

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WESTERN AND AFRICAN
TRADITIONAL CHURCHES AMONG VATSONGA:
A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY**

by

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DECLARATION

I, **TINTSWALO SOPHIE MDAKA** declare that the mini-dissertation submitted to the University of Limpopo for the degree of Masters in African Languages, is my own work and has not been previously submitted to any university for a degree.

.....

SIGNATURE

.....

DATE

DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my late parents, Michael and Mphephu Somisa N'wa-Milandzu Mdaka who supported me in my studies from my early childhood. My dedication goes to my husband Maxwell Ntimba and family who also encouraged me to further my studies.

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SUMMARY

Chapter One deals with the background to the study; literature review, aim of the study, objectives, methodology and significance.

Chapter Two deals with the doctrines of Western Churches.

Chapter Three deals with the doctrines of African Traditional Churches.

Chapter Four deals with comparison.

Chapter Five deals with findings, recommendations and conclusion.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many people think of the church as nothing more than a building. However, the church is not a building. The word “church” refers to the group of all saved people everywhere or a congregation of Christians who have united to work and worship together. Mannion (2009:88) describes the church as “*ekklesia*”. This is a Greek word and has two parts, that is, “*ek*” which means “out of” and “*klesia*” which means “to be called”.

Pardington (1926:336) maintains that “a church is a company of believers called out from the world and indwelt by the spirit of God whose special and peculiar ministry toward God is prayer, and toward another is consolation”. Corner (1982:21) supports the above statement by saying that, “Strictly speaking, the church is composed of the believers, ranging from the Old Testament through the New Testament to the present. It includes all ‘the called out ones,’ ... whether in heaven or on earth”.

In South Africa the church is categorized into Western and African traditional churches. Hence, some of the African traditional churches are known as cults. According to Soanes (2006:349) the word “cult” “refers to a system of religious devotion directed towards a particular figure or object.”

The study will concentrate on the similarities and dissimilarities between Western and African traditional churches.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Prozesky and de Gruchy (1997:26) mention that “Christianity came as a result of missions to the indigenous people or to those who had been brought to the Cape as slaves from the East”. During the colonial period, many black converts to Christianity were unable to reconcile fully their beliefs with the teachings of their church leaders, and split from their parent churches due to political, historical and cultural circumstances. Politics come into play when one observes Africans trying to escape white domination. This has an impact on African Christians because they also want

to get rid of white control in their churches. The separation of African Churches from Western churches is also historical in nature. Many of the parent churches, particularly those from protestant tradition, had themselves emerged from a process of schism and synthesis.

Most of the African people moved out from the Western churches because they did not have common beliefs. Western religion undermined African religion during the colonial era. African people were bound to attend Western churches and were to put on Western clothes instead of their own traditional clothes. They were called “*majakani*” because they had adopted western cultural beliefs. African unbelievers were called heathens “*vahedeni*” because of their adherence to African religion.

Lastly, the division between African and Western churches is caused by cultural differences. African traditional beliefs were not accommodated in the Western beliefs. As time passed by, some African traditional groups like Zionists began to mix aspects of traditional African beliefs, such as ancestor veneration with Christian doctrines. Many of them stress faith - healing and revelation, and in many congregations, the leader is viewed as a prophet. Some of the African traditional beliefs are:

- *Xiwacho*- the power of cleansing or treat illness.
- *Xiporofito* - prophesy
- *Xiambalo* - uniform
- *Swileriso* - instructions
- *Ku tlhavela* - incision (mark with sharp object)

Most African churches emphasize healing based on African cultural matrix.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Brink (1996:76), defines literature review as “a process that includes findings, readings, understanding and forming conclusions about the published and theory on a particular topic.” Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:22) say: “the process of reading whatever had been published that appears relevant to the research topic is called “Literature Review.”

There are scholars who attempted to provide a comparative analysis of Western and African churches.

1.3.1 Mbiti (1989)

Mbiti indicated that the world has now begun to take African traditional religions into consideration. According to Mbiti, all kinds of theories and explanations were put forward on how the different religious traits had reached African societies from the Middle-East or Europe. He indicated that African beliefs, cultural characteristics, and foods were borrowed from the outside world.

He mentioned that Africa had been in contact with the outside world and there was a reciprocal process. He further mentioned that many books speak of ancestors worship to describe African religions. Others refer to African religions in terms of magic. He denied that it is wrong to interpret traditional religions in terms of worshipping ancestors or magic, hence dynamism, tokenism, fetishism and naturism show clearly how the world understands African religions.

1.3.2 Frazier (1964)

Frazier mentions that in the past, black churches have been the most vigorous within African - American communities. He indicates that a long history of persecution and extremely limited opportunities for organizing secular social, political, and economic organizations has produced black churches which performed functions and tasks beyond their traditional religions.

In addition to being centres of community religious life, black churches historically have been the primary sponsors of secular social services, sources of autonomous indigenous political leadership, and reservoirs of organizational and human resources, especially during the Civil Rights movement. However, the contemporary position of the black churches is more of a contentious issue. Several sociological observers have argued that the historical institution centrality of the black church within African-American communities has recently been compromised, especially in urban settings, by increased competition from secular organizations better situated

to meet the needs of differentiated urban communities and by enhanced opportunities for black Americans in secular social, political, and economic spheres.

1.3.3 Mukenge (1983)

Mukenge offered a strong statement of the black church due to the inability of the denominational bodies to meet all the needs of their clientele because the church's resources were limited by economic conditions, the needs of black people were differentiated, and other organizations with access to more resources increased in number and responsiveness to black people.

Mukenge concluded that the functional attrition of the black urban churches such that the "pre-eminent" role of the black church is maintaining mental health and psychological stability. He further mentioned that urbanization caused by the black migration led the church not to meet all the functions required.

1.3.4 Lincoln and Mamiya (1990)

Lincoln and Mamiya argued that social and political functions have been only partially differentiated from congregations. They developed a theoretical account of the social forces which led religion and religious institutions to sociological prominence in African-American communities, that is; centuries of racial discrimination violence against black economic and political effort, the relative scarcity of circular institutions to complete with the church and the substantial social need confronting the churches.

They believed that factors still operate to maintain the functional centrality of the black church within African-American communities. They differ from Frazier and others by not claiming that these factors had historical importance. They also believed that black churches are generally more actively involved in their communities than are white churches

1.3.5 Gilbreath (1995)

Gilbreath indicated that separation of black and white churches was well known. The two groups of churches worshiped separately in segregated congregations hence they were supposed to love one another as brothers and sisters. Dr. Martin Luther king J. (1994) in The Civil Rights Act of 1964 mentioned that “eleven o'clock on Sunday is the most segregated hour of the week”.

One of the few places that civil rights workers fail to interact are churches. Black ministries and their allies were at the forefront of the church but their opposition came from the white ministries. He further indicated that even though they belong to the same denomination, which could not prevent the racial separation of their congregation.

In 1964 a group of black women civil rights activities went to a white church in St. Augustine, Florida to attend a Sunday service, the women were met by a phalanx of white people with their armed links to keep the activities out. There was a response letter from a Birmingham jail to white Ministers who criticized him and the civil rights movement after a major civil right demonstration.

1.3.6 Bonilla-Silva (2003)

According to Bonilla-Silva, worshiping together of black- white church is an important measure of interaction, closeness, and race relations between blacks and whites. He indicated that even though American society is no longer just black and white, black-white relations have remained a central focus in race relations in the nations, that is, social distance between blacks and whites has remained the greatest. The segregation has shaped two major forces that mobilize involvement in the black church, especially in the historical mainline denominations.

1.3.7 Barna (2001)

According to Barna blacks were much more likely than either whites or Hispanics to read the Bible, pray to God, attend Sunday school, participate in a small group, and have a quiet time during typical weeks though their church attendance levels were the same. He further explained segregation in America in terms of history and culture. He theorized that the black church was the way in which African-Americans preserved and maintained their African culture in slavery and after emancipation.

1.3.8 Nelson (1988)

Nelson argued that Southern congregations engaged in a wider range of community activities than do non-Southern congregations, then the observed race difference could be produced by the fact that black congregations were significantly more likely to be Southern than were white congregations. It is believed to have left a lasting legacy for the activities of black congregations.

1.3.9 Taylor (1997)

The study documented a heightened black religiosity that was independent of many sociodemographic factors of which blacks and whites differ. The researchers utilized seven different national data sets and multiple indicators of religious involvement. Taylor and colleagues demonstrate the importance of moving beyond the past research on African-Americans religion that typically lacked a comparative empirical base by race. It was often based upon descriptive studies without statistical controls for sociodemographic factors. They developed a multivariable mode of analysis comparing the religious involvement of African-Americans and whites.

1.3.10 Fichter and Maddox (1965)

Fichter and Maddox indicated that African-Americans were less likely than whites to live outside south, especially rural areas of this region. The research heightened levels of a church attendance and other kinds of religious involvements. The researchers suggest that blacks attend worship services with higher regularity, place

more value on religious practices, that is, they identify with their churches more strongly, participate in church associations more frequently, and read the Bible and pray with greater regularity than do whites.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to examine the differences between Western and African traditional churches. In order to achieve the aim, the following questions will be posed:

1.4.1 What is the role played by African traditional churches among African people?

1.4.2 What are the similarities and dissimilarities of Western and African traditional churches?

1.5 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are to:

- Highlight the role played by African traditional churches among African churches;
- Identify the role played by traditional approaches to healing; and
- Identify aspects of culture and beliefs that are central in the church.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method to be used in this study is qualitative approach as it enables the researcher to have a clear understanding of the topic under discussion. Leddy and Ormrod (2005:95) define qualitative research process as being more holistic and emergent with the specific focus, design, measurement instruments (e.g. Interviews) and interpretations developing and possibly changing along the way. Oral evidence is going to be used to allow researchers to enter the setting with open minds, prepared to immerse themselves in complexity of the situation and interact with participants.

