the ancestors. Human beings' life is known to continue after death (Makhubu 1988:29).

What is significant in African tradition is that —

- the ancestors acquire supernatural powers
- they live in a place or territory of the dead
- this place is believed to be closer to God

- all the living shall get to this place when they leave this life/world
- it is a new, beautiful place where the life of the deceased continues
- the concept of people being regarded as "asleep" instead of dead suggests that those sleeping will wake up to continue with life (Mönnig 1955:55).

African tradition believes that there is no question of the spirit of any person being barred from the territory or world of the ancestral spirits. All the dead are believed to be living in this world (Mönnig 1955:55).

In describing the condition of the world of the ancestors, many of the respondents idealised it as a beautiful place with enough accommodation, where the grass is always green and where there are plenty of fat cattle. The people in that land are believed to be happy and free from turmoil (Mönnig 1955:55; Ngada — interviewee no. 46).

The other picture of the condition of the world of the ancestral spirits is that, structurally, it is a reflection of this living world. It may be considered part of the present social order with the supernatural power making it the superior part of the present order. Unlike the present world, where traditional healers occupy an important place, in the ancestral world the ancestors occupy the important position. The ancestors are thus seen as occupying a position higher than or superior to traditional healers in the present order.

Traditional Africans always address the ancestors in the plural and never in the singular. This has much to do with the powers that the ancestors have over the living. This is an African expression of the honour given to the dead because of the power they have acquired. It also has to do with the concept of still regarding the ancestors as people who have crossed over to the world of power. The ancestors are also always addressed in the plural because of the knowledge that the ancestors are together, just as the living are together in this world. In appeasing the ancestors, the superior of the family/lineage calls upon one of his lineage and not the name of his ancestors. Yet, by calling only one name, he has addressed the entire generation. According to African traditional belief, the ancestors see things that ordinary people cannot because they possess power beyond the living. This is because once people have become ancestors, they have changed into ancestral spirit bodies with more power and

status than the living. The ancestral spirits are associated with any occurrence that is beyond human power. If something happens to someone that seems to have a magical power impact on that person, Africans naturally link the event with the ancestral power. This is also true in the case of a natural happening. Any occurrence considered to have supernatural power causes is usually said to have been brought about by the ancestors' spirits (Mönnig 1955:57).

A sound relationship with one's ancestors is therefore essential to African traditionalists. Such a situation guarantees safety and protection from the ancestral spirit forces by making people feel protected rather than threatened by the presence of the ancestors' magic forces around them. This situation implies that people's spirits or ancestors are at peace. To African traditionalists, this is very important because it is a sign that the living are strong, not weak, healthy, and not sick. This is the condition many African traditionalists wish to maintain — to have more power, power outside themselves in order to resist the influence of the supernatural power surrounding them (Makhubu — interviewee no. 47).

Since African traditionalists are generally socially patrilineally headed and organised, it is always the senior male who officiates during sacrificial rites to the ancestors. African culture considers males important. Mothers and all females usually listen to and follow the advice of the males, especially those of their respective families. The traditional structure is followed in which the chief had (and has) the power to intercede for the entire community in matters affecting the community, such as in time of drought when there were prayers for rain. The chief is the person who leads the customary sacrificial rites on behalf of the whole community. With regard to the procedure of community sacrifices to the ancestors,

The family will not on its own approach the ancestors for rain, or in connection with epidemics. Such national causes are approached communally through the communal ancestors, those of the chief (Mönnig 1955:60).

The male plays a prominent role in African traditional culture. A family approaches its own ancestors about its own personal desires, which affect it alone. The family or lineage approaches the ancestors of its superior male member in all matters affecting such family or lineage. The superior male member of the family/lineage acts as officiator and intercedes for



his family or lineage (Hammond-Tooke 1985:51; Nkosi — interviewee no. 48).

The nature of the sacrifice depends largely on the circumstances of the occasion. Traditional healers' advice plays a major role in guiding those concerned. African traditional beer nearly always features in the sacrifice to the ancestral spirits. It may be accompanied by a goat, a sheep or even a cow. A rooster or a hen may also be prescribed as a sacrifice. Those concerned with the sacrifice are usually given a detailed, prescribed list of what is to be sacrificed, including the type and colour of animal to be slaughtered. The details may be provided by the ancestral spirits when visiting the living or by the diviners consulted for advice. However, African traditional beer is often considered sufficient. When other things are sacrificed to the ancestors, they are almost always accompanied by beer. In the family rites, beer is most often used. A beast (cow or ox) is slaughtered in important cases, that is, in matters that affect the community or a society. If the community or a tribe want to thank the ancestors for rain, protection and any blessings, a beast may be slaughtered. Also, in matters which affect the whole nation, the chief or leader of the community officiates on behalf of the community and perform the sacrificial rites (Mönnig 1955:61).

Apart from these formal traditional rites, it is customary that when African traditionalists are drinking beer and some spills on the ground, it is interpreted as a blessing to the ancestors. Some interpret such an act as a sign that the ancestral spirits are demanding a sacrifice. Other Africans, when conducting a family party, like a birthday party, which involves any kind of slaughtering, sometimes like to include the ancestral spirits for protection and prosperity and the success of the function. In such a case, the superior male will then officiate and will slaughter a fowl by cutting its throat with a knife, and let the blood spill on to the ground. This is also accepted as a customary way of thanking the ancestors for their protection (Hammond-Tooke 1985:51).

Traditionally, the concept of ancestral spirits and their influence on people's lives are interpreted as the accumulation of the power of protection. Thus the traditional sacrificial rites are constantly performed to the ancestors, then, so that the living can be given more power to survive in the midst of the magical forces of this world (Hammond-Tooke 1985:54).

#### **4.1.2 Numinous power and the spirit of witches or sorcerers**

Belief in witches and sorcerers holds that they have magical power that ordinary people cannot counteract. Traditionally, witches and sorcerers are the agents of socially destructive action in and against the community. They are known for their ability to influence evil work in a magical way and their function is to perpetuate black magic which ordinary people cannot explain. The way they function and release their powers makes it difficult to discover (or expose) witches or sorcerers. Their aim is to apply magic forces to adversaries in order to harm or even kill them. These forces, which are strange and strong to ordinary people, create a situation where the living need more power. Witches and sorcerers cause misfortune, strain and stress to the living, a situation which calls for more power for the living to be able to cope (Daneel 1971:160).

Witches' powers are a cause of real concern to the living because traditionalists associate these powers with severe illness and death. Witchcraft constitutes a more serious threat within the traditional community. Wizardry is unacceptable because it is an enemy to the normal life of the community. Even though they are feared by the community, if witches or sorcerers are suspected or known, they are excluded by the community (Hammond-Tooke 1986:162). They are not invited to participate in community work or life for fear they might disturb the normal order through wizardry.

Witches perform the art of witchcraft to execute their work of destruction. Witches are people believed to have an inherent quality that allows them to change shape, go about magically and invisibly, causing misfortune and death. They may act by themselves or by means of familiars. Sorcerers are people who use special medicines to harm and destroy from a distance. Witch familiars are typically conceived of as animals: owls, hyenas, baboons, wildcats, snakes, polecats, weasels and civets. Witches keep them secretly and feed them personally, in most cases during the night when people are asleep. The reason for this is for no one, not even some of the family, to know of these familiars. The familiars are believed to be kept locked in places to which only the witches have access. Some witches are believed to sleep with some of the familiars and have sexual intercourse with them (Hammond-Tooke 1986:160-161; Daneel 1971:161; Oosthuizen 1992:132-133).

Witchcraft's bizarre familiars include a small, mischievous homunculus called *thikoloshe*. A *thikoloshe* can change into a lightning bird or into a snake that can change into a young girl. This type of familiar causes terrible fear in the community. The worst part of it is that, due to the wizardly magical spirit forces in these processes, people cannot withstand the power of witchcraft. The various changes that witches can adopt to apply their magical spirit force to their adversaries make it impossible for ordinary people to deal with the concept of black magic. The living have to ask for supernatural power to be able to withstand such spirits. It is difficult to understand witchcraft. Witches are said to be people with supernatural powers. The method used by witches is to apply witchcraft, that is magically loaded, while on the face of it they appear to be agents, in the form of animals, birds and creatures, and on the other hand, they seem to be spirits (Hammond-Tooke 1986:161).

It is not easy to classify witches and their agents as truly spirits. Witches' familiars are seen as animals yet at times not all people accept them as real animals. The reason for this is that these familiars are invisible to the people at whom the witchcraft is aimed. People who are not the targets of witches may not see these familiars. Witches are human but they inherit their evil position and its associated magical power, and their ability to change shape and become invisible makes them highly ambiguous (Hammond-Tooke 1986:162; Daneel 1971:161).

Sorcery is the process of using destructive medicines to cause harm to enemies for whatever reason. In most cases the enmity is born out of mere jealousy, which is common among urban residents. If a sorcerer can be identified, the punishment is very costly. Therefore, if witches suspect that the community is searching for them for acts of sorcery committed by them, they usually migrate secretly to another area. The punishment for witches, if found, is usually to burn them, their houses and property. Because of the brutality that witchcraft and sorcery bring to the community, the entire community gets involved in combating it. Although common law prohibits such action against suspected (or alleged) witches, traditionalists still apply this law where such enemies are found. Mönnig (1955:94) records the following:

Formerly the smelling out of witches was done largely with the poison cup or with *mankonyane* ... Witches were then brutally clubbed to death, or pegged

out in the entrance of the cattle kraal and the herd driven over them to trample them to death.

This punishment is still applied by the community if a witch is found.

As for why witches and sorcerers apply these magical forces to the living, the answer is that it is born out of jealousy, negative emotions and envy, anger from some evil pressure. Traditionalists largely categorise evil as evil incarnate (the witch) or inherent in matter (sorcery). Evil traditionally refers to the essentially antisocial attitude and actions that threaten the very basis of social life (Hammond-Tooke 1986:162).

The terrible thing about witches is that they attack the nearest and dearest — people who should be loved, respected and cherished. Witches are said to ride on baboons if they want to perform witchcraft personally. Some ride backwards on baboons and approach their victims backwards. The best time for witches to operate is at night when normal people are asleep. Other witches use people in their sleep as transport to perform their duties. The people used for this purpose are brought back to their beds before sunrise. It is not possible for them to wake up while being used by witches. Traditionally, when people feel tired and get up yawning in the morning, people believe that is a sign that they were used as transport by witches during the night.

Society despises witchcraft and sorcery because they are considered cruel to social life and destabilise humanity. Hammond-Tooke (1986:162) comments as follows on the evil of witchcraft in society:

The metaphors used to picture witches also vividly reflect the malignant inversion of normal life that is its main feature ... witches ... and their familiars work at night ... they indulge in cannibalism, they are terrifyingly ambiguous. But worst of all they attack the very pillars of healthy social life: they are the enemy within the gates.

The activities of witchcraft and sorcery are bad for the community and pose a threat to

society, though in different ways. Frequently sorcery involves bad actions which confront the community with an indirect threat only, such as, for instance, when people use the power of medicine to harm their victims. The pain might be for a certain period or conditional, in which case, depending on the conditions set by the sorcerers, the victims may regain their normal life. Witchcraft, on the other hand, is nearly always associated with fatal illness or death and is therefore more readily disapproved. Witchcraft thus constitutes a more serious threat to the whole community. On the whole, witchcraft is regarded as more dangerous than sorcery. People alleged to have indulged in witchcraft are usually exposed to drastic punitive measures by the community since they feel threatened by witchcraft. Sorcerers' actions can also be as malicious and destructive as those of witches, in which case the evildoers will be severely punished. It seems though that sorcery includes a wider range of less dangerous acts, which arise from ambition and political strife and are not necessarily punished by the community as a whole. The magical countermeasures undertaken by the sorcerers' opposing parties are considered sufficient (Daneel 1971:158).

Witches pose more of a threat to society. The fact that witchcraft involves cannibalism and personifies the evil and magical forces in society makes it more of a threat to the community.

Cannibalism is the most detested of all crimes, therefore she (the witch) is a cannibal. Family ties are the most sacred of all ties, therefore she destroys members of her own family. Medicine and magic are the forces with which one can control the environment in the interest of one's society, therefore they become perverted in the hands of the witch. Animals such as snakes are dangerous because they can kill, owls are feared because they fly when all other birds sleep; therefore the witch has these creatures as her familiars. She is associated with all that is feared and detestable (Daneel 1971:158-159).

Traditionally, family and lineage members' participation in ritual activities serves as reinforcement of the family and lineage ties. The unity of family and lineage implies the solidity of the family and lineage. By implication, only forces which militate against it are dealt with. Belief in wizardry enables the community to find and deal purposefully with the

magical power and misfortune of life which the community lives.

The most serious threat to family, lineage and traditional community is the successive deaths of members of one family. Such a situation inevitably leads to frustration and tension. It further warrants action from the afflicted family. Extinction of a family is regarded as the worst disaster because until drastic measures are taken to investigate the cause, there is no way to guarantee the continued existence of that family. The most likely suspects under such circumstances are relatives in the family with evil powers, who have intimate contact with the afflicted family and their households. One such likely suspect would be the wife of the most stricken family member, because she is, in a way, an outsider in the sense that she came into the family by marriage. She is not of the same blood as her husband, yet forms part of the family. She has the unquestionable right to participate in all the activities of her in-laws. This type of dilemma is more often attributed to the dangerous act of witchcraft than to sorcery (Daneel 1971:159; Hammond-Tooke 1986:161).

Only in the event of a lineage member being held responsible for such deaths is the charge or accusation likely to be sorcery. Some people believe that sorcery is not intended to cause fatal illness or destruction, but to cause the victim pain out of jealousy or political strife. Some of the respondents consulted believe strongly that a lineage member, especially one who has inherited wizardry and consequently casts a negative reflection on the whole lineage, could be responsible for such evil acts. The imputation of witchcraft carried out provides that lineage members of the deceased with the necessary sanction take acceptable measures against the person held responsible for such a threat (Myandu 1994:15).

The living need social equilibrium. Illness and death are the most obvious disruptive magical forces in social life. Normal life may also be disturbed by the success of those individuals who might generate jealousy and thereby lead to community friction. These are people who fail to conform to the accepted norms of community life. They tend to bring an unwanted change into the existing social order. As a result, they end up being accused of wizardry, and particularly sorcery. Traditionally, the concept of magical forces categorised in witchcraft and sorcery encourages the community to keep the accepted order of a society, by continually dealing accordingly with these forces which create a threat to traditional life (Myandu

1994:21; Hammond-Tooke 1986:162; Fedile — interviewee no. 49; Ngema — interviewee no. 50).

Two types of witchcraft, which include the use of magical power objects, are used by both witches and sorcerers. One is the application of real poison or medicines with magical power to the victims' food for them to eat (this is used mostly by women) and the second type is destruction by witches who are driven by forces within them. Witches who destroy because of driving forces within themselves will apply their forces without directing them at particular victims. The most common object used by witches and sorcerers to harm victims is beer. Since beer is provided and a very popular drink at festivities and parties, it is easy to bewitch one's target by adding medicine to the victim's drink. Witchcraft is highly unpredictable and dangerous to society. The information gathered showed that witchcraft is practised mainly by females and sorcery by males. Witches' modus operandi are psychic and magic in action while sorcerers mainly employ magic. Witches perform their duties at night when most people are asleep and sorcerers operate during the day in and among people. Witchcraft is basically motivated by a repetitive desire to harm, which is attributed to the evil driving force inherited or purposely acquired, which has become part of the witch's physique. The wish to destroy becomes a force which forms part of the witch as a person. The sorcerer's motivation for destruction is less dominated by external forces, but is the result of jealousy, envy or political striving. The outcome of witchcraft is mostly fatal. Witchcraft is basically unpredictable but dangerous to the whole community. Sorcery is intended to injure, at times fatally. Sorcery is predictable and potentially less dangerous to the whole community (Daneel 1971:167; Mönnig 1955:78).

#### **4.1.3 The diviner/medicine man**

Diviners are professional therapists whose functions include a wide range of magical practices. Magic implies the ability to manipulate the spirit world or power and to use power-laden objects to achieve desired ends. This act can be done with or without the aid of supernatural beings. Magic requires a specialised supernatural knowledge and power. The process is usually done in the correct, expressive and symbolic manner (Daneel 1971:140). Diviners' medical insight and their ability to manipulate spiritual forces are due to the supernatural

power that they possess. Diviners' main function is to determine the cause and prescribe the remedy for any evil spirits that may attack the community. Traditionalists believe that diviners are the only people who have the answers to control powers that destabilise the normal order. They are the well-known champions in matters affecting the basis of African (Daneel 1971: 143-144).

Traditional healers are specialists who prescribe remedies for diseases that affect the community. Their position is mostly acknowledged to their ability to normalise situations involving magical power in a community. Because of their supernatural power, diviners are able to cure (e g, barrenness) and to cast out evil spirits. The information collected shows that Africans have unique diseases, called African diseases, which can only be cured by diviners. Included among these diseases are madness, epilepsy and possession (by spirits/demons). Basically, the term "incurable diseases" refers to those diseases that are not caused naturally but by ancestral spirits and witchcraft, among other things. Because of their skills and powers, Daneel (1971:144) describes diviners as follows:

There is actually no end to the scope of a *nyanga's* activities. Gelfand aptly describes him/her as a "kingpin" of African society, whose scope of activity embraces more or less everything affecting an individual or his/her family. European society, he says, "has no one quite like a *nyanga*, an individual to whom people can turn in every kind of difficulty." He is a doctor in sickness, a lawyer in legal issues, a policeman in detection and prevention of crime, a possessor of magical preparations which can increase crops and instil special skills into his clients. He fills a great need in African society, his presence gives assurance in the whole community.

Through divination, diviners must establish whether an ailment/problem is caused by witchcraft or sorcery or a combination of the two. Diviners need to diagnose and apply therapeutic treatment by removing the magical cause of the illness by exorcising the spirit or by prescribing the rightful rites to be conducted. Diviners can also treat patients with the necessary medicine to cure the physical pain already sustained. Most important is the protection that diviners provide to their clients against future attacks.



The traditional consultation fee for a diviner was a goat, sheep or beast. Today, it is still frequently the same, but is paid in cash and ranges from R10,00 to R50,00. Clients are generally obliged to thank (pay) the diviner. Traditionally, the money is not given directly to the diviner, but is thrown on the floor near the divination set. It never enters anyone's mind not to thank (pay) the diviner because his ability to control evil spirits and forces is too great to risk angering him. The diviner's role and position in African tradition does not warrant any such trial. According to Bishop Semilane and Sithole, two respondents, such a person will not be cured or live. Everyone recognises and fears the diviner's power (Daneel 1971:146; Semilane — interviewee no. 55; Sithole — interviewee no. 56).

Diviners also use the powers in the medicines to treat their patients. For this purpose, the roots of certain trees and stems are mixed. Animal substances and fat are mixed and applied for a cure. These medicines are administered internally and externally. They can also be rubbed into the affected part of the body. Depending on the diviners' diagnosis and prescription, some may also be worn around clients' necks or waists. Medicines may also be placed in strategic points of clients' houses or yards to ensure protection (Makhubu 1988:80).

In the preparation of medicines, the magical power in the medicine is believed to strengthen weak clients. It is maintained that the power in the medicine opposes the destructive force in the client so that eventually the client will be cured. The supernatural force of the medicine, then, replaces the evil magical force weakening the client. This in itself cures the patient. To treat the disease in which a patient is believed to have sores in the stomach, the medicine is prepared from the roots of a shrub called *galium petiolaris*. When cut, the roots of this shrub have the appearance of flesh. The roots are boiled in water and the water then becomes clear red like healthy blood. The patient then drinks the water and the sores are cured through the power of this medicine. The power to cure a client can also be transferred from animals to people. For example, sheep are used to cure stomach trouble in children. Blood is taken from the sheep's ear and then mixed with acacia roots and administered to the children. This causes the stomach problem to stop (Mönnig 1955:91).

Sea water and coarse salt are used as a preventative measure for evil spirits. Sea water is

sprinkled in the client's yard and house. This act is done at night so that no one except the owner of the house knows about it. If sea water is not available, the diviner or the owner of the house can apply coarse salt. It is generally agreed that this is one common method of protection that works well. Sea water and coarse salt are believed to have magic power that causes witches or their familiars to withdraw as soon as they enter the yard. The sea water is said to be like the sea, which weakens witches and their familiars. Consequently, witches are unable to gain access. This is seen as a sign of strength in clients and this medicine makes clients resistant to the evil spirits surrounding them (Makhubu 1988:79).

Medicines are applied in different ways. Because of the knowledge and skills that traditional healers have, they prescribe medication, which may be applied to the afflicted parts. Medicines are also burned so that patients inhale the vapour or smoke. Some medicine may even be smoked in a pipe. Other medicines can be applied to the ears, neck or eyes and some are also frequently rubbed into incisions made in the body. Some protective medicines consist of merely wearing a piece of bone or root around one's neck or waist. The medicine's supernatural power is believed to empower clients, which makes them inaccessible to evil spirits and also strengthens clients against evil forces. Such medicines are also placed in cars (Hammond-Tooke 1986:167; Msimanga — interviewee no. 57).

Traditional healers/diviners and their medicines play a vital role in African life. Diviners use these supernatural powers against the spirits that threaten the community. Traditional healers use these powers to normalise the situation and cure disease. Africans general agree that the power in medicines used by diviners ensures stability and success in society and counteracts malignant forces. The powers used by diviners have a magical influence that is supernatural and inexplicable. The ability of diviners to counteract the power of the evil spirit and to normalise an abnormal situation in the community serves as a guarantee of success to African traditionalists.

## 4.2 NUMINOUS POWER AND THE SPIRIT WORLD IN THE ZCC

### 4.2.1 Spirit world and the Holy Spirit

Numinous power and the spirit world in the ZCC can only be understood against the background of the influence of the missionaries who presented the Christian message to Africans. Not only did Western culture create a stumbling block to God's power in the lives of Africans, but most Africans accept that Western medicines cannot meet certain basic needs and cure African diseases caused by traditional magic powers (Myandu 1994:21; Makhubu 1988:2; Mkhize — interviewee no. 58; *Speaking for ourselves* 1985:21).

The rise and growth of the African Independent Churches, including the ZCC, resulted, among other things, from the need to prevent the erosion of traditional culture in relation to God. Nevertheless, the missionaries' lack of appreciation of the spirit world and their not attempting to understand it contributed significantly to the development of the ZCC. Commenting on the ineffectiveness of the Gospel message presented by many missionaries, which gave the impression of a God who was not interested in the affairs of Africans, Dube (1994:134) says that when Africans broke away from the mission churches to form their own churches, their basic purpose was to consult the scriptures to hear what God said. In fact, through their efforts to hear from God Himself in the Bible, many Africans discovered that the Word of God did not always correspond to what the missionaries conveyed. They discovered that the God of the Bible was interested in their affairs. They learned about a God who loved and a God who wanted justice and righteousness for all people. From the Bible, they heard about a God who told them to do to others as they would expect others to do to them. Many Westerners still do not understand the reality of the spiritual power threatening the lives of Africans (Froise 1994:5).

Daneel rightly remarked that Africans' discovery of the Bible in the vernacular contributed to their understanding God's Word more clearly than how it had been conveyed to them by missionaries. They were encouraged by the understanding that God recognised them as important to him. This knowledge and their experiences of God's power in their religious practices facilitated their self-awareness. The Bible became the source of their power (Daneel

1987:25). During this study the researcher experienced this belief in the power of God's Holy Spirit in the ZCC. The power of the Holy Spirit which is experienced in these churches made them known. Many people approach them in search of this power.

The leaders of the ZCC serve God in their own context from such experience. Africans found it encouraging to realise that God was interested in them. After founding their own churches, the church leaders led them (Africans) to God through the Scriptures from an African approach. From the Bible, these churches learned that some aspects of their culture were acceptable to and appreciated by God. This discovery prompted the ZCC leaders and gave them the desire to assist their followers, who were depressed and oppressed, through God's power in the Bible. Many of those Christians, who got no assistance from and could not relate to the Christianity reflected by the historical churches, joined the ZCC.

To the question, "Why did you leave the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika, presently called the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa and join the ZCC?", one respondent, Mrs R Sibanda, replied: "Because I have found life in the ZCC and I am being fed." It is from this experience of the Christianity of the missionaries that we discussed numinous power and the spirit world in the ZCC (Sibanda and Khuse — interviewees nos 60 and 61).

To the African community, the existence of the spirits and their power or force in people's lives is a reality — even to Africans who have embraced the Christian religion. The key questions for Africans are how to live successfully, and how to adhere to the standards and norms of the Bible in the midst of all the forces which are culturally rooted, and to what degree these forces and their influence affect Africans' striving to live up to their new Christian belief. These questions become more crucial if one keeps in mind that to Africans, the spiritual world is so real and near that its forces are intertwined with and inspire the visible world affecting all people, both Christian and non-Christian (Parrinder 1954:10).

In response, Africans who have accepted the lordship of Jesus Christ maintain that in the ZCC, the power of the Supreme God provides solutions to all problems, including those created by the influence of the African spirit world. Parrinder (1954:24) puts it this way:

All Africans believe in the ancestors as ever-living and watchful ...The ancestors were human, but they have acquired additional powers and men seek to obtain their blessings and avert their anger by due offerings. Above all, there is the Supreme Being ... in times of great distress many Africans turn to God in desperation. He is the final resort, the last court of appeal. The power of God is Supreme; all flows from Him and inheres in Him.

While members of the ZCC are aware of the reality and influence of magical power which surrounds them, they are confident that God, by His numinous power, holds a solution for them when they pray to Him in the name of Jesus. Christianity came to Africa with the message of numinous power from the Supreme God. From the Bible they learn that He is the Creator, in the church they experience His power through the Holy Spirit. They believe that this God revealed Himself to mankind in Jesus, according to the Scriptures. In interacting with God, Africans have learned that this God cares for them individually.

The concept of God as the Supreme God and His power in relationship to His people is basic to the confidence of the members of the church. That the ancestors, traditional healers and medicines have power is a fact, but the people know that they possess no enabling power. This power is only obtained from God, through prayer in the name of Jesus. When the Bible speaks about this numinous power of the Supreme God, power which addresses Africans' basic problems, including their fear of magical power, it makes sense to them. Consequently, even though Africans accept the supernatural powers of the ancestors and traditional healers, they do not worship them but God. The ancestors were (and are) accepted as mediators and messengers of God (Makhubu 1988:60).

After Africans had accepted the Christian faith which they valued, they did not know who to consult with problems related to magical forces, those problems for which, in the traditional world, the traditional healers (diviners) are the specialists. This left a gap and created a need for more power to replace the protection catered for by the traditional healer, rituals and medicine. This gap caused uncertainty and fear for many. Anderson (1990:91) comments on

this gap in the lives of Africans and the need for the gospel message to address it:

It is to this gap in the existential world of Africa that African Christianity must speak. To be relevant to all Africa's needs, the biblical message must provide a comprehensive and qualitatively higher alternative to the solutions the traditional person seeks. It must provide a dynamic, life-giving power that secures deliverance from evil and allows one to feel safe. It must furthermore provide for the existential "this worldly" needs, and not only for the "life-to-come".

Reading the Bible from their perspective, Africans discovered that God's power is able to end their fears and uncertainty — the basic needs the missionaries could not address when they brought Christianity to Africa. Problems which the missionaries generally considered heathen often formed the core of Africans' existence. From the Bible, Christians realised that there is nothing that God of the Bible cannot address. The problem was not Christianity, but the way in which the gospel message was transmitted to the Africans. It did not respond fully to an African culture based on a spiritual concept.

Since Africans' basic needs cannot be separated from their religion, Christianity must address them effectively. If not, Christianity does not help Africans, but instead causes them more problems. Makhubu (1988:19) has this to say about the frustrations caused by missionaries, who transmitted Christianity to Africans without minding the holistic approach and the impact of spiritual forces on Africans, an act which only brought frustration to Africans:

White Christianity suppresses. Western manners that control people in daily life and even before God are presented as Christianity. You must also dress in a western mode to be a Christian.

From the Bible, Christians discovered that the African culture, which was condemned as heathen and barbaric, agrees with the Bible. These Christians were struck by the agreement which exists between the African world-view and the Old Testament. The ZCC's approach of presenting God's message, which is a holistic one, allows the members to listen and hear God's Word addressing each one of them directly, not via the Western world-view. This

brings God's word of power differently, which addresses Africans in their own context. Africans then realise some distortions of the impact of the power of God, based on the Bible; power which became the sole answer to all their basic problems; the problems which the Christianity presented by the missionaries could not even address. The ZCC leaders consult God of the Bible through prayer in the name of Jesus for any problems they encounter, whether spiritual or otherwise (Daneel 1987:85).

Makhubu, however, mentioned that there are Christians who, when confronted with problems of life, resort to sacrificing to the ancestors, in the hope of finding relief. Makhubu stated that he knew of "born again" Christians, who, while they usually claimed that they had nothing to do with their dead forebears, when some serious illness struck and medical help failed, secretly turned to the ancestral diviners. He also knew of educated people living in the elite sections of black townships, secretly carrying goats and sheep home in the boots of their cars for sacrifices to the ancestors. In performing these rituals, the elite pretended they were ordinary parties or social gatherings (Makhubu 1988:61). Commenting on this, Pauw (1975:140) concurs as follows:

It has already become evident that there are Christians who hold beliefs and perform rituals related to the ancestor cult of Xhosa tradition. Christians do sometimes vaguely relate these beliefs and rituals to the Christian tradition, but it is to them primarily a feature of Xhosa tradition and the continuity with this tradition is obvious.

During the research it became evident that this tendency exists in Soweto, too, particularly if a Christian is attacked by an illness which does not heal under Western treatment. Pooe, Mthethwa and other interviewees indicated that when Western medication fails, help is sought from traditional healers. If a traditional healer prescribes sacrifice to the ancestors as a remedy, some Christians perform it — though secretly (Pooe — interviewee no. 89; Mthethwa — interviewee no. 90; Mofokeng — interviewee no. 31).

The influence of God's numinous power is clearly experienced in the ZCC because God operates and is involved in the lives of the people. His power is also realised in the affairs of the community. Leaders of the ZCC, who are generally called bishops, prophets, overseers

and presidents by their followers, play an important role in leading their flock to experience God's power. In this regard Daneel (1987:135) states,

Against the background of the traditional world-view, which assumed a constant interaction between empirical reality and the spirit world, the prophets provide a simple, intelligible "system of reference" in which the Spirit of God acts as protective power in a world fraught with uncertainties which many people experience as threatening. Here constant exposure to witness and proclamation, in which God's help, protection ... in everyday life feature prominently, plays an important part.

The power of God experienced in the ZCC frees people who fear the effect of the evil spirit in their lives. This becomes clear when diseases are healed through prayer and those who are cured witness to it publicly.

The office of prophet in the ZCC receives prominence, particularly in filling the need for diviners in traditional cosmology. Prophets are known to be religious people who are called by God to serve in His church by the power of God. There are prophets who read the Bible in their training and also in their dealing with all who need help. A prophetess from the Bantu Independent Ethiopian Apostolic Church of South Africa was emphatic that she works with the Holy Spirit (Oosthuizen 1992:166).

African Christians of the ZCC believe that the prophet operates in the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit. The position and role of leaders in the ZCC is, in and through the power of God, to solve problems that affect the members. The leaders provide a service that ensures protection to the members against the adverse forces that are responsible for retrenchment, killings, illness and any misfortunes that cloud their future. The prophets do not possess the required power to accomplish this; they ask it from God who gives an answer through His numinous power. Like the seers in the Old Testament, the leaders of the ZCC and their role in the church and in the community are associated with God, as servants who proclaim God's word of power from the Bible. The members value their leaders as seers because they adequately provide security and stability to African Christians, in a way that neither the traditional specialists, medicines or any medical practitioners have done. These



members have realised that by calling on the powerful name of God, there is room for solutions to all their problems, which Western Christianity could not address.

To their surprise and joy, the Christians discovered from the Bible a God who gives them confidence in and for their everyday lives in a way that even the most known reliable person could not do (Mrs Z Bambo of Chiawelo — interviewee no. 64).

Daneel (1987:219) observed the following:

As for the Zionist and Apostolic Churches, one could say that they have reached a New Testament position. The historical person Christ, Lord and Saviour, is consciously accepted even though this key facet of the faith is sometimes crowded out by a host of religious activities. God the Father also occupies a far more prominent place in the lives and faith of church members than he held in the pre-Christian view. His more direct involvement in the lives of individuals is evident from regular reference to him in sermons ... of "God of Power", "Living God", "Our Protector".

Through a personal inspection of and listening to the Bible, members of these churches have discovered a God who is "far", transcendent, but simultaneously a God who is so "near", immanent, that they depend on His sufficient power for survival. They address Him as "Our Father" because of the concern He has for them.

Members of the church execute responsible duties through the conviction they have received from reading the Bible. A number of men and women assist in the key positions in the church. Some assist in teaching catechism classes, preparing those who have accepted the Christian faith to grow. They concentrate their teaching mainly on knowing and understanding the Bible rather than on church doctrine. Others assist the bishops in administering the church while many visit the needy and sick with the message of the Bible. All the members share in the Sunday services by participating in praising the Lord by singing and clapping of hands. Some occupy important positions by belonging to the church choir. Through their involvement in church activities, these members feel much enriched by the power of God. The ZCC is

therefore the real place to belong (Bambo — interviewee no. 64).

In the ZCC places are identified where members can receive assistance at suitable times from their bishops. These places are called by various names. The common names used to identify them are "Moria", "Zion City" and "Jerusalem". At the end of almost every Sunday service, the bishop attends to the patients, who each present their problems to the leader, who addresses them individually (Mgomezulu — interviewee no. 65).

Administration is structured according to church needs priorities. The overseers, bishops, prophets or presidents are usually supported by their subordinate pastors. More often the overseer gathers with his subordinates to teach them how to run the church. Each co-pastor reports to the overseer about his ministry. The president counsels them on how to minister to various needs. The overseer encourages his co-pastors to rely on the power of Jesus for solving problems. Before the members of the ZCC received their positions from the Scriptures, they were not able to exercise these valuable duties. They depended on the missionaries for everything and believed that anything done by the missionaries was perfect. Some of the senior leaders appoint co-pastors to take charge of church administration (Mbule — interviewee no. 66).

ZCC liturgy has almost the same form as that of the missionary churches. The main difference is that to the ZCC, each service is an "event". Something of God's power is usually experienced in every service. The service lasts for a whole afternoon or, mostly, for a whole night. The duration of the service depends on the bishop or the shepherd is directed by God's power. The time of the service is not a problem to members, what counts for them is their encounter with God during the services. The preaching and exposition of the Bible are still central. There may be more than one preacher at one service (Kheswa — interviewee no. 67).

The ZCC hold that the power of God's Holy Spirit directs their leaders; that the power of the Holy Spirit protects, heals and cures their diseases through prayer; that the power of the Holy Spirit is experienced; that the Holy Spirit sustains and guides these churches in all their activities (*Speaking for ourselves* 1985:16).

A central part of a Sunday service is the members' sharing of blessings: some thank the Lord for His blessings in their lives; some read Bible verses that have blessed them, sharing the impact that God's message has had on their lives; some bless God through a song for having answered their prayers. Through singing, sharing, dancing and clapping hands, God's power works in the hearts of members. Usually at this stage of a church service many exclaim, "I can feel the presence of the power of God in this service" (Taiwe — interviewee no. 68).

The preaching is preceded by Scripture reading. The sermon is usually interspersed with song, waving and clapping of hands, dancing, and music on drums and other musical instruments. Prophecies and ecstatic experiences take place. Then follows communal prayer prayed aloud by all the members in unison. During the services, the prophets are engaged in pastoral care to those who deserve it urgently. The overseer sometimes moves into another room in the building to attend to people with problems. After attending to people seeking professional aid, they rejoin the congregation to participate in the service. It does sometimes happen that the bishops, prophets or overseers will interrupt the proceedings to announce messages that God's power had revealed to them. It might be that there is a need to counsel someone in the congregation who has a specific, yet serious, problem. By the bishop's explaining the type of problem, the person concerned knows that he should go aside to be given aid by the bishop. The fact that the bishop usually receives the message, without having been told beforehand about the problem by anyone in the assembly, confirms to the members that it is, indeed, a message revealed by God's power (Daneel 1987:224). What Daneel says is also applicable to Soweto.

ZCC members accept God's numinous power as the source of all power. They believe that the ancestors' and diviners' power originates in and depends on God's power. The supernatural force of witches, sorcerers and medicines is subject to God's power. As a result their African concept of the spirit world does not erase or contradict their concept of God and His power. In fact, the traditional concept of the spirit world, which could be controlled by the diviners alone, helps the Christians to value and appreciate God's numinous power more clearly. They refer to God as the Great One, who loves them. The bishops' persuasion of the new converts to have faith in God arises from the trust the ZCC has in God's power. Accepting God's power as the solution to any problem prompts Africans to accept the

Christian faith in Jesus Christ, after which the new converts stop praying to God through the ancestors and pray in the name of Jesus Christ. The fact that, through His power, God of the Bible addresses the basic community needs more satisfactorily than anyone else encourages Africans to believe in the God of the Bible. For that reason, people with serious problems, who have tried everything else without success, do receive assistance free in the ZCC through the name of Jesus. Once assisted, they join the ZCC, where the traditional spirit world power is replaced by the numinous power of the God of the Bible (Daneel 1974:255).

#### **4.3 COMPARISON: NUMINOUS POWER AND THE SPIRIT WORLD IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND NUMINOUS POWER AND THE SPIRIT WORLD IN THE ZCC**

African traditional religion holds that after people's death, they receive more power than before. The ancestors are therefore believed to be the guardians of the living. African traditionalists believe that it is the ancestors, who care for the living, who grant blessings to the living and see to their welfare. They maintain that, without the care of the ancestors, people's lives are in great danger. The ZCC trust in God of the Bible for their welfare and destiny. They confess it is God of the Bible who guards and leads the church (Ps 23:1-4; Jn 10:11). They believe that it is because of the power of God that a church can survive. To them, God's care supersedes all.

##### **4.3.1 Differences**

- (1) African traditionalists hold that evil spirits manifest their power in the following categories: the ancestral power, the power of witches and sorcerors, and in diviners/medicine men.

The ZCC have no categories of manifestation of the evil powers.

- (2) Traditionalists approach the ancestors when encountering problems in life. The ZCC go to the church to pray.

- (3) African traditionalists believe the ancestors have power over life, poverty,

sickness, misfortune and death.

The ZCC believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to heal and save from death. They hold that the power of the ancestors depends on the power of the Holy Spirit.

- (4) Traditionalists hold that traditional healers have the ability to control the evil power. The ZCC believe that only God through the Holy Spirit can control the evil power.
- (5) Traditionalists rely on the power of diviners and the divination set to explain the reason for their problems. The ZCC rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to solve their problems.

#### **4.3.2 Similarities**

- (1) Traditionalists and the ZCC both hold that the power of evil is a threat to normal life. Consequently people feel compelled to acquire more power in order to counteract the evil powers.
- (2) Traditionalists and the ZCC are totally opposed to witchcraft and sorcery, and regard witches and sorcerers as evil people who wish to harm the community.
- (3) African traditionalists call upon a senior male member of the family to intercede for the rest of the family in sacrificing to the ancestors. The ZCC call upon the prophet to intercede for the whole congregation.

The researcher observed these similarities and differences in African traditional religion and the ZCC in the concept of evil powers. All the parties feel a need to acquire and possess more power in order to overcome the power of evil. Traditionalists turn to the ancestors and the traditional healer to acquire this power while the ZCC ask God for the power of the Holy Spirit.

In sacrificial rituals to the ancestors, it is the senior male who intercedes on behalf of the lineage or family. All the sacrificial rites are performed by him. The rest of the family do

nothing. It is believed that, by virtue of his seniority, he represents all his descendants to the ancestors. In the ZCC the bishop intercedes in prayer for the congregation. Although everyone prays to God at the same time during a church service, it is the function of the bishop or overseer, like the priests in the Old Testament, to beseech, thank and praise God in prayer on behalf of his congregation. Traditionally, when sacrificing to appease the ancestors, a goat, sheep or beast, sometimes even a fowl, is slaughtered. Slaughtering an animal to appease the ancestors is a must for completing the sacrificial rites to the ancestors.

God of the Christians demands a personal sacrifice, which comes from the heart. What pleases the Lord is not the sacrifice *per se*, but the attitude with which it is given (Ps 50:9-14). The ZCC's voluntary giving is prompted by biblical conviction. A sacrifice that pleases God is that of loyalty, thankfulness and readiness to keep God's word. African traditional religion idealises the world of the ancestors as being amply accommodating. It is believed to be a place for all the dead to live. The ancestors occupy important positions in this world. Hammond-Tooke (1985:58) states that the ancestors are seen as being at one level and as a "communion of the saints". This is because of the power that the ancestors have and their status over the living.

The ZCC hold that heaven is reserved for all who die having accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour. They emphasise that God is pleased with those who die having confessed their sins to Jesus. Those who die in their sins will not enter heaven, but stay for ever in a place of judgement, known as hell, together with Satan, their leader, who also does not enter heaven.

African traditional religion believes that the world of the dead is meant for all the dead. The ZCC believe that heaven is only meant for believers in Jesus Christ. All who deny Him advance to hell, a fearful and horrible place.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **NUMINOUS POWER AND HEALING**

#### **5.1 HEALING IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION**

African traditional religion has a spiritual concept of life. Africans have always been aware of the spirit world and are sensitive to the evil powers which can possess people and cause illness and misfortune. Traditionalists believe that the physical world harbours magical forces which threaten the stability and security of the living. "Africa knows a relatively widespread belief in the nature of spirits ... the whole of nature and all of life are, in terms of African thinking, permeated with spiritual power" (Kruger, Lubbe & Steyn 1996:34).

African traditionalists hold that the Supreme Being's power is above all power. God is accepted as the source of all power and is thus highly respected and honoured. Africans accord God the same respect as rulers because of his power. In accordance with African tradition, certain procedures have to be observed in order to gain access to a person of authority and rank, such as a king. Contact with such a person can only take place through an approved councillor or mediator. This attitude of respect also holds in spiritual affairs and requires the intervention of mediators.

Traditionalists believe that in order to live among the magical powers in the world ordinary people have to fulfil certain requirements. The traditional healer is the only advisor with the power to deal with these spiritual forces. Appeasement of the ancestors by means of sacrificial rituals is essential. Family rituals ensure the continued support and protection of the ancestors. The rituals also promote sound relationships among the members of the community, both living and dead. When the well-being of individuals is adversely affected, Africans consult the traditional healer for advice (Kruger, Lubbe & Steyn 1996:35).

##### **5.1.1 The power of the ancestors**

It should be noted that African traditionalists' approach to life, health and healing is closely

linked to their concept of the ancestors. The ancestors play a vital role in their daily life. Westerners with their analytical thinking and reasoning find it difficult to understand the relationship between the living and the ancestors in African tradition (Bühmann 1989:27-28).

African culture dictates that the living must remember the ancestors (Makhubu 1988:60). Traditionalists hold that appeasement of the ancestors guarantees a good relationship with them, which ensures good health, success and prosperity. "African society was held together very largely by our customary ways of showing respect to the elders, parents and other ancestors. To us it makes no difference whether our ancestors are alive or dead. We still honour them and respect them. What destroyed our African society more than anything else was the rejection of our traditional ways of showing respect to our parents and ancestors" (*Speaking for ourselves* 1985:22).

African traditionalists believe that the people have to respect the older folks, including those who have died. Because of this belief, when young Africans meet others who are older than them, the young(er) ones must greet the older ones first. Youngsters who do not do this are considered to have no respect, a situation which brings misfortune upon them. Furthermore, African tradition holds that young people must honour older people, irrespective of whether the elders are their biological parents or relatives or not (Mahlare — interviewee no. 185; Molatodi — interviewee no. 186). Failure to appease the ancestors could bring misfortune upon the living, such as a poor harvest, illness, theft, or retrenchment.

### **5.1.2 The role of the traditional healer**

African traditionalists believe that the only person who can provide a reason for the problems people encounter and how they can be solved. People approach the traditional healer for the solution to personal, social, family and other problems, such as unemployment, illness, family disunity, and a lack of rain. Traditional healers have the skill and the power to deal with the situation, and therefore play a prominent role in African society. They prescribe the sacrifices to be made to appease the ancestors and the medium to use for healing, and provide protection against evil powers (Funani — interviewee no. 129; Bühmann 1989:27).



- **Diagnosis**

Traditional healers are consulted for any problem and illness in people's lives. They are respected and acknowledged for the service they render in diagnosing the cause of the problem and protecting the community. Traditional healers are specialists *par excellence* for diagnosing African cultural illnesses.

- **Divination**

Traditionalists believe that magical powers affect human beings and that there is hardly any event which cannot be explained in relation to this supernatural source. So, for example, if an African becomes ill, it is taken that the illness is caused by witchcraft. The ancestors who operate through magical forces may cause misfortune to the living as a warning that they are not satisfied. The living may experience misfortune in the form of reaping a poor harvest in a year of good rain when most farmers have an abundant harvest (Msomi — interviewee no. 130; Mönnig 1955:78).

Use is made of divination to examine victims' illnesses and problems. The divination set consists of certain bones of dead animals and roots of certain trees, contained in a bag made of the skin of a rock rabbit. African tradition regards the traditional healer as the "seer", who establishes what has gone wrong, what influences led to the victim's problem or condition, and what should be done to alleviate or rectify it. Through their knowledge, traditional healers are able to detect what is wrong with the patient or what led to the victim's problem (Mönnig 1955:80; Oosthuizen 1992:49; Bishop Buang — interviewee no. 131).

African traditionalists accept that to those trained in its use, the divination set can indicate the answer to any question or the meaning of any situation; deduce whether the misfortune is ascribed to witchcraft or the dissatisfaction of the ancestors. The set can indicate the cause and nature of the disease and the curative methods to be administered or what sacrifice should be made to the ancestors (Mönnig 1955:81).

When patients or victims consult traditional healers, they state the pain or complaint for which

they are seeking assistance. The traditional healers hand them the bag containing the divination set. The patients or victims then breathe into the bag, after which either they or the traditional healers will turn the bag over, shaking it until all the pieces have fallen out. The traditional healers will determine the cause of the problem or disease from the way the pieces lie, and then explain the findings. The victims or patients have the right to agree or to object if they disagree with the traditional healers' explanation. During the divination process, as part of the interpretation or explanation, the traditional healers may ask the victims or patients questions (Mönnig 1955:83-84).

The pieces of the divination set represent a man, wife, son, daughter or witch. The positions in which they land after having been thrown are significant to the traditional healer in diagnosing the complaint. If a man who is ill consults a traditional healer and one of the pieces, representing a witch points towards him, there is a strong possibility of witchcraft. Ultimately the traditional healer will arrive at the correct cause of the problem or illness (President Chomane — interviewee no. 132; Mr E Choane of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Church in Zion of Killarney — interviewee no. 133). The diviner, as medicine man, has all the knowledge concerning disease and its symptoms. This makes diviners on the whole some of the most knowledgeable people in the community (Mönnig 1955:84; Dire — interviewee no. 134).

- **Use of water**

Some traditional healers prescribe water to cure stomach complaints. The water is usually mixed with muti for the patient to drink. The power in the water and the medicine counteracts the evil powers responsible for the illness. The patient may vomit black stuff which is traditionally held to be the cause. For stomach ulcers or abscesses, patients are given lukewarm water with salt. They are expected to drink almost four litres of the mixture. The power of water mixed with salt or muti is used to dispel evil forces. Salt and muti added to the water makes it more powerful (Oosthuizen 1992:81).

### 5.1.3 Physical diseases

African traditional culture regards headaches, 'flu and common stomach ache as ordinary physical ailments, which are due to ecological or somatic factors. Physical ailments are caused by nature and Africans accept them as the body's response to seasonal changes throughout the year (Myanda 1994:20; Oosthuizen 1992:73). Colds and 'flu are considered to be winter ailments caused by the cold, a change in the climate or the seasons. Headaches are caused mostly in summer. Nature is regarded as the main cause of these ailments (Kheswa — interviewee no. 140; Myanda 1994:20).

### 5.1.4 Psychosomatic diseases

- **Insanity; schizophrenia**

Mental disturbances are ascribed to disharmony between people and the supernatural powers. Affliction by the evil spirit is said to be the major cause of insanity. A traditional healer may take revenge on behalf of his patient and inflict insanity on the person responsible for his patient's illness. To do so, the traditional healer will make use of witchcraft. Such a person becomes mentally affected when he walks over the ground which the traditional healer has "treated" or when he eats food to which medicine has been added to harm him. It may also be caused by a traditional healer's negative use of medicines for the purpose of harming the person in revenge for the illness caused to the healer's patient. The traditional healer whose intention is to take revenge on the person responsible for his client's illness may cause the perpetrator to become insane (Oosthuizen 1992:76; Kgokane — interviewee no. 141; Kgosana — interviewee no. 142).

- **Deformity, retardedness; mental retardedness or insanity**

African tradition regards this condition as deformed rather than retarded. The condition is due to an act of God. God, the Creator, is above all living creatures and has power over all people and everything (Khambule — interviewee no. 143). No one can know why other people were born deformed. No one can ask God why he is short and not tall. Everything belongs to God

and he has made people and things as they are. The same applies to deformed people (Khanya — interviewee no. 144).

- **Wizardry**

This condition is ascribed to the mother of a deformed person having eaten bewitched food. She may also have walked over bewitched ground. When the living fail to appease the ancestors and they become dissatisfied with the living, misfortune, including death or the birth of a deformed child, may occur. Deformity may thus be the consequence of wizardry which affected the parents of the child because they neglected their duties to the ancestors (Khunou — interviewee no. 145; Oosthuizen 1992:81).

- **Disobedience to parents**

Disobedience to parents is a serious matter in African culture. Parents are regarded as the guides in the family. A healthy relationship between parents and children ensures prosperity for the living. Failure to maintain a healthy relationship could mean misfortune (Langa, Tlokwe, Seseng, Ramphela — interviewees nos 147, 158, 159, 160; Oosthuizen 1992:80).

- **Seizures, epilepsy**

This condition is ascribed to the mother's having a disease of the blood in some cases. Witchcraft is believed to be another cause. When patients have a seizure, their bodies shake violently and they fall to the ground, they sometimes foam at the mouth, and there is a danger that they might bite through their tongue or swallow it. Sorcery may also cause the condition (Teffo, Maepa, Galane, Hlahla, Khanyile — interviewees nos 161, 162, 163, 164 and 165; Oosthuizen 1992:83).

### 5.1.5 African cultural diseases

Various powers of the ancestors play a role in causing diseases for the purpose of harming or killing the living. African cultural diseases have no Western counterparts. The following

are examples.

- **Sorcery**

Sorcery involves the deliberate use of substances in order to harm or kill specific people. Sorcery occurs mainly at night but sometimes during the day (Madikizela, Mallane, Marumo — interviewees nos 166, 167 and 168; Oosthuizen 1992:86).

- **Spirit possession or hysterical psychosis**

The patients utter strange cries or sounds which are believed to be the voices of the spirits speaking through them. To bystanders, the patients appear to be insane. The spirits can speak in various languages. The patients frequently run away, screaming or shrieking, from the clinic or hospital (Mashigo, Masilela, Moshitela — interviewees nos 169, 170 and 171; Oosthuizen 1992:80).

- **Poisoning — ingestion of sorcerer's poison; psychosomatic trait disorder**

In the case of poisoning, poisonous substances have been eaten and are embedded in the victim's chest. These patients lose weight and become thin, lose their appetite and have a dry cough similar to tuberculosis. In some cases the patients vomit blood and their complexion darkens. The condition causes stomach pains and affects the heart (Modise, Moeketsi — interviewees nos 172 and 173; Oosthuizen 1992:100).

Sorcerer's poison is a substance given to the victim unnoticed with the intention to harm or kill. As soon as the victim ingests the substance, it affects the chest and the victim is afflicted with pain. The victim suffers loss of weight and appetite, coughing spells, weakness, and vomits or coughs up blood. At this stage the assistance of the traditional healer is needed (Motlatsi — interviewee no. 175).

- **Pollution**

Pollution diminishes people's resistance to disease. It is responsible for a number of negative conditions or reactions which affect a person. A corpse is polluted and can cause everything in the household and the surrounding area to be contaminated. Women are considered to be polluted when menstruating and after giving birth to a baby. Various causes are believed to be responsible for pollution, such as hatred or jealousy, having sex with someone who is mourning, especially a spouse, wizardry, secret sins and not observing traditional customs. African tradition holds that a spouse may only make love twelve months after the burial of a husband or wife. Anyone engaging in sexual intercourse with a widow or widower will be polluted. After childbirth normal life may only resume after the period of pollution has been observed (Moubane, Mahlalela, Nene, Motoai — interviewees nos 176, 178, 179 and 180; Oosthuizen 1992:102).

## **5.2 NUMINOUS POWER AND HEALING IN THE ZCC**

Healing through the power of the Holy Spirit forms the core attraction in the ZCC. Most of the people who visit these churches for divine healing have failed to obtain a cure for their diseases or an improvement in their condition from traditional healers or Western hospitals and clinics (Myanda 1994:8-9). Such diseases constitute an imbalance between the metaphysical and the human order, which disturbs numinous power. This implies treating therapy-resistant cases of culture-bound syndromes in African patients. These diseases are caused by witchcraft, sorcery, possession by evil spirits, broken relationships and neglect of or disobedience to the ancestors. Basic feeding the Lord's sheep or flock is expressed in healing them mentally, physically and spiritually, according to the Bible (Joyner 1994:86).

### **5.2.1 The power of the Holy Spirit**

While the ZCC believe that healing was the main purpose of Christ's mission on earth, they hold that healing is only possible through numinous power (Makhubu 1988:77). With regard to the gaps in the history of these churches, the work of the Holy Spirit throughout their history has simply been left out. They believe that their churches were founded by the Holy

Spirit and it was the Spirit who called their leaders to serve and lead them. The Holy Spirit taught them to pray for women who do not bear children to conceive and they were healed (*Speaking for ourselves* 1985:16-17).

The ZCC understand that numinous power is the life-giving force which is indispensable to a complete life. Unlike evil forces, whose purpose is to destroy human life, peace, health and prosperity, numinous power, the Holy Spirit, who comes from Jesus and witnesses to him, has come so that people may have life and have it in full (Jn 10:30) (Mdluli, Seoke, Ledwaba — interviewees nos 11, 183 and 184).

Numinous power in the ZCC is revealed mainly through the healing services, which form the core of every church service. People who were ill are invited to come forward for healing through prayer and the laying on of hands. The ZCC believe in the presence of the power of the Holy Spirit (Motholo — interviewee no. 8).

### **5.2.2 The role of the prophet**

The ZCC believe that the prophet is the servant of God who is used by the Holy Spirit. When members encounter problems, they are urged to go to the church for help. In cases of illness, family disputes, barrenness, unemployment or homelessness, the prophet advises them to go to church for prayer (Motholo — interviewee no. 8).

The ZCC prophets assist the community by praying to God to heal and help them. African cultural diseases can only be healed by prayer. Prophets serve as servants of God and listen to the Holy Spirit. They are involved in the social relationships of the community and pray for all the problems in the community. The community are satisfied and this is one of the reasons for the growth of these churches (Oosthuizen 1992:49 and 165). While the prophet prays over or with a patient the Holy Spirit reveals the diagnosis to him in a vision. The prophet asks God to guide him and reveal the disease to him, and the vision comes. Sometimes the Holy Spirit reveals a diagnosis to a prophet before the patient even comes to consult him. Visions occur during prayer for the patient. Dreams occur in sleep (Makwala — interviewee no. 4; Oosthuizen 1992:50).

- **Diagnosis**

Members of the ZCC consult the prophet or faith healer for any illness.

- **Visions or dreams**

Prophets receive information about patients' illness from God through visions or dreams revealed by the Holy Spirit. These visions and dreams are referred to as the "spirit of prophecy" and reveal directly what the diseases are. Visions give the prophet insight into the problem and how it can be solved or the illness cured. Visions are experienced mainly during a state of prayer and together with dreams are the main sources of diagnosis in the ZCC (Oosthuizen 1992:49-50).

- **Use of candles**

Candle light assists the prophets to clarify the cause of the problem. By looking at the candles and praying for God's power, the prophets are able to diagnose the problem or illness. The candle light acts like a beam or torch that lights the way. Some prophets light seven candles and look at the patient seated opposite them while praying for guidance. Prophets of the ZCC prefer white candles because they believe that white candles represent the Holy Spirit. Other favourite colours are blue, which symbolises love, and green, which symbolises faithfulness (Seboloi — interviewee no. 191). During this process prophets emphasise the Holy Spirit's direction, to whose authority and leadership they submit (Oosthuizen 1992:55).

- **Use of water**

Some prophets pour clean spring water into a clay pot to examine patients. The water must be clean and pure and the patient is asked to look into the water. The prophet studies the patient's reflection in the water in order to diagnose the illness. Other prophets pour water into a glass and watch patients closely through the glass. While watching the patients, the prophets hum or recite prayers. When the prophets diagnose the illness, the patients are free to agree or disagree with the diagnosis.



Water that is prayed over is believed to have power from God to detect patients' illness and to reveal how it can be cured (Dzingwe — interviewee no. 136).

### **5.2.3 Physical diseases**

ZCC prophets treat the same physical diseases as traditional healers (see sec 5.1.3).

### **5.2.4 Psychosomatic diseases**

ZCC prophets treat the same psychosomatic diseases as traditional healers (see sec 5.1.4).

### **5.2.5 African cultural diseases**

- **Spirit possession or hysterical psychosis**

Patients presenting with spirit possession or hysterical psychosis continually scream, shriek or make strange noises. These sounds are supposedly the voices of the spirits within the patients. Patients react differently. Some become aggressive and others become unconscious. This state continues for a long time (Mashego, Masilela — interviewees nos 169 and 170; Oosthuizen 1992:88-89).

The spirits take control of the victim, who becomes very strong. When the victim is completely exhausted, the spirits start to speak, informing the audience why they came, who sent them and what they want. During spirit possession the victim's brain does not function normally. Spirit possession is also believed to be caused by someone spitting out muti and calling the name of a person to be possessed. The reason for this could be jealousy or a disturbed relationship. Women are generally affected more than men. Spirit possession is also ascribed to strong feelings of insecurity (Moshitela — interviewee no. 171; Oosthuizen 1992:89).

### 5.3 COMPARISON: DISEASES DEALT WITH IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND THE ZCC

African traditional religion and the ZCC deal with similar diseases.

#### 5.3.1 Differences

- (1) African traditionalists hold that the ancestors have the power to protect and make the living prosperous if the living constantly appease the ancestors with sacrificial rites. The ZCC depend on the power of the Holy Spirit and have faith in the name of Jesus. They believe that the power of the ancestors is limited and comes from the Holy Spirit.
- (2) African traditionalists consult the traditional healer for help with problems and illness. The traditional healer is respected as the only one with the power and ability to inform the community of the person responsible for the adversity and to provide a remedy. The ZCC consult the prophet as God's servant in the belief that the Holy Spirit guides the prophet and brings the solution through prayer.
- (3) African traditionalists rely on the power of the divination set. The ZCC rely on the revelation of the power of the Holy Spirit through the prophet.
- (4) African traditionalists trust in the power and skills of the traditional healer to cure the disease. The ZCC rely on the power of the Holy Spirit achieved through prayer via the prophet, who is the shepherd and the servant of God. The power of the Holy Spirit expresses itself through the prophet in prayer by healing the disease.

#### 5.3.2 Similarities

The researcher observed that while African traditionalists believe in the power of the ancestors and traditional healers, the ZCC believe in the power of the Holy Spirit and accept the

prophet as the servant who is to lead, protect and guide the flock. Even traditional healers approach the ZCC for help with problems which they and the ancestors cannot solve. The ZCC deal effectively with them through the power of the Holy Spirit.

#### **5.4 COMPARISON: SYMBOLS OF PROTECTION IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND THE ZCC**

There are several similarities in the symbols used to express power in African traditional religion and the ZCC. Both use water, staffs, ash and medicine (muti) as agents of power to protect the living. However, African traditional religion believes that the power in these objects protects them. The ZCC believe the objects receive their power from the Holy Spirit after they have been prayed over. It is the power of the Holy Spirit using them as symbols.

Besides the symbols mentioned above, the ZCC use flags and the Bible. The Bible is believed to have power because it is the word of God. The ZCC believe that the presence of a bible in a house or with members is power. The researcher found that the ZCC emphasised their dependence on the power of the Holy Spirit in the objects. African traditionalists, on the other hand, rely on the power in these objects.

- **Ash**

Africans hold that ash has the power to protect and cure because it is clean. Any impurities are said to have been consumed by fire. The power of ash smeared on the window panes at the house of a deceased person protects the family against attack by any evil forces, including those responsible for the death.

After attending a funeral some families hold a cleansing day. Ash is added to the water and the family is cleansed. This ritual serves to protect them from being affected by the corpse since a corpse is polluted. The ceremony also serves to protect them from any other misfortune associated with the death (Tseola, Dolomo — interviewees no. 181 and 182).

- **Water and sea water**

Many Africans regard water as God's greatest natural gift with power to secure life. All life depends on and exists because of water. Natural spring water, which is regarded as clean and pure, is used for purification. Tap water is only used if tap water cannot be obtained. Water is mainly used for ceremonial cleansing. It is sprinkled around the house and on the roof for protection. The power in water is accepted as securing peace. Water is known to be a natural medicine from God. After a hard day's work people are offered water to drink and bath in. They then feel refreshed. Sea water or water mixed with salt is sprinkled in the yard for protection against witches (Makhubu 1988:78; Kolokoto, Lefakane — interviewees no. 148 and 149). Sea water is regarded as having the power to protect. People who live far from the sea either visit the sea or ask others to bring them sea water. This water is sprinkled in the house and the yard at night when the children and the neighbours are in bed to ward off evil and witches. People living in Soweto, for example, who cannot reach the sea gladly pay others up to R30 to bring them sea water in five-litre containers. They use the sea water very sparingly in Soweto. Some people add sea water to their bath water. It is believed to possess power because it is blue, which symbolises heaven. The salt in sea water makes it more powerful (Montle, Lekota — interviewees no. 156 and 157; Makhubu 1988:79).

The ZCC regard water as God's greatest natural gift to be used for healing. Natural spring water is preferred because it is considered clean and pure. Tap water, on the other hand, is considered polluted because of the chemicals in it. Although mostly tap water is used in the townships, running and spring water are preferred. The ZCC's major precondition is that water, even the powerful sea water, has to be consecrated. The church leader blesses the water by praying with arms outstretched. The ZCC believe that consecrated water protects them against the power of the evil spirits, including sorcery, wizardry and pollution. Because of the prayer of consecration, whoever uses it can step over evil objects without being affected. People without jobs find employment. This water also protects people from affliction by the evil spirits responsible for the death of the person whose funeral they attended. For this reason, after a funeral, the ZCC sprinkle their members at the entrance of the deceased's yard, immediately after returning from the cemetery. This sprinkling with water assures protection to members against any possible affliction related to death. Consecrated water is used as

protection against misunderstanding and disputes within the family of the deceased when the funeral arrangements are being made. This water is also sprinkled over the clothes of the deceased before sharing them out among the family according to African custom (Oosthuizen 1992:158-159; Lenake, Holomisa — interviewees no. 192 and 193).

- **Flags**

The ZCC use flags for protection against attacks by evil spirits at home. The flags are put at the gate or entrance to their yards. Flags are planted as a sign that the place is safe and that activities cannot be obstructed by evil forces. The flags serve as protection against witchcraft. Members take flags to their places of worship to be prayed over. The ZCC hold that the power of prayer loads the flags with the power to protect. Because of this power, members move freely at night without fear and walk long distances in the townships to attend church services, protected by the flags. The Bible speaks of flags therefore the ZCC use them (Oosthuizen 1992:62; Nxumalo — interviewee no. 194).

- **Staffs**

Traditionally, every African home has a staff known as the staff of the home. The special thing about this staff is that it is usually taken to the traditional healer who rubs and works medicines into it so that it has power against evil forces sent by enemies and witches to harm the family. The staff is thus trusted, kept in a special place and used by the father of the house only when necessary for protection. If a snake should come into the house, the father will use the staff to kill it. Because of the medicines worked into it, this staff has the power to destroy snakes, even ones sent by wizards to harm the family. No other staff can kill a snake sent by a witch (Leshoro, Mabogoane — interviewees no. 150 and 151).

Prophets, bishops and members of the ZCC carry staffs or even bundles of sticks with them. After they have been prayed over at church the staffs or sticks are believed to have special power to fight against evil powers. The staffs are associated with Moses and most of the prophets maintain that their staffs are like the staff of Moses which he always carried. The ZCC use the staffs to fight the devil and they are powerful weapons and also maintain the

practice of the head of the homestead keeping a staff for protection.

The staffs may be straight or crooked at the top and may be made of wood, metal or bronze. Although some staffs have a small wheel, a star or a rooster at the top, most have a cross or a circle which signifies complete effectiveness. Zionist staffs are usually painted white. Each one has a particular use, for example, the long stick is used in the river with water to protect people against dangerous areas and animals; the silver and bronze staffs are considered special and are only carried by bishops. For most Zionists staffs are indispensable. The staffs are also used as a substitute for laying on of hands during prayer. Prophets who are used to carrying a staff, crozier or crook, feel naked without one because of the value they place on their staffs (Makhubu 1988:85; Oosthuizen 1992:61; Tambo — interviewee no. 195).

- **Cords and ropes**

Cords and ropes that have been prayed over are believed to have the power to protect. Cords are usually wrapped around the waist and across the shoulders, but may also be worn around the neck, ankles or wrists as protection against the forces of evil. Rosaries are also worn around the neck to ward off evil forces. Colour symbolism plays a vital role with the prayer leaders or prophets. In African traditional religion, white is used to counteract evil forces and to strengthen a person for present and future attacks. Prophets and bishops advise people whose resistance to evil forces is weak to wear cords on their arms and around their bodies. These cords provide them with the resistance to stand against evil spirits. Prophets maintain that the more cords there are around the body, the better the person's chances of being protected from affliction. The same applies to people who are sick or who require added strength (Oosthuizen 1992:74; Zomba, Debai — interviewees no. 197 and 198).

- **The Bible**

The power of the Bible as a symbol of protection is realised in all ZCC church services. In the house or in an open space, such as under a tree, the presence of the Bible represents the presence of the power of God, whose purpose is to protect the assembly. Prior to a healing session the Bible is read and passages about people being healed are cited. ZCC members take

bibles with them to church services, exorcisms and healing services, either at a house or the beach. Although they seldom read from it, the physical presence of the Bible is a symbol of God's power to ward off all evil powers. In this way ZCC members trust that God will protect, guide and lead his church against evil powers by his Word (Oosthuizen 1992:48).

- **Medicine (herbs and charms)**

The African concept of the power in medicine is synonymous with magic. African traditionalists definitely conceive of the beneficial physiological reaction of the power in medicine. Although this reaction is explained rationally, the power in medicine also has a magical influence, which is supernatural and inexplicable, but can only be experienced by those affected.

Some people wear herbs and charms around their waists and wrists for protection. People also put these herbs and charms at strategic points in their homes, such as at the entrance gate. The magical forces in these medicines prevent evil forces from harming the household. In the preparation of medicines, the concept of administering beneficial power in medicines as opposed to the destructive force of heat is observed. The magical active coolness in medicine is transposed from the medicine to the affected person. Medicines protect people by this process. Herbs and charms are obtained from the roots and bulbs of trees and plants (Maponya, Mlambo — interviewees no. 152 and 153).

## **5.5 COMPARISON: RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND THE ZCC**

- (1) African traditionalists are religious people. They pray to God through the ancestors. The high respect they have for God necessitated a mediator, a senior figure and the ancestors were the right ones. African traditionalists do not worship the ancestors. Their approach to God is based on African culture.  
The ZCC believe in one mediator, Jesus Christ, in their prayers to God.
- (2) African traditionalists offer sacrifices to the ancestors in appeasement so that the

ancestors will bless them. If this is not done constantly, the living fear misfortune as a consequence.

The ZCC sacrifice to thank God for redeeming and protecting them. They glorify and honour him for his power.

- (3) Singing, dancing and the use of various instruments form part of African traditionalism and express their joy and sorrow. The singing, dancing and music unite the community. It also informs the people of what is expected of them, say, for instance, at a meeting at the chief's kraal.

The ZCC's singing expresses the power of the Holy Spirit. It creates an atmosphere conducive to the effective working of the Holy Spirit. The music attracts members to participate in worship.

The researcher observed that the power of the instruments controls the Christians. The music unites them and prepares them to adhere to the Holy Spirit in the ZCC. African traditionalists use horns and reed whistles. The ZCC do not use these instruments as often as the traditionalists. The ZCC use a keyboard and clap hands more often than the African traditionalists. African traditionalists do not use keyboards and keep hand clapping to a minimum. God's power unites, motivates and heals the people when they worship.

#### • **Prayer**

African traditional religion believes that people cannot separate prayer or praying from their daily activities. Long before the whites came to this country African had their own culture and their own religion. Their forefathers believed in God and worshipped him as the Great One. Their everyday lives were regulated and ordered by traditions and customs. Religion and prayer were part of the day-to-day way of life. The African custom of having a mediator when approaching a person of high rank or position, such as a king or chief, has influenced their praying to God via the ancestors. They do not pray to the ancestors, but to God (*Speaking for ourselves* 1985:22; Bührmann in Oosthuizen 1992:29; Mahlare — interviewee no. 185).



For the ZCC, prayer is the key to every church activity. The ZCC believe that God's numinous power is received when people pray. Their focus in prayer is God, the provider and origin of power. They believe that the Holy Spirit is there to guide and reveal to the church what God desires. They pray to God in the name of Jesus and accept the biblical message as the Bible puts it. They pray for God's help in finding work and accommodation, and for protection against the evil forces. They trust in the power of prayer and that when the church has prayed for a solution to a problem, God will provide the solution. In every church service there is a time of prayer for the sick and needy (Oosthuizen 1992: 20, 78; Bührmann 1989:30).

- **Sacrifice**

African traditionalists believe that the ancestors must be respected even more after their death because they have more power over the living. Appeasing the ancestors through sacrifices is very important for the well-being of the living. The living slaughter a goat or a sheep as a sacrifice to the ancestors. This is done at home and the ritual is to avoid misfortune. The traditional healer guides those in need on the kind of sacrifice to offer to the ancestors. Disregard for offering sacrifice is considered disregard for one's ancestors, a matter which could cause misfortune to the living (Makhubu 1988:60; Molatodi — interviewee no. 186).

Sacrifice for the ZCC is based on biblical texts, such as 1 Corinthians 16:2. The ZCC offer sacrifice to thank God for the blessings of health, healing and prosperity. They go further and sacrifice themselves to God through prayer in the name of Jesus. Their plans, ministry and healing work is associated with reconciling the lost souls with God. The ZCC believe that the more one is faithful to one's sacrifice to the church, the more prosperous one will be. Hence almost every Sunday a group of ZCC members visit Moria to offer these sacrifices. To them, sacrifice to God is a commitment (*Speaking for ourselves* 1989:16; Makhubu 1988:66; Bunda — interviewee no. 202).

- **Singing and musical instruments**

Africans are loved and respected by other nations for their singing. For Africans, singing is

part of life. They sing when they work; when they are tired. They sing lullabies to put their children to sleep. Singing permeates the life of a black person (Makhubu 1988:71; Oosthuizen 1989:244).

The ZCC express their devotion to God in singing. They believe that God's power works in them when they sing. In the ZCC singing is biblically based, such as Psalm 81:1-3 and bible texts. They sing hymns and choruses and prefer ones that direct the minds of the assembly to healing. Members spontaneously clap their hands or raise their arms above their heads while singing. The ZCC believe that singing has the power to inspire the preacher (Oosthuizen 1992:56; Makhubu 1988:74; Mawela — interviewee no. 200).

- **Drums**

African traditional religion accepts drums accompanying the singing in the services. African traditionalists have always had musical instruments, such as drums, horns and reed whistles, to accompany their singing. The horn is also used to control the tempo of the singing during services, weddings and cultural festivals. Reed whistles are also used to lead the choir. When the conductor blows his horn or reed whistle high, the choir know they have to increase their volume; when he blows softly and slowly, it serves as an indication that the song is nearing the end (Masango, Malakalaka — interviewees no. 187 and 188; Mthetwa 1989:246; Oosthuizen 1992:55).

The use of drums and keyboards is a common feature in the ZCC. This is based on Psalm 81:1-3. The Bible advises that in praising the Lord, God's people should strike the tambourine, play the harp and sound the ram's horn. Drums and keyboards are used mainly during the church service on Sundays. These instruments attract the youth and prepare the assembly for the power of the Holy Spirit (Mothapo, Zikhalala, Skosana, Nenguvhela — interviewees no. 98, 99, 100 and 201).

- **Dancing**

Dancing accompanies music in African culture. Traditionally, when people sing, their bodies

move in response to the rhythm. It is contrary to African culture to sing without any movement. In African traditional religion dancing is a way of obtaining power and expressing gratitude.

Many members of the ZCC state that dancing makes them feel the power of the Holy Spirit. Many also feel empowered by the Holy Spirit during the singing. Some of the church leaders or prophets do not participate in dancing but allow the church members to do so. These prophets abstain from dancing in order to communicate with the Holy Spirit. In ZCC healing sessions, the dancing may last a whole night. Many members feel the power of the Holy Spirit during the dancing (Zikhalala, Skosana — interviewees no. 99 and 100; Oosthuizen 1992:55).

## **5.6 COMPARISON: METHODS OF HEALING IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND THE ZCC**

African traditional religion and the ZCC both consider any threat to life and health an enemy. Sickness is regarded as an intruder that disturbs the normal order ordained by God. Both believe in healing to restore equilibrium in the family, community and society. African traditional religion relies on the power of medicine while the ZCC believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. Both agree that prayer is the means by which the living communicate with God. African traditionalists ask the ancestors to intercede on behalf of the patients while the ZCC pray for healing in the name of Jesus. Both the traditionalists and the ZCC use the power of water. The ZCC drive out the evil forces by exorcism through prayer. They also practise the laying on of hands and dancing in circles while praying for the sick to allow God's power to function effectively. Laying on of hands and dancing while praying for the sick do not occur in African traditional religion.

The researcher noted that even though the traditionalists trust in the power of muti/medicine, they and the traditional healers stated that without the power of God no healing is possible.