Creswell (1994:2) also defines qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding a social human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. This method is used when one wants to tell things that are personal or secret. Another scholar in the field of research methodology,

Van Maanen (1979:520) says: “qualitative research is an “umbrella” phase covering an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world.” Van Maanen goes further to say that, “the research method can be used in the description of groups (small) communities and organizations.” Therefore, qualitative approach is also fundamentally a descriptive form of research.

1.6.1 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher will use the following methods to gather information:

1.6.1.1 Primary research method

This method happens when firsthand information is obtained from the respondents in the form of an interview. Cohen and Manion (1989:307) define interview as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research relevant information, and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation. It is the method whereby one gathers information through direct verbal interaction between two people. The researcher will consult the following respondents:

- Eight pastors (four pastors attached to Western churches and four attached to African traditional churches).
- Six church elders (three from Western churches and three from African traditional churches).
- Four youth members (two from Western churches and two from African traditional churches).

1.6.1.2 Secondary research method

This research method provides the researcher with second-hand information as it had been gathered by other people. The researcher will select information needed in order to validate this study. In this study, the researcher will obtain information from dissertations, journals, theses, books and internet.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A comparative analysis of Western and African traditional churches would assist people to realize and understand the role played by African traditional churches in their lives. The study is of great significance because it will draw the attention of western churches to the need of taking African traditional churches into consideration. The study is also important because it will assist the African people to take their cultures seriously.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DOCTRINES OF WESTERN CHURCHES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the attempt has been made to discuss the doctrines of Lutheran church and Roman Catholic Church. Doctrine refers to a set of principles and beliefs held by a religious group, Oxford Secondary School Dictionary (2006:180). The focus is on whether there are similarities or not amongst the churches. Let us look on the following aspects:

- Faith
- Prayer
- Baptism
- Uniform
- Healing
- Prophecy
- Funeral

2.2 EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2.2.1 Faith

Soanes (2006:218) defines faith as: “the belief in a religious doctrine without proof or reasoning.” Faith has two main aspects: It is the true knowledge about God and Christ, with an unshakable conviction that what God has revealed about Him and us is true. Such Faith is necessary, but not sufficient for salvation, for even devil believes truths about God. Secondly, faith also involves trusting in God and being assured deep down that by His grace we are made right with God because of Christ that, what Christ has accomplished applies to us. Faith is centred in Jesus Christ and in what He has done, as each one of them is called to make a personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord. They believe that justification is through Christ the Lord.

True faith comes as a gift from God when hearing His word, and it naturally leads to a life of loving service to him. Thus Paul's teaching about being saved through faith apart from works corresponds with James's teaching about being saved through a faith that produces good works (Galatians 2:16) and (Genesis 15:6), "And Abraham believed the Lord, and the Lord declared him righteous because of his faith, when the people of Israel saw the mighty power that the Lord had displayed against the Egyptians, they feared the Lord and put their faith in him and his servant Moses. As Christians, the Lutheran's faith is centred on the person and works of Jesus Christ.

They believe that the son of God became a human being to suffer and disclose the world so that all who believe in Him will not perish, but through His substitution for them on the given forgiveness have eternal life. Lutherans believe that salvation was made possible by the work of Jesus Christ. This gives Lutherans phrase "Christ alone". They believe that they are saved by God's mercy and forgiveness and not by works of righteous for their past or even by personal action of deciding to follow Jesus. Rather, the work entirely gives rise to the Lutheran phrase "Grace alone"

They understand that simple trust in the promises of God in Jesus Christ is sufficient; this gives rise to the Lutheran phrase "faith alone" Lutherans take their beliefs from the Holy Scriptures. They believe the Bible to be the inspired and inerrant word of God and the only revelation and practice. This gives rise to Lutheran phrase "scripture alone." They also believe that justification is done through Christ the Lord. Lutherans have been known to write down statements explaining what they believe and where beliefs in the Bible.

The most important of these statements are found in the book of "Concord," a collection of Lutheran theological declarations. These are sometimes referred to as the "Confession." Shelly (1982:264) says: "their position is that if God has spoken about a matter, they must follow on that matter, but where God's word is silent, there can be liberty for practice as long as this responsibly for the sake of proclamation the Gospel into the world." They took four basic concerns and offered invigorating new answers. To the questions of how is a person saved, Luther replied: "not by works but by faith alone." To the question where does religious authority lie, Luther

answered: “not in visible institution called Roman Catholic, but in the word of God found in the Bible.”

2.2.2 Prayer

Prayer is a way of communication between God and man. Smit (2002:69) says: “Prayer is the thermometer by which the spiritual growth and vital power of Christian is measured.” Prayer is used in some circumstances to defend. In (Luke 22:31-32); Jesus says: “Simon, Simon Satan has asked to have all of you like wheat. But I have pleaded in prayer for you, Simon that your faith should not fall.” Prayer changes difficult situations, and this is revealed in the book of Acts while Paul was in prison, the church prayed earnestly for him,” (Acts 12:5). In the Lutheran Church, they usually say these words when they pray: “In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” using the sign of a cross.

The sign of the cross is made by the right hand touching the forehead at the word “Father,” touching the chest at the word “Son,” and touching the left and right shoulders at the words “Holy Spirit.” In their service, especially at the end of their service they recite the Lord’s Prayer:

Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen. (Matt 6:9-14)

Like any other churches, Lutherans also have conferences whereby different branches come together and worship the Lord. Mostly they have services for some hours depending on the activities of the service. In some of their conferences, they eat the Lord’s Passover (*xilalelo*), (Matthews 26:17-30). They usually have a one day conference.

2.2.3 Baptism

Baptism is considered to be a form of rebirth by water and the spirit (John 3:5) In Lutheran church baptism is the first of all, the sacrament, or act by which God brings people into the church. The New Testament speaks of two kinds of baptisms, that is,

sprinkling and immersing. John the Baptist, a prophet who had a ministry around the Jordan River where, it is reported; he was “proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of the sins” (Mark 1:4). Soanes (2006:106) defines baptism as: “the Christian rite of sprinkling water on to a person’s forehead or of immersing them in water, symbolising purification or regeneration and admission to the Christian church”. The apostle Paul speaks of baptism as a participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus. “We have been buried with Him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4).

Lutherans believe that by baptism they are grafted into the crucified and risen body of Christ. Paul calls the church the body of Christ. So baptism does not only bring one into the church, but because it is a sharing in Christ’s death and resurrection, there is also a change that takes place, Paul calls it “newness of life.” Baptism is incorporation into the crucified and risen body of Christ, and is a sign that there is assurance for all believers that they are truly loved by God and saved from sin and death for Jesus Christ’s sake. Jesus was baptised by John, not because He himself needed to repent but with the sign of solidarity with sinful and repentant people.

At the end of his earthly ministry, the resurrected Lord Jesus commands His disciples to “Go, make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Mark 16:15). This is the baptism instituted by Christ, is the Christians’ baptism. Sometimes people interpret baptism of the Holy Spirit as the story of the early church (Acts 2:4). It is, therefore, clear that baptism in the name of Jesus is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

The author of the book of Acts reports that those who welcomed the message of Jesus asked the apostles: “what should we do?” and they answered, repent and be baptised all of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:17). Typically a Lutheran church will have a “baptismal font” where baptism takes place. Newer churches are sometimes built with a baptistery having a pool where the baptised are immersed. Most Lutheran churches, however, will baptise at the font, which contains a basin filled with water. Often the paschal (Easter) candle stands by the correction between baptism and resurrection.

Baptismal font of Lutheran church



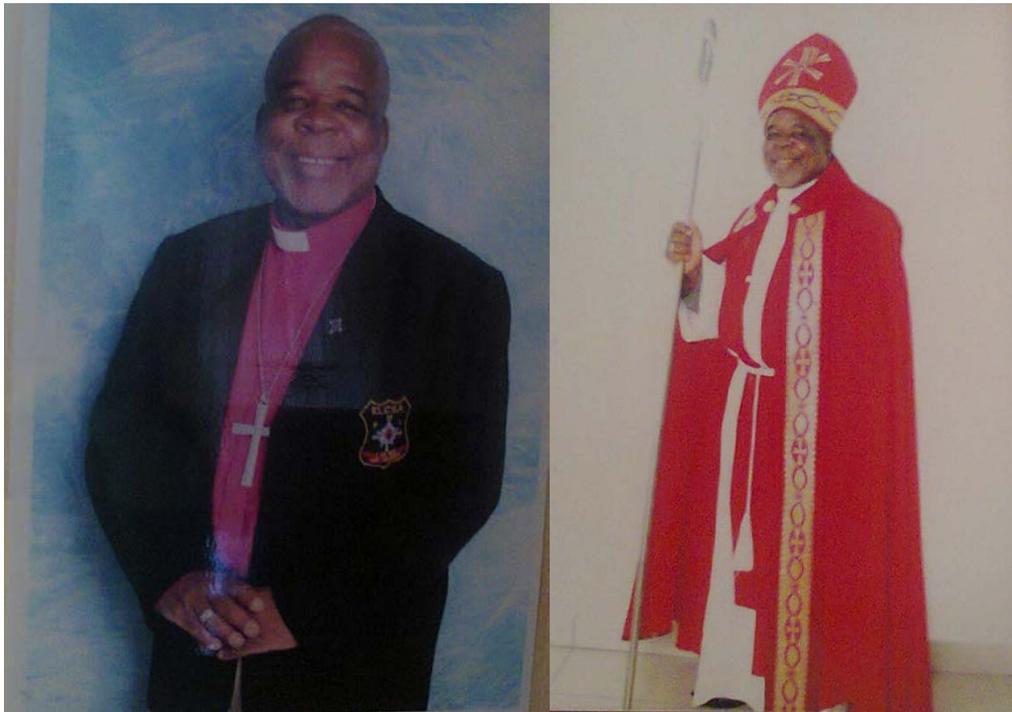
Fonts were usually placed in the chancel of the church where the baptism could easily be observed by the congregation. In recent years, however, fonts are being placed at the entrance to the church to show that they “enter” the church- understood as the body of Christ-by baptism, hence; they believe that salvation is God’s gift to them. It’s God’s work, and does not depend on whether mechanism can be worked out in the last moment before death. I was informed that before a person is baptised, he or she must attend a baptismal class for a period of a year. They memorise the following words:

I believe in God the father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only son and our Lord who was conceive by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary and suffered under Pontius Palate, was crucified, died and buried, the third day He rose from the dead, He ascended to heaven, and seated at the right hand of the father Almighty, from thence, he shall come and judge the quick and the dead...