### **5.6.1 Methods of healing in African traditional religion**

African culture and tradition define good health in terms of a healthy body and fulfilment of

the rules and rituals expected of human beings. Disease is viewed as a physical condition and a spiritual matter. Health depends on being in harmony with the spiritual powers. The net result of this balance is health, prosperity and wholeness, which find expression in participation in social activities. The metaphysical powers of the invisible world influence the powers of the visible world

The traditional healer is respected for his ability to maintain a sound balance between the metaphysical and the physical forces. Traditionalists maintain that what destroyed African society more than anything else was the rejection of their traditional ways of showing respect to their parents and ancestors. Lack of harmony between the two worlds brings disease and misfortune (Makhubu 1988:77; Gumede 1989:322; Dube 1989:112; Oosthuizen 1992:68; *Speaking for ourselves* 1985:22; Msomi — interviewee no. 130).

African traditionalists use medicine or muti to treat disease. Medicine or muti refers to a tree, shrub or herb. The traditional healer who treats the patient will prescribe the medicine according to the patient's condition. There are medicines for healing as well as for harming and even killing people. The intention behind the use of the medicine is important. The potency of the medicine is either inherent or derived from the ritual language used when it is administered. Thus, for example, the traditional healer can give medicine which makes a person insane and can also give the medicine to cure that person.

In treating psychosomatic diseases, such as insanity or schizophrenia, herbs are ground and boiled water is poured over them. The mixture is then given to the patient to drink. The patient will then react violently by sneezing, vomiting, jumping about and running around until he calms down. This is believed to be a sign that the patient is being healed. To treat epilepsy, medicine is applied to the patient's forehead and fat smeared on his joints. The patient is then given medicine to inhale.

Colour plays a significant role in traditional medicine. Black, white and red medicines are prescribed to fight dangerous diseases, such as spirit possession. White, which is considered cool, restores strength to a patient. Symbolic medicines are used to re-establish relationships, remove evil forces, and restore the balance between the metaphysical and physical powers.

The medicine is used to fortify the patient against future attacks (Oosthuizen 1992:74 and 84).

- **Sacrificial rites**

African tradition is reflected in the treatment of disease. In some cases the traditional healer may instruct the patient to perform sacrificial rituals to the ancestors. Treatment is designed to restore the balance between the metaphysical and the physical forces, to weaken the evil force, and to strengthen the patient. Treatment techniques are aimed at deliverance from a particular adverse or unhappy situation. Treatment of disease is primarily concerned with personal relationships and people's understanding that they depend on the supernatural for the satisfaction of their needs, which transcend material needs (Oosthuizen 1992:77; Dube 1989:116-117; Daneel 1987:148; Funani — interviewee no. 129).

### **5.6.2 Methods of healing in the ZCC**

The ZCC consider healing to be the major purpose of Christ's mission on earth. Their view is based on Scripture (e.g., Jn 9:25 and 11:43). Healing implies the restoration of social relationships, physically and metaphysically, and requires a holistic approach. The prophet plays a major role in the ZCC as the shepherd who is the welfare consultant, seer and advisor of the flock. Through prayer the prophet succeeds in permitting the power of the Holy Spirit to take control of all who are needy (Oosthuizen 1992:165).

- **The role of prayer**

The prophet prays to God in the name of Jesus for the patient's healing. Prayer occurs in a congregational context and is considered more effective because of the communal prayers, rhythm, singing and dancing. The ZCC take the communal approach seriously because it is part of African culture and tradition. The prophets are regarded as seers who have the ability to communicate with the Holy Spirit and thereby protect the community. The ZCC community takes the place of the extended family and the church acts as a sensitive and caring community. Members are protected and fortified against adversity and the evil forces through their oneness in spirit. The healing centre and sessions give meaning to their

fellowship (Dube 1989:122; Oosthuizen 1992:74-78; Hammond-Tooke 1989:53; Bührmann 1989:30; Lenkoe, Mawela — interviewees no. 199 and 200).

- **Exorcism**

The ZCC have a reputation of being able to exorcise the powers of evil. This is done during a healing session when the pophet prays for the sick in the name of Jesus. The evil powers are believed to come from the devil and his agents, namely sorcerors and witches. Evil forces are sent to weaken the patient physically and spiritually. Exorcism is a counter attack on evil. Many who attend the ZCC healing sessions are healed. The prophets pray for and heal people by the power of the Holy Spirit (Oosthuizen 1992:74; Mooketsi, Mdluli — interviewees no. 6 and 11).

- **Laying on of hands and dancing**

Singing constitutes a major part of ZCC church services. Prophets and faith healers sing to God for healing for those with problems. Music is said to create an atmosphere for the power of God to use the servant. ZCC members and some prophets dance around a patient in a circle. When the prophet prays, he lays hands on the patient's shoulders or the painful area of the body. Laying on of hands is a sign of love and concern for the patient and expresses God's love which is extended to the sick (Oosthuizen 1992:55; Makhubu, Ndobha — interviewees no. 9 and 10).

Members of the ZCC approach the church leader with all their domestic, social, personal, political and spiritual problems. During the healing services, which are usually held every Sunday, people affected by any illness or problem are called to come forward for healing. The ZCC believe their rapid growth is due to God's power through the Holy Spirit, which draws so many to them for healing (Oosthuizen 1992:39, 1994:241; *Speaking for ourselves* 1989:28; Motholo — interviewee no. 8).

- **The use of water**

Many prophets use holy water for healing. People who are sick or have problems come to the church for healing. Some bring water with them to be prayed over. This water is sprinkled on the shoulders of the patient during a healing session to ward off evil forces. The prophets pray for healing in Jesus' name and use the water as a symbol of God's power. The ZCC cite the Bible as justification for healing (eg, 2 Kgs 5:14; Ezek 36:25; Lev 14:8). In the ZCC cleansing takes place in the morning with water in a nearby river (Oosthuizen 1992: 75, 105; Makhubu 1988:78).

## **5.7 A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HEALING IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND THE ZCC IN SOWETO**

In conducting this study the researcher found that African traditionalists rely on the power of the ancestors as intermediaries. Constant appeasement of the ancestors is therefore essential for the living to acquire power.. The ZCC rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and pray in the name of Jesus. Salvation and blessing are gifts of grace from God for which people cannot work. The power of the ancestors and of the Holy Spirit are supernatural, but the Holy Spirit is above all powers.

The traditional healer and the prophet are consulted for help. Traditional healers believe in the power of medicine and their knowledge of medicine is essential for prescribing medication. Prophets in the ZCC believe in the power of the Holy Spirit, who works through them. The researcher found during this study in Soweto that both the traditional healer and the prophet are viewed as seers and advisors of the community. Both are also regarded as credible consultants in the community of Soweto because of their holistic approach to healing and meeting the needs of the community. The community acknowledge their position, skills and knowledge. While the traditional healers refer to the power of the ancestors, medicine and other objects, the prophets refer the community to the power of the Holy Spirit.

The researcher found similarities in the diagnosis of diseases by African traditional religion and the ZCC. Both were found to use certain objects to determine the cause of and the

remedy for the problem or condition. However, while African traditionalists always make use of objects, ZCC prophets only do so if revealed in a vision by the Holy Spirit. While the African traditionalists rely on the knowledge and skills of the traditional healer, the ZCC, including the prophets, depend on the power of the Holy Spirit for a cure.

African traditional religion and the ZCC both treat the same three types of disease. Healing in African traditional religion usually occurs at the home of the traditional healer whereas in the ZCC it usually happens at the place of worship.

African traditional religion and the ZCC both make use of certain common objects for healing and protection. However, some objects used by African traditionalists are not used by the ZCC and vice versa. African traditionalists make greater use of the power of the staff of the home to cast out evil forces than the ZCC do. The ZCC, on the other hand, makes extensive use of the Bible to cast out evil.

Both African traditional religion and the ZCC regard health as essential to life and anything that negatively affects or threatens health as an intruder to be eradicated. African traditionalists and the ZCC both make use of singing, dancing and water in healing. Both use some of the same musical instruments while at the same time differing on the use of certain other instruments. For example, the ZCC use the keyboard and the guitar which African traditionalists do not.

The researcher found that African traditionalists ultimately also depend on the power of the Holy Spirit for healing.



## CHAPTER 6

### NUMINOUS POWER AND INSTRUMENTS (OBJECTS)

#### 6.1 NUMINOUS POWER AND INSTRUMENTS/OBJECTS IN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

African tradition affirms the existence of a universal power. This life force is believed to be in everything: in people and in instruments/objects. Some people and instruments have more of this mysterious force than others. According to African belief, some mountains and rivers are considered to have a special energy and may not be approached without proper prior negotiation. Without this, anyone visiting such places may encounter serious injury, including the total disappearance of the living. Traditional social transformation is done at such places by traditional healers to bring about order within the community. The sea serves as a contact medium with the forces in the metaphysical world (Oosthuizen 1994:40).

Tempels (1952:44-45) correctly says that all African behaviour is centred in the single value of acquiring life, strength or vital force; that Africans' purpose in life is to live strongly and to make life stronger and to ensure that power remains perpetually in one's posterity. Anderson (1990:67) says that to Africans, life, existence is inextricably tied up with power. To live is to have power, to be sick or to die, is to have less of it.

The African concept of power which manifests itself in all persons and in instruments/objects also has to do with a person's dignity, authority and power over all types of oppression. People who are denied their personal right of expression and privileges, and have to face injustices and affronts to their personal dignity lack this power. Those who are confronted by the surrounding spirit world in the universe, with its threatening appearances and forces, desire to be in control of what is so often an uncontrollable situation. They strive to acquire the liberating ability and strength that will enable them to carry on. When faced with poverty, misfortune, injustice, sorcery, witchcraft, evil spirits, floods, famine and death, they long for something outside themselves that will enable them to cope, for they cannot manage in their own power. This African human need, which manifests itself in the desire for enabling power,

is found in every expression of human activity — religious, political and otherwise. Since for the traditional community, traditional healers are the guides against the adverse forces responsible for bad relationships, sickness and misfortune, traditional Africans consult them for the causes and cure of such diseases. In the performance of their duty, traditional healers use certain objects traditionally accepted to have power: divination sets, medicine, ash, salt, sea water and staffs (Anderson 1990:68-69).

### **6.1.1 Divination set**

A major issue with traditional healers is to discover the cause of any misfortune in a traditional community. The usual initial step is to diagnose the patient. Divination sets are traditionally accepted as instruments loaded with power, which enable traditional healers to detect the cause of the unwanted situations and therapeutic measures to cure them. Traditional Africans hold that since divination sets are the bones of dead animals, they are able to divine any problem put before them. African tradition asserts that the divination set of bones has the power to control supernatural forces and that traditional healers, using the set, are able to divine the source of all mishaps (Mönnig 1955:80).

African traditionalists maintain that because of the power in the divination set, traditional healers can deduce through divination whether the cause of a mishap is due to wizardry or the dissatisfaction of the ancestors. If due to wizardry, the divination set indicates the type of magic to apply and how it should be used against wizardry; if due to the ancestors' dissatisfaction, it will prescribe what sacrifice to make to the ancestors. Divination sets are regarded as essential in detecting the cause of any abnormal situation affecting a person or community and can also indicate the nature of the disease. Traditionalists hold that the divination set can predict the cause of a war, the outcome of a journey and any other future even about which people wish to know, as well as the precautionary measures to be taken to ensure the desired outcome. Divination sets are considered to have the power to prescribe the magic to be employed for all unknown situations to ensure success in any endeavour — whether in court, the job situation or bad relationships. They can show where a stolen object or property can be found. No wonder, then, that the South African Police Services resorted to involving the skills and knowledge of traditional healers to assist in locating the serial killer

in Cleveland, Johannesburg, Atteridgeville, Pretoria and Boksburg. This announcement was made on FM Radio Station in September 1995. Many Africans who telephoned to comment on this move confirmed that it was the best move towards identifying the culprit since they believed that he could be using medicines to protect him from being located, but that the diviner could trace him. Traditionally, when cases of this nature are investigated, traditional healers rely on divination sets for information. Mönnig (1955:80-81) has the following to say about methods used by diviners:

Various methods of divination are used ... The most common method is that which uses divination bones. This is, in fact, also the principal method since, even when other methods of divination are used, they will usually be preceded or concluded by consultation with the bones. Usually consulting the divination bones is considered sufficient.

Despite the wide range of supernatural forces which are conceived to be active in the daily life of Africans, it should not be assumed that the traditionalists' life is ridden with fear and suspicion. Africans are a happy people. Certainly, they do fear wizardry and the supernatural powers present in all their activities. Yet they can be protected from the powers by applying the divination set.

### **6.1.2 Medicine**

A holistic traditionalist approach to medication in curing diseases, based on the indication from divination, is the key to success in effecting medicine as an instrument/object of power. Such an approach ensures equilibrium in a person's social relationship. In order to restore the equilibrium when disturbed, a holistic approach to the entire situation affecting a person is necessary. The bad and negative forces have to be detected and removed from the situation and from the affected person to achieve normal health . It is in this area that the power of medicine plays a significant role in African tradition (Oosthuizen 1969:3).

African traditionalists use the power in medicines for protective measures or for ensuring the

desired results/outcomes and to cure. Mönnig (1955:88) comments:

Most unfortunate events caused by supernatural forces take the form of some disease. The use of medicine against this is therefore natural. Medicine has, however, a much wider use than merely in cases of disease. It is also used, for example, to ensure success.

The traditional African concept of the power in medicine is therefore also synonymous with magic. Traditional Africans definitely conceive of the beneficial physiological reaction caused by the power in medicine. While this effect is explained in a rational manner, it is true that the power in the very medicine also has a magical influence, which is supernatural and inexplicable, but can only be experienced by those affected.

The active magical power of coolness in the medicine is transposed from the medicines to the affected individual. This power not only opposes the evil forces weakening the affected, but also fortifies the weak with power to withstand the destructive supernatural forces leading to an unwanted situation. In this way, the power in medicine remedies the complaint. The power in medicines is administered internally and externally: internally to cure an illness and externally for protection. Medicines used for protection and for ensuring success are usually placed at strategic points in the house or at the entrance. It is important that they are not exposed to the public. Africans hold that if they are exposed, the opponents of the household may have easier access to counteracting their powers to the detriment of those being protected. The opponents' main advantage would be to possess the exact type of medicine so that they have a better chance of opting for medicine stronger than those. Protective medicines are worn on the waist, neck and hands. The traditionalists believe that the power in these medicines strengthens those using them so that they stand firm against all the evil powers whose object is to destroy the weak. Cords are also tied around the feet for protection and to chase the evil forces away (Mönnig 1955:89; Oosthuizen 1992:43).

Charms with the power of medicines are hung from the mirrors of cars for protection, for instance. Sometimes pieces of root are worn around the neck for protection. These roots are believed to protect people at home, on a journey and even at work. It is traditionally also

believed that having a protective medicine attached to the body will influence people who have a quarrel with the wearer to forget about it. For this purpose, there is a special medicine that provides power to people so that others respect them because of the "dignity" of the power of the protective medicine. Because of this belief, traditional Africans would never build or occupy a house without proper precautionary measures against wizardry because a person never gets ill unless bewitched by an enemy who may be "smelled out" from among his friends and relatives (Makhubu 1988:82).

Traditional African knowledge of applying the power of medicine to cure a disease is a combination of supernatural concepts and empirical observation.

### **6.1.3 Ash**

Africans hold that ash has the power to protect and cure because it is clean and pure. All impurities are said to have been consumed by fire. Ash is thus considered to have the power to purify all the evil elements. Ash is usually mixed with water in containers for drinking and baths. Some apply it dry to the painful part of the body or to the whole body. It is commonly used on window panes, doors and window posts to exorcise spirits and as a protective measure against illness and adversity. Ash is also sprinkled around a house and property to keep the house protected and prevent evil forces. It is also used as a cleansing agent in a house where death has occurred. After the funeral of the deceased, traditional Africans have a cleansing day. Ash mixed with water is sprinkled on all, using a new African broom or tassel at the end of a girdle. Before sharing the clothes of the deceased among the family and relatives, they are all sprinkled with ash to ensure that the evil spirit, which may have contributed to the person's death, is completely cleansed by the power in the ash (Makhubu 1988:80).

After attending a funeral traditional Africans will swallow ash, believed to cleanse one from any form of impurity associated with the funeral.

### **6.1.4 Water**

Traditional Africans regard water as God's greatest natural gift, with the power to secure

life. Upon reaching one's destination after a long journey on foot, traditionalists will require that one be given water to bath so as to be cured from the fatigue and ailments caused by the long trip. Traditionalists hold that all life depends on and exists because of water, due to the power in water. Water plays a great role in purification and purification is mostly effected with water. The AIC believe that once a prayer is said over water, it is no longer ordinary water but holy water (Oosthuizen 1992:60; August 1996:12; Kolokoto — interviewee no. 148).

Water from a natural spring is used for purification because it is regarded as clean and pure. It is used as an emetic from drinking and for bathing sick people. Very seldom is this water boiled before use. Tap water is regarded as polluted because of the chemicals added to it. This water is only used if spring water cannot be obtained. Water is mainly used for ceremonial cleansing. It is sprinkled around the homes of people who are not able to find a job. Traditionally, the cleansing is done in the evening when the neighbours and children are not able to see the action (Makhubu 1988:78).

The power in water is used to cleanse the spirit of the deceased after the burial. Traditionalists consider that water poured on the grave will help the deceased to rest peacefully in the new home. It is believed that through this gesture, the evil forces which might endanger the safety of the family of the deceased are removed. The power in water is accepted as securing peace. This visible protection of the deceased's family is very necessary. Africans hold that it also levels any dispute that might arise when cleansing is not conducted in the family. This ritual involves sharing the clothes of the deceased and properties among the family and relatives. Traditionally, no family member is allowed to touch the property to be shared until the sprinkling with water is done Makhubu (1988:78).

#### **6.1.5 Salt**

Traditionalists maintain that salt is a natural laxative element with the power to eradicate evil forces. It is used with a lot of water, but the quantity of salt is important, as an enema. In using salt, care is taken not to use a lot as it might be too strong for the sick person and therefore worsen the illness. Depending on the nature of the illness, salt can also be mixed with other elements, such as lime (Makhubu 1988:80).

The power in the salt is traditionally used for patients suffering from poison. It is also used to protect the home by sprinkling it around the house to keep wizardry away and to neutralise harmful medicines placed by an enemy. Traditional healers use salt mixed with water to cure people from various diseases. Salt is kept ready mixed with water and served to patients. If the mixture is too strong for a particular patient, the traditional healer will apply other medicines to neutralise the situation. Salt is sometimes spread in the yard of a house for protection. When witches approach the yard, they see what looks like blue seawater. This frightens the witches and they run to safety. There is no explanation for how the salt turns blue because it happens magically (Makhubu 1988:80).

#### **6.1.6 Sea water**

Traditionalists regard the power of sea water as highly effective for protection and healing diseases. People living far away from the sea will spend time and money to visit the sea in order to obtain sea water. It is used very sparingly because of its value for those living far from the sea and is usually added to ordinary water. For protection, sea water is poured into tiny bottles and buried in the ground at the gate of the yard or house. It is believed that anyone entering the yard with ill intentions would see a flood of water, like a sea, from the entrance and would only be able to run away for safety. To protect the yard, traditional healers advise that the whole yard — including the house and the roof — be sprinkled with sea water to keep out the evil forces (Makhubu 1988:79).

In curing the disease of patients at the sea, traditional healers immerse the patients in the sea more than once. Sometimes, then, clients may have to travel to the sea several times. Many people visit the sea under the care of diviners for cleansing and cure. Sea water is regarded as a great value because it can heal many diseases because it has salt in it and it is from moving water. Furthermore, its colour is blue, green and white, which symbolise love, faithfulness and purity, respectively. Traditionalists believe that the power of sea water is able to assist people who are weak if they use it. It protects and fortifies the user because of its power. Sea water gives dignity to the weak (Oosthuizen 1992:59).

### 6.1.7 Staffs

Traditionally, every African home has a staff, known as the "staff of the home". It is kept by the owner of the house and may only be used on special occasions. It is loaded with power and serves to protect the family in moments of crisis. Such a staff is to be used by traditional healers to ensure that it protects the family when needed. The father of the house keeps it safe in a place no child can reach. No one in the family may use it, except the mother — and only in his absence. The "staff of the home" is used like a revolver/pistol today. If a suspiciously big snake is discovered in the home, "the staff of the home" is the appropriate weapon to kill it because of the belief that a snake of that nature can only be sent by a witch. If, by chance, a family member was attacked and ran home for safety, but was followed by the attacker, the father of the house would take this staff for protection. It is a reliable weapon which can only be used in exceptional cases. Its power is such that the user must be careful not to use a lot of force (power), unless he intends to kill. Because of its power it is used sparingly, very cautiously and only when necessary. It is also used when the community is attacked by enemies whose intention is to invade the residences. Some men keep a staff for protection when looking after the flock or herd for protection against enemies and to bring the flock/herd together. These sticks are used for self-defence in fights or as weapons to assault others. If the stick and the user survive the fight, both have to undergo a cleansing ceremony to regain their power and status (Makhubu 1988:86; Morodi, Leshoro, Mabogoane — interviewees no. 7, 150 and 151).

### 6.1.8 Drums and horns

Drums are used as instruments of power in the African traditional context. The choir leader will beat a drum to call a choir together for singing. The sound of the drum has the power to unite the group. When a chief calls a meeting, traditionally, a councillor will blow a horn from the chief's kraal. Soon the community would assemble to hear what the chief had to say. The drum and the horn are thus instruments of power, summoning people. Because of their power, they are not blown or beaten randomly. They are used for a specific purpose because of the meaning attached to them by the community (Tambo — interviewee no. 195; Makhubu 1988:86).



## 6.2 NUMINOUS POWER AND INSTRUMENTS/OBJECTS IN THE ZCC

The ZCC concept of numinous power as experienced in everyday life cannot be divorced from its basic function in the church and community, namely, to normalise an abnormal situation or to heal. Oosthuizen (1992:154) points out that:

Healing and power are associated and the Holy Spirit is the symbol of power.

"Ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes over you" Acts 1:8.

This should be seen in the African context of numinous power ... The Spirit is the spirit of power.

The traditional African concept of power, in which power is seen as the quality par excellence in everything and every person, yet more so in some than in others, is quite different from the concept of numinous power as perceived in most of the ZCC. Examples of this power, according to traditional African religion, are the power of the ancestors, traditional healers, medicine, certain objects like sea water, staffs and other objects. These powers are limited and are installed by God the Supreme Being. This power is far below God's power.

Daneel (1974:338) comments as follows on this:

It has already been stated that despite the similarity between prophetic treatment and traditional medical practices ... there is an important difference between the two. Whereas the *nyanga's* medicines contain an inherent magical efficacy which is supposed to bring about the desired result, the objects prescribed by the prophets are in the first place symbols (*zviratidzo*) representing the healing power of God.

Daneel takes this further in *Testimonium* (1983:38) when he says,

While the *nyanga* seeks a solution which accedes to the conditions of the spirits, prophetic therapy is based on belief in the power of the Christian God, which surpasses all the other powers and is

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consequently capable of offering protection against them.

All the ZCC members interviewed for this study stated that numinous power is equivalent to the power of the Holy Spirit found in Acts 1:8. Numinous power is accepted as the source and origin of all other powers. It is the life force which all other powers depend on for healing and protection. It is accepted as the life-giving force from the Supreme Being. It is the above all power. The power of the ancestors also depends on numinous power. Numinous power is dynamic; it protects, heals and guides the members of these churches and performs miracles.

The ZCC accept some objects/instruments as holy because they are prayed for before they are used. They are regarded as possessing supernatural powers since they have been prayed over. Makhubu (1988:85) points out that it is God's numinous power that makes them holy and brings about healing hence they are called holy water, ash, staffs and uniforms.

### **6.2.1 Water**

The ZCC regard water which has been prayed over as an instrument/object loaded with the power of healing. Natural flowing spring water is preferred. Many of these churches conduct the cleansing ceremonies according to the prophecies of their prophets early on Sunday mornings in nearby rivers. Cleansing with water forms part of the church service, which has a significant meaning since it is performed at the prophecy of the prophet. Cleansing ceremonies are based on the Biblical evidence for using water and 2 Kings (5:1-4) and Psalm 81:1-3 are most often cited by the prophets during these ceremonies. The emphasis is on the healing of Naaman in a stream of running water at the instruction of the prophet Elisha. This is scriptural evidence to these churches that water has the power to heal. The prophecy of the prophet is also considered important in view of the many people who are healed (Makhubu 1988:78; Lefakane — interviewee no. 149).

According to Makhubu, in 1920, when he was a young child, he had terrible sores all over his body, which would not respond to any medical treatment. At the time he was a member of the Zionist church. His uncle, also a member of the Zionist church, visited his home.

During a prayer service, Makhubu says that it was revealed to his uncle, by the spirit of prophecy, that for Makhubu to be healed, he should be taken to the nearby river to be immersed several times. The following day his uncle, together with some of the congregants, immersed Makhubu several times in the river, after which he was shivering terribly. Several people thought he would die. After some days, the sores were dry and he was completely cured (Makhubu 1988:78).

The Zionist churches cleanse their members especially after a funeral service. The prophet/bishop sprinkles all the members, who stand in a row for this ceremony at the homestead of the deceased. The cleansing takes place before any member enters the home of the deceased after coming straight from the cemetery. The aim of this action is to cleanse the members from any evil spirits associated with the deceased that might cause misfortune to them. These churches consider it a curative means by the power in water.

Leviticus (14:1-9) is usually quoted, with special emphasis on verses 6 to 9, where water is emphasised as a cleansing instrument/object with power to heal. The prophet performs the cleansing in response to these Biblical evidences. Some prophets also cite Ezekiel (36:25), God's promise to purify His people with water. The ZCC interpret this as ensuring healing by water. John (9:7) gives an account of Jesus healing the blind man with water at the pool of Siloam. According to Dr Lydia August of the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission of Southern Africa, their church became well known because of their use of water which had been prayed over.

There was a layman in Orlando East, Soweto, who prayed for the sick using water as the visible element. Many people, from all over South Africa, visited his home for healing, and queues of sick people could be seen outside his home throughout the day (Makhubu 1988:79).

Different types of water are prescribed and used by the prophets for various diseases. For cleansing stomach problems, most prophets use tap water or river water to which either vinegar or salt is added. This is considered to have the power to heal evil forces causing sickness. Many prophets prefer rain water as it is considered to be free from chemicals. Rain water is considered to be purer since it comes straight from heaven. Running water is

considered purer than stagnant water (Oosthuizen 1992:45).

According to Dr Lydia August, formerly the leader of the St John's Apostolic Faith Mission in Southern Africa, daughter of Mother Nku, the founder of the church, water that has been prayed for is no longer ordinary water. The Holy Spirit gives power to the water for healing. This is why members of these churches carry bottles of such water. Many of her followers fetch water from the tap at Dr Lydia's home because it is the tap that Mother Nku prayed for. This tap is located next to the kitchen of Dr Lydia's residence in Orlando East, Soweto and she also regarded water from this tap as special. She used this water mostly to cure different diseases and for cleansing purposes. Water plays an important role in the ZCC, especially for purification, cleansing diseases and expelling evil forces which cause disease (Oosthuizen 1992:45).

River water is also used to cleanse and purify people from the pollution of evil. Purification through water is traditionally known as "bathing". In traditional belief, the proper way to cure the sick is not only to treat the disease but particularly to eradicate the source responsible for the sickness. To effect this, bath purification is necessary. Oosthuizen (1992:30) cites prophets who stated that purification is effected through "bathing", vomiting and divining out evil spirits, that is casting them out. They bathed and were taken to the river to be immersed and also vomited. They prayed hard and fasted for many days. Another prophet said that she went to the river on her own where the Spirit gradually taught her how to drive out evil spirits, and mentioned that the river is the place of cleansing.

The bishops constantly refer to having been immersed in the river to cleanse them for their task. Oosthuizen reports a prophet who said that after she had been purified in the river by immersion, vomiting, and being given an enema, she found herself able to speak in tongues and was also enabled to receive information from God through dreams. Water is used as a symbol of the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Most important is the prayer made to the water before administering the cure. It is this prayer of God's numinous power that cleanses people inwardly — a condition indispensable for all prophets to minister effectively in God's field (Oosthuizen 1992:31; Myandu 1994:8).

The ZCC rely on the power of holy water for their welfare because of the prayer made over the water. Just as Jesus used water to open the eyes of a blind man (Jn 9), so the leaders follow his example. During healing sessions the leaders read and claim such verses from the Bible (Oosthuizen 1992:31; Makhubu 1988:79).

### **6.2.2 Holy staffs, crooks and croziers**

Prophets and bishops of the ZCC carry staffs or even bundles of some special sticks with them. These are believed to have special power to fight against evil. The shape, size and even number are prophesied to the individual. The secret of the special power lies in the prayer which the church prays over them before they are used (Makhubu 1988:85).

Holy staffs and croziers play an important role in the Zionist churches as they are considered to be the most potent expeller of magical forces. They are not ordinary sticks, but are symbols of power. Prophets believe that holy staffs or croziers were carried and used by biblical prophets and leaders, especially Moses. As such, they are symbols of power given to their office by God.

Zionist prophets believe that, just as Moses was given the authority to possess a staff through which he was able to protect the people of God according to God's instructions, they, too, claim the same authority literally on their staffs from God. They use these staffs according to the prophecy that they receive from the Lord, which they believe is equal to the instruction God gave to Moses about how to use the staff. He gave him when he led the Israelites. Prophets of the Zionist churches use staffs, in the same way as Moses, by an instruction of a prophecy which comes from God. Once a prophecy is received, the prophet executes it as soon as possible (Oosthuizen 1992:61).

The Book of Numbers (20:6-8) in the Old Testament is often quoted as the biblical basis for using a staff in their ministry. Prophets associate the miracle of the water from the rock with the power of the staff Moses received from the Lord. This is why the staff had power. They believe that the staffs they use in the church, provided through prophecy and used on instruction from God, have power and therefore these are referred to as holy staffs.

The African traditional concept of keeping a staff by the leader of a homestead is also maintained. The staff of the house is used by the head of the household or his spouse in his absence, only when all other methods have been tried. Likewise, the shepherd, the prophet is the sole person to use the holy staff for protecting or healing the flock, if so ordered by God, through prophecy (Makhubu 1988:86).

The biblical belief of associating a snake with the work of the devil affects the belief of ZCC members. This, together with the African concept of evil generally being associated with a snake, leads to any snake being killed (and sometimes burned) by a prophet with the staff. Traditionalists believe that a snake is the symbol of evil forces aimed at destroying the adversary. A snake is always associated with witchcraft since it is one of the main familiars used by witches to achieve their goals. Therefore the staff of the prophet is used to smash any snake that might be noticed at an assembly. According to a respondent, no other staff could be used to kill a snake because the snake would either run away before it was smashed or might easily attack its adversary. The holy staff of the prophet, with its power, is able to counteract such forces and the use of the holy staff to counteract such a force is considered to be the church's obligation as the staff is provided by God to protect the flock from evil attacks (Leshoro, Mabogoane — interviewees no. 150 and 151).

According to a respondent, once when baptism was supposed to be conducted in a river, the church leader conducted a prayer before they moved into the water and as the congregation moved deeper into the water, they felt as if a big animal was moving across their feet. They spotted a snake and were frightened. The church leader stood praying, waving his big staff from left to right, and they could feel the animal moving gradually away from them. The church leader continued to pray and the rest of the congregation were singing and clapping their hands. After a while the leader stopped praying and the congregation was quiet, and they moved deeper into the water and no movement of an animal in the water was felt. At the spot for the baptism the leader told them that it was a snake and he had touched it with his foot, and that is when he started to pray, using his staff, and God moved the snake away from them. The congregation was assured that God's power had protected them. At the end of the baptismal service the leader prayed again. The congregation was not only pleased and grateful that the service went so well but also for having witnessed God's power during the service

(Oosthuizen 1992:61).

The staffs are mostly regarded as weapons which provide protection because of having been prayed over. ZCC members see the function of the holy staffs as being used to fight against the devil and his evil forces aimed at harming the adversalry. According to the late Dr Lydia August, once while on a return trip from Greece to South Africa she and some team mates were waiting to board their flight. She had a vision that the plane they were about to board was not in perfect condition and, because of this, she held back. Her companions wanted to know why and she explained that there was something wrong with the plane. An airport official was watching them closely. Dr Lydia then requested that she and her mother be booked on the next flight to South Africa. Twenty minutes after take-off, the plane returned to Athens airport and it was discovered that the flight was "powerless". The airport official then inquired from one of the team whether Dr Lydia's mother was a prophet and then asked what was wrong with the flight. Mother Nku walked to the right rear wing of the plane and began praying, waving her staff from right to left. After that the same flight took off for South Africa, with Mother Nku and her colleagues on board, and arrived safely in South Africa. The holy staff saved them from the evil force which aimed to harm all on board during the first attempt. This evidence was supported by Leshoro — interviewee no. 150.

Staffs are substituted for laying on of hands during prayer. They give the power of protection to the church. Prophets who are used to carrying a staff, crook or crozier, feel "naked" (incomplete) and insecure without one. This is due to the value the prophets place on these instruments once they have been prayed over.

Oosthuizen (1992:6) cites the following remark of a healer: "God said we should carry the staves ... they are powerful weapons through which we cast out evil spirits ... they are like the staff of Moses which performed the miracles."

The staffs can be of wood, metal or bronze. Some are straight or crooked at the top. Some have a small wheel, a star or a rooster at the top. Zionist staffs are usually painted white. Each instrument has its particular use. The long stick is used in the river or water to identify the deep or dangerous areas. It is also used when praying in the river, the sea or a dam during

special services and to cast out evil powers. The silver and bronze staffs are considered special and are only carried by the bishops (Makhubu 1988:85; Oosthuizen 1992:61).

### 6.2.3 Ash

Members of the ZCC say they do not believe in the use of medicine to heal the sick, but that they use ash and water which has been prayed over. Asked why ash is not called holy, like water and staffs, they explain that it is because ash is basically used with other objects, such as water. Water, after being prayed over, is the key substance of purification over evil forces. Ash used with a prayed over object, such as water, is considered powerful. This applies to other instruments of power such as salt, vinegar and white lime. Makhubu (1988:80) describes the use of ash as follows:

Ash is mixed with water in small or large quantities for drinking and for baths. It can also be used on door posts and window frames to exorcise evil spirits and as a protective element against illness or harm.

Ash is said to be clean and pure because it comes out when all the impurities have been consumed by fire. Fire is considered to be the best purifier of all elements. Some believe that mixed with water, ash can be applied to the whole body or the affected part(s) for a cure. It can also be swallowed dry for a cure. Ash is sprinkled around a house or on the door posts and window panes during death. It is important to mention that the ZCC maintains that for any healing to take place, a prayer has to be said requesting God to implement His power over the mixture (Oosthuizen 1992:46).

ZCC members maintain that the power of God which comes through prayer changes the nature of the mixture. God's numinous power takes over and the mixture/ash becomes powerful. It is important, therefore, to realise that for the ZCC, God's numinous power, whose intervention is through a prayer, forms the core of the required power. Ash, water, lime, blue stone, epsom salts, blue soap, milk, Sunlight soap and so on merely symbolise God's power. Oosthuizen (1992:46) describes the procedure: "The power of the Word is important. It could substitute the spell. It is important that prayer be said 'over' the mixture."



Tambo (interviewee no. 195) stated that his members relied solely on the power of the Holy Spirit, which is attained through prayer believing in the name of Jesus. Performance of visible rituals is symbolic of what God's power does to effect the desired healing. The members of these churches believe that the instruments *per se* have no power in themselves to achieve the desired end. Calling on the name of Jesus is essential for healing.

Many ZCC members maintain that ash is not as powerful as water. Mixed with water, ash is mainly used for vomiting to remove the evil inside the stomach. It is used as a purgative, outside the church building and also for remedying constipation. It is also used as a protective measure.

#### 6.2.4 Salt

Ordinary coarse salt is used as a natural laxative element. The prescription of this substance depends on the prophecy or vision of the prophet for the particular illness. Salt is used with a lot of water. The measurement of the salt is important to effect healing. Depending on the ailment, salt is used with other elements of power. Salt is also used as an emetic if something poisonous has been swallowed. Mixed with water, the sick drink it and vomit, which takes the poison out of the stomach to save the sick person from its effects. It is also believed that the salt remaining in the stomach can make the poison inactive. When a family is threatened with evil forces causing fear and anxiety, salt is sprinkled around the house to keep witches away. It is also believed that the salt will neutralise the medicines already placed by the enemy against the family (Makhubu 1988:80).

According to Makhubu (1988:81), the use of salt as an enema became popular during the time of Mmaletsoai, a prophetess who attracted people seeking healing from all over South Africa and beyond. To diagnose her patients, Mmaletsoai gave them a Bible to open at random, like a fortune-teller. She would then prophesy. A prescription of water mixed with salt and ash was given to patients. Mmaletsoai prayed over the mixture before the arrival of the congregation and the patients. Mmaletsoai, meaning "use of salt", was a leader in the Zionist church.

Some members rely on salt because of what the Bible teaches about salt in Matthew 5:13. From this verse they gather that salt is meant to give taste to food and to preserve meat. In the same way, these members consider the role on earth as that of providing good taste to the world, and to ensure a better life to the community. They do this by assisting those in need. These churches extend a helping hand to all during their services. The Zionists render the service of help in response to God's Word that they are the salt of the earth.

### **6.2.5 Musical instruments and singing**

Music plays an important role in the Zionist churches, based on the biblical truth in Psalm 81:1-3 and other bible texts. The Bible advises that God's people should make music, strike the tambourine, play the harp and even sound the ram's horn to God. Musical instruments associated with God's power through the Holy Spirit are common in the Zionist churches. Drum-beating is part of worshipping God in music. No church service is conducted without the congregation singing a hymn or chorus. Music, accompanied by drum and cushion beating, is common. This is often done while standing; a sign of respect to God because of His power and mercy, with faces uplifted and eyes closed as a token of meditation with God, and arms stretched up as an indication of surrender to God. While this is happening, everyone concentrates with mind and heart on God. Commenting on the power of music in the church, Joyner (1994:88) states that "music has the unique ability to touch the soul and arrest the heart. It is a language of the spirit. Those who know this language and can use it effectively, have been entrusted with a potent weapon in the battle for the hearts of men."

During a service of the Christian Church in Jerusalem of Zion, while the congregation was worshipping through music with their hands lifted up, some of the congregants started to pray aloud, while others were crying, as the Spirit touched them. Indeed, singing is not only an indispensable part of the service, it is also praying (Oosthuizen 1992:56).

Singing, especially with drums, assists in creating an atmosphere in which God's Spirit operates effectively since people have opened their hearts to Him. This is what happens during a praying session. The assembly sing a hymn that precedes the praying for the congregation with the laying on of hands. The sound of the drums accompanying the singing

creates an atmosphere that leads the assembly to witness to God's presence. It is common for the bishop to quote Scripture, while the congregation sing softly, and to invite the sick and sinners on the authority of the Bible to come up and accept the Lord Jesus. The Scripture passages, the soft singing and the touching music lead people to respond to God's call. This is a sign of God's presence and control in the music service of the ZCC. This is what makes music with drums indispensable in their church services. Oosthuizen (1992:57) cites a prophet stating:

Singing makes the patient more susceptible to my commanding and healing prayers. The "commanding prayers" referred to here are those prayers which command the evil spirits to leave the patient. For most of the respondents, the singing of those present at the healing session is indispensable for effective healing.

Many of the Zionist churches use a keyboard, a piano or an organ in the church to accompany the vocal singing. Keyboards are popularly used. Most of these churches have choirs or bands that lead the music during church services. It is important to mention that office bearers in the ZCC consider their contribution to the church very seriously — as manifested in faithful attendance by those who perform a duty, from ushers to interpreters of sermons. This is also true of the church choir members and those responsible for leading hymns/choruses with keyboard, piano or organ.

Many members say that when the musical instruments are not played, they feel inactive and find it difficult to follow the rhythm and concentrate. All present — band, choir and congregation — seem to concentrate on God more readily during the music by the instruments. The conductor or the choir master follows the bishop's instructions closely for singing and for stopping. When the congregation intercedes, for example, it is a very sensitive time of meditation where God's power takes charge, and the bishop may wish the congregation to sing softly and hum and prepare the congregants to get ready for the Word of God (Mawela — interviewee no. 200).

The band or choir also adheres to the instruction of the church leader during an altar call

session, when the congregation is prepared to claim God's promises of forgiveness of sins and accept Jesus or prior to prayer over some for particular problems or illness. The blend of melody and the meaning of the words feed the congregation and strengthen their faith (Nonguvhela — interviewee no. 201).

Many people are attracted to the Lord by music. Africans love music and in this way people who are attracted by music are reached by the Word of God during the sermon. When Africans gather for various feasts and celebrations, singing plays an important part and instruments are played. Music permeates the life of Africans. In a church service it affords an opportunity for personal introspection. Many give their lives to Jesus during a healing session (Makhubu 1988:71).

More than fifty percent of the ZCC liturgy is allotted to singing. Dancing and clapping during worship are spontaneous actions in most churches. The singing in the ZCC is biblically based. The Scripture passage most quoted for this is 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray continually". Zionists believe that the concept of eternal worship and prayer is expressed in their hymns and choruses. Praising the Lord in song is believed to be one part that awaits the saints after death, as Makhubu (1988:74) says, "In heaven and eternity ... the AICs hope to spend eternity praising God in song."

It is generally agreed among ZCC members that one's inner thoughts and feelings are expressed in the music. Music is expressed with concentration and expresses one's faith and dependence on God's power for everything. It provides a sense of satisfaction, relief and hope. Many members say that after a church service many people are able to cope with some affairs they could not handle before. This is possible because God's power of life strengthens them as pray to Him through the music. According to many members, rhythmic singing and movements contribute to the effectiveness of the congregational fellowship, which offers life to many in these churches (Oosthuizen 1992:56).

The ZCC believe that instruments are God's gifts to glorify His name. During services guitars and other instruments are used (Bishop Mothapo of Protea, Bishop Zikhalala of Jabavu, Bishop Skosana of Dobsonville — interviewees no. 98, 99 and 100).

During the researcher's visit to the St Elia John Apostolic Church in Zion of RSA, while the congregation was singing softly and members were requested to concentrate their hearts and minds on God prayerfully, Bishop Mothapo announced, "The power of the Holy Spirit is ministering in this church now. I invite all who want to surrender their lives to Jesus to please do it right now. This is the day God has put aside for your rebirth in Him. If there are such people, please raise up your hands so that we can pray for you in this service. Please don't listen to or think of the person next to you. This is the moment God wants to speak to you personally. Thank you Jesus" (Mothapo — interviewee no. 98).

The bishop then advised the people to close their eyes before he invited those who wanted to give their lives to Jesus, urging them to concentrate on their union with God and to do as the power of His Spirit directed them in their hearts. He then requested all who had raised their hands to move up to the front, and the congregation thanked the Lord for the new lives dedicated to Jesus by clapping their hands. The new converts prayed and a prayer was said for them at the request of the bishop. The new converts were instructed to go to the person responsible for registering the particulars of all new members. According to Bishop Mothapo, the purpose of registering the particulars of all new members is to "lift them up individually to God during our family and personal prayers at home" and to give them "lessons from the Bible, whose purpose is to teach new converts how to read the Bible, and in so doing to assist them to grow spiritually". Members agree that instruments, prayer and music make it easier for people to surrender their lives to Jesus. This makes instruments, accompanied by prayer and music, a special gift from God to the church (Mothapo — interviewee no. 98).

#### **6.2.6 Flags**

Some members believe that flags which have been prayed over and are put at the houses have the ability to cast out or prevent malevolent forces. Some are put in the places of worship or carried to these places, particularly where church services are conducted in open spaces. Flags are made in different colours, mainly blue, green, white and yellow.

Holy flags manifest God's power in the lives of the ZCC in different ways. At the place of worship, the holy flag is believed to protect members from evil forces. It symbolises the

power of God who guides and directs His church. According to many members, the significance of the flag is not in the flag *per se*, but in that the leaders of the church, "men of God", have prayed over it. Oosthuizen (1992:159) confirms this by saying, "Flags are planted near the place of worship as a sign that the place is safe and that the various liturgical and ritual activities cannot be obstructed by evil forces."

Holy flags reflect God's power that protects His flock from the attacks of demons. Flags are accepted at the place of worship as a symbol of the power of the Holy Spirit, whose duty is to guide the church. Flags are put on top of the house, at the entrances to some yards, and even planted in the front of houses because ZCC members believe they serve to ward off evil forces. In places where lightning is a real danger, most houses have flags on them (Oosthuizen 1992:160).

Some members said that flags are mainly put on the houses of new members because they are still growing in the power of God and the flags serve as motivation for these converts to fulfil the law of God and to strengthen them to hold on to Jesus when bad things, usually associated traditionally with evil forces, do happen to them (Mabogoane, Leshoro, Tambo — interviewees no. 151, 194 and 195).

### **6.3 COMPARISON: NUMINOUS POWER AND INSTRUMENTS/OBJECTS IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND THE ZCC**

#### **6.3.1 Differences**

- (1) African traditionalists approach traditional healers to diagnose diseases, prescribe medicine or what action to take (eg, sacrifice to the ancestors) and discover who is responsible for the problem or condition.

The ZCC approach the prophet for healing and believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to heal. They approach the church for a cure rather than to find out who or what caused the disease.

- (2) Traditionalists believe in the natural power of medicine for healing. The ZCC believe

in the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer.

- (3) Traditionalists believe in the power of medicine worked into the staff of the home for protection.

The ZCC believe in the power of the Holy Spirit working through prayer in all the instruments/objects of protection.

- (4) Traditionalists use divination sets and medicine as instruments of power but the ZCC do not.
- (5) The ZCC use musical instruments and singing as instruments of power. African traditional religion does not do so.

### 6.3.2 Similarities

- (1) African traditionalists and the ZCC both use water, ash, salt and staffs as instruments of power to ward off evil powers and for protection. They also use water, ash and salt for cleansing.
- (2) Traditionalists and the ZCC both use sea water for protection and to ward off evil powers.
- (3) Traditionalists use horns and drums to call the community together. Horns are used to call people to attend a meeting at the chief's kraal and drums to call traditional choir members together.
- (4) Traditionalists use staffs, including the staff of the home, for protection from danger and evil forces. The ZCC use staffs, flags and croziers for protection from danger and evil forces.
- (5) Traditionalists rely on the power of the medicine worked into the staffs by traditional healers for protection. The ZCC rely on the power of the Holy Spirit in the staffs for

protection. They call the staffs holy after they have been prayed over.



## CHAPTER 7

### NUMINOUS POWER AND DEATH

#### 7.1 NUMINOUS POWER AND DEATH IN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Although traditional Africans believe in a continuation of life beyond death by all the living, the death of a family member, relative or friend still remains a terrible blow to those left behind. Death is feared in African tradition and is considered humanity's biggest enemy. Whenever death occurs, it causes great shock and instability and leaves the affected family like orphans because it takes their dear one away from the community, according to traditional belief. Once death strikes a family, everything comes to a standstill. If the family concerned were preparing a birthday or wedding celebration, everything stops, mainly because traditionalists associate any death with magical power. To Africans, there is a cause for any evil event that happens to a person.

When there is a death, the affected family immediately conducts various traditional rituals which point to the real presence and effect of death on the bereaved family. Everything must be done by other members of the community, neighbours, distant family members and friends, for those in mourning are considered to have no strength. One of the initial rituals is to mix ash with water and smear it on all the windows of the deceased's house. Relatives, far and near, are immediately notified of the death. The faces of the close family members are sad, indicating the pain caused by the death, and they talk in low voices and slowly. Their biggest worry is who the culprit responsible for the death might be (Tjibeba 1997:15; Van Deventer 1991:55).

In the midst of such suffering all who hear about the death come to console the family at the deceased's home. Their presence and condolences assist the affected family to bear this sorrow and grief. Traditionally, when death occurs, neighbours leave their homes to mourn with the family of the deceased until the deceased is buried. Some bring cakes, vegetables, or any foodstuff/groceries to relieve the family's burden of feeding who come to be with them until the funeral takes place. Others volunteer their chairs, tables, cooking and eating utensils

while those who have big tents are prepared to offer them at a minimal price or free of charge to the family. The tent is pitched and serves as shelter for the people to stay during the day and even at night. They only go home to check whether all is well. This action expresses the empathy the community shares with the affected family at a time of death and the power of unity.

Tjibeba (1997:16) states that in consoling the family, visitors, friends and relatives will say words like,

So and so has completed his journey. He has gone home to be with his people in the world of the ancestors. He has left sorrow for us. We shall also follow him. He is free from all the pains and sufferings of this world.

Such sentiments express the African concept that even though death affects a person entirely there is a sense of continuity of life beyond the grave, which is better than the present life. This belief enables Africans to cope with death despite the implications it has for the living. Makhubu (1988:29) says that the word "dead" is not used for human beings by blacks. It is used for animals and plants. People are known to have gone to be with their ancestors. Human life is known to continue after death.

African traditionalists have no clear picture of exactly where and how this world is, other than that it is peaceful, evergreen and a beautiful place. At funerals one often hears words like "Farewell and greet all, tell them not to forget us when you arrive at the home of the ancestors" addressed to the deceased. Death is therefore perceived as a transition to another state of life or the beginning of a journey to the land of the ancestors (Pauw 1975:106; Tjibeba 1997:19).

### **7.1.1 Tribute**

Paying tribute to the homestead of the deceased is a traditional observance practised by many Africans. This belief is encouraged by the African concept of *ubuntu* or humanity, which is

rooted in them. Since African tradition regards death as an evil intruder and humanity's worst enemy, Africans consider it a priority to stand together in the struggle against this tyrannic force. If one family member is struck by death, the rest of the community are also affected. The same also applies in moments of joy. People do not need to be blood relatives of the family of the deceased or wait for an invitation as a prerequisite to qualify to visit the family. It is a spontaneous necessity for the community to go and express their sympathy to the affected family as soon as possible after the message has been received. Death is considered to be humanity's worst enemy, something which requires the attention and cooperation of the community (Tjibeba 1997:14).

Arriving at the home, the basic question is to establish the nature of death, whether the deceased was sick, if so, for how long. If the deceased died suddenly, the family would be encouraged to investigate the one responsible for the death as well the reasons. Traditional healers, who are the specialists in this field, will be approached for assistance. In African tradition, an immediate suspect is wizardry. They believe that the deceased has gone to rest. Although the deceased is missed by family, relatives and community, the relatives are urged to be comforted. Communities, societies or clubs to which the deceased belonged also visit the home — including, at times, those to which members of the family belong — as a group to comfort the family and pay tribute. They will sing choruses or hymns to comfort and will express sympathy and pay tribute, saying things like "We mourn the loss of so and so (the deceased), who was an asset to this society. His presence will be felt by us all." The spokesperson for the group will then tell the family of the good that the deceased did and reassure the family that the loss of the deceased affects not only the family but the entire community (Tjibeba 1997:16).

Traditionally, people keep on good terms with each other at the deceased's home and do not raise any complaints or disputes. Many assist in cleaning the house or pitching the tent, in searching for the beast to be slaughtered, and other general assistance. These gestures of help and tribute help the family to know who to get help from when they assemble later to prepare for the funeral. Death is thus the great leveller. Faced with death, all humanity, rich or poor, realise their sameness. Death does not choose (is not selective). Death is the "bride" of every family. Today it is the turn of this one and tomorrow it will be the turn of another. This

concept of death and its effect on people's lives encourages the community to constantly be on guard to face death. Death is taken seriously. Africans regard it as something that God permits to happen to a family, even though evil powers are the cause. It is a state which no one can endure or fight against, but just accept. When God speaks, no one can speak against Him (Pauw 1975:107; Tjibeba 1997:20).

### **7.1.2 Funeral arrangements**

When all the family and relevant relatives have arrived, a meeting is held to discuss the funeral arrangements. The first matter is to set the date and venue for the funeral. Many prefer to bury their dead on a Saturday or Sunday when most of the people are not working. Although some of the elderly are still buried in their places of origin, most people in Soweto bury locally. Those who are buried at their places of origin are buried there to "sleep" where their parents are also buried. Traditionally, the relationship between the dead and the ancestors is assured. Many hold that the ancestors are happier because by doing this, the living indicate their dependence on their ancestors (Tjibeba 1997:15).

When asked whether the dead who are buried in Soweto instead of their place of origin are welcomed in the world of the ancestors to the extent that their descendants received equal blessings as those whose dead are buried with their parents, many traditionalists say they are welcomed by their ancestors. Their descendants do share equal blessings, depending on the relationship of the living with the ancestors. Some traditionalists say an advantage of burying the deceased close to their family is that the family are able to visit the grave to perform the necessary rituals, something that will foster a healthy relationship between the living and their ancestors (Tjibeba 1997:15).

Formerly a coffin was made locally by the neighbours from wood, without the family deciding on the type of coffin except to ensure that the corpse fits properly. Nowadays the issue of the coffin has become the central focus of the family and much discussion goes into the type. When consensus is reached a delegation of generally three people will be nominated to go and search for a relevant coffin at different places before the final decision is made (Pauw 1975:101). Slaughtering of a beast is another essential to be performed when burying

the dead. The same meeting that decides on the coffin will decide on the type of beast to be slaughtered (e.g., it must be fat and not too old). Slaughtering a beast of mourning for the day of the funeral is a common practice in African tradition. Again, this is one of the most commonly performed ancestral rituals among Africans. Although not everyone does connect it with ancestral beliefs, the majority observe this custom, believing that the ancestors are annoyed if it is neglected. To many, it is regarded as a form of thanksgiving to the ancestors (Pauw 1975:113).

### **7.1.3 The eve of a funeral**

Many people from far and near and neighbours usually stay overnight at the home of the deceased on the eve of the funeral. A great part of the night is devoted to songs and voluntary public speeches. Public testimony is a prominent feature of present-day ceremonial rites prescribed in a traditionalist context. There are customary speeches and admonitions in connection with rites of passage. The purpose is to indicate the significant role the deceased played in the community and to persuade the remaining family and community to follow the good example set by the deceased. Family meetings are held to discuss family matters and the funeral. There is always beer to sustain people at this time. A funeral is a time to bring families together (Tjibeba 1997:16).

The family of the deceased ensures that all the people assembled for the funeral are fed. Traditionally, the intestines of the beast slaughtered in the afternoon of the day preceding the funeral are prepared to feed the people together with porridge. Nowadays tea and scones are served at least twice while the service is on. If the deceased person is not a member of a Christian church, a night vigil service is conducted at the home of the deceased by someone who is a Christian. At about 5.00 a.m. the following morning the service stops to allow the people to bath and dress for the funeral. Breakfast, consisting either of tea and scones or of sorghum soft porridge with intestines, is served to everyone at about 7.00 a.m. and breakfast is succeeded by the funeral. It is significant to note that the funeral is a community experience (Tjibeba 1997:16).

#### 7.1.4 The day of the funeral

The coffin of the dead is carried from the house into the tent or yard. Traditionally, a member of the family says a poem in praise and respect of the deceased during the proceedings. Then the members of the family, according to their closeness in relationship, follow each other to see the corpse. This is their last token of respect and of mourning. Then more speeches follow while all present file past the coffin to pay their last respects.

Traditionalists view death as an act of evil power; an act by which the ancestors choose and take the people they need. There is a belief among traditional Africans that people who die are good (quality) because the ancestors need them. This concept necessitates that the living remain faithful to the ancestors. Just as parents teach their children good morals and wish them to live according to that standard, the ancestors, too, are our parents and they demand that the living should respect them for their blessings. The ancestors are to be remembered. Death is seen as misfortune caused by the power of the ancestors (Makhubu 1988:61).

It is commonly remarked at funerals that what has happened is not new, for death is not unusual, but common and inevitable form of suffering. Traditionalists compare death to a man who proceeds to his kraal without telling his flock that he would be coming to fetch one of them. The metaphor implies that the living are subject to the will of the ancestors and God. The dead are said to be in the presence of the ancestors, enjoying peace, free from illness, sorrow and troubles. In this sense, death presents a positive note to encourage the living to become more eager to prepare themselves for death. Continuity between existence (life) before and after death is expressed strongly. The basic implications of the speeches emphasise the values to the living that create harmonious social relations. The living are persuaded to shun disgracing their parents and society. The speakers put across the traditional African gentleness, kindness, humility, respect and love based on the traditional concept of kindness, which implies loyalty (Pauw 1975:116-117).

After all have expressed their condolences the crowd proceed to the cemetery where the deceased is buried.

Arriving back home from the grave baths of water are put at the gate for all to wash their hands, to erase any evil which might have contributed to the death of the deceased. Traditionalists believe that until people have cleaned themselves by washing their hands in the water, they remain unclean and vulnerable to the evil forces which might be responsible for the death. Traditional cleansing chemicals like ash and the leaves of the African wattle tree are added to the water. The first person to wash hands is the closest members of the deceased, followed by the rest of the family and the crowd. After the washing, the traditional staple meal — porridge and meat — is served to all. Nowadays rice and vegetables are also served. Condolences in money are presented to the bereaved family. Family members are appointed to receive the condolences and to write down the names of all who contribute and the amount. Finally the whole amount is handed over to the relevant person in the family.

The power of death unites the families in African traditional religion because of the impact and power that death has on the family. While families meet to discuss when, where and how the deceased is to be buried, they also discuss matters like the length of the period of mourning, when to perform the ritual of cleansing, who in the family should lead the rituals, and erecting and unveiling the tombstone (Tjibeba 1997:27).

#### **7.1.5 Mourning**

Observation of a form of mourning by the deceased's family begins the day after the funeral. All the deceased's clothes must be washed, starting at about 4.00 a.m. to be completed by 6.00 a.m. or before sunrise. The aim of washing is to cleanse all the evil power that might be attached to the deceased's property. This is followed by shaving the heads of all the family members. Men wear a small piece of black on the left sleeve. Women pin a small piece of black cloth on their dresses at their left arm. These rituals are performed early in the morning, before 10.00 a.m. These are traditional rites to indicate that the mourning family is still under a dark cloud. The family mourn the loss of the deceased for six to twelve months, during which period the family is restricted from visiting and joining in any community activities. After the death of a husband, the wife dresses entirely in black, from before the funeral takes place. The period of bereavement is one year. For a year, which means before termination of the blackness ("cloud"), the homestead cannot have a wedding or a party — the homestead

keeps to the homestead (Pauw 1975:110).

Termination of mourning means that they stop wearing black. Often this is accompanied by a ceremony. The black materials and bands are removed and burned. Family life becomes normal. Weddings, parties and other events may be staged at home; the widow is permitted to participate in all community activities fully; the uncle of the widow is responsible for conducting the termination rites and ensuring the availability of a beast to be slaughtered. He also has to see that the bereaved receive the appropriate attire for this occasion: a new dress for the widow, a rug and at least a pair of shoes or slippers. The termination ceremony is celebrated at the uncle's home. Since the event happens in the early hours of the day, the bereaved family is free to go and the widow to go to her home as early as 11.00 a.m. to celebrate with her friends. The termination rite is the last death rite to be conducted by the family of the deceased. This marks the end of mourning, which releases the widow to attend public occasions, talk aloud, visit anywhere and remarry, if she so wishes. Although traditionally, a woman's grave is at her in-laws' place, at present some widows do marry. In African tradition the saying "your pain is my pain and your sorrow is my sorrow" is expressed especially at the time of death. People do not need to be blood relatives to help each other and be helped. Mourning (and its impact) has the power to draw and unite the family (Makhubu 1988:91).

#### **7.1.6 Unveiling of the tombstone**

The erection and unveiling of the tombstone is the last respect the bereaved family express to their deceased. It also serves as a remembrance to the generation of the deceased to show where they are buried. This is vital at times of bringing sacrifices to the ancestors, particularly when times are bad for them. While the funeral is conducted with heavy and painful hearts, the unveiling of the tombstone is an occasion of joy, praise, thanking and sacrificing to the ancestors in African tradition.

According to traditional African religion, the minimum period for this occasion is one year. Each family decides when to perform it, according to their own circumstances. Since it involves expense, family meetings are held to discuss the date. African tradition associates the



erection and unveiling of a tombstone with ancestor worship. Prior to the unveiling, as early as 5.00 a.m., the family go to the grave to sacrifice to the ancestors. They bring the blood of the animal slaughtered for the occasion and sorghum beer. After kneeling down around the grave, the leader pours the blood of the animal on the grave, saying:

We have come to present these to you, our ancestors; here are all your children (calling each by name). We ask you and the other ancestors to remember us. We depend on your blessings for success. Kindly accept our plea and be merciful to us, your children (Lijo — interviewee no. 13).

The leader then spreads snuff around the grave and rises to leave the place quietly. The rest of the group follow. They leave the graveyard as quietly as they entered and may only start talking softly outside it. This is a sign of respect for the ancestors. The rationale behind the appeasement of or sacrifice to the ancestors is that they will empower the living. The living will have an abundant harvest, their livestock will increase and they will prosper in all their undertakings.

Not all the dead are honoured with a tombstone. According to traditional belief, different factors lead to the erection and unveiling of a tombstone. Many erect tombstones for their parents because their parents requested this before they died. Traditionalists believe that if anyone fails to comply with the request of the deceased, bad luck will follow that person. There is a Sotho saying that one should never fail to fulfil the request of the deceased. This is linked to the strong belief that the ancestors have more status than the living and that the prosperity of the living depends entirely on the ancestors. Failure to adhere to the ancestor's demand leads to misfortune for the living. Some people cite a recurring dream about the deceased as indicating that they should erect a tombstone. According to Pauw (1975:114),

The erection of a tombstone on his father's grave was the result of a repeated dream in which his dead father used to ask him: "How is it that I made a tombstone for my father and there is no tombstone for me?" The father also instructed him to sell a beast to provide the money for his tombstone. When this was eventually done, the visitation stopped.

The ancestor's visit to demand a tombstone facilitated its erection. The power of the ancestors, which brings a blessing to those who adhere to their demands, played a significant role in this matter.

The third reason given for the erection and unveiling of a tombstone is that the family did it because they had seen others do it and thought it was a good idea to preserve the grave of one's ancestors — to show the next generation so that they, in turn, may show their children where their ancestors were buried. It makes it easier for the generations to remember their ancestors, something which can only benefit the descendants (Phakathe — interviewee no. 19).

Because it is a family affair, the unveiling of a tombstone has the power to bring the family together. It is a time for the family to get to know each other better. Unlike a funeral, which is a sad occasion when people are in mourning, unveiling a tombstone is considered a happy occasion. Through knowing each other more closely, the family become more united and powerful. This unity, in turn, appeases the ancestors, who bless the family (Pauw 1975:115).

Arriving home, the celebration begins. The relatives, friends and community join the family at this stage. The rest of the day is for eating, drinking sorghum beer, and celebration. When this happens, the traditional African says: "The ancestors are satisfied", an expression which suggests that prosperity will accompany the family concerned.

## **7.2 NUMINOUS POWER AND DEATH IN THE ZCC**

Death leaves a vacuum which cannot be filled or mended. Once it strikes, death causes severe pain to those affected and the community. Commenting on the impact of death, van Deventer (1991:55) says,

Death is the cause of great fear, mainly because it is so directly related to the ancestral gods and spirits. And when death occurs, everything comes to a standstill.... During and after the funeral, a variety of rituals also take place which point to the real presence of death among the living.

Although death causes disaster, pain and frustration among the African community, members of the ZCC hold that death is not the final end of humanity's destiny. These churches have a strong belief in a continued existence of life, beyond the grave. How members talk about a dead person confirms this belief. Most people address the corpse of the deceased not as a corpse, but as a person. Members of the ZCC are often heard bidding the dead person, saying "Go well, remind the other ancestors about us and to prepare a place for us since we are also following". Church members address the deceased by his name, almost as if they expect a response from him (Makhubu 1988:60).

While belief in the powers of the ancestors to protect and afflict is still visible among church members, the need for an unbroken communion with the dead still exists. The ZCC are sensitive to this need, and grapple with it continuously. The ZCC have come up with some of the most remarkable and imaginative ritual substitutes for the ancestral rituals. In relating the Christian message to a society dominated by the ancestral belief, they have contributed to the Christianising process. They present Jesus as the one who releases, protects and liberates mankind because of His love. The loving affection and the releasing power of Jesus through faith in Him is now able to predominate and illuminate the relationship. While some members still believe in the reckoning of the ancestors, the ZCC have broken the area of fear by presenting the loving and powerful Jesus (Daneel 1974:318; Sibanda, Khuse, Mzimela, Xaba and Bambo — interviewees no. 60, 61, 62, 63 and 64).

Jesus as the Saviour of love to all who are in distress is the secret of the dynamic growth of these churches. The practical witness in their church services, in their daily life and during death causes many whose lives are threatened by fear related to traditional belief and power, to go to the ZCC for answers. The comfort, care and concern of God in their everyday affairs strengthen their faith in God's numinous power. The fear of death, coupled with magical forces, which is a real threat to the traditional African, is eradicated by presenting God's love to the flock in the ZCC. Continued preparation of the church members for heaven through presenting Jesus as the real numinous power in their church services overtook the dominating fear which caused some to search for answers from the ancestors (Daneel 1974:323; Mgonezulu, Mbule and Kheswa — interviewees no. 65, 66 and 67).

### 7.2.1 Condolences

Once a person dies, the message is spread to many people, mostly to church members, in a short time. Many church members report to the bishop before they can tell their families. Many of the church members receiving the message, rush to the house of the deceased to verify the message and to share their sorrow. Most leaders of the ZCC go to the family to console them spiritually and physically. The physical consolation is to offer themselves for any assistance the family may need, including voluntary gifts that the leader might soon identify. Traditionally, Africans do not convey a message of death until one is sure of the incident because the affected family will only tell one or two nearby families about the death and they, in turn, spread it to the neighbours and so the whole community receives the message. Somewhere along the line, the original message sometimes tends to become distorted hence close neighbours, friends and relatives confirm its authenticity, either verbally or by telephone, so that they are sure to relay a more detailed message.

The first question people will ask is the cause that led to the death. Many accept the suffering more easily if the deceased had been suffering from a disease for some time, particularly an illness like cancer, AIDS or tuberculosis. After detecting the cause of death, the ZCC members comfort the family with messages from the Bible and a prayer. Fellow church members offer their utensils. The presence of a church leader among the bereaved is essential as it involves pastoral mediation based on the Bible. The bishop's main task is to restore the disturbed equilibrium in the family following death and comforting, consoling and guiding are essential. Counselling people in crises is a constant service rendered by the ZCC to members. The bishop ministers to people in every crisis, such as in marriage, divorce and death (Tjibeba 1997:85-90).

As a token of mourning, all the windows of the house will be smeared with ash mixed with water, the doors and all the shiny objects, such as mirrors, will be turned around. The bereaved family keep their faces down turned and noise is forbidden among the children. Pictures on the walls are turned so that they face the wall. This stems from African traditional belief and conveys a message of death to all; it informs all visitors to the family about the serious situation they are in (Tjibeba 1997:15).

### 7.2.2 Funeral arrangements

Funeral arrangements basically concern three items: setting the date (day) for the funeral, the type of beast to be slaughtered, and drafting a programme for the funeral day and choosing the coffin. Family members convene a meeting as soon as possible to sort out all the details.

Attending a funeral conveys a far-reaching meaning to the bereaved African family. It indicates the sincere sympathy of those who attend. Failure to share the suffering and pain caused by death to the bereaved family by not attending the funeral, in turn, conveys a negative message to the family. This is neither Christian nor traditional. According to Bishop MR Madonsela, leader of the Christian Apostolic Faith Praise God Church in Zion of South Africa, when death has come, all the neighbours leave their families, to stay with the bereaved family because the agony of death is severe. It affects the community at large (Madonsela — interviewee no. 17).

As regards the meat, many prefer to slaughter a beast, especially if it is the father or mother of the family who has died, but some buy meat straight from the butcher and only slaughter a sheep or a goat. Whatever decision the family reaches, a delegation from the meeting is appointed to execute the decision. Consultation with the church leader is important. Members of the church work hand in hand with the family in preparing for the funeral (Tjibeba 1997:31).

Drafting a programme for the day of the funeral is crucial as is deciding on the type of coffin. This is so because to Africans, a dead person is respected more than the living. The ZCC in Soweto follow similar procedures to those outlined above. Death has the power to bring the family, the community and African society together (Tjibeba 1997:31-32).

### 7.2.3 All-night vigil

From the evening on which the church leader has certified the death, a church service is conducted by the church at the home of the deceased. The purpose of the service is to express sympathy for the loss and to console the bereaved family through a prayer. These services are

attended by those outside the church, too. Besides being African custom, it is meant to indicate solidarity from the community. It also expresses the Christian requirement of carrying each other's burden (Gal 6:2). Night vigils are prayer meetings held in the evenings at the home of the deceased. They are attended by the neighbours and relatives. These meetings culminate, on the night before burial, with an all-night vigil. Night vigils provide an opportunity for everyone who wants to say farewell to the deceased to do so. It is the only platform where anyone can comfort the family or say something about or pay tribute to the deceased. Many people, including those who could not attend any of the evening services, make sure to be present at the all-night vigil (Makhubu 1988:91).

Many Africans welcome the corpses of their dead the afternoon of the day before the funeral. Acknowledging the sorrow the family and relatives undergo on such occasions, many of the residents voluntarily deem it their duty to move to the home of the deceased to give the stricken family moral support when the corpse arrives. The spirit of unity and solidarity that reigns among Africans, where one's pain becomes the other person's pain too, as well as the spirit of identifying with those in pain over death, encourage the community to share their sympathy with the deceased's family (Makhubu 1988:91).

The all-night vigil is usually opened by one of the subordinates to the bishop or overseer. Already the mood of the real funeral and sorrowing over the deceased is not only identified, but starts to be felt. Sermons at all-night vigils usually take the following course:

We are here at the house of so and so, for the reason that God has paid a visit to this family. It is not because of our own programme, but according to the will of God. It is God who has taken our deceased whom we loved. As people of God, we know that God has a purpose for us with this tragic incident. From the passage we have just read, Jesus Christ says, "I am going to prepare a place for you." Today we are gathered here because of the deceased. Tomorrow you might be gathering at my home because of me. Death comes to all of us at some time. The Bible says we must not worry much, but rather put our faith in Jesus. He has died for our sins. He prepares a place for those who trust and believe in Him. This death serves as a reminder to us.

Life is passing fast, and we do not always think of that. Who would ever have thought we would be gathered here tonight because of the death of our deceased? Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us. Are you ready to enter that room now if you die? We are all challenged to believe in the Lord. The Bible says He is the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one goes to the Father except through Him. These words ought to console us too, if we trust in God. They challenge those who still rely on matters of this world. All are urged to accept Jesus in their hearts. Such people meet days like this with joy.

The bereaved family is encouraged to allow the power of the Holy Spirit to take control of their hearts. The entire audience is challenged to be sure whether the Spirit of God governs their hearts. So it is God's power alone that is able to provide real peace of mind amidst all the suffering caused by death. The sermon concludes with a spontaneous hymn by the bishop, who then requests all to console the bereaved, giving an opportunity first to church leaders. Usually, all the other church leaders console the family from the Scripture passage read by the presiding church leader. During an all-night vigil, many speak about the deceased, especially friends and family. Some church leaders use all-night vigils as a platform to win souls. The impact of death has the power to make the community share with the family of the deceased (Tjibeba 1997:91).

#### **7.2.4 The funeral service**

The funeral service is marked by a procession of church leaders wearing their church regalia moving from the house into the tent, with the coffin of the deceased behind them. The congregation sings a song softly. The presiding church leader utters quotations like the following from the Bible, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall depart. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21) and "Man born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He springs up like a flower and withers away, like a fleeting shadow, he does not endure" (Job 14:1-2) (Pauw 1975:102).

The coffin is stationed at one end of the tent. A family member, responsible for monitoring

those who want to see the deceased's corpse, opens the coffin. The family members are given the chance first, followed by relatives, then friends and the community. The assembly keeps on singing throughout. The march to the church and graveyard usually follows this pattern: first, the church leaders, followed by the hearse and the family, then the mothers' union, wearing their church uniforms, where applicable, and the rest of the community after the mothers. Upon entering the church yard, programmes are issued to the community. The programme is followed as scheduled. Only the people listed on the programme, or their representatives, say something. The main speaker will speak first, paying tribute to the deceased. The rest of the speakers repeat the good done by the deceased from their perspectives. The sermon is followed by prayer and singing. After the service the congregation leave for the cemetery. The sequence of order from the church to the cemetery remains the same as from home to the church. At the graveyard the leader will conduct the service. The choir sing as the coffin is lowered into the grave. At the end of the service the leader will throw soil on the coffin three times, accompanied by other church leaders, saying, "God said you are dust and to dust you shall return." Then the family are first asked to show their last respect to the deceased by throwing soil into the grave. After the family and relatives have completed their work, all the menfolk fill the grave with soil, using spades. Then all are invited to go via the house of the deceased to wash their hands (a polite way of saying they were invited for something to eat before leaving for their respective homes). The burial rites are closed with the pronouncement of benediction by the bishop. To Africans, death is a mystery to all and religious rituals serve to explain the transition of the deceased to another state of life (Tjibeba 1997:19).

### **7.2.5 Mourning**

Mourning in the ZCC is often based on traditional African belief. Although mourning is universal and biblical, Pauw (1975:109) has this to say about mourning:

Most Christians strictly observe some form of mourning ...

An important set of observances involves wearing black

and avoiding shiny objects. All rural Christian women wear

full black dress after the death of a husband or other close relative.



A man wears a black band or a small piece of black material on his sleeve as a sign of mourning.

At about 4.00 a.m. on the day after the funeral, the family of the deceased wash all the deceased's clothes. By sunrise all should be hung up to dry. At about 6.00 a.m. all the family members, including the children of the deceased, assemble at a corner of the yard to shave their heads and to wear black material. Wearing black material and avoiding bright colours is a mourning ritual practised by the bereaved, followed by the cutting of hair. Widows and widowers have to wear black longer than other members of the family. Family members wear black for at least three to six months. Again, some families do not observe this mourning rite anymore (Pauw 1975:109).

What Pauw says also holds for the ZCC in Soweto. The mourning rituals are vital. Some families believe that if these are not observed, misfortune will strike the family of the deceased.

The bereaved family is expected not to hold a party or wedding during the mourning period (Pauw 1975:122). Termination of the mourning rites is set by the family on the day that the mourning rite is first practised. The termination day is also coupled with the sharing of the clothes of the deceased to the family and relatives. On the day of termination, a beast, goat or sheep is slaughtered. The family and friends who participated in the mourning rituals assemble. The person concerned performs the ritual. He tells them that the time for mourning had ended. Relatives, friends and close neighbours are invited. The clothes of the deceased are distributed among the family. This termination rite is performed in the early hours of the day. The rest of the day is left for the people to eat and drink. The ZCC console the bereaved family by presenting God as the protector of His flock and as the Expeller of evil powers (Daneel 1974:318).