It is an oral test to verify whether the person qualifies for baptism or not. Those who are ready are given a chance to recite before the congregation. If ever they do qualify, then the Pastor, Dean or Bishop prepares a baptismal font full of water and sprinkle them, then they are saved.

2.2.4 Uniform (*Xiambalo*)

2.2.4.1 Bishop's uniform



In the Lutheran Church, uniform is used as a form of identification. The following are Bishop's uniform.

- Black shirt or any colour with a colon. According to the Lutheran Church, the Bishop must always be in uniform wherever he goes. This will make people to respect him.
- Jacket with an emblem.
- Pink clothes or cope when conducting funeral services.
- Alb (inner dress).

- Stole (long belt from top to bottom).
- Kettle (belt).
- Red staff, rod and miter (hat).

They also put on a gold ring having a cross of Jesus Christ on their right hands as a symbol that they are married to Jesus.

2.2.4.2 Male and female uniform

In the Lutheran Church, both male and female members put on black and white uniform. Men's jackets have emblems while women put on ordinary black and white uniform and cover their heads with black hats. Female youths do not cover their heads. They just put on black skirts and white shirts. Same applies to the male youths; they put on black trousers and white shirts. It is not a matter of must, if one does not have a uniform; he or she is also welcomed to their services.

2.2.5 Healing

Soanes (2006:281) says: "Healing is to make part of the body healthy again." It is a way of making the body becoming healthy, either physically or spiritually. In the Lutheran Church, healing works hand in hand with faith. They stress faith in their healing process as stated in (Mark 16:18), "they will be able to lay hands on the sick and heal them." Both the pastor and the sick must be in the same position of having faith. They also pray for the sick from a far distance because of faith (Luke 7:6-10), "I am not even worthy to come and meet you just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed." Sometimes they use cell phones to pray for the sick.

2.2.6 Prophecy

In Lutheran Church, they receive prophecy through the word of God. (Psalm 119: 105 & 133) says: "your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path... guide my steps by your word so I will not be overcome by evil."

2.2.7 Funeral

Soanes (2006:576) explains funeral as: “A ceremony held shortly after a person’s death, usually including the person’s burial or cremation.” Lutherans regard death as a new beginning. They believe that those who have faith are assured eternal life with God. At the service, guests are ushered to seating. If arriving late, they do not enter during the procession or prayer. A pastor presides over the service and reads from the “*Lutheran Book of Worship*” or “*The Lutheran Hymnal of Lutheran Worship*.”

Christians are expected to fully participate, but non-Christians need not kneel, sing or pray with them. If interested in recording the service, permission should be received from the pastor prior to the service. There are no specific rituals for observing the anniversary of the death. They do not allow the family members to perform their rituals. During the process of the funeral; all pastors are to be put on pastry clothes.

Bishops should put on the following attire: pink clothes, staff rod, miter (hurt), cope (a big jacket), kettle (belt), *alb* (the inner dress), and a stole (a belt from top to bottom). Other members are to put on black and white uniform including jackets with emblems for males. There is an “Agenda” (service book) that is used for the burial. They have short services during the course of the week before the burial day called “*ku chavelela*” in Xitsonga. This is the service whereby they preach the word of comfort to the family, extracted from the Holy Bible.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church has no formally approved teaching document regarding funeral practices. Specific material intended to guide the way this church approaches the burial of the dead, however, can be found in Evangelical Lutheran Worship in the form of liturgical texts, rubrics (directions) and “Notes on the Liturgy” found in the Leaders' Edition. These notes guide the church's practice in a variety of circumstances.

Although the most common form of the burial of the dead involves worship in church with the body of the deceased Christian present, the notes make it clear that adaptations are possible if the body cannot be present. For pastoral care and to help in planning, the pastor should be notified immediately upon the death of a member of

the congregation. No plans for the funeral should be made apart from consultation with the pastor and appropriate parish staff.

When possible, it is a good idea to plan the funeral liturgy well before the death of a Christian to avoid planning during a time of grieving. Such planning offers an occasion for the pastor to talk seriously about the Christian hope of the resurrection of the dead through Jesus Christ. On the last day (burial day); they all put on uniform and the pastor gives a short sermon. Then they take the deceased to the graveyard and bury him or her. After the burial they all return to the deceased family and enjoy the lunch. From there everyone may disperse.

2.3 ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The word 'Catholic' in the Apostles' Creed refers not to the Roman Catholic Church, but to the universal church of the Lord Christ:

I believe in God the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the Right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall Come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic (or universal) Church, the communion of saints, sins, the forgiveness of (or universal) Church, the communion of saints, sins, the resurrection of the Body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

2.3.1 Faith

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Virgin Mary is the mother of the church and of all its members, namely all Christians. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

The Virgin Mary ... is acknowledged and honoured as being Truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer.... she is clearly the mother of the members of Christ' . . .since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head, "Mary" mother of Christ, Mother of the Church.

In addition, the Virgin Mary is seen as the mother of all Christians because Christians are said in scripture to become spiritually part of the body of Christ. Christians are adopted by Jesus as his “brothers”. They therefore share with Him the Fatherhood of God and also the motherhood of the Virgin Mary. Again, in the New Testament book of John; Jesus, from the cross gives the Apostle John to Mary as her son, and gives Mary to John as his mother. John as the sole remaining Apostle remaining steadfast with Jesus is taken to represent all loyal followers of Jesus from that time on.

According to the Roman Catholic Church, their spiritual “Father” is the pope of Rome and their spiritual “Mother” is the Virgin Mary. A Catechism of Catholic Doctrine, (15:27) declares: “The Pope is the spiritual Father of all Christians” and “The Blessed Virgin Mary is our Mother also because, being the brethren of Jesus, we are the children of Mary.” The devotion to the Virgin Mary thus continues to be emphasized in Roman Catholic teachings. For instance, in his encyclical *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, Pope John Paul II discussed how his own motto “*Totus Tuus*” was inspired by the writings of Saint Louis de Montfort on total consecration to the Virgin Mary, which he quoted:

Now, since Mary is of all creatures the one most conformed to Jesus Christ, it follows that among all devotions that which most consecrates and conforms a soul to our Lord is devotion to Mary, his Holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to her the more will it be consecrated to Jesus Christ.

In a separate address to the Montfortian Fathers, Pope John Paul II stated that reading Saint Louis de Montfort's work on Devotion to Mary had been a “decisive turning point” in his life. They believe that there is one God in three divine persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This doctrine is also called the “Holy Trinity.” The second Trinity (the son) assumed a human nature by being born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was free from all stain of original sin. In an event known as incarnation, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God became united with the human nature through the conception of Christ in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Christ therefore, is both fully divine and fully human. It is taught that Christ's mission on earth included giving people His teachings and providing His example for them to follow as recorded in the four Gospels. To belong to the church one must accept as factually true the gospel of Jesus as handed down in tradition and as interpreted by the Bishops in union with the Pope.

The doctrine of apostolic succession is one of the keystones of the Catholic faith. It holds that the Pope and the Bishops have in varying degrees the spiritual authority Jesus assigned to His apostles. The church is seen as having from God a system of conveying God's grace direct to humanity. The church teaches that the main motive for ethical behaviour is the love of God. They say that nothing that God has created is evil in itself, but evil use may be made of it.

The doctrine concerning persons not Catholic is that since God affords each human being light sufficient to attain salvation, all will be saved who persevere in what they believe to be good, regardless of ignorance. Only those who will be damned who persist in what they know to be wrong; among these are persons who resist the church when they know it to be the one, true church.

According to Roman Catholics, justification is done through works (Roman 3:23). Traditionally, they have to buy a card which makes their sins to be forgiven. For an example, if a member has committed a criminal offence, and he or she has to be arrested; the person must just produce that card and be forgiven.

2.3.2 Prayer

A member of Roman Catholic Church says that they use Mary's name when they pray. They regard her as the mother of God, and also as their messenger. For example, Mary was sent to Jesus when wine was finished in the wedding of Cana (John 2:1-3). They have the following forms of prayer; Blessing and Adoration (praising God), Prayer of Petition (asking for what we need, including forgiveness), prayer of intercession (asking for what others need) and Prayer of Thanksgiving (for what God has given and done).

The Roman Catholic Church includes specific prayers and devotion as acts of reparation. These prayers do not involve a petition for a living deceased beneficiary,

but aim to repair the sins of others, for an example, when the name of Jesus Christ is taken in vain, or for the repair of blasphemy. Some such prayers are provided in the “Ricotta Catholic prayer book.” Some prayers focus on reparations. They recite their prayers as follows:

We fly into thy patronage, ooh holy Mary mother of God. Despise not our prayer in our necessities but deliver us from all dangerous, ooh glorious and blessed virgin, amen.

Most often, they perform an individual prayer whereby a member is supposed to enter in a chapel being alone. A chapel is a prayer room which is found inside the church building. One who enters in a chapel room must not be disturbed by other members of the church. He or she must close his or her eyes when praying. They believe that by closing their eyes during prayer symbolises that the one who is praying, must have concentration to his or her God.

They are encouraged not to open their eyes when praying because it might happen that they see things which will disturb them during their prayers. Sometimes they play soft music during their prayers. When they pray for the blessings and protection, they put their hands on their foreheads as a sign of an “eye of hope.” The Roman Catholics use the following symbols: star, sun and the eye of hope. Each symbol has a special meaning.