The ash spread on the windows of the house on the day of death is removed soon after the funeral. Some Christians do this a few days later. The same applies to the shiny items and wall pictures. While these traditional rituals are still practised by some members of the ZCC, the majority (60%) of the respondents indicated that they don't observe them because they

don't assist the bereaved to forget about their tragedy, but rather remind them. God's power, which is sufficient to carry and sustain those who trust in Him, is pushed out with the result that He appears either to be too weak to assist His children or He is not interested in agony related to death.

Members of the ZCC regard each other as "kinsmen" because of their faith in the Lordship of Jesus and their experiences of the working power of the Holy Spirit. This fellowship brings about a sense of solidarity. Carrying each other's burden is a matter that governs their lives. It is not easy for the members of these churches to pass each other in need. This behaviour is born from their trust in God's power. To most, God's power in motion counts, and not man's action without involving God (Daneel 1987:135).

#### **7.2.6 Erection and unveiling of the tombstone**

The erection and unveiling of a tombstone is the last respect shown by the family to the deceased. The ZCC erect a tombstone to their deceased to remember them. Some Christians perform these rituals with the aim of sacrificing to the ancestors, a concept which is based on traditional religion and not Christianity. The fact that a goat or sheep has to be slaughtered during the ceremony makes it easy for Christians who believe in ancestral worship to perform this ritual unnoticed. Church members who sacrifice to the ancestors as if they are erecting a tombstone to them, do not let the church know about it. The church remains under the belief that it is done from a Christian point of view only. Many Christians perform or participate in rituals expressing a continuing relationship to their dead ancestors (Pauw 1975:182).

On the day of the unveiling, the church service begins at the home of the deceased at about 6.00 a.m. The service is usually conducted by a church leader. At home, the church service is an ordinary prayer by the church leader and singing of hymns. Some issue programmes and many don't even make some. The crowd then leave for the graveyard.

### 7.3 COMPARISON

- African tradition believes in a continuation of life after death. Accordingly, the word "dead" is not used for human beings by Africans. Dead is used for plants and animals alone.

The ZCC maintains that life continues beyond the grave. The story of the rich man and Lazarus is often quoted to verify continuation of life after death for all people, Christians and non-Christians (Lk 16:19-31).

- Speeches of the traditionalists revolve around the values of the deceased, and the services rendered by the deceased become the focal point.

The ZCC praise and thank God for the life of the deceased during night vigils. They thank the Lord for the role the deceased played in contributing to improving the life of society.

- African culture emphasises that the dead proceed to the other world or the world of the dead, after death. They do not have a clear explanation of this place but envisage it to be a peaceful, beautiful place where joy is the order of the day.

The ZCC believes that the living go to heaven after death. The ZCC says that only those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour will go to heaven, which is a place where God reigns. Those who do not accept Jesus as the ruler of their lives will go to hell, a state of pain, sorrow and agony (Jn 14:1-3; 2 Cor 5:1 ff).

- Traditionalists regard death as the final dangerous enemy of humanity, unwanted and causing suffering and agony to the community.

The ZCC goes further to admire death as a gate(way) to eternity, life eternal (Phil 1:21).

- Constant performance of sacrifices to the ancestors and appeasement by the living is a guarantee of receiving blessings from the ancestors, according to African religion. Practising all traditional rituals is necessary to ensure acceptance of the living in the world of the ancestors.

The ZCC teaches that acceptance of Jesus as Saviour in one's life is the way to eternity. Jesus is the only way to heaven. Salvation, entering God's kingdom is achieved not through humanity's efforts but is an act of God's grace (Jn 14:6; 3:16; Eph 2:8). Salvation is the gift of God to man.

- During the unveiling of a tombstone, traditionalists thank and sacrifice rituals to the ancestors. The erection of a tombstone is based on dreams about and visits of the ancestors to erect it. An act that traditionalists feel compelled to exercise.

To the ZCC, a tombstone is a remembrance of the deceased. It is a sign of respect the living show to the deceased. All the glory and honour are directed to God for having given the living the life and talents to serve the community.

## CHAPTER 8

### SUMMARY, OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 8.1 SUMMARY

During this study the researcher found that both African traditional religion and the ZCC believe in the existence of power and that there are similarities and differences in their conception of power and its influence. The ZCC spiritual belief helped them to understand the function of numinous power and the Holy Spirit. Their concept of numinous power as "life force" and its influence is in keeping with the biblical concept of the influence of the power of the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:8. For traditionalists, one's life and existence are inextricably bound up with one's power. To live and to be healthy is to have power, to be sick is to have less power and to die is to have no power.

##### 8.1.1 Similarities

- **Need for power**

African traditional religion and behaviour are centred on a single value: to acquire more power, numinous power to live strongly and to ensure that power shall remain perpetually in the African's posterity. Some people have more and others have less of this power. The presence of power enables people to live strongly. Such people are able to withstand the evil forces from their enemies or witches, whose aim is to weaken them. To Africans, people's lives, success, happiness, health and, above all, peace depend entirely on the power they possess. To be weak, to have problems, to be sick and to die are signs of lack of power. African traditionalists believe that to survive and cope in life, people's intervention with the ancestors and traditional healers, and the use of medicine are vital. Thus, whenever problems arise in African society or even when there is a foreboding of trouble, it is usually necessary for the afflicted to consult the diviners. The diviners are the specialists in both the spirit world and in dynamism or magic. The ancestors and traditional healers are the champions in fortifying the living weak persons with the basic need, numinous power (Anderson 1990:67-

68).

The ZCC are known as the church of the Spirit, a term reflecting dependence and emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit. They are sometimes referred to as "spiritual churches" or "spirit-type" churches or even "African Pentecostal Churches" (Anderson 1990:65). All these names reflect the ZCC concern with the influence of numinous power in their church services. According to them, this is the numinous power spoken of in the Bible (Acts 1:8) and it plays a prominent role in all their church service. The presence of numinous power and its operation in the ZCC is mainly visible during the healing sessions of their church services. With reference to the influence of power in the ZCC healing process, the healing message is the pivot of all church activity. The ZCC headquarters are generally regarded as healing venues by many people.

Numinous power governs the lives of the ZCC members and is at the centre of their teachings. Water prayed for and other objects are considered holy because this numinous power has "anointed" them to counteract any evil spirit that might harm a person. ZCC members believe that healing of the sick, provision of jobs and repentance are the fruits of the influence of numinous power. They approach the church leader with all their problems and he upholds them in prayer to God. In their church services, the music, which consists of beating drums, playing piano and guitars and clapping hands, and, above all, the Word of God are a means of acquiring the influence of God's Spirit. This power touches the lives of people, is experienced and forms the core of their existence.

- **Continuity of life after death**

African traditional religion believes in the continuity of life after death. The respect that the African traditionalists show to the dead is based on the belief that people's ancestors have more power over the living than before their death. Africans also believe that people's destiny and success depend on their relationship with their ancestors. Maintaining a healthy relationship with one's ancestors is thus traditionally encouraged. The living have to respect, honour and obey the ancestors. They have to be thanked and satisfied through sacrifices. African traditional religion believes this is necessary because the ancestors have power over

life and death, sickness and health, poverty and prosperity. African traditionalists believe that nothing is impossible for the ancestors and that their main desire is to be remembered by the descendants. If the living do this faithfully, the ancestors reward them with good health for themselves and their livestock, plentiful rain and good harvests. If, on the other hand, the ancestors are forgotten or disregarded, they may withdraw their protection and the living and their descendants will suffer ill-health, death, drought and loss of crops and livestock (Sundkler 1976:21; Karambamoheru 1998:1; Mönnig 1955:54).

The ZCC preach that life continues after death. The life which the living need to enjoy after death depends entirely on how the living respond to the gospel. According to the Bible's teachings, this life is achieved through faith in Jesus Christ (Jn 3:16). The words of Jesus (Mt 25:31-46; Jn 14:6), "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me", are quoted in support of this. The core of their ministry is confession of sins and surrendering one's life to the Lordship of Jesus. The ZCC preach that, according to the Bible, faith in the name of Jesus is the only guarantee of eternal life. Those who deny and show contempt for this truth will go to a place of pain, where the condition is pain, known as hell. It is a place of severe pain, sorrow and eternal mourning.

- **The "other world" — Heaven**

African traditionalists believe in the existence of a place called the "other world", the "world of the ancestors", or *badimong*. It is a place where all the dead will enter. No person's spirit shall be barred from this world of the ancestors. Although Africans have no clear description of it, it is assumed to be a beautiful, peaceful, evergreen place where pain, sorrow and mourning have no place, and all the people are happy — a place of joy (Makhubu 1988:29; Mönnig 1955:55).

The ZCC teach of going to heaven after death. It is a place, a kingdom where Jesus reigns. Those who have accepted Jesus into their lives and as their personal Saviour will enter into heaven, where there will be no pain and where all will praise and glorify God for ever. This place is called the Kingdom of God (Mt 25:31-46). Those who do not accept but reject Jesus and His teachings will enter into a place of eternal pain and sorrow, where there will be

weeping and gnashing of teeth. The ZCC thus persuade people to believe in Jesus Christ, but the ultimate choice (decision) remains with each person. God's numinous power is able to assist and lead those who choose to accept Jesus. In other words, it is through the acceptance of Jesus, that the power of the Holy Spirit can cause people to reach this goal.

- **Holistic approach/involvement in ministry**

The power of solidarity and unity plays an important part in African traditional religion. An individual is considered a composite part of the community. Relationship and community are the essence of life and religion. This is realised in every facet of life: work (eg, ploughing, looking after the stock and cooking) and celebration (eg, wedding or birthday celebrations) as well as at a time of bereavement (Oosthuizen 1997:8).

Since families exist in some type of homeostatic balance, the loss of a person in a family group can unbalance this homeostasis and cause pain. If death strikes the family, each member of the family is, to some extent, bereaved. Each will react more as a member of the family with the rest of the community, and not as an individual. The whole approach to their ministry is holistic and it involves everyone, regardless of whether he or she is related to the bereaved person or not (Tjibeba 1997:73).

The holistic approach of the ZCC to ministry is the key to their success. Thus President TE Motholo of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion of Africa, in Rockville, Soweto encouraged his congregation to bring all their problems, frustrations and sicknesses to the church for divine healing.

The sense of unity and community found in the ZCC ministry is the source and foundation of their strength. Hence Tjibeba says that in the African context, death is a communal (community) issue and Africans' strength lies in the proclamation of the Christian Gospel and also in the solidarity of friends and relatives. During burials African people support each other materially as well as spiritually. This spirit of togetherness and sharing the problems in times of sorrow is a strong force. In ZCC Christian families, the home of a recently deceased person becomes a kind of holy place where people pray and read from the Scriptures. Here, face to



face with death, bishops, prophets, church leaders and members of the family and clan take turns to preach. This lasts for several days and in this way the ZCC assists the family to cope with death and to try to integrate it into their lives (Bujo 1992:125; Tjibeba 1997:50, 82, 119). The researcher's findings in Soweto concurred with those of Bujo and Tjibeba.

### **8.1.2 Differences**

- **Mediator — ancestors and Jesus**

According to African traditional belief, ancestors are not God, but are accepted as mediators and messengers between God and human beings. This belief is based on the African traditional belief that human beings cannot address God directly because He is Supreme. The ancestors, who are superior to the living and have more authority over the living, are approached by the living to approach God on behalf of the living to present their petitions. Traditionally, the ancestors are believed to be closer to God (Makhubu:1988:28).

The ZCC strive to approach God according to the biblical principles. Some, however, approach God through the ancestors and Jesus Christ. What is important is that in the use of the Bible, the Word of God, the intention of most of them is worship according to biblical instructions. Many people visit the ZCC because of the performance of miracles by the Holy Spirit, especially during their healing sessions, founded on the Bible.

- **Obeying the ancestors — obeying God**

Traditionalists perform ceremonial rituals or sacrifices with the aim of appeasing the ancestors. This is believed to be their only way to ensure protection, security and blessings from the ancestors. Failure to do so may lead the living to encounter misfortune, disaster and even death. To avoid this, appeasement of the ancestors from the side of the living is a sign of their obedience to the ancestors. The power associated with the performance of these rituals unites the family (Sundkler 1976:21).

ZCC members are committed to obeying God. This is done through living up to the standard

required by the Bible: worshipping, praising and living as God wishes from the core of their lives. The ancestors are remembered as people with not sufficient power to protect or secure the living because they are creatures as well . Only God has the power to bless. The ZCC believe that with faith in Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit will guide and lead them, and protect them from the attacks of the evil powers. The ancestors are merely honoured as seniors to the living.

- **Traditional healers and prophets**

According to African belief, traditional healers are not expected to socialise with people, except at a special community traditional ceremony. Even though they do work in cities, traditional healers are generally associated with the ancestors and sometimes with wizardry. Diviners do not usually attend church (Myandu 1994:17).

Prophets operate in the church of which most are leaders. They work in the cities and attend communal meetings or gatherings. Most of their work, which includes praying for the sick and leading the people to Jesus, is done in the church or a place of worship. Prayer in the name of Jesus is the only cause of the existence of their ministry. They are usually called God's people because of their peaceful dealing with people. The ZCC consult prophets for prayer for any problem (Myandu 1994:16).

This empirical study has indicated that the prophet has a vital role to play in the ZCC. While this office played a major role in the proclamation of the Christian message in first three hundred years of the Christian Church's existence, in South Africa it has become associated mainly with healing in a holistic sense. The prophet's role of experiencing God's power has dealt with the daily needs and personal problems of ZCC members. The healing ministry is found in most of the Zionist Christian churches. Coupled with this ministry prophets emphasise personal commitment to Jesus Christ as a prerequisite to receiving the power of God.

The prophet in the ZCC fills the vacuum left by the historical churches where no church leaders compensated realistically for the loss of the traditional healer's role in effectively

dealing with the evil forces. The traditional healer is known as a welfare consultant, seer and adviser and is deeply involved in social relationships in the community.

The traditional healer heals through diagnosis with the use of the divination set and the prescription/provision of muti/medicine. He also protects the people and their possessions against the evil powers. In the ZCC his office is fulfilled by the prophet.

The rapid growth of the ZCC is largely due to the healing ministry of the prophets. Prophets stress the role and power of the Holy Spirit in their work. Some prophets sometimes also use muti/medicine but always emphasise that healing happens by the power of the Holy Spirit. Such prophets only use medicines when so revealed by God through visions.

- **Instruments of power**

Both African traditional religion and the ZCC use salt, ash, water and staffs as instruments of power. Traditional healers also use divination sets and muti while the ZCC use the laying on of hands. Both use music, singing and dancing as instruments of power. The ZCC use keyboards and guitars which traditionalists do not. The ZCC hold that God's power causes healing through these instruments when prayed for.

## **8.2 OBSERVATIONS**

The study clearly indicates a huge communality in the need for and concept of numinous power in African traditional religion and the ZCC. This need for numinous power is experienced both in the leadership of African traditional religion and the ZCC and in the ordinary followers. Such a need for the presence of numinous power in everyday life is not prominent or indispensable in mainline church services and members.

The study shows the communal and holistic approach of African traditionalists in all matters of life. This profound sense of unity is the basis of their strength. If there is no rain, a communal day of prayer will be organised to make sacrifices to the ancestors, under the leadership of the traditional healers or chiefs, and all the people will gather. During wedding

celebrations or funerals, not only those affected are involved, the entire community is expected to attend. Such unity forms the source of their power. The ZCC approach to ministry is holistic and communal and involves all areas of life. An invitation to ministry, say in healing, the search for jobs, barrenness and family problems, is extended beyond their church membership. All people's needs are met in this church through the power of God. In the ZCC prophets and bishops are specialists since they trust in the numinous power of God. Africans, who have turned away from their sins and have joined the "mainline" churches, get frustrated when the church fails to address their basic needs and refers them to social workers, psychologists and others. This does not happen in the ZCC. the influence of numinous power witnessed by the bishops is visualised in operations. It comes as no surprise then that members from historical churches attend the ZCC secretly, and eventually openly and permanently. However, this rapid growth of membership happens without the ZCC following any worked-out missionary programme in their ministry.

The study has indicated a sense of empowerment in all areas of life of the African traditionalists, something which emerges from the *ubuntu*, caring and loving features of Africans, the need for each other and the fact that one exists because of others. The ZCC ministry attracts many people because it employs the strategies of sharing, loving and caring. This concept and force enable the ZCC to overcome ethnic and geographical boundaries. The ZCC of Lekhanyane is found in Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Botswana, Transkei and the Republic of South Africa. The variety of languages does not deter the drive to reach out from the Spirit of God. This feature or element is missing in the mainline churches because they are individualistic and have an ethnic focus. Is the influence of God's Spirit not able to heal people in the historical churches just as it does in the ZCC?

There is no doubt that the ZCC's concept of power and its traditional holistic approach to mission work continue to attract many people. The dynamic growth in membership indicates acceptance of its service by the majority of the African community. While these churches experience the presence of God's power which answers people's needs and problems, the historic churches continue to suffer a loss of members to the ZCC.

The historical churches should learn to pray for miracles to happen in their church services

as they do in the ZCC. The historical churches can learn from the power of prayer as experienced in the ZCC. They need to create a platform of divine healing sessions during Sunday services to pray for members who are sick or have problems.

The concept of numinous power as expressed in the ZCC enables people to cope with the difficulties of life or frees them from the threats of evil forces. It provides a meaningful deliverance to people in the name of Jesus Christ. The ZCC offers a platform of "rescue" to Africans through a healing prayer and faith in the name of Jesus. As a result, even members of the historical churches visit the ZCC in search of protection, security and success.

### 8.3 CONCLUSION

The influence of numinous power and its role play an important part in the lives of most Africans. The holistic approach practised by AIC and ZCC church leaders, which embraces the traditional approach to dealing with evil spirits, continues to attract many people. Over the last twenty years the AIC movement has grown into the most dynamic church movement in South Africa. It is proliferating among Black South Africans and attracting adherents of traditional African religions. At the same time it is drawing many former members of mainline churches into its fold. The dynamic growth rate of ZCC membership is an indication of the acceptance of its ministry by the majority of Africans. In 1950 seventy-five to eighty percent of all Black South African Christians were members of the mainline churches and only twelve to fourteen percent belonged to the AICs. By 1980 the mainline Black Christian population had dropped to fifty-two percent while AIC membership had increased to twenty-seven percent and by 1991, the figures were forty-one and thirty-six percent, respectively (Oosthuizen 1997:8). While the AICs are enjoying spontaneous growth, the mainline churches are losing members to the AICs (Makhubu 1988:77).

The influence of numinous power experienced and realised during AIC services enables members to cope with the threat of evil forces and the difficulties of life. The holistic ministry and experience of the influence of God's power in their church services give the community life. It is in these church services that their basic needs are effectively met. Numinous power in the name of Jesus provides complete deliverance. Therefore, even members of historical

churches visit the ZCC in search of protection, security and success (Daneel 1974:318).

Most people seem to find the application of the influence of numinous power as expressed in the AICs acceptable. The shift of African church members to the AICs is due to the warmth these churches offer. The ZCC, who constitute the vast majority of membership in the AICs, stand as a force to be reckoned with, especially by the historical churches. As Makhubu (1988:3) so aptly remarks, "People can call us what they want, judge us, put us in pigeonholes if they wish, we exist and are growing very fast. They may ignore us now in some quarters but they cannot dismiss us." This remark of his, which was directed at the historical churches, clearly indicates that the ZCC are a thorn in the flesh of many historical churches in South Africa.

It is the researcher's belief that the influence of numinous power expressed by the AIC poses a challenge to the historical churches. The holistic traditional African approach in presenting the Biblical message is lacking in historical churches, which would seem to suggest that the latter method is inadequate for many Africans. The historical churches' gospel, which fails to address people's daily difficulties and fears, does not provide security and protection to many Africans hence the historical churches' loss of members to the AICs. Mission-oriented churches should employ methods that serve the whole person. The rapid growth of the AIC should serve as a lesson to the historical churches in South Africa. In regard to the influence of numinous power in people's lives, Mr Moffat Karambamuchero (1998:1), Director of Africa Prison Fellowship, says:

I was born a worshipper of the ancestors before I repented to Christianity. I used to sacrifice to the ancestors for any problem I came across and the problem was solved. Stealing was something I committed and I never felt any guilt for such a crime. After I was promoted to a higher position in my career, I stole money and was convicted. While in prison, I thought of my family and the crime was too heavy for me to bear. Sacrifices to the ancestors never healed the guilt of the crime I had committed. While listening to a tape on radio in prison, the preacher said:

"You don't run away from your sin, but you confess it". I then confessed my sin to Jesus and surrendered my life to Him. Thereafter, the depression and evil feeling which had tormented me, was healed. I was relieved and experienced peace and joy. The Spirit of God released me from the sorrow of evil.

According to Karambamucho, real relief and cure came to him through the power of God. Soon after he had accepted Jesus, God's power, operating through His Word, freed Karambamucho from the guilt of sin.

The spontaneous and rapid growth of the ZCC, based on the authority of numinous power, continues. The permanent existence and growth of these churches is evident (Makhubu 1988:3). The researcher is of the opinion that the concept of numinous power as expressed by the ZCC through their ministry challenges the historical churches to review their methods of mission. This study should motivate the mission-oriented churches to apply a traditional holistic methodology in presenting the gospel in such a way that it serves people completely, including their basic needs.

The continuous dynamic growth of ZCC membership while the historical churches lose members should encourage the historical churches to learn from the ZCC how to present the gospel in context. The generosity, love and care shared by ZCC members, which even lets visitors feel at home, is an important recipe that the historical churches can learn. In the researcher's view this significant aspect and quality of mission is often obscured in the historical churches. Many people find that the warmth, care and sense of belonging people receive in the ZCC is lacking in most of the historical churches.

The historical churches need to accept the ZCC as their equals in this ministry and no longer as the field of their own operation, and a closer cooperation between the historical churches and the ZCC should exist for the missionary cause.

It also seems to the researcher that the concept of numinous power as expressed in the ZCC challenges the historical churches to engage with the ZCC more on an ecumenical platform

for the cause of the Gospel. Closer cooperation between the ZCC and the historical churches is therefore more important than ever before for the expression of God's dynamic power, the Holy Spirit within society.



## **ANNEXURE:           TRANSCRIPTIONS OF INTERVIEWS**

### **(1)     The late Dr Lydia August, President of St John's Apostolic Faith Mission in Southern Africa, Orlando — 15 July 1993**

*Is there a distinction between numinous power and the Supreme Being or God?*

Numinous power is the Spirit of God, it is God Himself (Jn 1:1). It is part of the Deity. One cannot separate numinous power and the Supreme Being according to the Bible.

When God created the world, numinous power was there. It is only that in the creation, God the Father took the initiative (Gen 1:1); in the redemptive work, Jesus Christ came up front (Jn 3:16). The Holy Spirit, God's numinous power, guides the Church now. Numinous power is the Spirit of God the Father who presently directs all who believe in the Bible and Jesus Christ.

One cannot separate numinous power from the Supreme Being. It is God's Holy Spirit, the origin of all.

### **(2)     The late President PP Ngwenya of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion of South Africa, Klipspruit — 16 January 1994**

*When is the tombstone erected and unveiled and is a tombstone always erected?*

According to the culture of Africans, a tombstone for the deceased can only be erected within a minimum of one year after the burial. Unlike in the case of a funeral, where the whole community is usually involved in mourning for the deceased, the erection and unveiling of a tombstone is a family matter. Each family arranges and attends such occasions. A few close friends of the family may be invited to attend.

Not every person who dies deserves a tombstone. Only someone whose life was exemplary, or who has served the community, deserves a tombstone. The emphasis is generally on the good works the deceased has rendered to the community. The family, especially the younger

generation, are encouraged to follow in the footsteps of the deceased.

The church leader would also praise God who has given the deceased to the family. He also thanks God for the positive life that the deceased led during his life. Eventually, the congregation is urged to thank God for the deceased's life.

**(3) Bishop RJ Mbatha of the African Holy Church in Zion, Meadowlands**  
**— 12 August 1993**

*Is the purpose of the sermon at a funeral to tell the congregation about the deceased or to preach the Word of God?*

I am sent to preach the Word of God at all times. That is why I always read a portion from the Bible even before I say anything. I know that God has a purpose with every person. He has appointed His servants to proclaim the good news to the oppressed, the sick and the dying.

Talking about someone who has died is not my mission. I may mention it in the beginning. I know that those who mourn for the deceased can only be healed by the Spirit of God, which works through His Word, the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God. It heals the broken spirit. The Spirit of God gives courage to those affected by death. It strengthens them to live in hope, to see the love of God amidst death. It calls those who live without God to reconcile with God while they still have time to do so. I present Jesus Christ to them.

**(4) Mrs S Makwala, member of the Zion Christian Church Ekukhanyeni,**  
**Zola — 13 March 1995**

*How did you become a member of the ZCC?*

I never attended church. My parents belonged to the Methodist Church and I was told that I was baptised in the Methodist Church.

I suffered from a stomach ache from 1993. I consulted many doctors, but no one managed to heal my disease. I also went to the traditional healers for a cure, still they failed to cure

my pain. One afternoon in February 1995, Mr T Mokone, who is a senior member of the Zion Christian Church Ekukhanyeni, visited my house. He invited me to accompany him to his church on Sunday for a healing prayer. I did go to church with him the following Sunday. When the bishop extended an invitation to all who were sick to come up to the front for a prayer, I joined. The bishop with Mr Mokone prayed for me and I was healed.

I then decided to register as a full member of the above church because, through a healing prayer, God cured my disease.

**(5) Bishop TE Mohulo of St John's Catholic Church in Zion, Orlando West,  
— 17 June 1994**

*Is there any cooperation between numinous power and the spirit world?*

Numinous power is the Spirit of God. It originates from God. This is the Spirit of Power which we read about in Acts 1:8.

The spirit world is the place where the evil spirits operate, a place where the ancestors reside. After death, the dead are considered to have more power over the dead. Being at this place, the ancestors, who are dead human beings, expect the living to venerate them. Failure to comply with this, the traditionalists maintain, means that the living will encounter misfortune.

Numinous power refers to God from whom all creatures originate and on whom all depend for survival. The spirit world is a place where the dead live, a place regarded as superior by traditionalists. Even the spirit world residents are created by God and depend on numinous power for their destiny.

**(6) Bishop T Mooketsi of Church of Jesus Christ in Spiritual of the  
Republic of South Africa, Pimville — 15 June 1995**

*Do some church members maintain traditional elements in the church?*

The practice of traditional religion such as worship of the ancestors is practised by some members, particularly the new converts from no church. This happens especially when

illnesses affect such a member. An affected member comes to church for a healing prayer. When she does not get cured, she goes to the traditional healer, who gives her some medicines for a cure. I advise such a member to rely on Jesus for healing alone. Members agree that Jesus can heal the sickness of one who believes through a prayer. This kind of syncretism fades out when a member grows deeper in the promises of the Bible. I usually persuade them to have faith in Jesus who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, heals all diseases and problems.

I thank the Lord who through His power heals more people so that those who are weak are strengthened in faith.

**(7) Archbishop SA Morodi of the South African United Apostolic Church  
in Zion, Dube — 15 March 1995**

*Do certain objects in the church have power?*

There is power in some objects which are used in the church, for example staff, Bible, water, salt, et cetera. These objects' power comes from God. When we pray for them, God's power affects them. That is why they are defined as holy water, holy staff and so on.

If a snake attacks us during a baptismal service, we smash it with the holy stick. The power loaded in these holy objects overcomes all evil powers. It is the power obtained from God through the Name of Jesus.

As a result, some members fetch these holy objects like water to protect their houses by sprinkling them on the roof and inside. Others drink from the holy water when sick. We go about to prayer meetings in the night safely because we carry holy sticks for protection.

**(8) The late President TE Motholo of the Christian Catholic Church in Zion of  
Africa, Rockville — 4 March 1993**

*Is God's numinous power present and visible during a healing service?*

This church believes in the presence of the power of the Holy Spirit of God. During the

healing service, which usually takes place every Sunday, I appeal to the Holy Spirit to touch those affected by any illness or problems, to heal them. This we do in the name of Jesus. This Name has the power to remove all the evil forces.

After confirming new members or marrying a couple, I tell them the following: If you encounter any problem, for example, illness, barrenness, family disputes, joblessness, you must come to the church for a healing prayer. I say this because God's power has healed many such problems. Confirmation of this power becomes visible when the illness of those prayed for gets cured. The witness of such members, which is testified during such sessions, serves as a clear indication to the whole congregation. Hence I shall not stop praying for the sick in this church.

**(9) The late Rev Paul Makhubu, who was President of the Council of African Independent Churches, Orlando — 12 March 1994**

*Jesus Christ, the Son of God*

The researcher asked the question about Jesus Christ being the Son of God and at the same time being One with the Father because this question is viewed in a very negative light by many Christians in the Zionist churches. The Sonship of Jesus Christ appears to pose a serious problem to members of the ZCC because it is viewed as a theology that belittles the authority and deity of God to that of a human being.

Rev Makhubu replied as follows:

The Zionist churches accept God, the Father as the Creator of all things with absolute authority. We worship Him as God who owns all power and dominion. To the Zionist churches, God is super humanity. He is holy and belongs to the world of the deity. It is difficult for us to accept Jesus Christ as God's Son. Such a concept suggests that God has a wife. To us, this poses a serious problem which doesn't tally with our concept of God as the Almighty God does not marry. On this basis, we are unable to agree that Jesus Christ is the son of God when we know that God did not

marry. To us, Jesus is the way, the truth and the light. He is mediator between man and God. Through Him all men are reconciled with God if they believe in the name of Jesus. The Zionist churches consider the above question as something unacceptable in African cosmology."

**(10) President J Ndaba of the Damaseko the New Church of Christ in Zion  
Bluestone of South Africa, Meadowlands — 16 November 1993**

*Dreams, visions and the Bible*

The Bible, visions and dreams are generally considered to be the means through which God reveals Himself to people. The researcher needed to know which of the three is the most important medium for the church.

President Ndaba indicated the importance of the three media. He said that in some cases, God communicates with His people through dreams as He did when He advised Joseph and Mary to flee to Egypt from Bethlehem as King Herod wanted to kill Jesus (Mt 2:13), and Pharaoh's dream about seven years of abundance and seven years' famine (Gen 41:1-8). God may also choose to communicate with man through a vision. In the Bible we read about God communicating with Abram when He called him (Gen 12:1-4). Through visions God mainly tells his servants, like prophets, what to do and what He wants His people to do. It is the responsibility of the shepherd to execute God's command. He must communicate God's message as the Lord has told him.

The Bible is the final book through which God revealed Himself to every human being. In the Bible, God speaks to all people. God's Word is dynamic. The Bible is indispensable to the church because the church lives through God's written Word, the Bible. The Bible is the only weapon entrusted to the church by God to fight against the devil and his demonic forces. Since God's Word is powerful, it gives life to the church.

Just as God spoke to the prophets of old through dreams, visions and the Bible, God still uses the same methods to address His people. However, the Bible as the spoken Word of God advises His flock day and night. Through the Bible, God provides life, healing and protection

to all who believe in the name of Jesus. He guides and sustains His sheep against evil forces. God's power, revealed through the Holy Spirit, protects His church against all demonic forces.

It is imperative for members of this church to obey God's Word as written in the Bible. In this church we fast and pray for God's healing when someone is seriously ill. Sometimes we spend day and night praying to God on top of the mountain, since Jesus also had to isolate Himself from His disciples for a prayer during His severe sufferings (Mt 14:32-36). God answers our prayers, heals the sick, provides jobs and protects us from evil powers through the power of the Holy Spirit because we obey the Bible.

**(11) Pastor ZM Mdluli of the African Congregational Church, Orlando —  
2 March 1994**

*Do the ancestors depend on God for power?*

God, the Creator, is the source of all life. He created everything on earth and in heaven. He is the origin of life. The ancestors also depend on God for their success. Although we Africans traditionally respect and depend on the advice of our ancestors, still we know that they, in turn, depend on God's power for success. This becomes evident when one encounters serious problems, such as misfortune or illness. The traditional healer, who is the famous specialist in normalising such an abnormality, clearly depends on God's power for healing. To the question, "Will I be cured?" which the person consulting him asks, the traditional healer's usual response is "If God wishes, you will be cured".

The recognition of the ancestors by Africans, and the love and care that exist between the living and the ancestors do not reduce God's power to that of any creature. African traditional religion taught Africans to respect, love and care for their ancestors. They are considered to be the advisers of the living. The ancestors are to be acknowledged and respected by Africans to ensure one's welfare and prosperity. Failure to adhere to this required practice may lead to one's misfortune and even death. As a result, the ancestors are considered very important in African traditional religion. They are the guides of the living because they are regarded as possessing more authority than the living. They are to be respected, loved and cared for by the living. Nevertheless, the ancestors, too, rely entirely on the power from God.

**(12) The late Bishop BDS Mahlangu of the Bantu Reformed Church of South Africa,  
Chiawelo — 18 November 1993**

*Does the evil spirit in traditional religion originate from the ancestors or from numinous power?*

The evil spirit in traditional religion manipulates God's power with the intention to harm. Such acts are commonly practised by witches and sorcerers with the object of hurting and eradicating their victims. Evil forces contained in medicines or herbs are used in this process. Sometimes familiars, such as baboons, owls and snakes, are employed to perform the evil cause. These evil spirits originate from the devil, who is the leader of all who practise evil activities. The evil spirit uses the power from God to disturb the normal flow of life in a society. Traditionally, when this occurred, advice from the ancestors was required. Appeasement of the ancestors was considered to be the means to combat evil forces from the victim. Since the ancestors are believed to possess more power than the living, they would intercede to God on behalf of the victims for a remedy.

Numinous power, vital or life force, originating from God is the source of good traditional religion. In traditional religion the evil spirit is considered an intruder originating from Satan, whose purpose is to disturb the normal order of creation.

**(13) Bishop RS Lijo of the National Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa -  
Phiri — 11 April 1994**

*Who do people worship, God or the ancestors?*

Bishop Lijo replied that the church has only one God to whom all the prayers are directed. He is the Father of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Prayers and worship are directed to Him in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our intercessor with God.

The ancestors are those people who have already passed over to the other world. We respect, love and care for them. Traditionally, we sacrifice to, venerate and appease them, but we do not worship them.



**(14) Archbishop TW Ntongana of the Apostolic Methodist Church of South Africa,  
Emdeni — 13 June 1993**

*Do the ancestors have a role to play in the church?*

The ancestors are our forefathers whom we remember and respect. In the church we worship God in and through Jesus Christ. The ancestors do not play any role except that, as their descendants, we remember them and follow in their footsteps in exercising our faith as far as is in accordance with the Bible.

**(15) Archbishop SB Mazibuko of the Children of God Ekukhanyeni Church  
in Zion, Dlamini — 16 March 1995**

*Whose power is able to comfort the bereaved, the ancestors' or God's?*

The ancestors are our forefathers and creatures. The power they possess is limited. Their powers originate from God. They also rely on God's power for existence. When I visit the bereaved family, I read from the Bible, which is the Word of God. The healing exercise is executed in the name of Jesus according to the Bible. Therefore, the healing experienced by the bereaved comes from God's power and not from the ancestors.

**(16) Pastor MD Chiburi of the Association of Independent Ministers and  
Churches in Africa, Naledi — 19 May 1995**

*Who is the mediator between man and God?*

The Bible tells us that we should approach God in the name of Jesus. From the Bible we learn that all petitions made to God should be directed in the name of Jesus. No other name is given to man though man can be saved by the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). The mediator between man and God is Jesus Christ.

**(17) Bishop MR Madonsela of the Christian Apostolic Faith Praise God Church  
in Zion of South Africa, Klipspruit — 12 August 1993**

*Who initiates healing during a healing service, the prophet or God?*

A prophet is a messenger of God. His task is to execute what the Lord has revealed to him through a dream or vision. A prophet has no power to heal, but God uses him to cure the sick. The prophet prays for the sick to God in the name of Jesus and God's power heals the sick.

**(18) Bishop IPB Mokoena of the Community for Jesus, Meadowlands — 10 October 1994**

*What is the role of numinous power in the church?*

Zionist churches are known to be spiritual churches because of their belief in the operational power of God. From the Bible we learn of the power of the Holy Spirit poured out on the apostles (eg, Acts 2:4). Accordingly, members of these churches believe that God heals His people from sickness through this power. Numinous power is thus the life of a church. This power originates from God. Signs, such as healing, speaking in tongues and prophesy, are confirmation of God's presence through the power of numinous power or life force. It is indispensable for the survival of the church.

**(19) Bishop S Phakathe of the Esixima Mulilo Nazareth Apostolic Church in Zion,  
Zondi — 3 February 1994**

*Does every deceased person deserve a tombstone?*

While we respect our ancestors, Africans do not erect a tombstone for all the dead. Only heroes who served the community are honoured with a tombstone. The main aim of the tombstone is for the next generations to know what the hero has done for the community and to learn from his example. The descendants need to know what the deceased has done and praise the deceased for the work he has performed.

**(20) Archbishop HM Ndlozi of St Augustine's Apostolic Faith Mission of Southern Africa, Meadowlands — 19 August 1994**

*What authority has a church leader in church?*

A church leader is a charismatic person whose authority is above that of an ordinary member. Such a person is charged with a task of shepherdhood by God. God anoints every leader with the power of the Holy Spirit. God uses other church leaders like bishops or archbishops to empower leaders. For this reason, all church leaders are highly respected within these churches. We respect them for we accept them as ambassadors of God who elected them to such positions.

**(21) Bishop R Mothapo of St Elia John Apostolic Church in Zion, Moletsane — 19 May 1995**

*What is the implication of cleansing after a funeral?*

We Africans believe that every death is associated with evil force. The evil force is considered to be the agent of virtually any death. This concept still plays an important part in the lives of some church members. The cleansing of people after death, which practice is dominated by prayer, is conceived to be a protective measure against evil forces, which control the dead, not to affect the living.

**(22) Archbishop NH Ngada of the United Independent Believers in Christ Church, Zola — 2 March 1995**

*What is the relationship between the ancestors and God?*

In the Bible we read of God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. These are the ancestors of the Jews. In the same way, every African has ancestors through whom he proceeds to God in prayer. God is Almighty and Holy. We respect the ancestors since they are closer to God. We venerate them. The success of the living depends on one's relationship with one's ancestors. God is above every creature - while we worship through Jesus Christ, we appease our ancestors so that we may be prosperous and healthy.

- (23) Bishop LP Nale of the Holy Spirit Power of God Church, Pimville — 17 August 1997**

*What does God's Spirit offer to the church?*

A church without the power of God is dead. A dead church cannot attract people to the Lord. There is no life in a church without the power of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:8). The power of the Holy Spirit makes the witnessing of Jesus by His disciples possible. It is by the power of the Holy Spirit that the evil spirit is cast out. The power of God's Spirit gives life to the church by caring for them and curing them of illness which makes them weak. Only the power of God can do this. Therefore, this power is the live wire of every living church.

- (24) The late Rev OSD Mooki of the New Church of Southern Africa, Orlando — 15 January 1994**

*Is there life after one's death?*

According to African belief, life continues when a person goes to the world of the dead, which is assumed to be a place of joy and peace. The grass and trees are imagined as being evergreen. The troubles of this world will be no more. Therefore, we do not say a person "dies", but he sleeps. This explains why the ancestors are respected. They are assumed to have more power than the living. From the Bible we read that there is life after death (Mt 25:46).

- (25) Mr LP Lebelo of the Zion Christian Church, Diepkloof — 16 February 1997**

*What is the importance of the power of prayer in your life?*

As a Christian, prayer forms the basis of my life. Our bishops pray for our success, protection and welfare in general. Any problem that we encounter in life is overcome by God through prayer. During our Annual Conference at Moria all who require any help come for prayer. Those without jobs, the sick, and those who need protection. Many of those prayed for are cured or find jobs, and because of this, they join the church. Therefore through the power of prayer, the church of Christ grows.

**(26) Bishop S Mohlolo of St Patrick Apostolic Church in Zion, Jabavu — 13 February 1994**

*Can disregard of one's ancestors be the cause of one's misfortune?*

According to African culture, children must honour their parents. In so doing, they will be fortunate. Failure to comply with this requirement will cause misfortune to the living. The living may be unsuccessful at work, not occupy higher posts and may even lose their jobs, something which will affect their family at large.

In such cases, the remedy is to consult the traditional healer, who will prescribe medicines for the affected person. The traditional healer will also ensure that the affected take heed of the requirements of the affected's ancestors as a precautionary measure against being in a state of misfortune.

**(27) Bishop PZ Mkhize of Apostolic Jerusalem in Zion Mission of South Africa, Mapetla — 12 April 1994**

*What is the ancestors' role in the erection of a tombstone?*

Bishop Mkhize reported that he had wished to erect a tombstone for his late father, erecting a tombstone being a ritual which involved the entire family. He had contemplated calling the family together to inform them of his desire. With this in mind, but before he had called the family together, his uncle had visited him to enquire about erecting a tombstone for his late father. A few days after his uncle's visit, Bishop Mkhize's sister telephoned him to ask when they could erect a tombstone for their father. These enquiries, which coincided with what he wished to do, confirmed for the Bishop that this desire was a wish of their ancestors. Without further delay the family met to discuss the date on which this could be done. A tombstone was consequently erected and unveiled. According to the Bishop, the erection of the tombstone was the ancestors' wish.

**(28) Bishop D Mbenese of Apostolic Faith Church Association in Zion of South Africa,  
Senaoane — 7 March 1994**

*The visit of an ancestor brought healing without prescription.*

Bishop Mbenese reported that an ancestor's visit cured him of a disease from which he had suffered for a long time. He suffered from a severe pain in the chest and, in accordance with African culture, consulted traditional healers for healing. He would be better for some time, but the pain would start again.

One night his late grandfather visited him in his sleep. His grandfather was happy. This grandfather's happy appearance meant that he (the living) had done nothing to displease the ancestors. Seeing his grandfather, whom he did not remember because he had died when the Bishop was young, made Bishop Mbenese very happy. After this visit, Bishop Mbenese was completely cured.

**(29) Archbishop NH Ngada of Spiritual Chuches Research and Theological Training  
Institute, Zola — 2 March 1994**

*Are there requirements for sacrificing to the ancestors?*

Archbishop Ngada stated that sorghum beer, snuff and blood were among the basic requirements in sacrifices to the ancestors. These ingredients were usually sprinkled on the ancestors' graves. Practising this ritual ensures the pleasure of the ancestors and erases any dissatisfaction which might exist between the ancestors and the living. This then enables prosperity to the living.

**(30) The late Rev P Makhubu, President of the Baptist Church of Southern Africa,  
Orlando — 15 March 1995**

*The ancestor's visit is a sign of warning to the living.*

Reverend Makhubu, President of the Baptist Church of Southern Africa, stated that some visits of the ancestors are related to recovery from some disease to avoid misfortune to the living. Some people have been called to be traditional healers and some to be prophets because of some illness which could not be cured by any medication. The living were advised what to do by the visit of the ancestors. Those who were called to become traditional healers were advised where to go for training; the same applied to those called to be prophets. Such visits were made to protect the living from suffering the pain of disease and the living were also thereby directed to a special ministry.

**(31) Rev K Mofokeng of National Baptist Church of Southern Africa, Moletsane —  
2 March 1995**

*Appeasement of the ancestors ensures welfare.*

Reverend Mofokeng stated that African traditional religion requires that a good relationship exist between the living and the ancestors for the welfare of the living. This condition is maintained by the constant and loyal appeasement of the ancestors by the living. Such action will ensure protection of the living, which implies freedom from danger, accident and disease; profit in business; promotion at work, which also means better pay, and increased crops and

livestock for farmers.

Rev Mofokeng said she could mention many people she had met who had experienced well-being and prosperity through persistent practice of appeasement of the ancestors. She also knew people who had suffered misfortune and death through neglecting their sacrificial duties to the ancestors.

**(32) Bishop IPB Mokoena, Southern Africa Theological College, Meadowlands —  
10 October 1994**

*The bond between the family and the community*

Bishop Mokoena stated that African traditional religion considers the family and the community one unit. This is because according to African traditional religion, an individual cannot be separated from the family, a family cannot be separated from the community and, in the same way, a community cannot be separated from a society. African traditionalists believe that "Motho ke motho ka batho", which means that a person is a person because of other people. This truth is also found in the Bible. For example, in Genesis 2:18, God said it is not good for the man to be alone and decided to make a suitable helper for him.

African traditional religion maintains that this relationship should be maintained and condemns any force which intends to interfere with it. In view of their activities and work, witches are unwanted elements because they disrupt this unity.

**(33) Ms E Makwakwa of the Independent Cushian Church of Southern Africa,  
Diepkloof — 13 May 1995**

*Diagnosing the cause of illness in African traditional religion*

Ms Makwakwa said that the method popularly applied by many diviners is divination. A set of animal bones, known as the divination set, is used. African traditionalists believe that through using these bones, the diviner can determine the cause of any illness or problem brought to him. The usual practice is for the patient to be given this set of bones in a bag, traditionally made from the skin of a rock rabbit. The patient blows into the bag before



throwing the set on the floor. The diviner will then turn the bones over while mumbling softly, a sign which confirms his skills of divination. During this procedure the diviner explains the source of the problem, identifies the person responsible for it, and prescribes protective medicine for the disease or problem.

**(34) Bishop BH Tshabalala of Judeasian Methodist Church of Africa, Klipspruit —  
4 October 1995**

*The value of a traditional healer in African traditional religion*

Bishop Tshabalala explained that African traditional religion believes that there is generally no illness, problem or misfortune that the traditional healer cannot handle. For example, when it was time to plough and there was no rain, the people would approach the traditional healer, who would tell them the reason for the lack of rain and, above all, what they should do to have rain. The sick would go to the traditional healer, who would help them. Bishop Tshabalala went on to say that the traditional healer knew that the power to heal and to bring rain depended entirely on God. Therefore, if asked by a patient whether a cure would occur after using the prescribed medication or performing the prescribed ritual, the diviner's common response was, "If God so wishes, you will be cured".

**(35) Bishop J Khuswayo of Enkazimulo enhle Apostolic Church in Zion, Senaoane —  
15 July 1995**

*Whose power is able to save man from sin, the ancestors' or God's?*

Bishop Khuswayo said that the ancestors are people who have died. They cannot release man from the forces of sin. In John 3:2 we read of Nicodemus, a man held in high esteem and teacher of the Law, who came to Jesus in secret and asked him how he could be saved from sin. Jesus told him that he needed to be born again spiritually. Nicodemus realised that Jesus' authority was far beyond the power of the ancestors.

The Bishop said he always urged his congregation to be born again of the Spirit and told them that they needed to confess their sins to Jesus, who was the only one who could save them. He stressed the importance of being born again. Bishop Khuswayo persuaded his flock to

make sure they are born spiritually here and now. He pointed out that beyond the grave, no salvation is possible. He also emphasised the importance of Christians living up to the norms of the Bible. By their fruits, he said, people will know whether they belong to Jesus or not, just as the Scribes had noticed in Jesus.

**(36) Dr E Mashao, Principal of Timothy Training Institute, Pimville — 4 March 1993**

*What is the practice of witchcraft and how does African traditional religion view it?*

According to Dr Mashao, witchcraft is an act of wizardry whose aim is to harm or kill. This act can be practised by a person during the day or through familiars. Witches also use medicines to harm the community. These medicines are derived from shrubs and trees. If traditional healers use their skills to hurt members of the community, they are no longer performing their duty according to community expectations. In such cases, if discovered by the community, they are categorised as witches or wizards and if this is proved to be correct, they may be killed for it. African traditional religion completely condemns witchcraft. Witchcraft is also condemned in the Bible.

**(37) Bishop T Maseko of the Holy Bantu Church of Zion, Central Western Jabavu — 4 April 1993**

*The acts of witches and sorcerers are destructive.*

African traditional religion holds that witches and sorcerers exist to disrupt the success and normal order of a community. Their acts are magic and cannot be described. Individuals can perform acts of witchcraft physically without being noticed by using animals like the owl or the hyena. Witchcraft is traditionally associated with harming the person targeted with serious illness or death. This is why the community traditionally fears and disapproves of witches and sorcerers. Witchcraft threatens the community and its stability. It is unwanted and because it cannot be described fully, it is difficult to combat.

**(38) Bishop P Mahlangu of Seven Army in Zion, Naledi — 6 February 1995**

*Method of diagnosing the cause of a disease in African traditional religion*

Bishop Mahlangu stated that while other methods are used, such as looking at a patient and commencing diagnosis and prescription, the most common method is divination.

A divination set, composed of dead animal bones in a skin bag, is given to the patient, who is instructed to blow into the bag before throwing the bones on the floor. The diviner then follows up by watching how the bones land and, while mumbling and talking to the bones, the diviner explains to the patient the cause of the illness and who is responsible, and then prescribes medicines to cure it. The diviner usually tells the patient not to agree with his explanation if it is wrong.

**(39) Bishop A Tatai of Jericho Christian Church in Zion of Africa, Zola — 5 March 1994**

*Who is the source of all power?*

African traditional religion holds that life originated from God who is above every creature. He is the creator of heaven and earth. This God is the source of all power. He is the provider of life to all human beings. All other powers depend on him.

**(40) Archbishop C Sibeko of First Born Church in Zion, Zondi — 6 April 1994**

*Who brings healing — medicine or God?*

Archbishop Sibeko explained the role and importance of the diviner in African traditional religion in curing disease and indicated that almost all diviners believe that a cure can only take place through the intervention of God through His power. In exercising their ability and knowledge of medicines, diviners depend on God for healing. When asked by patients whether they would be cured after using the prescribed medication, many diviners' normal response is "if God wishes, you will be cured". This response indicates the diviner's submission to God's authority in his ministry. It also suggests dependence on God's power for healing. African traditional religion holds that healing is in God's power more than in medicines.

Medicines are just the means used for achieving this end.

**(41) Bishop L Sihlangu of Chief Corner Stone Church in Zion, Rockville —  
7 April 1994**

*Life-giving power comes from God.*

According to Bishop Sihlangu, God's power is the source of all powers existing in the world and elsewhere. The diviner's power depends on God's power. The power of the ancestors, the power in medicines, all owe their powers to the life-giving source of God's numinous power.

African traditional religion approaches creative power through God's power. Without God's power, there is no power. He is the Creator of everything because His power cannot be compared to any in the world. All other powers depend on God's power.

**(42) Bishop F Mtshalintshali of the True Zion Congregation Church of South Africa,  
Meadowlands — 9 May 1994**

*God's power is the answer to all our problems.*

Bishop Mtshalintshali stated that the holistic approach taken by the church to address the needs of church members is effective because prayer is the key to relating to God. Members pray in church for all people's needs, such as the lack of a job, illhealth and protection against evil forces that cause misfortune. The Bishop intercedes for his flock in prayer to God. He lays hands on the sick and God removes all the obstacles. The Lord touches the people through His Spirit. God protects, guides and leads church members every day through prayer in the name of Jesus. God's word is powerful. The gospel of the Holy Spirit is there to provide life, protection and security to all who believe in the name of Jesus.

**(43) Bishop T Sampo of Nazareth Church of God in Zion, Meadowlands —  
9 May 1994**

*Mixing veneration of the ancestors with worship of God*

Bishop Sampo said there were members of his church who sometimes mix worship of God

with veneration of the ancestors. This happens mostly when a member experiences the continuous hardship of illness which is not cured even after prayers and attending a clinic. In such cases members are suffering from what are traditionally known as illnesses that can only be cured by Africans, such as madness. The patients will then simultaneously pray to God and appease the ancestors to sort out the problem. Sometimes a members, especially of the historical churches, will celebrate a function at home, inviting church members and the minister to attend. While the occasion is clearly seen as a church function, the patient will also sacrifice to the ancestors on this occasion.

**(44) Bishop Khambule of the Ethiopian Church in Zion of South Africa, Meadowlands  
— 17 May 1994**

*The irrelevancy of the gospel brought by missionaries to Africans*

According to Bishop Khambule, missionaries condemned African culture and most of the customs and declared them heathen. People had to wear Western dress before they could be converted to the Christian religion. Missionaries confused worship of God and veneration of the ancestors, and their ignorance of the difference between worshipping God and appeasing the ancestors led them to conclude that Africans worship the ancestors. This was and is hurtful to Africans and caused many to leave the missionary-oriented churches for the ZCC. Unfortunately, this attitude still prevails in many missionary churches, who do not take a holistic approach and are consequently unable to identify the basic needs of African people, such as joblessness, lack of security and protection from evil forces. This is a cause of great disappointment and dismay to many African Christians.

**(45) Bishop BH Tshabalala, General Secretary of the Community for Jesus, Klipspruit  
— 4 October 1995**

*The power of the ancestors over the living*

Bishop Tshabalala stated that the ancestors have the power to grant the living prosperity and well-being. This can only happen if the living constantly satisfy the ancestors by performing the required sacrificial rites. The ancestors expect the living to appease them by giving them sorghum beer, and acknowledging and honouring them. The living need to inform the

ancestors of their needs and future plans, report misfortune to the ancestors and ask for their blessing on their plans and undertakings. If one of their children is getting married, the living need to inform the ancestors whose family their child is marrying into. If a daughter is to be married, the ancestors should be informed that she will be moving to her new family.

**(46) Archbishop NH Ngada, Director of the African Spiritual Churches Association, Zola — 2 March 1994**

*The condition of the world of the ancestors*

Archbishop Ngada stated that there is no definite explanation or description of what the world of the ancestors is like. African traditional religion assumes it to be a beautiful place with green grass where the ancestors live. It is believed to be a peaceful place where hunger, drought and suffering are unknown. Those who reside there are more respected because of the added power they acquire over the living after death. Joy is believed to reign in the world of the ancestors. Honouring their ancestors is a prerequisite for the living if they are to prosper on earth.

**(47) The late Rev P Makhubu, Director: Khanya African Independent Theological Training and Research Institute, Orlando — 15 March 1995**

*What is the benefit of constant performance of sacrificial rituals to the ancestors?*

Reverend Makhubu stated that African traditional religion holds that faithful performance of sacrificial rites to the ancestors guarantees prosperity, protection and well-being for the living. The ancestors expect this from the living as proof that the living still honour them after this life. Failure to sacrifice arouses the dissatisfaction of the ancestors. The living will subsequently encounter misfortune, such as illness or a poor harvest. To improve such a situation (which, of course, the living do not want), the living should slaughter a goat or a sheep, provide beer and appease the ancestors.

**(48) President N Nkosi of the Holiness Union Church, Dobsonville — 11 February 1995**

*Procedure of performing sacrificial rites to the ancestors*

African traditional religion believes in the prominent position of the male in the family. The male is accepted as the head of the family, to be obeyed by all the members. Disregard of his authority is considered an offence. This is so because men traditionally know and practise African traditional customary law in the kraal when serious matters affecting the community order are resolved. Consequently, when the ancestral sacrificial rituals are performed, the head of the family officiates on behalf of the family or clan. The eldest head of the clan will talk to the ancestors, pour beer and intercede for all who are with him. When he has finished, he will adjourn the meeting as he is the one to assemble the family.

**(49) Pastor V Fetile of the New Christ Gospel Church in South Africa, Dobsonville — 12 July 1994**

*The operation of witches*

Pastor Fetile described an incident of the operation of witches. According to him, he was walking home from work at about 2 o'clock in the morning and suddenly felt very afraid. On looking around to see whether anything fearful was advancing on him, he saw a group of naked people sitting on the pavement a short distance away. He stood still for a moment, considering whether to turn around or proceed. On second thought, he deemed it best to proceed because he was afraid they might follow him if he turned back. He was so afraid that he thought running away might help. Finally, however, he decided to walk past them. As he drew close to them, he felt the hair on his head rising. He looked at the group and noticed they were witches. They clicked their tongues at him, but fortunately did not follow him. About 200 metres past them, his hair felt normal and his fear subsided.

**(50) Bishop M Ngema of the Zion Apostolic Faith Mission, Naledi — 4 May 1994**

*The operation of witches*

Bishop Ngema described an experience he had of a witch. At about three o'clock one morning

Bishop Ngema was awoken by his dogs barking and went outside to see what they were barking at. He noticed a naked woman in his neighbour's yard. She was carrying a bucket with water mixed with some medicine and was walking around, sprinkling the liquid on the house and the cars parked in the yard. Bishop Ngema went inside and phoned his neighbour. The woman continued sprinkling the liquid and at 3.30 a.m. the bishop and his neighbours went out and confronted her. She told them that she was on duty and lived in Jabulani. The neighbours consulted the traditional healer the next day as a protective measure.

**(51) Rev Z Malele of the Presbyterian Church of Africa, Tladi — 6 May 1995**

*Witches and their work*

Reverend Malete said that one evening his stomach was upset and during the night he had to go to the toilet several times. His toilet was outside the house and at about one o'clock in the morning, when running to the toilet, he noticed something in his yard close to the toilet. On looking more closely, he saw that it was a naked person with a black animal next to her. When he got closer, the naked woman jumped on the animal and went out of the yard. He followed them and they went past three houses before they went into the yard of the fourth house on the street. Reverend Malete then went home. He felt so frightened at what he had witnessed that, on entering his house, he fell to the floor. Later he got up and went back to bed. Fortunately, his runny tummy had stopped. The following day he told his neighbours what had transpired. His neighbours told him that the woman was a witch who was known by several people on that street.

**(52) Pastor T Mlangeni of the Christian Divine Apostolic Church in Zion, Diepkloof — 15 September 1995**

*The cost of breaking with wrong African traditional practices for Christianity*

Pastor Mlangeni said it remained a continuous struggle to break with wrong practices in African traditional culture for the cause of the cross. It should be mentioned, however, that not all traditional African customs or practices are wrong, such as the initiation of young men and women. The wrong practices, which are a problem, are where the ancestors are consulted to serve as mediators between man and God. The Bible puts it clearly that Jesus is the way,



the truth and the life, and that no man comes to God except through Him. African traditional religion says that you do not consult a king directly, but have to go through the councillors. Some people therefore think that to pray to God, they have to go via the ancestors.

**(53) Mr M Karambamuchero, Director of Prison Ministry: his address given at a spiritual workers' training programme workshop presented at the Johannesburg Diepkloof Prison on 15 July 1998**

*Only God's power can free man from the guilt of sin and not that of the ancestors*

I used to believe in the power of the ancestors for any problem in my life. Sacrifice to the ancestors was the core of my life. The purpose was to appease and venerate the ancestors and submit myself to them so that all I did would be a success. Indeed, this worked for me.

When I was arrested, convicted and sentenced for fraud, I missed my family very much. I spent a lot of time thinking how I could be released earlier. I sacrificed a lot to the ancestors to help me in this problem. Basically, I was intellectually much disturbed. I lacked peace and continued appeasing the ancestors to give me peace.

One day, I was listening to a preacher on the radio and he said, "You don't run away from your sin, but you confess it". This message grabbed me. I knelt down there and then and confessed my sin to God in the name of Jesus. Since then my life changed. I experienced a great relief spiritually. My life was transformed completely to today. I experienced a life of joy and peace that I had never known before. I was a different person. If you believe in Him, you will never be the same and you will have life in abundance (John 3:10).

**(54) Mrs B Boikanyo of St Bethlehem Jerusalem Church in Zion of South Africa, Orlando West — 17 May 1994**

*I started the church after the visit of the ancestors*

I was ill and suffered from stomach pain for a long time. I consulted clinics, hospitals and even specialists for a cure. I could not be helped. In the seventh year of my illness, my late father visited me. He told me to found a Zionist church. He showed me the design and colour of the church attire. At that stage I did not belong to any church. I then did as my father told

me and started this church in 1989. After that, I was cured. We pray for the sick and I believe that it is because of these prayers that I became well.

**(55) Bishop L Selimane of the Inkanyezi Zion African Christian Church of South Africa, Protea — 19 Mach 1994**

*Consultation fee for the traditional healer*

On this question Bishop Silimane said that, traditionally, a sheep or goat, or sometimes a beast, would be required. The charge or fee depended mainly on the traditional healer's diagnosis. The charge automatically included the consultation, medicines and protective measures. Some diviners treat the sick until they are cured and only then do they pay the cost. If the patients are not cured, some diviners do not take any payment.

No patient fails to pay the fee requested by the diviner out of fear and respect for the diviner's position and role in the community. Because of the diviner's power over the spiritual world, it would never cross anyone's mind not to pay the fee owing to the diviner for fear of becoming very sick or even dying.

**(56) Bishop L Sithole of the New Bethlehem Church in Zion, Diepkloof — 19 September 1995**

*Authority of the diviner among Africans*

Bishop Sithole stated that diviners are highly esteemed and respected by Africans. This is because of the significant position they hold in the community, but particularly the role they play in normalising matters in the community. If there is no rain, the only person who can be of help is the diviner. If a child is sick, the only person who can be of help is the diviner. If there was no rain, the diviner would be consulted to provide answers why and also give solutions to remedy the situation.

The diviner is regarded as a specialist who cannot be compared in the African traditional world-view. Because of his position in the community, no person would think of not paying the required fee for a consultation. Such a move is considered highly dangerous and risky and

could lead to death. The diviner's powers are revealed in his ability to counteract the evil spirit which causes a threat to the community.

**(57) Bishop P Msimanga of the Christian Holy Spirit Apostolic Church in Zion,  
Molapo — 5 April 1995**

*Protective medicines*

The curing of diseases of any kind is the main duty of the diviner in African traditional religion. It is important to note that when an African inquires about the cause of a pain, the basic question is to know the person responsible for the illness rather than what the sick person is suffering from. Another factor is which medicine to prescribe because protection is vital to counteract the evil forces responsible for the illness. In African traditional religion, being ill is considered the lack of power to withstand the illness. Hence, when a person is ill, African people insist that he be given food so that he can gain strength to fight against the illness. Medicines cure a disease because they have the power to strengthen the sick person.

**(58) Bishop M Mkhize of the Catholic Ethiopian Church in Zion, Meadowlands —  
11 June 1995**

*Traditional culture in relation to God*

Bishop Mkhize stated that African traditional religion matches with the biblical message of Western Christianity. Western Christianity emphasises Western culture to the African before presenting God to him. For example, one has to dress in a certain way before one is accepted into Christian fellowship and one has to do away with one's real name and take what is called a Christian name. This gives African people the impression that God does not appreciate them. Our initiation customs were also considered unacceptable.

When we read the Bible, we notice that God loved the world and every person as he is. His love, revealed in Jesus Christ, is unconditional. The unbiblical approach practised by many missionaries when presenting the gospel to us gave birth to the rise of the Zionist churches as a place where we as Africans can express ourselves to God as we are.

**(59) Mr R Mabaso, member of the Christian Church in Zion, Dobsonville — 10 June 1995**

*The Bible and African traditional religion*

The Bible teaches about the love of God to man in his condition. God's wish is for people to treat each other as brothers and sisters. The Bible teaches us that we need to help those in need. This became good news for us. It was different from what missionaries told us about Christianity which has to go via Western culture.

In the Bible we recognise that what God needs is for African traditional people to treat one another by assisting each other. As a result, we discovered from the Bible that there is much similarity between its message and what African traditional religion stands for.

**(60) Mrs R Sibanda, a member of the First Born Church in Zion, Mapetla — 10 April 1995**

*Why did you join the Zion Christian Church?*

My parents were members of the Dutch Reformed Church, presently the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa. I was baptised as an infant, attended Sunday School and eventually attended a catechumenate class for two years, after which I was confirmed a full member of the church. I married Mr L Sibanda, who belonged to no church. My husband permitted me to attend the church of my choice. Being a member of the aforementioned church, I continued as a member. It was when I became ill that I asked the minister for charismatic healing prayer and he referred me to a social worker and a psychologist for observation. I believed that God could heal me. My neighbour invited me to her church (ZCC) for healing prayer. I went to church with her and when the healing service started and the sick were invited to go up, I went. The priest prayed for me and I was healed. After that I joined this church because in this church I found life.

**(61) Bishop Y Khuse of the Ethiopian Church in Zion of South Africa, Zola — 11 April 1995**

*Why I joined the Zion Christian Church*

I was born into a family who belonged to no church. Through the influence of the religious education I received at school, I discovered the importance of affiliating with a church. Since the State did not recognise the authenticity of the spiritual churches as it did the historical churches, I decided to join the Church of the Province of South Africa. I was twenty-seven years of age then and already married. My wife became ill for a long time. The medical practitioners we consulted could not cure her. One day my friend, Siphoniso, told me how in their church people's diseases were healed by prayer. Siphoniso urged me to bring my wife because his church (the ZCC) prayed not only for members of their church but also for everyone present who needed help. The next Sunday my wife and I joined Siphoniso in his church for a healing prayer for my wife. The bishop touched my wife while he prayed to God to heal her in the name of Jesus. After three days my wife was healed. My wife and I then decided to join the ZCC.

**(62) Bishop F Mzimela of the True Zion Congregation Church of South Africa, Jabavu — 17 June 1994**

*The role of a church leader of the ZCC*

ZCC members regard the church leader as a charismatic man of God. He is trusted, obeyed and consulted by his members for help. He is known as the shepherd of the flock and, because of the role he plays in the church and beyond, is highly respected and esteemed by his followers. He is the one to approach for any need a person may have. He can predict the future like the seers of the Old Testament. He prays for those who are sick and through the power of the Holy Spirit, God heals their diseases. He is trusted and respected by the church. In the ZCC, the charismatic leader fulfils the role that the traditional healer fulfils in African traditional religion. His role is associated with God because he is a servant of God.

- (63) Mrs V Xaba, a member of the Damaseko Congregational Church in Zion, Zondi  
— 5 July 1995**

*Why are ZCC leaders important?*

ZCC members value their leaders because they proclaim the gospel of power realised in the lives of the members daily. When we are attacked by evil forces, we turn to the church leader for a healing prayer. When this is done in the name of Jesus, the illnesses vanishes. The bishops also pray over the staffs we hold and because of this prayer, the staffs serve as a protective measure against the evil forces levelled to harm us. Above all, through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, bishops are able to adequately provide stability, security and protection to their members in a way that no traditional healer or medical practitioner has done.

- (64) Mrs Z Bambo of the Galilee Umpumula Church in Zion, Chiawelo —  
19 September 1995**

*The ZCC provide a "home" for members*

The ZCC care and love for their members is sufficient to give confidence in the power of the God they serve and to safeguard and secure all from the threats of this life. The ministry of prayer practised by many of these churches gives comfort to all those members affected by troubles. The healing ministry is a solution to all the problems surrounding us. Western Christianity failed to address this. To that end, God's power revealed in the Bible, provides confidence, hope and prosperity to the church members in a way that no person can give. Belonging to these churches is like being in a home. Accepting Jesus as one's personal saviour is the key to one's basic salvation.

- (65) Bishop T Mngomezulu of the Truth Gospel Apostolic Church in Zion, Mapetla  
— 7 May 1995**

*Healing service in the ZCC*

Prayer for the sick is part of the main Sunday service practised in my church. People are tired, stressed and frustrated by their problems, like family-related problems, lack of work and

poverty. They are also struck by fear caused by a high level of insecurity in and around Soweto. When they come to church, they ask God to remove all these problems. The healing ministry is where all these are presented to God in prayer. There are people who attend and have joined my church because when they first came for a healing prayer, God healed them. On Good Friday the whole congregation gathers at one place to pray. God answers prayers.

**(66) Bishop T Mbule of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Mpumulanga Church in  
Zion, Meadowlands — 4 February 1995**

*Healing church service*

Zionist churches are famous for their spirituality and their healing ministry. At every Sunday service those who suffer from any kind of illness and problem, be it of a physical or a spiritual nature, are given a chance to come up front for a healing prayer. During this church service many of those who were prayed for give a report of how they were healed. Such witness confirms why many bishops of these churches advise their members to bring all their problems to church for prayer since God wants to release all who are heavy laden.

This approach did not exist in churches led by missionaries. People looked to the missionaries for all their problems since they believed that anything Western was perfect, including the actions of the missionary. However, reading the Bible, the ZCC leaders realised that God appreciates their culture as well. They turned to God for all these problems and through the power of His Holy Spirit, God blessed them.

**(67) Bishop O Kheswa of the Holy Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa,  
Killarney — 15 March 1995**

*Liturgy during a church service*

According to Bishop Kheswa, the liturgy includes singing a spiritual hymn, followed by a prayer which may be said by the church leader, but which is prayed by all in most churches. Singing in the ZCC automatically includes clapping of hands, dancing, beating on drums or objects to make a noise, shouting and sometimes crying. Those who are possessed by spirits scream, jerk and jump. Some fall on the floor and roll around. However, the bishop may

decide to pray for those he deems need prayer, while the singing continues. Scripture reading is followed by a sermon. Much time is spent on scripture reading in the ZCC. Healing services occur either before the scripture reading or thereafter. The service may last for the whole day, for example from 10h00 to 17h00, or the whole night, for example from 19h00 to 6h00 the following day. Church leaders depend on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The time factor is not a problem to the church.

**(68) Bishop B Taiwe of the New Holy Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, Killarney  
— 7 April 1995**

*The order of liturgy during a Sunday church service*

After the congregation has sung the first song, which is followed by a mass prayer, the congregation are afforded time to testify what God has done for them. Whoever has something to share and tell the congregation of how God has blessed him may do so from where he is sitting. For example: Mr George Thindiza read from Isaiah 43:1 and explained how God had blessed him during the week by protecting him when some friends were killed. According to him, he and some friends were walking from Umlanlankunzi railway station to Killarney when they were attacked by thugs. Two of his friends were shot dead and he and three others escaped. For this, he thanked the Lord in church. Mrs I Shai, another member, sang a hymn, "Ke na le modisa", and said that this song blessed her in her illhealth.

It is important that through such testimonies other church members are able to witness God's power in action and the dynamism of the gospel message is visible in the lives of members. Testimony takes about thirty minutes.

**(69) Bishop S Bhengu of the Dominion Church in Zion of RSA, Killarney —  
11 March 1994**

*The place "heaven"*

Heaven is a beautiful place. Only those who are born again, as the Bible states in John 1:12, will enter into the Kingdom of God. The door to heaven is through acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour of one's life. However, there is also another scenario. According to the



Bible, in Luke 16:23-24 and Matthew 25:4, is a painful place, which is meant for all who do not give their lives to Jesus or who dishonour God and despise him. The choice remains with every individual. God has stretched out his hand through Jesus to save all humanity (John 3:16).

**(70) Bishop F Mnguni of the Galilee Mission Church in Zion, Killarney — 3 March 1994**

*The place of the ancestors*

African traditional religion believes that it is a territory where the ancestors live. This place is assumed to be clean and beautiful. There is believed to be an abundance of nice food, cattle, sheep and trees and the grass is for ever green. This belief is based on the authority that the ancestors have over the living. The fact that the prosperity of the living depends on their relationship with the ancestors is an indication of the ancestors' authority over the living. This being the case, the place of the ancestors is visualised as an exceptionally loving place compared to this world.

**(71) Bishop G Masinga of the Zion Christian Church of Bishop Angenas Lekganyane, Killarney — 13 May 1994**

*Diagnosing a patient — the traditional healer*

The divination set is commonly used by traditional healers in diagnosing a patient. This set is made up of bones of dead animals. These divination sets are traditionally kept in a skin, usually of a rock rabbit. When a patient approaches the traditional healer for advice, this set is given to the patient. The patient is instructed to blow into the bag and then either to give the set back to the traditional healer, who will immediately shake the contents before throwing them on the floor, or to throw the bones himself. The traditional healer will then start examining the bones to determine the cause of the illness or problem. Finally, the bones will guide him to the relevant prescription, which automatically includes protective measures for the patient against future attack. In African traditional religion, it is very rare for a traditional healer to ask a patient what his problem is or where the pain in his body is. Instead, the traditional healer will inform the patient about his problem or illness and describe the pain

to the patient. In most cases, traditional healers diagnose correctly. This approach gives merit to the ability of a traditional healer.

**(72) Bishop R Vilakazi of the Apostolic Africa Church in Zion of South Africa,  
Orlando West — 19 March 1995**

*Diagnosing a patient - traditional healer*

The divination set will be used to detect the cause of the problem or illness. The traditional healer will usually request the patient to hold the divination set, shake the contents and before the patient or traditional healer throws the divination set on the floor, the patient must blow his air through the mouth into the bag containing the divination set. This act is considered important as the spirit of the patient is associated with the power contained in the divination set. This action enables spiritual contact of the patient and the diviner through the divination set.

After the divination set has been thrown on the ground, the examination by the traditional healer begins. During this process, the power/spirit of the traditional healer reveals itself through mumbling, as the diviner lifts up some pieces of the divination set and puts them down. He/she sometimes hisses, snorts, talks to the divination set. During this process, the traditional healer tells the patient who the person responsible for the illness is, explaining where the pain is and how it attacks the patient. The traditional healer advises the patient in clear terms to disagree if he/she does not tell the truth, or whether the patient agrees with him/her. Many patients agree with the traditional healer's diagnosis.

**(73) Bishop D Xaba of the Holy Witness Apostolic Church in Zion, Killarney —  
3 February 1993**

*Diagnosis during consultation of a traditional healer*

A minimum of patients spontaneously explain to the diviner during consultation where the pain is in their body or how and when the pain attacks them, because this is not recommended in the African traditional world-view. In fact, the opposite is recommended. The sign of a good traditional healer is the ability to inform the patient during consultation where the pain

is, and when and how often the pain attacks. African traditionalists do not esteem the ability and skills of a traditional healer who asks the patient about the illness rather than informing the patient, through diagnosis, of the source of the pain and which part of the body the pain comes from and how. Such a traditional healer loses patients for he is considered incompetent in African traditional religion.

**(74) Bishop A Khoza of the Apostolic Holy Messenger Church in Zion, Phiri —  
4 March 1993**

*Diagnosis during consultation — traditional healer*

According to Bishop Khoza, African traditionalists question and doubt the traditional healer who, when a patient consults him for help, will ask the patient questions such as: Where do you feel the pain? Who did or said what to you that caused your illness? How does the pain affect you? How long have you suffered from this pain? Where do you live? Are you married? Do you have children and how many? Is your husband employed? Are you working?

Such questions clearly indicate the diviner's lack of ability in his profession. Indeed, a real specialist in African traditional religion is noticed and appreciated by a traditional healer, who will inform that person all about himself, the reason for his visit and where he comes from even prior to his diagnosis through the divination set.

A traditional healer who questions instead of informing the patient about his problem loses patients.

**(75) Bishop H Hlongwane of the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion, Killarney —  
5 April 1995**

*Diagnosis during consultation of a traditional healer*

Bishop Hlongwane stated that during a diagnosis the traditional healer soon detects from the patient whether there are still aspects of his illness or problem that have not been addressed. This will cause the traditional healer to re-examine the divination set to find out what they are. By the use of the divination set during diagnosis, the traditional healer can detect if there

are still some unfulfilled obligations that the patient owes to the ancestors. Such obligations would also be the reason for the illness or problem affecting the patient. In such a case, the traditional healer's prescription would include the performance of sacrificial rites to the ancestors.