The “eye of hope” represents that God always sees them when they pray. The “sun” represents that things will be shining for them. The sign of the star” is an indication that it will show them the way to heaven, (Luke 2:9) says: “after this interview the wise men went their way. Once again the star appeared to them, guiding them to Bethlehem.” They put these symbols outside and inside the church building.

2.3.3 Baptism



Baptismal font of Catholics

The Roman Catholic Church sees baptism as the first and basic sacrament of Christian initiation. In Roman Catholic church, baptism is usually conferred by pouring water three times on the recipient’s head, while reciting the baptismal formula: “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthews 28:19). They use a “baptismal font.” The sacrament of baptism is often called “The door of the church.” Once a person is baptized, he or she becomes a member of the church.

Most Catholics receive baptism as infants. They believe that since baptism removes both guilt and the punishment due to original sin, delaying baptism until a child can understand the sacrament may put the child’s salvation in danger, should he or she

die unbaptized. Traditionally, the rite of baptism was held outside the doors of the main part of the church, to signify the fact that Christ Himself ordered His disciples to preach the gospel to all nations and those who accept the message of the Gospel. According to them, baptism was necessary for salvation. For Catholics, the sacrament is not a mere formality; it is the very mark of a Christian, because it brings them into new life in Christ. They believe that, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

2.3.4 Uniform (Vestment)

2.3.4.1 Vestments of the Pope



Uniform has been customary in every era and in every country to invest any position of dignity. This is done for a twofold purpose - that other people may respect and obey you and that you may respect yourself and be more conscious of your role in the society and more attentive to them, on account of the uniform you wear. This is even true of the religious attire. The priest wears it that he may always be distinguished from other men, and that he himself may always be reminded by it that he is “chosen among men” to offer sacrifices and holocausts for them, and to be a mediator between the Almighty and His creatures.

In every religion, the practice has been in vogue (current fashion) of wearing some form of vestment. The priest has had a distinctive dress, whether he was a “medicine-man” of some tribe, an augur of pagan Rome, or a priest of the Hebrew (religion). The vestments worn by the priest at masses are as follows: the alb, the cincture, the stole, and the chasuble; and at certain services he may use the cope, the humeral veil and the surplice. Each of these has its own history and its own symbolical meaning.

2.3.4.1.1 The Alb

The long linen gown worn by the priest is called the *alb*, meaning simply the white garment... It is a survival of the white Roman toga. Its white colour denotes the necessity of purity, both of soul and body, in him who offers the Lamb of God to the Father.

2.3.4.1.2. The Cincture

This is the proper name for the girdle worn around the waist to bind the alb closely to the body. It is made of braided linen, or sometimes of wool... (Exod. 29:9) “And you shall gird (Aaron and his sons) with sashes and tie headdresses on them; and the priesthood shall be theirs by a perpetual ordinance.”

2.3.4.1.3. The Stole



At Mass, and also in nearly every other religious function, the priest wears around his neck a long narrow vestment, the ends hanging down in front. The deacon at “Mass” wears a similar vestment, but in a different manner -- diagonally from his left shoulder to his right side. The stole came into use about the fourth century, and was originally a sort of robe or cloak; but its form was gradually modified until it became a narrow strip. It is said by some to have been the court uniform of Roman judges, and to have been adopted by the Church to denote the authority of her ministers...

2.3.4.1.4 The Chasuble



The most conspicuous part of the costume of the priest at Mass is the “*chasuble*”, the large vestment worn on the shoulders and hanging down in front and behind. The rear portion is often, though not always, ornamented with a large cross. The word “*chasuble*” is from the late Latin “*casula*,” a little house, because it is, as it were, a shelter for the priest. This vestment has been greatly altered during the centuries of its history. It was originally a large mantle or cloak, with an opening for the head in the centre, and had to be raised at the sides to allow the hands to be extended outside the cloak. The assistants at the Mass were obliged to help the priest by holding up the sides of the “*chasuble*”... (Due to its size and weight if heavily ornamented).

2.3.4.1.5 The Cope



“The cope” was originally worn only in outdoor processions, and was considered merely as a rain-cloak, as is shown by its Latin name, *pluviale*, a protection against rain. The cape attached to it, which now has no use whatever, is a reminder of the large hood formerly used to cover the head in stormy weather. Our English name, cope, is from the Latin “*cappa*,” a cape.

2.3.4.1.6 The humeral veil

The humeral veil was worn on the shoulders of the priest at the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament when he held the Sacred Host for the blessing of the people, and also when he carried the Blessed Sacrament in procession.

2.3.4.1.7 The Surplice

It may be well also to say a word about this vestment, which is worn over the cassock at the administration of the Sacraments and at various services of the Church. It is the special garb of clerics not in sacred orders, and it is used to lay altar-boys in the church.

In its present form it is one of the most modern of vestments. The word surplice is from the Latin “superpellicium” -- a dress worn over furs. In the Middle Ages it was allowed to the monks in cold countries to have fur garments, and over these a linen gown was Surplice worn in choir. It was later considered practically as an alb, and in the twelfth century it was usually so long that it reached the feet. Gradually it was made shorter, and about the seventeenth century the custom began of ornamenting it with lace.

2.3.4.1.8 Tunic and dalmatic

The tunic is the vestment of sub-deacons. These vestments hang from the shoulders, which are covered by projecting flaps; these are sometimes connected under the arms, so as to resemble short sleeves. The colour, of course, varies according to the Mass, and on the back are usually two ornamental vertical stripes, but no cross. (A deacon will now often appear in just alb and stole.)

A tunic signifies simply an outer garment. The dalmatic gets its name from a Roman garment made of wool from the province of Dalmatia, worn under the outer clothing in ancient times. Today a priest might be seen in regular “street clothing”, or in a shirt with a Roman collar, and in a more formal setting a suit with a clerical shirt. The colour is usually black. This is his normal working uniform when he is not officiating at a liturgy or performing a sacrament.

2.3.4.2 The Vestments of a Bishop

These are numerous, and each has its own interesting history and its own symbolic meaning. The Bishops are the links in the apostolic chain, the pastors of Christ's flock, and the principal labourers in His vineyard. All the dignity which a Bishop has by virtue of his office, and all the qualities which he should have to be worthy of his

exalted position, are symbolized by the chief insignia which he is privileged to use. He wears a Pectoral Cross (a cross of precious metal) attached to a chain around his neck which hangs on his breast.

2.3.4.2.1 The skull cap



The skull cap is worn by the Pope and by Bishops. Its purpose is unclear although it has been suggested that it was needed to cover the area of the head shaved for tonsure.

2.3.4.2.2 The cassock

A Bishop's cassock varies in colour according to the occasion. On penitential days it is black with purple silk trimmings; but on other days he wears a purple cassock, called a choir cassock, with crimson trimmings, at church functions, and an ordinary cassock, of black with red trimmings. Over his cassock he wears a short cape, bearing the Italian name of "*mozzetta*", buttoned over the breast

2.3.4.2.3 The Miter

This is the distinguishing mark of the episcopal office -- a tall double-pointed cap, probably of oriental origin, which can be traced back to pagan times; at least, something very similar was worn by kings in Persia and Assyria long before the Christian era. The present double or cleft form was evolved gradually; it was at first low and concave, and was subsequently increased in height and more richly ornamented. Its two points or horns symbolize the Old and New Testaments, which the Bishop is supposed to explain to his people.

2.3.4.2.4 The Crosier

This is the Bishop's pastoral staff. It is a copy of the shepherd's crook, used for the guidance and restraining of the sheep, and has been looked upon as the special badge of the episcopal office the ritual of a Bishop's consecration. It signifies his power to sustain the weak, to confirm the wavering, and to lead back the erring. The upper part is often very beautifully moulded and enriched with images and symbolic ornaments.

2.3.4.2.5 The Ring

On the third finger of a Bishop's right hand he wears a large ring - a custom traceable to about the year 600. It was a signet ring originally, but is now considered as a symbol of faith or fidelity.

According to the Roman Catholics, their uniforms are seasonal. They have uniform for summer and for winter. In summer all members put on white uniform. They believe that white colour represents holiness. In "Good Friday" and winter, they put on maroon colour so that they may feel warm. In Roman Catholic Church, all Bishops put on black copes with maroon belts and maroon skull caps. All female members put on uniform and cover their heads with white- cloths.

2.3.5 Healing

In Roman Catholic Church, they use anointing oil when praying for the sick. They believe that if a person becomes ill because of his or her age, or has begun to be in danger of death, a priest or a Bishop may use different oil to bless that particular

person. This sacrament known as anointing of the sick, is believed to give comfort, peace, courage and, if the sick person is unable to make confession, even forgiveness of sins. Although it is not reserved for those in proximate danger of death, it is often administered as one of the last Rites. They also burn the incense (a substance burned for the sweet smell it produces), “*miri ya risuna*” in their church every morning, (Luke1:9).

2.3.6 Prophecy

According to the Roman Catholic Church, prophecy takes place during their services whereby a prophet points out the one to be prophesied to the chapel (prayer room). No one is allowed to enter in the chapel during the process of prophecy.

2.3.7 Funeral

Funeral is the preparation of taking the deceased to the grave. Funeral happens after death. Soanes (2006:576), defines funeral as: “ceremony held after a person’s death, usually including the person’s burial or cremation.” In general, Roman Catholics are to be given a Catholic funeral on their death. On the other hand, Catholic burial rites are to be refused to the following: unless they gave a sign of repentance before death.

- Persons well known to the guilt of apostasy, heresy or schism.
- Those who asked to be cremated for anti-Christian motives.
- Manifest sinners, if the granting of church funeral rites to them cause scandal to Catholics.

Traditionally, Catholic funerals are denied to the unbaptized unless they are of unsound mind or showed signs of repentance. They also perform funeral hymns like, “On Eagles Wings” by Michael Joncas based on (Psalm 91). These hymns are often performed before or after funeral masses, and the song conveys the people being raised up to heaven. According to them, their funeral consists of three main parts: the vigil (sometimes called wake), the Requiem mass, the burial and informal after burial gatherings.

2.3.7.1 The Vigil

The night vigil takes place in the home of the deceased, although it can also be conducted in the parish church or chapel, or other place depending on the laws of their state parish or chapel. During the night vigil, family members gather around the coffin and pray for him or her, remembering about his or her previous life. This is the time to console one another. They say that if the vigil takes place where death has occurred, funeral cards, types of holy cards are usually presented with a Catholic image on the one side and, on the other, a prayer, and the name, birth date, and heavenly birth date of the deceased.

If the vigil is not held at the deceased's home, one can still order custom-made funeral cards and make one's own. They say that prayer is the centre of the vigil, and the priests should lead the mourners in the glorious mysteries for the soul of the departed. If the priest is not available, they should pray for the glorious mysteries in the group. The following prayer is offered for the deceased after each decade of the glorious mysteries:

*Eternal rest unto him/her (them), O Lord; and let
Perpetual light shine upon him/her (them). May he/
she (they). Rest in peace. Amen.*

The eternal prayer is a good prayer when thought of the deceased comes to mind in the years to come; they also pray this prayer passing cemetery or grave yard, and also on All Souls Day, and adds it to their Rosaries during the month of November, which is dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. They indicate that, the coffin is usually opened during the vigil, flanked by candles on both ends. During this time, they turn the mirror towards the wall and cover them. They kiss their deceased to say "goodbye" and keep his or her lock of hair of some other months which is later placed along the funeral cards and the like, on the family all known as "*Gandzelo*" (a place where they put some pieces of different clothes related to the deceased for remembrance or a marked place of worshipping their ancestors).

This will remind them to pray for their loved one. In Xitsonga they say "*ku phahla*." This is a way of communicating with their ancestors. The researcher discovered that, the first thing to remember about Catholic funeral is the truth that the corpse of the

deceased will be resurrected and reunited with the soul when Jesus comes at the last day of judgement. In addition, if the deceased is “saved,” his or her corpse will be glorified. For this reason, the corpse of their loved ones will be treated with utmost respect and, it is against Catholic custom to cremate the corpse, having been allowed in the past during the times pestilence, for example, when cremation was done for the common good. They put flowers as a sign of beautifully transient.

They are always present, although some might request that, aside from closest family members, donations are made to selected charities instead of additional bouquets being bought. A crucifix is also present too, and a Rosary which is placed in the hands of the deceased. They say that, visitors who enter the place of the vigil should dress modestly and sombrely. They also place a book where visitors sign as it is good for the mourners to see many names listed and to know that their loved one was cared for by many. These books are often used by family in sending thank you cards afterwards, and make this task much easier in having all the names and addresses in one place.

2.3.7.2 The Requiem mass

Requiem mass is a special mass for someone who has died. They say that, during the day of the Requiem mass, the non-Catholic visitors will find general information on how to behave at a Catholic mass. The Requiem mass has the following differences: incense is not burned, Gospel is not read, and kissing of the book after the Gospel reading and kiss of peace in solemn masses are omitted. On that day, the body is taken from the place of the vigil to the church as they ring the bell slowly and a saxophone is used as an instrument with tenor voice, or an adult male voice with tenor if not an instrument.

The first stage involves the priest and the other clergy to go to the house of the deceased. One cleric carries the cross and another carries a vessel of the holy water. Before the coffin is removed from the house, it is sprinkled with the holy water. The priest with his assistants, say the Psalm De profundis. The cross-bearer goes first, followed by members of the clergy carrying lighted candles. The priest walks immediately before the coffin, and the friends of the deceased and others walk

behind it. As they leave the house, the priest recites the antiphon. They take the corpse of the deceased to the Alter (in the middle of the church). If the corpse is a layman, the feet are to be turned towards the Alter.

If the corpse is a priest, the position is reversed, and the head being towards the Alter. The feet of all Christians should be pointed to the east. On the day of the Requiem mass, the priest should dress in a black cope and greet the coffin at the door of the church, sprinkling it with water and reciting words in chanting voice (Psalm 129). They also read (1Thesalonians 4:13-18), in which St Paul speaks of death. After the gradual, they read the Gospel of (John 11:21-27) about the story of Martha's profession of faith that her brother, Lazarus, will rise again.

They also pray Jesus Christ to deliver the souls of the faithful departed from Hell, and for St Michael to lead them into the holy light. Afterwards, the priest, again dressed in a black cope, stands at the foot of the coffin and grants the departed absolution. They chanted a "Kyrie" followed by a "pater," while the priest passes twice around the body, sprinkling it with holy water and incensing it. This is followed by a prayer asking that the holy Angels bear the departed to paradise. As the body is carried out of the church, they sing this song:

*May the Angels lead you into paradise: may the martyrs
Receive you at your coming, and lead you into the holy city,
Jerusalem. May the choir of angels receive you, and with
Lazarus, who once was poor, may you have everlasting rest*

2.2.7.3 Burial and informed after burial gatherings

Hornby (2005:191) defines burial as: "the act or ceremony of burying a dead body." They say that burial is not a disposal of a thing; it is caring for a person, in burial, they believe that they are reminded that the body is not a shell, a husk tossed inside by "real" person, the soul within. According to them, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2Corinthians 5:68, Philipians 1:23), but the body that remains still belongs to someone they love who will reclaim it someday. After the Requiem mass, the coffin is taken to the cemetery. The ground in which the body will be disposed, should be blessed by a priest if the cemetery is not a proper Catholic

cemetery. This is done with these words as the grave and body are sprinkled with holy water and incense:

O God, by your mercy rest is given to the souls of the faithful. Please bless the grave. Appoint your holy angels to guard it and set free from all the chains of sin and the soul of him or her whose body is buried here, so that with all thy saints he or she may rejoice in thee for ever through Christ our Lord. Amen.

After the prayer, the priest recites the words in (Luke 1:68-79) and the body is carried to the grave. The grave is then blessed, if it has not been blessed previously. He again asks the soul to rest in peace, and ends with another prayer for mercy. It all ends with the following said as the priest makes the sign of the cross over the body: "May his soul and the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace." Traditionally, the body of a layman (a person who is not trained for priesthood) is buried in the way that the head faces east, which symbolizes their awaiting bodily resurrection by Christ.

The body of the priest is buried in the opposite direction, symbolizing their having to comfort the effects of the pastoring of the souls entrusted to them by God. At that point, the graveside ceremony and the burial are completed. After the funeral, they gather at the house of the closest to the departed, to eat, drink, remember, console one another and pray. This tends to be the days after funeral, when all the distractions of funeral arrangements and greeting people have vanished. They bring food to the survivors and taking care of them. They call them and let them cry and talk. They encourage them not to be afraid to mention the name of the deceased. (Let them tell how they feel). This is how they deal with grief. They emphasise these words from the Bible:

Our father Abraham did not "dispose" of the "container" previously By his loved one. Occupied Moses tells us that "Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah east of 'Canaan" His burial of his wife, returning to the dust from which she came, Honoured our forefathers, in practice distinction from the shamefulness with which our God views the leaving of the bodies to decompose Publicly. (Genesis 23:19, Isaiah 5:25).

The researcher discovered that when the family lose their loved ones, the first thing the family will do is to inform and invite the priest. All the funeral arrangements and preparations are made with the priest, that is; date of funeral, time, and venue of the night vigil, burial and transportation of the corpse to the church and to the cemetery. They ensure that their loved ones are treated with utmost dignity at all times, and give their loved ones the gift of caring for them after death. This helps many with their grief, and saves literally thousands of dollars in the process.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DOCTRINES OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL CHURCHES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the doctrines of African Traditional churches such as Zion Christian Church and Rainbow Apostolic Church. (The fact that these churches are founded and led by Africans is that, they reflect on African beliefs. For an example, the ways in which they sing and dance). In particular, the churches owe their origins to the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church of John Alexander Dowie. However, they integrated into themselves; indigenous African life.

3.2 ZION CHRISTIAN CHURCH

3.2.1 Faith

The Zion Christian Church members believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. According to Zion Christian Church, justification is through works. For them to be saved, they need to follow the church doctrines. For an example, they associate God with their ancestral spirits so that their prayers should be quickly heard.

They have membership cards which they pay money every month. They also have a special book called “buka ya lekhetho” irrespective of the race one belongs to. Each member of Zion Christian Church must put on a badge with a symbol of a star.

Zion Christian Church badge or symbol



They also put the symbol of a star on the front side of their church buildings and on the visible place of the mountain called “Moria.” They believe that the star will show them the way to heaven as it showed the wise men to the place where Jesus was put.

3.2.2 Prayer

They believe in God and gods so that their prayers should be answered quickly. The pastor leads the *congregation with these words* “*A hi khongeriseni swikwembu swa ka Lekganyane*” meaning that they should pray for the gods of the Lekganyane clan because they also play a very important role in their lives. Then the congregation follow the sequence of the prayer knowing that they are uniting God with gods so that their prayers may be answered. The pastor continues to say: “*A hi khongeriseni swikwembu swa ka hina*”. Let’s pray for our gods, and then everyone starts praying to his or her own ancestral spirits seeking for help.

By so doing, they believe to be pleasing God and gods at the same time. When they pray they kneel down and bow their heads. They have taken this from the Bible in the book of (Psalm 95:6-7) which says “come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker, for He is our God.” They also have a night vigil (whole night prayer) which is called “*Mpogo*”.

They associate “*Mpogo*” with “Mhamba” in Xitsonga. Usually “*Mpogo*” is performed when something went wrong in a particular family or one of the family members has done something wrong and even if something evil is going to happen. They organise “*Mpogo*” in order to be saved from the evil things. Parrinder (1976:57) indicates that: “in South Africa, the ancestral spirits are the most intimate gods of the Bantu: they are part of the family or tribe, and are considered and always consulted on all important occasions.”