**(76) Bishop S Ntenjana of the Corinthian Star Church in Zion, Killarney — 19 May 1994**

*Diagnosis in the traditional healer's consulting room*

Bishop Ntenjana said that in African traditional religion, every illness is caused by someone. The cause may be the negligence of the patient to perform sacrificial rites to the ancestors, an act which would arouse the ancestors' dissatisfaction. Or it could be caused by someone who hated the affected person. The dissatisfaction of the ancestors and the effect of wizardry on the patient involve spiritual forces which cannot be explained rationally. By means of their expertise in the field of diagnosing such illness, traditional healers can determine the cause of the illness. In African traditional religion, this aspect basically involves the person who caused the illness rather than what caused the pain in the patient's body.

**(77) Bishop F Banda of the New Apostolic Church Full of Gospel in Zion, Killarney — 11 April 1995**

*Diagnosis of a patient in a traditional healer's room*

Bishop Banda said that a traditional healer who is possessed by the spirit expresses this by making a big noise. The traditional healer will constantly shake his head, mumble and talk (but not to the patient), look around and turn the divination set over. Sometimes the traditional healer might put on a garment he did not put on before. The traditional healer might walk around the room, looking up at the ceiling of the room. Eventually, the traditional healer will sit down and diagnose the patient.

African traditional religion believes that once a traditional healer shows signs of being spirit possessed, his diagnosis and prescription is very good. Nevertheless, the lack of these signs is no guarantee or proof that the traditional healer lacks the ability to diagnose.

**(78) Bishop T Nompula of the United Messenger and Prayer in Zion Kingdom, Phiri**  
**— 4 April 1995**

*Prescription and protective measures*

Regarding an illness whose cause is detected to be dissatisfaction of the ancestors, the traditional healer will prescribe the performance of sacrificial rites by the patient. The traditional healer will inform the patient what to do to satisfy the ancestors. First the traditional healer will tell the patient the cause of the illness. If the ancestors are not satisfied with the patient, the traditional will prescribe the animal to be slaughtered, such as a goat, a sheep or a fowl. The traditional healer will also tell the patient what colour animal will be acceptable to the ancestors. Once the patient has followed the traditional healer's instructions, the ancestors will be satisfied and will lift the misfortune which caused the patient's illness. When this happens, the patient will be cured. His sister's daughter, who had been ill for a year, recovered soon after the traditional healer had been consulted and had told them to go and sacrifice to the ancestors.

**(79) Bishop K Malimba of the Christian Apostolic Holy Spirit Church in Zion,**  
**Meadowlands — 11 June 1994**

*Diagnosis and prescription by a traditional healer*

Bishop Malimba informed the researcher that appeasement of the ancestors is crucial for the patient if the cause of the illness is detected to be dissatisfaction of the ancestors. The performance of the sacrificial rites prescribed by the traditional healer is the only path for the patient to follow for a cure. The traditional healer will know exactly what the patient should do, depending on what the ancestors demand as an acceptable sacrifice. Through their knowledge of spirituality the traditional healers will prescribe the required method and sacrifice. For example, the ancestors may require the patient to slaughter a white or a black cock and bring snuff and sorghum beer. Once these prescriptions are fulfilled, the patient will be cured because the relationship between the patient and the ancestors has been normalised. The bishop described how his cousin had suffered from pains in the stomach. The family consulted different medical doctors for about eight months without any success in curing the illness. After nine months they decided to consult the traditional healer, who detected that the

cause of the illness was the dissatisfaction of the ancestors. After performing the sacrifice prescribed by the traditional healer, his cousin was cured.

**(80) Bishop L Mkhondo of the Corner Church in Zion, Tladi — 14 August 1995**

*Diagnosis of a traditional healer*

According to Bishop Mkhondo, illness diagnosed as being caused by the unhappiness of the ancestors can be cured by the patient fulfilling the requirements of veneration and appeasement of the ancestors. If a patient suffers misfortune, the traditional healer needs to advise the patient exactly how the ancestors desire the sacrificial rites to be performed. In African traditional religion, the traditional healer is the specialist in such matters. Once the patient has carried out the traditional healer's advice, the illness will be cured. The bishop related the story of his nephew, who had suffered from an illness caused by his negligence to sacrifice to the ancestors. His nephew was taken to the clinic and doctors at Baragwanath Hospital, but was not cured. The family decided to consult the traditional healer, whose diagnosis indicated that the patient had neglected to appease the ancestors. The traditional healer told him to slaughter a black cock and sacrifice it and sorghum beer to the ancestors. After doing that, his nephew was cured.

**(81) Bishop B Gumede of the Inkazimulo ya Bazalwane in Zion, Senaoane — 12 April 1995**

*Curing a spirit-possessed disease in African traditional religion*

Curing a spirit-possessed patient by driving out the spirit is one of the toughest tasks of a traditional healer. In African traditional religion, this type of disease is normally cured by singing and dancing. The singing, which lasts for a minimum of thirty minutes and is accompanied by drums, has to take place. Both the patient and the traditional healer dance. Through the singing and the sound of the drums the traditional healer brings the patient to the stage where healing can take place. The evil spirit responsible for the patient's illness is driven out. The traditional healer drives the spirit out through a ceremony of waving an oxtail and sprinkling medicine on the patient's body. This process is called exorcism. There is a danger that the spirit might retaliate therefore the traditional healer's medicine must be very

powerful.

**(82) Bishop E Nonguvhela of the Bedside Church in Zion, Dlamini — 5 July 1994**

*Exorcism and remedying of evil spirit disease by a traditional healer*

According to Bishop Nonghuvela, remedying evil spirit illness is one of the most difficult tasks to perform. The evil spirit responsible for causing the illness may retaliate. If this happens, the medicines used by the traditional healer must be stronger to resist the evil forces' power. Dancing and drum beating is to precede the exorcism stage. When the stage of exorcism is reached, the traditional healer sprinkles medicine on the patient with an oxtail. The music continues as the traditional healer instructs the evil spirit to get out of the patient's body. Such a healing session may take thirty to sixty minutes, during which time the dancing, singing and drum beating is carried on. The traditional healer who engages in this healing needs to be strong to face the counteraction lest he, too, fall victim to the forces of the evil spirit.

**(83) Bishop R Mtshali of the Zion Apostolic Church in Assembly of God,  
Killarney — 8 April 1994**

*Westerners' inability to communicate the gospel to Africans*

Bishop Mtshali stated that the lack of understanding of many missionaries in proclaiming the gospel to Africans in Soweto led some Africans to believe that Christianity did not worry about the problems of Black people. The Christianity preached by these missionaries did not address the basic problems of Black people, such as illness caused by evil spirits and protective measures against wizardry as a whole. The missionaries taught Black people to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and to cast all their burdens on Him in prayer because He is all-powerful. Black people were taught to do away with the "witch doctors" because they were heathens. But these traditional healers were the people Africans relied on in any problem. When the "born again" Christians were attacked by illness which was magic related, they went to the missionaries for help. The missionaries referred them to social workers and psychologists for help. African traditionalists knew the traditional healer to be a specialist in all areas. Now the missionaries taught them about a Jesus who cannot sort out

some of the Africans' basic problems. This situation left Africans with some questions about Western Christianity.

**(84) Bishop O Radebe of the Apostolic Jerusalem Church in Zion, Molapo — 5 June 1993**

*Western Christianity and wizardry*

An illness that causes serious problems among Africans is one caused by wizardry, particularly wizardry caused by transferring the evil spirit to the victim. This transfer can be done either in a symbolic object or animal, where the witch's evil spirit is brought into the yard, house or room in which the victim stays to harm the victim. The evil spirit as a witch can also be transferred magically. Such diseases were addressed effectively by the traditional healer in African traditional religion. When the newly converted Christians approached the missionaries for help in dealing with these problems, they were warned not to consult the witch doctors because they were heathens. The missionaries failed to grasp the impact and problems of wizardry. Westerners do not have the same spiritual concepts as Africans and Africans felt left in the lurch. Many did not know what to do with a Christianity which failed to address their problems. This led to many Africans going back to the Bible. After reading the Bible, they found that Jesus addressed such evil spirit problems and these Africans started their spiritual churches which are able to address spiritual illness for Africans. These churches are the ZCC.

**(85) Bishop L Mguni of the New Jerusalem Apostolic Church in Zion, Tladi — 15 October 1993**

*Healing of a disease caused by wizardry by traditional healer*

Bishop Mguni stated that in African traditional religion, a disease caused by wizardry can only be cured medically by a traditional healer and not by a Western-oriented medical doctor. When such a patient is examined by a medical doctor, the doctor usually sees no cause for the disease, even after a thorough examination has been made.

His brother had suffered from stomach pains as a result of wizardry. He was taken to Tladi



Clinic for treatment, which did not help him. The clinic referred him to Baragwanath Hospital where the treatment given also failed to cure the disease. The family then decided to take the patient to a traditional healer who, after examining him, informed them that the disease was caused by wizardry. Only then did they know the cause of the pain. The traditional healer gave the patient medicines which cured the disease. So the bishop discovered that Western doctors cannot cure a disease caused by wizardry.

**(86) Bishop S Randima of the South African Apostolic Church in Zion, Zola —  
11 November 1993**

*Treating of a disease caused by wizardry in African traditional religion*

My neighbour suffered from painful feet. His family took him to the traditional healer as the latter is known to be a specialist beyond comparison to whom Africans go for help in any problem. I was invited to accompany them. The traditional healer examined the patient using the divination set and wizardry was detected to be the cause of the disease. The traditional healer mixed his medicine and drank some. He then asked the patient which part of the feet was the most painful. After the patient had pointed to the spot, the traditional healer applied medicine to it. The traditional healer then sucked the patient's feet and brought odd articles from them — pieces of bone, teeth and hair. After the treatment, the patient was healed.

**(87) Bishop F Lenkoana of the New Ekukhanyeni Christian Church of South Africa,  
Protea — 5 December 1993**

*Treating a disease caused by wizardry in African traditional religion*

The traditional healer, having examined a patient whose disease was caused by wizardry, first mixes some medicine, which he drank. He then prescribed medicine for the patient to sprinkle on the roof of his house and inside the house. The patient applied the medicine as prescribed and the pain in the chest from which he had been suffering subsided. During the night the patient felt no pain, but during the day, when the patient went outside the house, she felt the pain. The patient went back to the traditional healer and reported this. The traditional healer instructed her to go and sprinkle the entire yard with the medicine. She did this and the next morning removed some objects at the entrance next to her kitchen door. Next to these objects

was a hole. The patient took these objects to the traditional healer who told her that they were destructive medicines brought by a witch who wanted to destroy her. After that, the patient was cured.

**(88) Bishop T Sisulu of the Holy Union Church in Zion, Protea — 6 May 1994**

*Treating a disease caused by wizardry in African traditional religion*

Bishop Sisulu stated that in a case where the traditional healer detects wizardry to be the cause of a disease, where objects are used by the witch to destroy the victim, the traditional healer prescribes medicines before cupping the affected part of the victim's body. When cupping is applied, polluted blood is drawn from the body. Destructive objects, like hair, small bones and some magical substances, are pulled out. When this is done and the patient is healed, it serves as proof that those objects were used by a witch to destroy the victim. Western medication cannot heal such diseases because evil forces are involved.

**(89) Bishop L Poee of the Church of England in Zion, Protea — 15 May 1994**

*Constant veneration of the ancestors as a sign of a good relationship between the living and the ancestors*

Bishop Poee stated that when the living persist in venerating the ancestors by appeasing them with the required sacrifices, the relationship between them remains in good standing. This is a situation which, according to African traditional religion, puts the living in a fortunate state. The living will prosper in all they do, receive a good harvest, and their livestock will multiply, enjoy good grazing and produce enough milk. The living will be protected from disease emerging from a bad relationship between the living and the ancestors, especially disease caused by evil spirits which cause great discomfort to the living.

Failure by the living to perform the sacrificial rites leads to their having to consult the traditional healer to normalise the situation. He is believed to be the only specialist in this area because of his potency in controlling mystical powers and ability to effectively remedy misfortune through applying medicines.

**(90) Bishop A Mthethwa of the Holy Apostolic Church of God in Zion, Killarney —  
5 May 1995**

*Traditional healer's role in healing ill relationships between the living and the ancestors*

A healthy relationship is a prerequisite between the living and the ancestors. In African traditional religion, when the living faithfully perform sacrificial rites to the ancestors it is a token that the living honour and respect the ancestors — a requirement which African traditionalist believers expect ensures blessings to the living. Blessings entail protection of the living from the magical forces which aim to harm and destroy the living. Bishop Mthethwa knew an artist who lost fame and success to the stage where she indulged in taking drugs. The more she took drugs, the more bleak her future became. Friends stopped associating with her. Eventually she consulted a traditional healer with her problem. The traditional healer advised her to sacrifice to the ancestors. When this was done, the artist's work improved. The first song she recorded was praised by many Africans and she regained respect.

**(91) Bishop F Twala of the Bantu Congregational Baptist Church of Zion of SA,  
Naledi — 9 April 1994**

*Treating diseases with medicine*

African traditional religion holds that diagnosing a patient and prescribing medicine is the function of a traditional healer. A traditional healer who is most respected and honoured can diagnose patients by telling them their names and surnames, where they come from and what assistance they require. African traditional religion suspects the expertise of any traditional healer who asks patients what the problem is instead of telling the patients where the pain is in their body, how often it bothers them and how it attacks them so that the patients can object if the traditional healer's diagnosis is not correct.

**(92) Bishop R Lekhetha of the Holy Church in Zion of South Africa, Killarney —  
6 March 1994**

*Treating a patient with medicines*

In treating patients with medicines African traditional religion includes protective measures

that the patients receive to protect them from similar attacks. Medicines are thus not only provided to cure the disease, but also to protect the victim against the powers of evil. Such medicines are worn around the waist, neck or arm. Some medicines are put in strategic points in the house to protect the family from destruction. These medicines make African traditionalists feel protected and certain of prosperity in whatever they do.

**(93) Bishop T Rapheso of the Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa,  
Dobsonville— 7 April 1995**

*Treating of a disease with medicines*

Some patients receive protective medicines which are to be kept at strategic points in the patient's house. Some medicines are meant to hang in the patient's vehicle, especially on the rearview mirror, to protect the user from accidents on the road and the car from being stolen and hijacked by thugs. It should not be assumed, however, that every object hanging from the rearview mirror is for protection; some objects are put there for mere decoration.

**(94) Bishop B Dube of the New Apostolic Church of God in Zion of South Africa,  
Protea — 7 August 1995**

*Treating of patients with medicine*

The status of traditional healers in the community is respected because they use the powers contained in medicines to restore and preserve the life of the community. They use these powers in medicine to cure the diseases that attack the community. In so doing, traditionalists fight against weakening the strengths of the people. They fortify the nation to remain healthy and fit and free from weakness, which indicates a lack of power to survive against the evil forces — a state not desired in African traditional religion. Traditional healers fight against any forces which disturb the well-being of the community.

**(95) Bishop I More of the Covenant Church of New Jerusalem in Zion, Mapetla —  
13 November 1993**

*Treating of patients with medicines*

African traditionalists have trusted traditional healers for the outstanding work of ensuring the welfare of the community by fighting against disease and lack of courage and protecting the community from destruction. Traditional healers' knowledge of medicines and their ability to use the powers in medicine to cure disease and protect the community is commendable. African traditionalists regard traditional healers as the restorers of a nation and protectors because they use the powers in medicines to ensure that people are strong.

Witches and sorcerers use the powers in medicines to harm, destroy and kill. For this reason, African people do not want witches and sorcerers.

**(96) Bishop S Sekanka of the Well of Jacob Apostolic Church in Zion, Chiawelo —  
12 October 1993**

*Treating of a disease with medicine*

Chest and abdominal diseases are considered serious. There is a standard fee of R40 for serious diseases, which normally includes the prescription of medicines. However, the fee may be more because medicines to combat these diseases are scarce and to find them requires a lot of effort. For this reason, a patient may become weaker and even die while the traditional healer searches for the relevant medicines. However, patients who are not satisfied with one traditional healer have the right to go to another one for help.

**(97) Bishop L Matabane of the Voice of New Holy Christian Apostolic Church in Zion  
of South Africa, Molapo — 14 October 1993**

*Treatment of diseases with medicines*

If a patient is not satisfied with one traditional healer or the disease does not improve, the patient can go to another traditional healer. If this happens, the first traditional healer forfeits the consultation fee because, according to African traditional religion, the traditional

healer only requires payment when the patient has recovered. Some traditional healers may refer a patient to another healer. If this happens, payment of the fee will also only be made to that traditional healer at the end of the treatment.

**(98) Bishop P Mothapo of St Elia John Apostolic Church in Zion of RSA,  
Protea — 15 October 1994**

*Music in the Zion Christian Churches*

In the Zionist churches music with instruments like drums is believed to be God given. Zionist churches are known for their love and quality of music among Africans. Some people join these churches because they are attracted by the music and the singing. When there is music and singing, God's power is felt ministering in this church. When this happens, I am led by the Spirit of God and pray for the congregation.

The researcher visited the bishop's congregation during a church service when the bishop said the following:

The power of the Holy Spirit is ministering in this church now. I invite all who want to surrender their lives to Jesus to please do so right now. This is the day God has put aside for your rebirth in Him. I there are people with such needs, please raise your hands so that we can pray for you in this church service. Please do not listen to or think about the person next to you. This is the moment God wants to speak to you personally. Thank you, Jesus.

Many people went up to the front to be prayed for. Those who were possessed by the evil spirit were healed and they thanked and praised God, constantly calling the name of Jesus.

**(99) Bishop P Zikhalala of the Example Christian Church in Zion, Jabavu —  
19 September 1995**

*Music in the Zion Christian Churches*

One attraction to the ZCC is music. In my church, God has given people voices to glorify

**(102) Bishop O Nomvete of the New African Voice Church in South Africa, Tladi —  
18 March 1995**

*Treatment of a disease in African traditional religion*

Protective medicines, in the form of charms or roots, are offered to people who feel threatened by evil forces, to protect and strengthen them against weakness caused by the evil forces which may cause illness and also destroy them. When a person is sick because of being bewitched, a powder made from the roots of a tree known as *euclea notelensis* is given to the victim. These roots are first dried and then burnt in a clay pot until they are very black. The powder is then mixed with the fat of a goat and other medicines made from a perennial flower. The medicine is rubbed into a stick, which is put across the entrance (door) to the sick person's house. Africans believe that the power of these medicines can protect them from further witchcraft in the house.

**(103) Bishop L Nhlapo of the African United Apostolic Church in Zion of SA,  
Mzimhlophe — 15 August 1994**

*Treating a disease*

Africans believe that, in treating a disease caused by an evil spirit or a magical force such as wizardry, medicines provided by traditional healers are not only for curing the disease, but also for protection and fortifying the afflicted. Medicines give the patients equal power to survive the poison in their bodies. Medicines are able to strengthen the patient to give continual resistance to the witch's poison, whose aim is to weaken the victim. Protective medicines are normally worn at the waist, neck and hands for strengthening purposes. These medicines are believed to be able to protect the afflicted against future attacks.

**(104) Bishop F Moloko of the Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Zion of SA, Mzimhlophe  
— 6 May 1994**

*Treating a disease*

The protective power of medicines against the opposition forces is also used by football teams who play against one another. Medicine made from the roots of a *secanomona parrifolia* is

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obtained from a traditional healer. This medicine, in the form of a power, is sprinkled between the goal posts before the match starts. Africans believe that the power of this medicine will weaken the opposing team's ability to score goals. The opposing team will either aim wrongly or surprisingly miss opportunities to score so that they end up scoring no goals. Some thugs also use these medicines to protect them from being identified and ultimately arrested by the police.

**(105) Bishop S Nkoana of the Voice of Petros Apostolic Church in Zion, Killarney —  
8 April 1994**

*Treating a disease*

Medicines from the roots of *secamone perviflora* are used by Africans to gain dignity, especially people who hold managerial positions. They sprinkle the medicine in their offices at least once a week or month. The sprinkling is done at the entrance (door) to the manager's office, early in the morning before any worker enters the premises. When this is done, Africans believe that the manager's dignity will be regained. When the manager gives instructions, people under him will carry them out. The power of the medicine will discourage the manager's enemies from opposing him because the strength of the medicine will weaken the enemies' power.

**(106) Bishop P Molefe of the Renewed Free Damase Church of God in Zion,  
Mzimhlophe — 16 July 1995**

*Treating of a disease*

For the treatment of the disease known as hot or high blood, traditional healers administer medicine based on coolness. Such medicines are produced from the bulb of a creeper known to be very cool. Hot blood, which is also believed to be caused by a high temperature, may also cause the patient to have a nose bleed and is treated by such medicine. The creeper bulb is put on the painful place of the patient or the bulb may be boiled and the water be given to the patient to cool the high blood. Parts of the bulb may also be chewed by the patient and the substance from these bulbs counteracts high blood.

**(107) Bishop R Seshane of the Ethiopian Free Church of Zion in South Africa,  
Killarney — 15 August 1995**

*Administering of medicines*

In prescribing medicines, the traditional healer may also prescribe different methods of administering them. Some medicines may be taken orally and be applied to the afflicted parts of the body. There are instances where the medicine may be inhaled as a vapour or smoke. In some instances the medicine may be smeared on the eyelids or rubbed into the skin or into incisions made on the body. Particularly for purposes of protection, the body of a supposed victim is cut with a sharp razor blade on the wrist or ankle to insert medicine. These prescriptions are given by the traditional healer. In this matter the traditional healer takes into account the patient's condition and the dangerous situation to which the patient might be exposed.

**(108) Bishop B Letuke of the Phillipian Church in Zion of South Africa, Phiri — 6  
May 1994**

*Administering treatment of a disease*

In prescribing the methods of treatment, the traditional healer distinguishes between supernatural and natural causes of a disease. Magical diseases are one whose cause is linked with evil spirits; natural diseases are ones whose cause is linked to having eaten something to which the patient is allergic. The causes determine the prescription and method of administration. Some medicines may be inserted anally; others are smoked in a pipe.

The traditional healer's knowledge of plants, shrubs and bulbs from which medicines are produced, is vital. Such knowledge facilitates the patient's welfare and thus of the community because the traditional healer is able to prescribe the correct medicines for the relevant disease.

**(109) Bishop B Madlala of Zion Corinthian Church of South Africa, Mapetla —  
11 February 1995**

*Treatment of a disease unique to Africans by traditional healers*

There are diseases which are unique to Africans. These diseases can only be healed by traditional healers, according to African traditional religion, and not by Westerners. Diseases known as physical ailments, which include ordinary pains ranging from a common cold, a headache, to a more severe type of disease, for example. Such diseases are known as *umkhuhlane* in Zulu and *mokhohloane* in Sotho. For these diseases, medicine referred to as *muti* is prescribed in African traditional society. The term "muti" refers to a herb, tree or shrub. Such diseases are due either to ecological or somatic factors.

**(110) Bishop A Maphosa of the Christian Sabbatical Apostolic Church in Zion of  
South Africa, Mzimhlophe — 14 May 1995**

*Treatment of diseases unique to Africans*

Spirit possession is traditionally referred to as being possessed by alien spirits. It seems as if the person loses his senses. It is like madness. The patient keeps on snoring, or screams, hay or o-o-oh... The voices that are heard from the patient are actually from the spirit. The spirits can speak in languages. When a patient is brought to the clinic or hospital for treatment, the patient runs away. A person who is possessed by spirits usually cries, screams, jumps, runs away, throws his hands in the air, lies down and screams. Some victims become unconscious, others are aggressive. Most victims are women. The illness is caused by a witch who spits medicine and then calls the victim.

**(111) Bishop L Sekete of the Holy Bethel Church in Zion, Molapo — 15 September  
1994**

*Treating diseases unique to Africans*

According to Bishop Sekete, spirit possession is a disease which makes people lose their senses. The people scream and say words which have no meaning to the listener. Spirit-possessed people say things they cannot account for. The spirit speaks through the person.

which is poured into water, is given to the patient. About seven litres of lukewarm water is taken with emetic medicine. Traditional healers recommend that emetic be done on an empty stomach first thing in the morning. The patient kneels over an empty clean basin so that he can vomit into it. When the patient's stomach is full of water, vomiting occurs naturally. The water coming out of the stomach brings out the substances from the stomach which cause nausea and discomfort. To activate the vomiting, the patient is advised to put a feather or a finger into the throat. During the process the traditional healer watches closely to examine what kind of stuff comes out of the patient's stomach. The traditional healer examines the substances later to inform the patient what caused the disease.

**(115) President S Mkhonza of the Mbophololo Apostolic Zion Church, Mapetla —  
12 August 1995**

*Treatment of diseases by traditional healers*

Emetic medicine is used to cure an excessive build-up of gall in a patient's stomach, a disease which also causes nausea. Emetic, which cleanses the patient's stomach, for the purpose of removing substances which cause the disease, is considered a sensitive process. The patient is advised to take the medication under the observation of the traditional healer. If the mixture is too strong for the patient, which might harm the patient, the traditional healer will neutralise it. The yellow, green or black substances which come up with the patient's vomit are examined by the traditional healer. From this, the traditional healer detects the cause of the disease.

**(116) Bishop E Mbokazi of the African Methodist Church of Christ in Zion,  
Killarney — 19 May 1995**

*Treatment of diseases by traditional healers*

Medicines used against contagious diseases are preventative and protective rather than curative. Protective medicines are distributed to clients for some weeks of a possible infection or contact with the disease. Since the involvement of evil spirits is always a reality to be reckoned with in almost every disease, in African culture, precautionary measures are administered against possible attacks.

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Medicines are worn around the neck or the waist. The power of this medicine is to strengthen the client's body so that it can stand firm against attacks aimed at harming. The clients were charms for protection and a cure.

**(117) President I Rakgetsi of the United Apostolic Church in Zion, Dlamini — 11 April 1994**

*Treatment of a disease by a traditional healer*

For a patient who is struck by misfortune, such as searching for a job for years with no success or someone whose house is frequently broken into by thugs, a steam bath is prescribed. Medicine is put into the water in a bath. Heated stones are put into a basin of water so that the water boils and makes steam. The patient is to undress and kneel next to the basin with the medicine. The patient has to be covered with a thick blanket to prevent the steam from coming out. The patient is to remain under the blanket for about fifteen minutes. The traditional healer will uncover the patient.

**(118) Mr T Molahlehi of the Holy New Jerusalem Church in Zion, Pimville — 14 January 1994**

*Treatment of a disease by a traditional healer*

Preventative medicines are used to cure disease. There are diseases which affect a person through contact with others. Protective measures are important also in that they can protect a person from being infected with evil spiritual forces whose aim is to harm and destroy the community. However, such medicines have to be administered well in advance of possible contact. The medicines, which are usually worn by clients around the neck or waist, prevent the magical forces from harming the clients. They strengthen the clients and cure diseases because they make the clients strong. These medicines make a person admired and trusted from his appearance. Because of these medicines, a person can be employed or promoted because he is trusted. If he is a sportsman, he will win.

**(119) President F Mnisi of the Ethiopian Church in Zion, Mzimhlophe — 15 June 1993***Treatment of a disease by a traditional healer*

The power of the protective medicine gives the person dignity and makes him strong. This prevents magical spirits, whose aim is to weaken a person, from penetrating his body. The power of this medicine makes a person successful in all his endeavours. If he is a sportsman, he will play successfully. If he is a businessman, he will prosper. The power of the protective medicine makes a person gain respect from others because he has dignity.

**(120) Mr PH Raleting of the Holy Bantu Apostolic Church in Zion, Naledi — 13 August 1993***Treatment of a disease unique to Africans*

Sorcery may be applied to the victim out of jealousy, witchcraft or because the sorcerer just feels like practising on someone. To cure such a disease, a medicine known as ondabula avula is cooked and the liquid given to the patient. The liquid makes the patient vomit. The foam which causes the illness comes out of the patient's mouth. A mixture of water and medicines is used to provoke vomiting. Burned animal skins mixed with herbs are prescribed for the victim. The medicine may be sniffed into the nose, licked or jumped over. Other medicine is cooked and the juice given to the victim to drink. Some oil mixed with fat and herbs are smeared on the genitals for a cure.

**(121) President T Sibeko of the St Ethiopian Catholic Church in Zion Spiritual, Chiawelo — 1 September 1993***Treating of disease unique to Africans*

These diseases, which include sorcery, wizardry and madness, can only be cured by traditional healers or by approaches which take African culture into account. These diseases cannot be healed by a psychologist, a medical doctor or a missionary. They do not understand African culture and the spiritual forces which affect the people. To this end, Africans prefer traditional healers to deal with these diseases. Their knowledge of medicines and their understanding of African traditional life style is vital.

**(122) Bishop E Khumalo of the Corinthian Church of God in Zion, Killarney —  
11 June 1994**

*Treatment of a disease unique to Africans*

Poisoning traditionally implies that a poisonous substance that has been eaten caused congestion in the victim's chest. The poison causes the victims pain. The victims cannot get enough oxygen. They lose their appetite and cough continuously as if they have tuberculosis. Their complexion becomes dark because their blood circulation is not normal. The affliction affects the lungs and disturbs the heart beat. The cause of the illness is medicine which was put into the victim's food with the intention to destroy his health or kill him. Once the medicine is eaten, the victim becomes very sick or dies. The food is mixed with the fat of an animal which affects the chest. Witchcraft or sorcery is involved. Traditional healers cure this disease by mixing herbs through the use of emetics to steam the victim in a bath.

**(123) President V Dlamini of The African Holy Church in Zion, Protea — 21 May 1994**

*Treatment of a disease unique to Africans*

The body of an alligator is to burn and be mixed with the blood of a black chicken. The victim should drink this medicine three times a day. This will cause the victim to vomit. What is poisonous has to be burned to neutralise it. The blood of a black chicken is said to represent the evil intention of the sorcerer. This mixture is regarded as a strong medicine able to cause the victim to vomit the poison that had been eaten.

**(124) Bishop F Mbaile of the Apostolic Messengers Church in Zion, Tladi —  
17 May 1995**

*Treatment of a disease unique to Africans*

Pollution is a condition which causes a person to have bad luck. If a polluted person owns a business, it will run at a loss. If he is a student, he will fail. Whatever a polluted person plans to do fails. To elevate this condition, the help of the traditional healer is needed. A state of pollution indicates that the victim lacks the power necessary to survive. Pollution diminishes resistance to disease. The victim of pollution has no luck at doing anything. His



aims and dreams are not fulfilled while he is in this condition. Africans believe that if people fail to observe their customs, especially if they do not appease their ancestors, such a situation catches up with them. Sacrifices to the ancestors and washing the victim with medicine mixed with water from a traditional healer will cure the disease.

**(125) Mr H Khalo of the Kush/Bethany Zion Church in South Africa, Zola**  
**— 15 September 1994**

*Treatment of a disease unique to Africans*

The ancestors play an important role for the living. They can bring blessings or misfortune to the living. The ancestors have a great influence on the living. Performing sacrificial rites to the ancestors is a requirement the living are expected to fulfil. This is done by slaughtering a goat, chicken or beast to appease them. The living receive protection and blessings from the ancestors. Breaking these sacrificial rites has tragic consequences. People who do not faithfully venerate the ancestors are rewarded with bad luck. For example: they cannot get a job; if women, they will not get married; there will be family disputes and loss of property. The cause is basically failure to observe the traditional customs. Bad relationships with the ancestors can be normalised by appeasing the ancestors by sacrifice.

**(126) Bishop G Khaile of Intandani Church of Zion, Mzimhlophe — 11 November 1993**

*Treatment of a disease unique to Africans*

The ancestors play an important role with the living. The ancestors can bring the situation of a blessing or of a misfortune to the living. The ancestors have a great influence on the living. The performance of sacrificial rites to the ancestors is a requirement which the living have to fulfil. This is done by slaughtering a goat, chicken or beast to appease them. Breaking these sacrificial rites is tragic for the living. The living receive protection and blessings from the ancestors. Bad luck is the lot or reward of a person who does not faithfully venerate the ancestors. Such a person cannot get a job. If it is a woman, she will not get married. There will be disputes in the family or the family will suffer some incomprehensible loss of property. The cause is basically failure to uphold all the traditional customs. A bad or poor relationship with the ancestors can be normalised by appeasing the ancestors by sacrificing.

**(127) Mr P Kubheka of the Pentecostal Apostolic Church in Zion, Protea — 21 May 1993**

*Treatment of diseases unique to Africans*

African traditionalists hold that children must respect and obey their parents. This has been the golden rule in African tradition through all the years. The reward was always that such children would be blessed; they would not be involved in accidents, and they would pass their exams at school. This was to teach children discipline and responsibility. They should respect their customs based on good ethics. If children respect their parents, African culture knew they would be able to respect other people as their parents in the community. When this happened and the parents were happy with their children, such children would prosper. Failure to do so would lead the children to a state of misfortune, things would go against them. To normalise such a situation, the victim had to rectify the relationship with the parents — the ritual sacrifice had to be performed to show respect to the ancestors.

**(128) Evangelist Q Sekwati of the Old Kush Church in Zion, Mapetla — 20 August 1995**

*Treating a disease unique to African culture*

According to Evangelist Sekwati, to normalise an unwanted condition with the ancestors, the victim needs to be taken to the traditional healer. He will outline the procedure to be followed by the victim. The victim is to slaughter something to appease the ancestors. In one case, his sister suffered ancestral displeasure and was told to slaughter a black goat. The bile of the goat was poured over the body of the victim. After this, the ancestors were satisfied and the victim was prosperous. There was also a person who suffered the condition of a bad relationship with the ancestors and approached the ancestors. The person was told to slaughter a chicken and apologise to the ancestors. Two white chickens were slaughtered and sacrificial rites performed. The victim apologised to the ancestors. By performing this ritual and apologising to the ancestors, the ancestors were happy and the condition of misfortune left the victim.

**(129) President F Funani of the Ngonyameni Apostolic Church in Zion, Mzimhlophe  
— 16 July 1994**

*Spiritual powers in the African concept*

We Africans are spiritual people. We believe that life continues after a person has left this world through death. Traditionally, a person does not die, but sleeps. There is a relationship between the living and those who have gone through this world. The living respect and honour the dead because they have more power over the living. They are able to bless the living or cause them misfortune in a mystical spiritual way. For the living to experience peace, they must respect their dead by remembering and appeasing them constantly. They must sacrifice to them, thank and honour them. Failure to do so will result in the living being sick, experiencing hardship, or being robbed and dying. In diagnosing African cultural disease, traditional healers are the only specialists par excellence.

**(130) Bishop N Msomi of the National Baptist Church in Zion, Orlando — 15 May 1995**

*Diagnosing an illness*

The ancestors, who operate through magical forces with the living, may cause misfortune for the living as a warning that they are not satisfied. The living may experience misfortune in the form of reaping a very poor harvest during a year of good rain when most farmers have abundant crops; hurting himself in an inexplicable way that is difficult to understand; or kicking against a stone that has been standing there for ages and breaking his foot.

**(131) Bishop J Buang of The Galilee Mission Church in Zion of South Africa, Molapo  
— 4 July 1993**

*Diagnosing an illness*

Divination is the principal method used by traditional healers to diagnose patients. The divination set, consisting of certain bones of dead animals and roots of certain trees, is offered to the patient or victim, who throws them on the floor after blowing into the bag containing the set. Through his knowledge, the traditional healer is able to detect what is wrong with the

patient and what led to the patient's or victim's condition.

**(132) President J Chomane of The Messiah Church in Zion, Naledi — 16 March 1994**

*Divination*

When a patient consults a traditional healer for help for his illness or problem, the first thing the traditional healer does after the patient has stated the matter, is to give him a divination set. The patient blows his breath into the bag. Then the patient or victim shakes the divination bag up and down from the bottom of the bag, before throwing them on the floor. The traditional healer mumbles and recites a poem praising the pieces of the set and interprets the cause of the illness or misfortune to the victim. The victim is free to tell where he disagrees with the traditional healer's interpretation. A piece of bone taken from a baboon is known to inform the traditional healer about witchcraft or wizardry.

**(133) Mr E Choane of The Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Church in Zion, Killarney — 5 October 1995**

*Divination*

If a patient consulting the traditional healer throws the divination set and the piece of bone taken from a baboon points towards him, it indicates the possible interference of witchcraft in the victim's illness. After repeating this process of divination over and over, the traditional healer shall ultimately detect the real source of the illness and the reasons why. This information will then be translated to the patient.

**(134) Archbishop H Dire of the Congregational Church in Zion, Dobsonville — 7 May 1995**

*Divination*

The knowledge the traditional healers have in detecting the cause of illness or misfortune in a society and their ability to identify the person responsible for it, have always sustained traditional healers as the most knowledgeable people among Africans. Most of them are trusted, respected and honoured. They are the only people to consult when there are problems.

Many who went to them for help have been rescued.

**(135) President N Shebambo of the Holy Spirit Church in Zion, Jabavu —  
11 February 1995**

*Diagnosing with water*

When the patient or affected person consults the traditional healer for a cure, the traditional healer uses water to detect the cause of the illness and the relevant remedies. The traditional healer pours clean water from a spring or a tap into a clay pot. The patient or affected person is then asked to look into the water. The reflection of the patient's face will be seen and, using his knowledge, the traditional healer can detect the cause of the illness from looking into the water. By then examining and questioning the patient, he can detect the cause of the illness and who is responsible for it and why.