Ray (1999:52) maintains that: “the gods and ancestors watch over human affairs, take note of personal conflicts and intervene by causing illness and misfortune.” It is believed that they are mystical ties that bind the living-dead to their surviving relatives. This may happen if one has committed a sin and the ancestors become angry. Shabangu (2006:7) supports the above scholar by saying:

Loko ku tshuka ku humelela swin'wana swo biha edyangwini, ku nga ha va mavabyi kumbe rifu, tinyimpi kumbe timholovo, ku huma muti kumbe ku teka riendzo, ku xambila kumbe swin'wana swo yelana ni hanyelo ra vona, va muti ... va hlahluva ku twa va le hansi leswaku va ri yini.

If that is the case, “Mpogo” should be organised to serve as reconciliation. There are two types of “Mpogo”, which are “Mpogo ya xitlhavelo” in which a sprinkled beast should be slaughtered and food be cooked. The blood shed from the slaughtered beast is a sign of giving to their ancestors to drink. In Xitsonga is “ku phahla.” All members of the church must eat the food and no left overs (*mahlanhla*). By so doing, they are trying not to live their ancestors behind.

The next one is called “Mpogo ya mixo,” whereby all members should not eat any food but to drink pure warm water (*muhavulo*) or tea only for the whole night and they all disperse the following morning. The “*muhavulo*” makes them not to slumber but to be energetic and dance for the whole night. One may not just organise “Mpogo” without having been told by the church prophets. There should be something called “*swileriso*” (instructions).

They must also make a booking in time and it should be approved by their ministers and church leaders from their local church. Then one can organise “Mpogo” and invite all family relatives and members of the Zion Christian Church from the four directions of the earth, (*timheho ta mune ta misava*). If it may happen that they all come, they say: “*xileriso xi hetisekile*” meaning that things have gone well. Some of the respondents stressed that the church was able to help them in some way to overcome serious emotional and domestic problems. They associate “Mpogo” with “*ku phahla*” in Xitsonga.

This is a way of reconciliation with their ancestors. They slaughter a beast and sprinkle it with water mixed with *muti* using twig leaves of a tree called “*nxuva*”. They organise “*Mhamba*” if one of the family members has discovered that things are not going well at home and then consulted a *sangoma* who told him or her how to organise that “*Mhamba*” in the form of “*ku hlahluva*” (foreteller)

3.2.3 Baptism



River baptism of Zion Christian Church

They also believe in John's baptism (John 1:26) which says: "I baptise with water." They believe in river or dam baptism which is also called "immersion". There is no waiting period or baptismal teachings. According to them, salvation comes through baptism, and as such a person gets repented and be baptised on the same day. Those who are to be baptised, must first confess to the pastor and make this vow:

Ke gafa sathane le medimo ya gagwe ka moka le mekhwa ya gagwe ka moka. Gomme ke ineela go wena Modimo yo Moraro. Tate le Morwa le Moya o mokgethwa, gore ketle kebe wa gago ka go botega tumelong le go kweng, go fihla bofelong byaka.

In English it says "that I renounce satan, his demonic spirits and all his schemes. And offer myself to you God of Trinity so that I can be yours by faith and obedience until I die". They usually baptise according to their portfolios. For an example: "*Ndzi khuvula manana Maria Shikwambani hi vito ra Tatana, ni ra N'wana ni ra moya lo wo Kwetsima.*" (I baptise Maria Shikwambani in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit). Sometimes they just say "*hi mavito manharhu*" and then they immerse

you three times deep in the water. They believe that the calling of the name is a sign of registering you in heaven. Immersion is a sign that your sins will remain in the water.

After the baptism, is then that the church elders may teach you some of the church doctrines such as: abstaining from pork, not smoking, not drinking alcohol and any other intoxicating beverages. They associate God with their ancestors.

3.2.4 Uniform (*Xiambalo*)

Soanes (2006:686) says: “uniform means the distinctive cloth worn to identify the wearer as a member of a particular organisation or church.” Uniform of the Zion Christian Church is divided into two categories, that is, men’s uniform and women’s uniform.

3.2.4.1 Male uniform (*xiambalo xa vavanuna*)



Men have two types of uniforms, which are: khaki suit and green suit (*xiambalo lexi-kulu*) with yellow stripes on its sides. They put on khaki uniform when conducting or

attending funerals or during church services, although there are those who put on formal suits or blue and white uniform when conducting funeral ceremonies. They use a green suit only on Sundays when attending church services. Women are not allowed to touch men's uniform. Men are supposed to wash their own uniforms.

3.2.4.2 Female uniform (*xiambalo xa vavasati*)



Women have three types of uniforms, which are: blue dress, Khaki dress and a two piece with green and yellow colours. They put on “xiambalo lexikulu” on Wednesdays and Sundays. Women’s choir puts on blue dress and green jersey on Sundays. They use the khaki dress in funeral ceremonies and church services. Those who do not have uniforms are also welcome to attend services.

3.2.5 Healing

The main reason people join the Zion Christian Church in its early years was for healing from sicknesses. The on-going healing of these members makes healing as one of the most important factors in its continued expansion. People join Zion Christian Church because they feel and believe that their needs are met and this

means healing from physical sicknesses and discomfort. There is no doubt that healing from illness has a major role in the life of Zion Christian Church members. In the Zion Christian Church the use of symbolic healing objects is known as “*mohau*” (grace), and it is justified from the Bible by referring to Paul's use of articles of clothing to heal people in (Acts 19:12).

It forms a prominent part of Zion Christian Church liturgy every week, and cannot visit the Zion Christian Church without observing this emphasis and the ritual associated with it. In Zion Christian Church, healing is done through the following features: water, salt, coffee, tea, white paper (newspaper), small stick called (*gongondzwana*), traditional sauna (*phungula*), and piece of brown cloth, bulb syringe and prickling. One of the features of everyday Zion Christian Church life is the belief in what Lukhaimane (1980:62) calls “faith healing” which he defines as the use of “sanctified papers”, *gongondzwana*, copper wire, and strings which people use as protective or healing objects.

3.2.5.1 Blessed water (*mati ya xikhongelo*)

According to the Zion Christian Church, they fetch water from a river, fountain or waterfall depending on the instructions (*swileriso*) from the “prophet.” They bless the water before being used. Usually the water is divided into still water, running water and noisy water, especially from a water fall (*boboma*). They believe that water from a water fall is very powerful when coming to healing or preventing themselves from any challenges that they may come across. Every member of a Zion Christian Church has a small bottle where they pour just some drops of blessed water so that wherever they go; they must have something to protect them.

They use noisy water (*mati ya pongo*) when one has got a lot of enemies, court case, and or there is no peace at home. They drop the blessed water from a small bottle into a bath full of water. The person in charge will bath his or her entire body without soap or washing towel. The person has to put on his or her clothes being wet. This is also practiced in traditional healers whereby they drop the blood of a slaughtered chicken mixed with magazines into a bath full of water and let the person bath his or her entire body without soap or washing towel.

They believe that if a person is at conflict with others or enemies, that person is said to be dirty. The bathing process is a sign of cleansing themselves (washing away hard lucks and temptations) and gaining favour from other people. This is also done when a person has to go to court. They also use noisy water (*mati ya pongo*) mixed with ordinary warm water to vomit. This is a way of taking out some poisonous things from their bodies. Noisy water is also used when a person has some swollen legs.

They burn some stones and make a sauna (*phungula*) so that the blood will be warm and rub the person with Vaseline having Lekganyane's photo. This process, according to the belief, makes the blood to circulate well. This will help the pastor prickle the person (*ku lumeka*) in Xitsonga as the blood oozes out. They don't prickle a person if he or she didn't go for sauna. Another method of healing in the Zion Christian Church is that of pricking, where a prophet prescribes that a patient be pricked on the hands, legs or in the nostrils in order to get rid of what is traditionally believed to be the source of sickness and pain, impure blood. Salt is used to clean the stomach and excess bile through vomiting.

The use of a small piece of wood (*gongondzwana*), of a sheet of paper waved rapidly over the patient's body, of sand from a certain river or dam, and the use of other objects named by the prophets are all common faith healing customs in the Zion Christian Church.

3.2.5.2 Gongondzwana, white paper, green cloth, small bottle of blessed water



The objects appearing above are used when praying for the sick. Before praying for the sick, they sprinkle the person with the blessed water from the small bottle. The person refuses to be sprinkled, won't be prayed for. They believe that if they can lay hands upon the sick without sprinkling him or her, they might be infected by their sicknesses or demons. After sprinkling the person, they burn the white paper and move it around his or her body. It is believed that the burning of the white paper is a sign of burning out evil spirits or diseases. They also use a "green cloth" and "gongondzwana" (small stick used when praying for the sick) when laying hands in order to be protected from being infected. They also indicated that "green colour" represents life. When a person goes out during the night, he or she sprinkles his or her body with the blessed water so that he or she may be protected from enemies.

3.2.5.3 Bulb Syringe (*Xipeti*)

A bulb syringe is mostly used in both males and females. When a woman does not conceive, both the woman and the man will be given a bulb syringe (*xipeti*) to clean them. They mix the blessed water with tea, particularly "Joko tea" or FG tea. Sometimes they mix with more salt to make the tea taste sour. It is called "*ku basisa ekhwirini*" in Xitsonga whereby they mix warm water with "*muti*" and use a bulb syringe.

They use it when a man has weak erection or even when a woman does not feel like having sex or experiencing illnesses such as: drop or haemorrhage (none stopping menstruation). This is called “*xitlhandla*” in Xitsonga. Bulb syringe also helps in cases whereby a woman has constant miscarriage. They boil light tea and let her drink almost every day until she conceives again.

3.2.6 *Murhandziso* (Making someone to love)

The word “*murhandziso*” simply means making someone, especially a man to love or admire his partner while he is not. For example, when a man marries and divorces constantly, they give him “*murandziso*” so that he will find himself loving. They boil water mixed with blessed water and tea resulting in light tea and give it to the man without making him notice the reason thereof.

They will convince him to use it in the form of vomiting, “*ku phalaza*” in Xitsonga so as to cast out the demonic spirits in him. In Xitsonga they say, “*u na xinyanya*” meaning that he loves just for a short while and all of a sudden, his love disappears and marry another one. When a man has gone away seeking for job and does not return home again (*ku kholwa*) in Xitsonga, they take a shirt and hang it outside the lining wire and sprinkle it with blessed water.

Sometimes the victim’s wife is given noisy water together with fountain water to bath her entire body without using soap or towel. After bathing, she just puts on her clothes being wet. If one dries himself or herself after bathing, he or she will be taking out his or her blessings. They believe that the water will remove the evil spirits or darkness (*xinyama*) in Xitsonga which makes her husband not like visiting home. She will be instructed to fast and pray and be encouraged to wake up every night at twelve o’clock midnight and pray. She will be requested not to eat any food on Sundays until the problem is solved.

The use of these symbols is one of the central and most important features of their Church life. One thing that the Zion Christian Church members must observe is “instructions” (*swileriso*) given by the Church authority to maintain healing. The Zion Christian Church pastor says that two main things needed for a person to be set free are: firstly, the person must be in good standing with God, and secondly, the person

must carry out the instructions passed down from the ancestors through the mouth of the prophet.

One Zion Christian Church member relates this: "I was fighting with my husband almost every month end, I was told to fetch still water; in Xitsonga we call it "*mati yo miyela*". I followed the instructions, and indeed there was peace at home." she continued to say that, they are given brown papers or small bottle with blessed water "*mati ya xikhongelo*" to protect them from sorcerers. If they are offered food or tea, they light the brown paper and wave the smoke over the food or sprinkle the blessed water "*mati ya xikhongelo*" over the food to prevent evil spirits or poisons.

All the Zion Christian Church members are told to drink the blessed tea before going out to work or any other places, as it gives them additional protections; which they take with them when visiting a non-member. The most common symbol used by these churches is that of water which is blessed and prayed for by a minister or a prophet for use by the congregants, either as a form of healing itself or else in large quantities to induce vomiting, or some mixed with salt. It is only the prayer that makes the water efficacious. Devine healing through the laying on of hands is the method which is common in all Zionists.

This has a scriptural precedence (Mark16:17-18), but was found to be dangerous on the part of the Lukhaimane (1980:63-65), suggests that, Lekganyane did not want his ministers to have the power to heal without relying on him as the source of power. Some respondents were emphatic that healing was the main reason they were in the church. Healing is certainly one of the activities. A Zion Christian Church lady was told of her sickness for a long time. She was suffering from menstruation (*xitlhandla*) and had tried diviners, medical doctors and other prophets, but all in vain. Then her husband heard a word in the form of a dream that he should take back his wife from the traditional healers (*tin'anga*) because she won't get healed.

He did as he had been told and took her to the church where he was given some instructions (*swileriso*) on how to treat the sickness. As he was one of the church elders, he had also been instructed to boil light tea to heal the sickness. The lady confessed that she was totally healed and she had been told that she must not leave the church for the rest of her life. That is why even today she is still a full member of Zion Christian Church.

3.2.7 Prophecy (*Xiporofito*)

Soanes (2006:490) says: “Prophecy means to predict what will happen.” In Zion Christian Church, they mostly put their trust on prophecy. Members of the Zion Christian Church have to be prophesized before using some of the healing aspects. Young (1998:125) indicates that according to Jeremiah, certain prophets claim to have been the recipients of divine revelation. They looked to God and appealed to the Lord’s name and an accreditation of their message, whereas as a matter of actual fact, the Lord had not sent them. In Zion Christian Church, the prophets are the people of immense importance.

They are the messengers who hear from God and proclaim to His people. They are sort seers, people who have divine power to see the revelation of God pertaining to the complaint of the enquirer, especially sickness. Like diviners, they are usually expected to see the complaints before they are actually uttered by the sufferers. Their work was also to warn people from doing evil. In (2 Chronicles 21:12), “you have led the people of Jerusalem and Judah to worship idols, just as king Ahab did in Israel.” God sent a prophet to tell him that he is going to be punished through intestinal disease until it causes his bowels to come out.

Prophets are the ones who help people when they are sick. They are the ones who must pray for and dispense the “holy water” and other symbolic healing objects as the need arises. They are expected to give direction and counsel for kinds of problems. In some instances they are believed to have to declare that will of the ancestors. Prophecy is an essential aspect of the ministry in the Zion Christian Church. It is the accepted way in which the Holy Spirit reveals his will for a specific situation. In this context, it forms part of the pastoral care, for the many different problematic situations encountered by African people.

In Zion Christian Church prophecy takes place during the dancing of “*Mpogo*” or the preaching time. Before the prophet starts to prophesy, he or she usually manifests some signs that the spirit has taken control, the prophet snorts, cries, whistles, pants, jacks and contorts his or her body in different ways. They should say these words: “Hm...for Rolia boy Rabathaka fly”. After these words a prophet will continue to say: “the word says” (*Rito ri ri*). They put their hands together pointing out whom to

prophesy, they go outside accompanied by a pastor as a witness of what the prophet will tell you. They pick one to be prophesized. This is a hidden language when they are communicating to God and their ancestors at the same time. It is said that these words give them the power to reveal the problem of the complaint whether he or she is sick or has met some difficult situation.

The researcher witnesses her husband's sister prophesying in Sesotho while she could not even say a single word in Sesotho when she becomes sober and not in the spirit. Prophets often exert a moral restraint on people. One Zionist lady relates of how a prophet had revealed that she had put on some demonic ropes on her waist after she had consulted a "sangoma" due to her long term sickness. She was suffering from non-stop menstruation. She was told that the ropes changed into a big snake during the night. She denied but when she arrived home she removed all the ropes. The following Sunday she went to church and the prophet told her that she had to buy a prayer tea (*tiya ya xikhongelo*). She gave her some prescription on how to use the tea and she maintains that she was healed.

3.2.8 Fortifying (*Ku sirhelela*)

3.2.8.1 Fortifying the body of a person (*Ku tiyisa miri*)

3.2.8.1.1 *Mutlamo* (white cloth like a rope) and Vaseline

In Zion Christian Church, they believe that they should strengthen themselves against the evil spirits or witchcrafts through the use of "*mutlamo*." Soanes (2006:238) says: fortify means "to strengthen a person mentally or morally." Each member of the Zion Christian Church has to put on "*mutlamo*" for protection. The rope is only prepared by pastors. They sometimes rub their hands with Vaseline having Lekganyane's photo. They believe that they are protected from witchcrafts or sorcerers.

It is said that if it might happen that someone shakes hands with you, and that person is having "*muti*" which is meant to kill, it won't work. They sometimes apply Vaseline for their entire bodies. If someone has a court case, they also apply it so that he or she may not be found guilty. They also sew a small piece of a blue cloth in each of their clothes or blankets. According to them, the small piece of a blue cloth is an indication that they are protected from any evil spirits whenever they put

on such clothes. They say that they do not put on funeral clothes because they already have that blue cloth. It is said that blue cloth represents “*nala*.” In Xitsonga they put on a small piece of a black cloth to indicate that someone in the family has passed on and the black colour represents darkness.

3.2.8.2 Fortifying the home (*ku tiyisa muti*)

3.2.8.2.1 Blessed poles, water, sand, salt and whip

Soanes (2006:239) indicates that fortifying means to strengthen a place... Some Zion Christian Church members put two poles at the gate of their yards. They put a wire line on top between the two poles. They believe that they are protected from lightning and witchcraft. It is the duty of pastors to put the poles. They mix sand, salt and blessed water and sprinkle the whole yard from corner to corner. They also sprinkle and whip all the rooms and yard to cast out evil spirits. They leave the yard and the rooms unclean for a period of three days.

3.2.8.2.2 Blessed stick (*nhonga ya xikhongelo*) and Lekganyane’s photo

In Zion Christian Church, members put “*nhonga ya xikhongelo*” (blessed stick) at the top of the doorframe to protect themselves from witchcraft. They believe that the stick will make the witches unable to enter into the house. Sometimes they take along their blessed sticks when they go somewhere especially in the night. They believe that nothing will harm them when they have their blessed sticks.

They have taken this from the book of (Psalm 23:4): “even when I walk through the dark valley of death. I will not be afraid, for you are close besides me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.” Members of Zion Christian Church hang a photo of Lekganyane on the walls of their rooms. According to them, the photo protects them from any evil spirits or witchcraft. They sometimes put the photo under their pillows.

3.2.9 Funeral

According to the Zionists, any pastor can conduct a funeral service as long as he has been delegated by the senior pastor. All Zion Christian Church members (males and females) are to put on uniform particularly the khaki one on the eve of the funeral. They have a night vigil whereby they dance for the whole night. They drink

“*muhavulo*” (pure warm water or mixed with tea) which makes them not to slumber. No one is allowed to sleep during the night vigil except the deceased. They believe that only the deceased should have a peaceful sleep. No one is allowed to cry during the funeral for they will make the deceased not to enter the kingdom of heaven.

They put the following in the coffin: uniform, membership card, baptismal certificate and church books. These will help the deceased to be easily identified in heaven. Before taking the coffin outside, they sprinkle it with water. From the house to the tent, the pastor recites these words: “*Timbilu ta n’wina ti nga kanakani. Pfumelani eka Tatana ni le ka mina mi pfumela. Hikuva vuako byi tele endlwini ya Tatana.*” (Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.

There is more than enough room in my father’s home (John 14:1-2). The pastor will recite these words repeatedly. On the way to the cemetery, Zion Christian Church pastors who attended the funeral are to walk in front of the hearse while the congregation follows singing their church songs. When they are about to enter the cemetery, they all kneel down and pray. This was the way of making those who carried the coffin rest because in the olden days transports were scarce. The coffin is then carried by hands to the graveyard.