**(136) Mr M Dzingwa of the First Born Apostolic Church in Zion, Jabavu — 4 April 1993**

*Diagnosing with water*

The patient informs the traditional healer of his problem, such as illness. The traditional healer pours clear and pure water into a glass. The patient needs to sit directly opposite the traditional healer with the glass of water in the middle. The traditional healer starts by looking at the glass, talking to himself so that the patient cannot hear clearly what he is saying. The traditional healer continues to recite poems, watching the glass of water closely. After he has finished reciting, he then informs the patient where the pain is in his body, how long he has had the pain and what the cause is. The patient is given the option of disagreeing with the interpretation. But I do not know any patient who disagreed with the traditional healer's diagnosis.

**(137) Bishop S Hlabangwane of the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion, Jabavu —  
2 July 1995**

*Diagnosing with water*

The traditional healer is able to detect the illness of a patient by feelings that radiate from the patient. Through the traditional healer's knowledge he is able to diagnose the patient's specific illness and to know exactly which part of the body is affected. Through further examination the traditional healer can identify the person responsible for causing the illness. Some traditional healers are able to know whether the patient is telling the truth or not when reporting the illness or problem for help.

**(138) Mr J Hlongwane of the Christian Apostolic Church in Zion, Jabavu — 2 July 1995**

*Diagnosing with water*

Diagnosis by the traditional healer may take place through looking in the water, telling the victim or patient what help he needs and also by explaining to him how the pain attacks him, when and which part of the body is affected. This happens without the patient having uttered a word to the traditional healer. The traditional healer mostly trusted and honoured is the one who tells the patient his illness right away. Africans consider such a traditional healer special and he becomes famous. The cause of the illness is very important since Africans believe everything happens for a purpose.

**(139) Bishop N Jadu of The Christian Tabernacle Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa, Zola — 19 June 1996**

*Physical disease*

Physical diseases refer to ordinary flu, colds, stomach aches and headaches. These diseases are caused by the change of climate or the seasons of the year. Ordinary colds attack many people during a cold season while headaches attack most people in summer. Stomach aches affect most people during all the seasons. This also has to do with what people eat. Taking food which does not agree with the body may also cause stomach ache.

**(140) Archbishop J Kheswa of The Christian Exodus Church in Zion, Killarney —  
4 August 1996**

*Physical diseases*

Ordinary headaches, colds and stomach aches are traditionally considered physical diseases. Their cause is basically ecological or somatic. The change of seasons during the year is considered the basic cause. Colds are known to be a winter ailment and are commonly accepted as such. Stomach ache may be caused by the type of food a person eats. Meals that are not well cooked may also cause stomach ache. In summer many people suffer from headaches while others have nose bleeds from the heat. African culture holds that headaches are a summer disease and colds are a winter disease.

**(141) Bishop N Kgokane of The Christian Exodus Church in Zion, Mapetla —  
28 May 1993**

*Psychosomatic diseases*

The African traditional name for these diseases is insanity. It is believed to be caused by the existence of supernatural powers with the living. It may also be caused by a traditional healer's negative use of medicine with the aim of harming the hated person in revenge for the illness the latter caused to his patient. At the request of the patient, the traditional healer may "send back" the illness to the one responsible for causing it. The traditional healer mixes relevant medicines, pours them in the yard or house of the hated person unnoticed. Once the person steps on these medicines, he becomes insane. This practice penetrates to the victim through witchcraft.

**(142) Mr L Kgosana of the Holy Apostolic Church in Zion, Moletsane — 12 November  
1994**

*Psychosomatic diseases*

The traditional healer whose intention is to take revenge on the one responsible for his patient's illness may, through the use of medicines, cause the hated person to become insane. The traditional healer may add certain medicines to the victim's food unnoticed. When the

victim eats the food with the medicines, he becomes insane. Should anyone else eat this food, the medicines will not affect him. Such medicines are intended for a particular hated person only. To my knowledge, a few traditional healers will do this witch act on request by a patient. Many traditional healers refuse to perform this dirty work because they say they are called to heal people, not to destroy them.

**(143) President T Khambule of The Sabbatical Christian Church in Zion, Molapo —  
6 May 1995**

*Psychosomatic diseases*

Retardedness or deformity is an illness a person is born with. The affected persons are in that condition before they come into this world. Neither the deformed nor his parents can tell why. This is an act of the Creator, God who is above all. All men are created by Him, the world and everything one can see. As such, this illness can only be ascribed to the will of God, much as other people are born cripple, God is in control of the destiny of all beings.

**(144) Bishop F Khanye of the Apostolic Jerusalem in Zion Mission of South Africa,  
Meadowlands — 11 February 1994**

*Psychosomatic diseases*

Deformed people are created by God for His own purpose. God knows best. No man can know why other people were born deformed. It is neither the fault of the person nor his parents. There is no one who can ask God why he is tall and not short; why his hair is long and others' is short; why he is born in this country and not in any other country. It is like asking God why I have to speak Sotho and not Venda. All these things are God's and He has made things and people as they are. The same applies to deformed people.

**(145) Bishop E Khunou of the African Zionist Ministers Association, Senaoane —  
21 October 1991**

*Psychosomatic diseases*

If the ancestors are not satisfied with the living because of their unfaithfulness in appeasing



the ancestors, the living encounter misfortune. This means that anything bad may happen to the living, including death. It is at such times that the evil forces used by a witch can attack the living. Therefore, giving birth to a deformed child in such a family may be the result.

**(146) Bishop X Kholisang of the Nazareth Church of God in Zion, Phiri — 2 March 1995**

*Psychosomatic diseases*

When a person eats food which is mixed with a witch's medicine, that person will be bewitched. The witch exists to harm the normal way of life and to deny people the peace which they desire. Giving birth to a deformed child may result from a mother being bewitched prior to the baby's birth. Since a witch's act is metaphysical, it is not possible to explain how the witch struck the victim.

**(147) Ms R Langa of the Apostolic Zion Church of God, Dube — 19 September 1995**

*Psychosomatic diseases*

African culture teaches that children must respect their parents. This act is revealed when a child executes the instructions of his parents. When Africans appease their ancestors, it is part of fulfilling this command. When this happens, the living will prosper. Failure to obey the instructions of one's parents may lead to one having a deformed child.

**(148) President M Kolokoto of the Church of the Nations in Zion, Senaoane — 6 October 1994**

*Water*

Africans believe that water is God's gift which provides life and health to the world. Without water, there is no food, no life; good harvests and grazing for cattle are impossible. Water is known to be a natural medicine from God. When a person has been working in the field and comes home tired, he is given water to drink and bath. He then feels refreshed. As such, many Africans hold that without water, there is no proper life.

- (149) Bishop D Lefakane of the Rejoice in Christ International Church in Zion,  
Dobsonville — 8 May 1996**

*Water*

Water is used for protecting the household from evil forces and bad luck. Water is mixed with salt and sprinkled in the yard to protect the family from being harmed by witches. Purification, which has to do with cleansing a person and thus protecting that person from uncleanness, is done by using water. Either a person bathes in or washes with water or it is sprinkled on the body. This happens particularly when a person has engaged in an unpurified case, like burning a corpse or attending to someone whose family is dead.

- (150) Mrs F Leshoro of the Light of House Community Church in Zion, Moletsane —  
4 December 1995**

*Staff*

Most African homes keep a "staff of the home". It is a staff which the house owner has taken to the traditional healer to be worked with the medicine for protecting the family against any serious danger which may cause death. If a snake comes into the house, the father of the house will use this staff to kill it. Because of the medicines which have been worked into it, it possesses the power to harm and destroy snakes, even if they are sent by wizards to harm the family. Not any other staff can destroy a snake sent by a witch, only the "staff of the home".

- (151) Mr I Mabogoane of the New Church of South Africa in Zion, Zola —  
9 November 1993**

*Staff*

Africans believe in keeping a staff known as the staff of the home for protection. If thugs invade a house with the aim of killing, the father of the house will use this staff. The special thing about this staff is that it is usually taken to the traditional healer, who loads it with medicine. This makes the staff have power against the evil forces sent by enemies and witches to destroy the family through wizardry. This staff is thus trusted, put in a special place, and

used by the father of the house only when necessary for protection.

**(152) Mrs C Maponya of the Zion Apostolic Spiritual Healing Church, Mapetla —  
10 June 1994**

*Medicine*

While medicine can heal a sick person, for instance a wound caused by boiling water, Africans hold that medicines have supernatural powers which are mystically used. This power cannot be explained or rationalised, but can only be experienced by the victim. This is difficult for people from other cultures to grasp. Yet, it is real and true among most Africans. This is what makes medicines used by Africans very special. These medicines are obtained from the roots and bulbs of trees.

**(153) Bishop B Mlambo of the African Free New Church in Zion, Jabavu —  
1 February 1993**

*Medicine*

Medicines used by Africans are derived from the roots and bulbs of trees. Magical powers, which are contained in these medicines, makes them cool. In the preparation of medicines, the concept of administering beneficial power in medicines as opposed to the destructive force of heat is observed. The magical active coolness in medicine is transferred from the medicines to the affected person. Through this process, medicines protect people. Some people hang medicines around their waists or wrists with string. Others put them at strategic points in their houses/homes.

**(154) Bishop M Zwane of the Church of Christ in Zion of South Africa, Molapo — 14  
June 1993**

*Sea water*

Sea water is believed to have protective power. The salt in it makes this water more effective as a protection. The family who is disturbed by witches, or even families who have not yet experienced this problem, but who wish to protect themselves from such problems, will

sprinkle this water in the house and the yard. Some even sprinkle the top (roof) and outer walls of the house. This will cause witches to give way, witches fear a lot of water. When the witch approaches the house for ill motives, this water will look like a big sea and then the witch will give way.

**(155) Bishop G Zini of the Zion Christian Catholic Church of South Africa, Mapetla  
— 15 August 1994**

*Sea water*

People living far from the sea do not hesitate to spend time and money going to the sea to obtain sea water. This is because of the value this water has for protection to Africans. Once this water is sprinkled in the yard, any witch approaching the yard will not be able to go into the yard. What the witch will see is the yard being like an ocean. As such, the witch will not be able to apply witchcraft or wizardry. The water is sprinkled in the night when the children are in bed.

**(156) Bishop T Moutle of the Zion Apostles and Christian Brethren Church of  
South Africa, Jabavu — 11 May 1993**

*Sea water*

Sea water has a very effective protective power. The water is used very sparingly by those living far from the sea. The owner of the house sprinkles the water in the yard and in the house. When witches approach the yard with ill motives, they will only see a lot of water and will turn back.

**(157) Bishop A Lekota of The Christian Bantu Church in Zion of South Africa,  
Moroka — 17 September 1993**

*Sea water*

The salt in sea water makes it have more protective power than any other water. It is preferred and used by many people. Some people living here in Soweto, who cannot reach the sea, request those going there to please bring them sea water. They do not mind paying

those who have to bring the water from the sea to Soweto. If this water is sprinkled in the yard, it is not possible for witches to carry on their wizardry or witchcraft. What will happen, is that the witches will turn back without stepping into the yard.

**(158) Mrs C Tlokwe of the Corinthian Apostolic Faith Church in Zion, Chiawelo —  
2 November 1993**

*Disobeying parents' instructions*

African traditional culture believes that parents are to be respected by children. "Parents" refers to a person's biological parents and everyone who is older than the child. These include people who are dead. When Africans clean the graves of their deceased, it is a form of respect. When this is done, the living are said to be blessed. They will succeed in what they are doing; for example, finding a good job and being promoted. Disregarding this leads to serious misfortune.

**(159) Mrs R Seseng of the Ebenezer Zion Christian Church, Jabavu — 12 September  
1994**

*Disobeying parents' instructions*

Children are to obey the instructions of their parents without question. Africans expect and believe that. Any child is to respect and act according to the request of the elderly. By parents we mean any person who is older than the child. That is why parents would not ask permission to send a child to the shop. This is because, in African culture, it is so accepted. Indeed, a child who disregards any instructions from an elderly person will be punished, and if he continues, he will be unfortunate. It is considered a taboo. Misfortune will usually follow that child.

**(160) Bishop J Ramphela of the Free African Independent Church of Zion, Tladi —  
9 August 1994**

*Disobedience to parents' instructions*

African culture holds that children are to respect their parents. This implies any person who

is older than the child has the right to send the younger one, who must obey. If an elderly person is standing in a bus, the younger one must give a seat to the elderly. This respect is vital for the young to live happily and successfully. If not, misfortune will strike any child who disregards instructions from elderly people. The young people will have a poor harvest, not find a job and encounter many problems.

**(161) Bishop F Teffo of the Free Bantu Apostle Church in Zion, Chiawelo — 10 May 1994**

*Causes of epilepsy*

Epilepsy is caused by witches who hate a person. Witches throw medicines on the ground, particularly at the entrance to the victim's yard. When an expectant mother, who is the victim, steps on this part of the yard, she is bewitched. The baby born will have epilepsy. It is from jealousy and hatred that witches act this way.

**(162) Mr G Maepa of the Zion Gospel Church in Christ of South Africa, Chiawelo — 14 May 1993**

*Causes of epilepsy*

A mother who has suffered from a blood disease usually causes the baby to be born affected with this sickness. An epileptic person born with this condition is not easy to cure. The mother might have lost a lot of blood prior to the birth which is traditionally believed to be the cause of this sickness.

**(163) President P Galane of the New Zion Apostolic Full Gospel Church of South Africa, Orlando — 27 June 1994**

*Causes of epilepsy*

Out of jealousy and hatred, a witch throws medicines in the yard of an expectant victim. If the expectant mother steps on the medicine, the medicine will affect her so that the baby she gives birth to will suffer from epilepsy. Through magical means the witch is able to affect the expectant victim in this way. It is a painful condition. Only the traditional healer can help

those affected.

- (164) Bishop F Hlahla of the Mc Carmel Paradise Church of God in Zion,  
Senaoane — 6 July 1994**

*Signs of epilepsy*

A person suffering from epilepsy will show signs of fainting at times with foam coming from the mouth. The patient's teeth are usually clamped tight and have a tendency to bite the tongue, if not quickly attended to. The patient's body shakes and the feet are stretched rigid. Most patients do bite their tongues.

- (165) Mrs D Khanyile of the New Apostolic Zion Covenant Church of Africa,  
Moletsane — 29 June 1993**

*Signs of epilepsy*

When an epilepsy patient falls down because of this illness, foam comes out of his mouth. Many of the patients bite their tongues during the convulsions. Usually the patient cannot control himself and is not aware of what is happening. The patient cannot tell when an attack is going to take place. The only person who can help is the traditional healer.

- (166) Bishop F Madikizela of St Joseph Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa,  
Chiawelo — 13 October 1994**

*Sorcery*

Sorcery is intended to hurt or harm the victim. The aim is to destroy or kill the victim. It is a common practice among Africans who are fighting each other. It is a very sly way of destroying other people.

**(167) Mrs T Mallane of St Hendricks Apostolic Church in Zion of South Africa,  
Senaoane — 21 May 1995**

*Sorcery*

Sorcery is done out of jealousy. Some wicked people put poison in the food assigned to the victim. When the victim eats the food, the poison affects him and the purpose of the witch is achieved. This can happen during the night or the day.

**(168) Bishop N Marumo of St Jerusalem Africa Church in Zion, Naledi — 25 July 1994**

*Sorcery*

Sorcery is the use of magical forces to harm a victim with the purpose of destroying or killing. Medicines are mixed and secretly put in the food to be taken by the victim. When the victim eats the food, the poison affects him. He might be hurt, crippled or killed.

**(169) President R Mashigo of the United Africa Federation Apostolic Church in Zion  
of South Africa, Killarney — 30 April 1993**

*Spirit possession*

The evil powers cause a person to jump, jerk and scream. A person turns to run away when brought into a quiet place. During the attack, the evil spirits express themselves through the voice of the victim. A person looks insane and very stubborn.

**(170) Bishop P Masilela of the United Africa Church in Zion of South Africa,  
Moletsane — 5 May 1993**

*Spirit possession*

This happens when the evil powers enter into the spirit of a human being. They cause the person to do or say things which he cannot account for. These evil forces express themselves through the voice of this person. The person usually utters "ei! yoo!" The person screams and rolls on the ground when he suffers an attack.



- (171) Bishop J Moshitela of the Vuhlayiseki Apostolic Zion Church of South Africa,  
Zondi — 6 August 1993**

*Spirit possession*

When the evil forces attack a person, they cause him to be stubborn. He does not know where he is. He can speak in different languages. When he is brought to a clinic or hospital, the patient usually runs away. He screams, shouts and runs away. Sometimes the patient has to be chained for treatment.

- (172) President P Modise of the Third General Apostolic Church in Zion, Chiawelo —  
1 November 1994**

*Ingestion of sorcerer's poison*

Poisonous substances which are swallowed or eaten by the victim causes congestion in the chest. This makes it difficult to inhale or exhale. The heart beat becomes impeded and the patient becomes powerless. The patient experiences coughing and a loss of appetite and the patient becomes weaker and weaker.

- (173) Bishop D Moeketsi of St Abraham's Apostolic Church in Zion o South Africa,  
Meadowlands — 19 August 1993**

*Ingestion of sorcerer's poison*

The poison medicine, once eaten or drunk by the victim, blocks the flow of air in the chest. The victim feels tired, lacks appetite and becomes weak. The victim coughs blood and the normal functioning of the stomach is affected. The victim is like someone suffering from tuberculosis and his complexion becomes dark.

- (174) President A Molele of the Morians Episcopal Apostolic Church in Zion,  
Dobsonville — 15 March 1994**

*Ingestion of sorcerer's poison*

Ingestion of sorcerer's poison is a substaces given to the victim with the intention to harm or

kill. As soon as this substance gets into the victim's body, it affects his chest. Pain starts to affect him. He loses weight. His complexion becomes dark. He starts to cough constantly, like someone suffering from tuberculosis. The patient loses his appetite and becomes weak and thin.

**(175) Mrs F Motlatsi of United National Zion Church of South Africa, Mapetla —  
6 January 1994**

*Ingestion of sorcerer's poison*

A victim who has drunk a poisonous substance becomes affected soon after drinking it. The poisonous substances affects the victim's lungs. It becomes difficult for oxygen to flow through the body and this causes the heart to work harder. During this process, the heart beat increases and the patient sweats, lacks appetite, becomes tired and coughs. When he coughs, blood comes out of his mouth.

**(176) President K Maubane of the New St Marcus Zion Apostolic Church, Dobsonville  
— 11 October 1993**

*Pollution*

Pollution is a condition which causes a person to encounter misfortune if not attended to. If a person attends a funeral, a corpse is considered polluted. After attending a funeral, one must cleanse oneself to remove this pollution. African traditionalists believe that a family struck by death may not attend some community activities unless the cleansing has taken place. While polluted, the affected person is in a disadvantaged position.

**(177) Bishop Q Motete of the Enoni Christian Church in Zion of South Africa,  
Moletsane — 21 February 1994**

*Pollution*

Africans believe that a woman is polluted during her menstruation period. Such a woman may not have sex until this period is over. It is believed that whoever engages in sexual relationship with her at this time will also be polluted. This condition has a supernatural

negative implication for the victim, which may have a negative result. One might become sick or encounter unending problems.

**(178) Mrs D Mahlalela of the African Free new Church Episcopal in Zion, Dobsonville  
— 2 February 1995**

*Pollution*

There are many reasons why a person can be regarded as polluted. At childbirth, a woman is considered polluted, in African belief. Strangers and even family members may not enter her bedroom because there is a belief that the pollution may affect the baby's health. This polluted condition will be cleansed after thirty days when people may communicate freely with her.

**(179) President A Nene of the Federation of Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa,  
Emdeni — 22 March 1994**

*Pollution*

Making love with someone who is still mourning for a spouse is taboo and a pollution to the victim. African culture believes that a spouse may only make love twelve months after the burial of a spouse. Anyone who engages in such an activity with a widow or widower will be polluted, a condition which has a negative effect on the victim.

**(180) Bishop S Motoai of the Holy Zion Apostolic Church in South Africa, Zola —  
15 June 1995**

*Pollution*

Disregard for traditional customs and norms may cause a person to be in this state. The ancestors expect these customs and traditions to be kept, respected and upheld by all. Failure to comply with these brings a condition of misfortune to the living. The living may become ill, be out of work and experience unending problems until the real cause is addressed.

**(181) President F Tseola of the Bafololisi Church in Zion of South Africa,  
Dlamini — 12 July 1995**

*Ash*

Ash has the power of protection because it is clean and pure. If death strikes a family, the African traditional sign is to smear ash mixed with water on the window panes of the house. It serves to protect people from the evil forces which might be responsible for the death who might attack the rest of the family. It also protects the family from any other evil power which might wish to harm the family.

**(182) Mr M Dolamo of the African Native Faith Congregational Church in Zion of  
Africa, Dobsonville — 30 August 1995**

*Ash*

After attending a burial, Africans, particularly with babies, cleanse themselves with ash. It is wiped on the hands. Some wipe the babies before they breast feed them. This ash is believed to cleanse all the pollution of the corpse. It protects the baby from being brought into a state of pollution.

**(183) Bishop D Seole of the African Catholic Church in Zion of Africa, Naledi —  
30 April 1995**

*Numinous power*

This is the Spirit of God through which all beings were created. The power of the Spirit, which comes from God. It is this power on which all lives depend. This is the power which heals the sick in the church because through this Spirit the leaders of the ZCC were inspired to found these churches.

**(184) Bishop H Ledwaba of the African Zion Gospel Church, Mapetla — 20 July 1995**

*Numinous power*

It is that Spirit through which the whole creation was brought forth, the Spirit which gives

life and healing. The power of healing which occurs in the ZCC originates from this Spirit. It provides healing, peace and happiness in the lives of the members and in the church. It is this same Spirit on which the leaders of the ZCC depend for strength.

**(185) Bishop A Mahlare of the Zion Independent Baptist Church of Southern Africa, Killarney — 17 May 1995**

*Respect to the ancestors in ATR*

African traditionalists hold that the young people have to respect the older people, including even those who have died. It is from this belief that when a young African person meets someone who is older than him, the younger one must greet the older person first. If this is not done, such a young person is considered to have no respect, a situation which brings misfortune. The graves of the dead are visited, cared for by the living as a token of showing respect for the elderly.

**(186) Mr B Molatodi of the African Christian Apostolic Zion Church in Africa, Senaoane — 4 December 1994**

*Respect to the ancestors in ATR*

African traditional belief holds that the young person must honour the elder one, irrespective of whether the older person is one's biological parent or not. Disregard of this brings a situation of misfortune, which may cause unending problems, e g, continuous illness attacking the young person. If this respect is maintained, the living are expected to succeed in all they do.

**(187) Bishop L Masango of the International Pentecostal Church in Zion, Molapo — 20 June 1994**

*Musical instruments*

African traditionalists have always had instruments, such as drums, horns and reed whistles, to accompany their music. The dancing of their bodies or dancing occurs spontaneously when music is played. The instruments are beaten or blown by people who understand and know

the rhythm of music. Without these instruments, music is not really complete. The horn and reed whistle are also used by the leader of the choir to control the choir members. The singing occurs during marriage celebrations and cultural festivals.

**(188) Bishop S Malakalaka of the New Apostolic Covenant Church in Zion of Africa,  
Phiri — 19 July 1995**

*Musical instruments*

The leader of the choir directs the choir how and when to sing louder or softer. When he blows the instrument louder and jumps higher, it means the music must go up. If the leader blows the instrument slowly and softly, it is a sign that the music must be softer and that it might end soon. The choir master's musical instrument is essential for the performance of the choir.

**(189) Bishop Z Mphulo of the Zion Apostle Church of Africa, Mapetla —  
11 September 1994**

*Muti or medicines*

Various mixtures of medicines from herbs, trees and bulbs are used to treat illness in African traditional culture. These mixtures are traditionally referred to as muti. Some medicines are mixed with water; others are ground and taken as powder for emetics to treat stomach and chest pains. The traditional healer detects from his diagnosis which treatment to give. In treating epilepsy or insanity and treating African cultural diseases, rituals and emetics are applied.

**(190) Bishop O Mazwe of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Holy Spirit Church  
in Zion, Zola — 5 August 1995**

*Diagnosis in the ZCC*

The Holy Spirit reveals to me in a vision the diagnosis of a patient. As I pray in front of the patient with my eyes closed, the power of God's numinous power or the Holy Spirit informs me what is the disease that the patient is suffering from. I do not diagnose the disease, but

I ask God through prayer to reveal this to me. I do believe the vision comes from God because I always depend on His revelation. Sometimes the Holy Spirit reveals to me in advance the disease of the patient who is still to consult me for diagnosis. This usually happens in a dream during my sleep. The next day the patient will arrive for help. I will tell him the nature of his illness up front even before he lays his problem before me. This is how the Holy Spirit diagnoses the diseases of those who consult me for this kind of help.

**(191) Bishop TL Sebolai of the Canaan Church of God in Zion, Dlamini — 30 May 1994**

*Diagnosis — candlelight*

When a patient consults me for a problem, I light seven candles for diagnosing. The patient must sit opposite me with the candles burning between us. I first pray to God for diagnosis because on the Holy Spirit can diagnose and cure diseases. Looking at the burning candles, I am able to see the revelation of the Holy Spirit, which I relate to the patient. The light of the candles serves like a torch, which reveals to me the message about the patient. The candles assist me as a prophet to understand the diagnosis of the Holy Spirit. White candles are mostly used by prophets during diagnosis.

**(192) Bishop SA Lenake of the Nazareth Church of God in Zion of Africa, Mapetla — 16 October 1995**

*Water as a symbol of protection*

Members of the ZCC believe that water that has been prayed over has power to protect the people who use it against the powers of the evil spirits. These include wizardry, sorcery and witchcraft, and pollution. Because of the prayer over the water by the church leader, whoever uses it can step over the evil objects without being affected. Those without jobs, get employed. This water is able to protect the people from being afflicted by the evil spirit responsible for the death of the deceased, too. It is on this ground that the ZCC sprinkle their members who have attended a funeral with water at the entrance to the yard of the deceased immediately after returning from the graveyard. This sprinkling ensures protection to our members against any possible affliction related to death.

**(193) Bishop TP Holomisa of the Messiah Church of God in Zion of Southern Africa,  
Phiri — 28 June 1995**

*Water as a symbol of protection*

Consecrated water is sprinkled on the members of the family of the deceased. This is to prevent any dispute which might arise when the funeral arrangements are being discussed. All the clothes of the deceased, which have to be shared after the burial, are also sprinkled to protect the family from being afflicted by the evil powers which caused the illness or death of the deceased. It also ensures that the family execute this ritual without friction.

**(194) Mrs R Nxumalo of the Free Holy Apostolic Church in Zion of Africa, Zola —  
30 November 1994**

*Flags as symbols of protection*

Some members carry consecrated flags when moving to church for protection. It is because of the power loaded in these flags that members are able to move freely in the night without fear. Members walk long distances in the township to attend church services, protected by these flags. Carrying these flags, they feel protected and are able to step over all evil adversaries. Consecrated flags are special agents of protection to us.

**(195) Mrs C Tambo of the Mission Church of God in Zion, Zola — 29 October 1995**

*Staffs, drums and horns — protection symbols*

Staffs carried by the leaders of the ZCC protect the members from all sorts of dangers. They are believed in the ZCC to have power enough to fight and prevent unknown dangers. Carrying of a staff ensures the bishop and the members of the ZCC of a symbol of the presence of God's protection as stated in Psalm 23. The ZCC hold that objects can only be empowered after prayer to God has been said. Horns and drums used in the African traditional context have the power to attract the community. This power is due to the meaning African traditionalists attach to the sound of these instruments. The sound of these instruments has the power to bring the community together.



**(196) Bishop B Mamba of the Zulu Congregational Church in Zion, Protea —  
11 September 1994**

*Sea water as a protection symbol*

Consecrated sea water is considered loaded with protection power. The user adds sea water to ordinary water. This applies to people living far from the sea. They use it to protect the family against evil forces sent through wizardry during the night. The water is sprinkled all over the yard and in the house. Anyone trying to enter the yard or house with evil intentions will feel uneasy, frightened when arriving at the gate. The witch will be scared to enter. The ZCC believe that consecrated sea water has the power to protect the targeted people. Those in search of a job are advised to wipe their faces with sea water. This is believed to provide dignity to the job seekers.

**(197) Bishop F Zomba of the Christian Church in Zion, Protea — 15 May 1994**

*Cords as protection symbols*

Cords are worn around the neck, waist and ankles as protective symbols. The condition of the health of the person and the possible prediction of attacks by evil spirits determine the number of cords the patient should have and where. For a patient whose level of being attacked is great, more cords are usually provided by the prophet. Cords which are put around the waist and across the arms on the body are for people with less strength and resistance to evil forces. Those with a high level of resistance to evil spirits wear the cords around the neck and ankles. These cords protect the people against evil spirits.

**(198) Bishop V Dabai of the African Zionist Ministers Association, Zondi —  
22 April 1993**

*Cords as protection symbols*

Prophets and bishops advise people whose resistance against evil forces is weak, to have cords crossed around their arms and their bodies. These cords provide them with the resistance force to stand against evil spirits. Prophets maintain that the more cords are put around the body, the better chance a person stands of being protected from affliction. The same applies to

people who are sick or who require more strength. Strong people put cords on their ankles and wrists.

**(199) Bishop R Lenkoe of the Barorisi Church in Zion of Africa, Naledi —  
25 May 1994**

### *Dancing*

Many ZCC consider dancing as part of the service rendered to God. During the divine healing sessions, many bishops and prophets dance in circles with their patients. The ZCC regard this as a sign of the love the prophets have for the patients. Some prophets do not participate in dancing, but allow the church members to do so. Such prophets abstain from dancing either because they have not received a revelation from the Holy Spirit to dance or so that they can communicate with the Holy Spirit. Dancing in the ZCC healing sessions may last the whole night. During this process people are attended to. Spirit possession is experienced mainly during dancing in a circle. Most members, particularly women, enjoy and participate in dance during healing sessions.

**(200) Bishop D Mawela of the United Church in Zion of South Africa, Phiri —  
28 May 1993**

### *Singing*

Music makes the prophets or bishops communicate with the Holy Spirit. During singing, some prophets receive revelation from God about the patient. During the singing, I feel the presence of the power of the Holy Spirit moving in the church. Singing is a way of praising God, the Holy Spirit, for the good He does for and to us. Many of the ZCC members participate in singing.

**(201) Bishop S Nenguvhela of the Holy Judeashian Church in Zion of Africa,  
Dlamini — 23 October 1994**

### *Drums and keyboards*

Drums and keyboards are used by many ZCC during their church services. These instruments

accompany the singing in the church. The youth are mainly attracted to these services by these instruments. The ZCC base their use of these instruments on the scriptures, for example Psalm 81:2: "... strike the tambourine, play the melodies on the harp and lyre ...". Drums and keyboards prepare the assembly to listen to the Holy Spirit. Some prophets receive revelations from God concerning their patients. The spirit of the assembly is moved to accept the Word of God. God's power is felt when there is singing and musical instruments are played.

**(202) Bishop A Bunda of the Livy Church of Christ in Zion, Zola — 2 September 1995**

*Sacrifice*

The ZCC give their money to the church as a sign of thanking God for blessing them. Through prayer in the church, they find jobs and are healed from their diseases. People are reconciled with God. The ZCC believe that the more one is faithful in one's sacrifice to the church, the more prosperous one will be. Hence almost every Sunday there is a group of ZCC members from elsewhere in the country, visiting Moria to present these sacrifices. To them, sacrificing made to God is a commitment.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### TO CHURCH "COUNCILS" IN SOWETO

1. The word "COUNCILS" in this questionnaire refers to acknowledged, appointed leaders, Bishops, Archbishops, Prophets, Presidents, Representatives of Theological Institutions and Congregations of the AIC (Zionists) in Soweto.

### 2. PLEASE FURNISH THE FOLLOWING DETAILS

2.1 FULL NAME OF THE "COUNCIL" \_\_\_\_\_

AGE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE e.g. Bishop \_\_\_\_\_

2.2 OFFICIAL ADDRESSES

RESIDENTIAL \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

CODE \_\_\_\_\_

#### NOTE 1

Numinous power means "life giving strength", "life force", "vital force", which enables man achieve success amidst all the hardships in this world. Power without which man cannot live peacefully. It is the strength which most Africans want to acquire and strive for.

#### NOTE 2

Put an "X" where applicable.

#### NOTE 3

Motivate your answer whether "YES" OR "NO"

#### SECTION 1.1

- 1.1.1 Is there a mixture of numinous power and the Supreme Being in traditional religion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

- 1.1.2 The Supreme Being is the source of numinous power

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
no

1.1.3 Numinous power originates from the ancestors.

                      
YES

                      
NO

1.1.4 Do the ancestors depend on the Supreme Being for power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

1.1.5 The Supreme Being depend on the ancestors for power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

## SECTION 2.1

2.1.1 Does African traditional religion consider numinous power and the spirit world as equal.

                      
YES

                      
NO

2.1.2 The spirit world in traditional religion originates from numinous power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

2.1.3 Numinous power originates from the spirit world of traditional religion.

                      
YES

                      
NO

2.1.4 Numinous power influences the spirit world in traditional religion.

                      
YES

                      
NO

2.1.5 The spirit world of traditional religion affect the operation of numinous power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

## SECTION 3.1

3.1.1 People pray to the ancestors for healing

                      
YES

                      
NO

3.1.2 Healing is possible through the power of the Supreme Being in African traditional religion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

3.1.3 The ancestors depend on the Supreme Being for power of healing in the traditional worldview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

3.1.4 The Supreme Being depend on the ancestors for power.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

#### SECTION 4.1

4.1.1 Certain instruments e.g. salt, water, are loaded with power.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

4.1.2 Is the power in such objects the same as that of the Supreme Being?

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

4.1.3 Healing is possible by the instruments without the power of Supreme Being.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

4.1.4 Power of the Supreme Being is equal to loaded power in instruments.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

4.1.5 Power of the Supreme Being depend on the power in loaded objects for healing.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

#### SECTION 5.1

5.1.1 The ancestors' power can remove fear from those affected during death.

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

5.1.2 Power of the Supreme Being is able to bring comfort to those affected by death.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.3 Death can be overcome by the power from the ancestors or traditional healer.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.4 Death can be overcome by the power from the Supreme Being.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.5 Traditional healers extend prayers to the ancestors for healing.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.6 African traditionalists appease the ancestors.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.7 African traditionalists readily go to the traditional healer for help.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.8 ZCC members advance to the church for any problem.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.9 Africans advance to the ZCC for help on diseases and problems which could neither be solved by African traditional healers.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.10 The power used in African traditional religion comes from the ancestors.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.11 ZCC power comes from the ancestors.

                      
YES

                      
NO

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AGE \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE e.g. Bishop \_\_\_\_\_

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POSTAL \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_

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#### NOTE 3

Motivate your answer whether "YES" OR "NO"

#### SECTION 1.1

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\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
NO

- 1.1.2 The Supreme Being is the source of numinous power

\_\_\_\_\_  
YES

\_\_\_\_\_  
no

1.1.3 Numinous power originates from the ancestors.

                      
YES

                      
NO

1.1.4 Do the ancestors depend on the Supreme Being for power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

1.1.5 The Supreme Being depend on the ancestors for power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

## SECTION 2.1

2.1.1 Does African traditional religion consider numinous power and the spirit world as equal.

                      
YES

                      
NO

2.1.2 The spirit world in traditional religion originates from numinous power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

2.1.3 Numinous power originates from the spirit world of traditional religion.

                      
YES

                      
NO

2.1.4 Numinous power influences the spirit world in traditional religion.

                      
YES

                      
NO

2.1.5 The spirit world of traditional religion affect the operation of numinous power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

## SECTION 3.1

3.1.1. People pray to the ancestors for healing

                      
YES

                      
NO

3.1.2 Healing is possible through the power of the Supreme Being in African traditional religion.

                      
YES

                      
NO

3.1.3 The ancestors depend on the Supreme Being for power of healing in the traditional worldview.

                      
YES

                      
NO

3.1.4 The Supreme Being depend on the ancestors for power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

#### SECTION 4.1

4.1.1 Certain instruments e.g. salt, water, are loaded with power.

                      
YES

                      
NO

4.1.2 Is the power in such objects the same as that of the Supreme Being?

                      
YES

                      
NO

4.1.3 Healing is possible by the instruments without the power of Supreme Being.

                      
YES

                      
NO

4.1.4 Power of the Supreme Being is equal to loaded power in instruments.

                      
YES

                      
NO

4.1.5 Power of the Supreme Being depend on the power in loaded objects for healing.

                      
YES

                      
NO

#### SECTION 5.1

5.1.1 The ancestors' power can remove fear from those affected during death.

                      
YES

                      
NO



5.1.2 Power of the Supreme Being is able to bring comfort to those affected by death.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.3 Death can be overcome by the power from the ancestors or traditional healer.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.4 Death can be overcome by the power from the Supreme Being.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.5 Traditional healers extend prayers to the ancestors for healing.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.6 African traditionalists appease the ancestors.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.7 African traditionalists readily go to the traditional healer for help.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.8 ZCC members advance to the church for any problem.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.9 Africans advance to the ZCC for help on diseases and problems which could neither be solved by African traditional healers.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.10 The power used in African traditional religion comes from the ancestors.

                      
YES

                      
NO

5.1.11 ZCC power comes from the ancestors.

                      
YES

                      
NO