When they became tired, they identified a place to rest for a short while. The place was called “*Xixangu*” in Xitsonga (a place whereby the mourners kneel down to rest). This is practiced to date. Sometimes they do this as a sign of honouring the deceased for the last minute. Immediately they enter the gate of the cemetery, one of the senior pastors will start to recite the words in (John 14: 1-2). When the undertaker is busy lowering the coffin, the pastor will read the scripture from the Bible (Job 7:1-9) saying:

Vutomi bya munhu la misaveni i matlhari; Emasiku ya yena ma fana ni masiku ya munhu la tlhoriweke. Ku kotisa khumbi loko ri navela ndzhuti, Ni mutirhi loko a langutela hakelo ya yena, Ndzi averiwe tinhweti ta ku vaviseka,... Tihlo ra loyi a vonaka a ri nga tlheli ra ha ndzi vona. Mahlo ma yena ma ta ndzi lava kutani ndzi nga ha ri kona.

They usually recite these words in their home language. Before they can cover the coffin with soil, the pastor who is conducting the burial service will take a little bit of

soil and sprinkle on top of the coffin. Being holding a spade with soil, he will request all pastors from any denomination to do the same while family members or close relatives also follow the sequence. If the deceased is a female, women are given an opportunity to carry off their beloved one as a sign of saying goodbye.

They also make a guard of honour, marching and singing especially songs related to the function. From the cemetery they all return to the family. Pastors who remain in the deceased's family will start to sprinkle the whole yard before the mourners reach the family. People from the cemetery are not allowed to enter the family before being sprinkled with water as they "are unclean." Then the pastor gives instructions to the family members about what to do after the burial.

They are told to spend seven days performing their church rituals, "*phungula*" (sauna) and abstaining from sex. He gives them "blessed water" to mix with ordinary water to be used at home. The deceased's wife is not allowed to put on funeral clothes but on casually clothes. Hence, there are those who feel like wearing blue clothes to be identified that they are widows. The deceased's spouse will be suspended from attending church services for the whole year. If it is a pastor, he is not allowed to pray for the sick, but can be prayed for.

3.2.10 Cleansing

Soanes (2006:108) defines cleansing as: "making something thoroughly clean." It is said that a year after the burial, the deceased's family perform their cleansing rituals. They will invite their family members to come and celebrate the cleansing rituals.

3.2.10.1 Night vigil

During the day of the night vigil, some pastors must first visit the family and sprinkle the whole yard before the night vigil. According to their beliefs, they must cast out the evil spirits before they could start with their function. They organise a "*Mpogo*" function whereby they will spend the whole night praying and dancing. On that day, the deceased's family will offer the Church a beast and food to be cooked. They sprinkle the beast and food before cooking to prevent the evil spirits. They slaughter a beast and the shedding of blood is given to the ancestral spirits to drink.

In Xitsonga they pour the blood on top of “*gandzelo*” (a marked place where people use to communicate with their ancestral spirits). They believe that may be the beast might have been used for ancestral spirits (*homu ya swikwembu*) or “sacrificial beast” (*homu ya mhamba*). They also believe that the food may cause diseases, for example diarrhoea. According to Zionists only males are to cook red meat and porridge while females are to cook white meat (chicken) and salads. Then they all eat the food and no left overs. If they fail to finish up the food, they better share the food. The finishing up of food symbolises that things have gone well.

3.2.10.2 Sand, salt, white paper, whip

Early in the morning they sprinkle the whole yard and all the houses with sand mixed with salt while the other one follows with a whip. They use a whip also when a person has problems. They whip around the person three times to cast out those problems. They also burn the white paper and round it over the person and put other papers in each of the room. This is a way of casting out evil spirits. Then they sprinkle the deceased’s spouse with blessed water and clothe him or her with new clothes. They let him or her sit at an open space. Everyone will give him or her some gifts. All the gifts must be sprinkled before could be used. From there the deceased’s spouse is said to be “clean” and he or she is then allowed to attend church services. If it is the pastor, he is then allowed to pray for the sick.

3.3 RAINBOW APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH

3.3.1 Faith

Rainbow Apostolic Church like any other Christian churches believes in the Trinity of God, that is, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Justification is through Christ the Lord and works. The book of James (5:1) says “faith without works is dead.” In Xitsonga they say: “*ripfumelo ro pfumala mintirho ri file*” For an example: for them to be healed, they have to fulfil some instructions (*swileriso*) in Xitsonga. In other words they have to work hard for their salvation. They believe in fasting to gain more spiritual power.

3.3.2 Prayer

The Rainbow Apostolic members use the name of Jesus as a mediator in their prayer. They also recite the Lord's Prayer which is led by a Bishop or an ordained pastor or elder. The following is the Lord's Prayer as it appears in (Matthews 6:9-14):

Tata wa hina la nga matilweni, vito ra wena a ri hlawuriwe, a ku te ku fuma ka wena. Ku rhandza ka wena a ku endliwe emisaveni swa nga hi le matilweni, hi nyike vuswa bya hina bya siku rin'wana na rin'wana. U hi rivalela milandzu ya hina, tani hi loko na hina hi rivalela la va nga na milandzu eka hina. U nga hi yisi emiringweni, Kambe u hi ponisa eka leswo biha, hikuva ku fuma i ka wena, ni matimba, ni ku twala, hi masiku ni masiku, Amen. (Matewu 6:9-14)

When the Rainbow Apostolic members pray, they dress presentably, and not forgetting to kneel down, as a sign of respecting "God." Paul says: "I fall to my knees and pray to the father," (Ephesians 3:14). They also take off their shoes immediately when they enter into the house of prayer because the place is "holy" (Exodus 3:5), when God talked to Moses, he was instructed to take off his sandals for the place was holy. According to the Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church, those who are demon possessed are encouraged to fast and pray so that the demons may be powerless. If ever they are unable to fast and pray, they will be allowed to go to the *inyanga* for initiation. They believe that the demons won't have power as like before. Then it will be easy for the Bishop or pastor to cast out the demons.

Sometimes when they are from the initiation school, the demonic spirits may turn into prophetic spirits. They also have a whole night prayer called "*murindzelo*" in Xitsonga. There are two types of (*murindzelo*): which is "*murindzelo wa mixo and wa xitlhavelo*." They usually associate "*murindzelo wa xitlhavelo*" with "*mhamba*" where they slaughter a beast and cook food. The Bishop must bless the food before they eat. All the food must be finished and no left overs. One has to organise "*murindzelo*" when he or she has been instructed by a prophet to do so. They invite all family relatives and all apostolic churches according to their names as they have different identification names, (for example, Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church), but affiliating to one body, which is, Apostolic Christian Church.

3.3.3 Baptism

They believe in John's baptism (John 1:26) "I baptise with water". Before a person is baptised, he or she must first receive some doctrinal teachings such as fast and prayer, abstaining from sex and any other related teachings as part of their doctrines. A Bishop or pastor who is supposed to baptise must also fast and pray and abstain from sex, so that they may not be attacked by the evil spirit during the process of baptism.



River baptism of Apostolic Christian Church

During a baptism process, the name of the person to be baptised, birth date and some of his or her sins are written on a piece of paper and put it on the person's forehead. The writing of the name and the date of birth is a sign of registration to "heaven". When the person gets into the river or dam where the pastor will conduct baptism, he asks the person these questions: "Did you ever commit adultery or killing?" saying "yes" or "no". If yes, then the Bishop will pray with him or her. When the person is immersed, his or her sins will remain in the water and be a new convert and all iniquities have passed away.

3.3.4 Uniform (*Xiambalo*)

In Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church, Christians put on blue and white uniform with long belts written the name of the Church. Mostly, the blue colour is the “cape” that they put over their shoulders, especially the female members. Some of them put on any other colours like green or maroon, depending on the instructions of the Church prophesy. Bishops put on long dresses (cope) and a miter (hat) similar to that of the Lutheran Church and the Roman Catholic Church. They always hold a stick with a symbol of a cross on it. They believe that the stick gives them strength to overcome evil spirits that might come along their ways.

3.3.5 Healing

Like other Christians, the Rainbow Apostolic members believe that God is the divine healer; hence they also make use of different features to support their healing practices. Soanes (2006:281) defines healing as: “making part of the body healthy again or to put a situation right.” According to them, a Bishop lays hands upon the sick. If the Bishop is not available, a pastor or an ordained woman prays for the sick. Often times, they engage themselves in fasting and praying to have healing power (Matthews 17:1-7). Jesus took Peter, James and his brother John to the mountain to pray. When descended from the mountain, Jesus was approached by a man whose son was demon possessed and He casted it. They also encouraged the sick people to practice fasting and praying if they do have power to do so.

They also believe that some of the sicknesses need prayer and fasting (Matthews 17:21). In addition, if a person has demonic spirit, they usually take him or her to the mountain and pray with him or her. They spend some days on the mountain praying until the demonic spirit goes out. If the demonic spirits do not go out, then they give permission to the person to go for the “*inyanga*” for initiation. They believe that through initiation the demons will be powerless. From the initiation, the person will be baptised again in the form of “*xiwacho*” whereby he or she will be immersed deep in the river for seven times with the hope that the demons will remain in the water. The following features play a very important role in their healing process: candles, ash, water, tea, milk, *xiwacho*, and ropes.

3.3.5.1 Candles

In Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church, candles are meant for different things: gives ordinary light, and also symbolises Jesus as the light. They usually light the candles during services. They light the candles until the service is over (John 9:5). The light symbolises Jesus as the light of the world.

3.3.5.1.1 White, red, green, yellow, blue, and black

In some of the challenges, they use all six colours. When a person has some problems, he or she lights all colours of candles and put them around the bath while bathing. Sometimes they use all colours if one has been prophesied that he or she will have an accident. If a person is sick or have nightmares, he or she should light candles so as to be healed or cast out the spirit of fear. Most often they are given some instructions by the prophet. Sometimes they receive prophecy that they must light the candles at home, because something evil is going to happen.

They believe that the light will cast out the evil spirits. The prophet must first pray for the candles before they could be used. Sometimes they do it in the bush. They are always encouraged to have faith when using these candles. When someone has a court case or has committed a crime, they light all six colours and leave them until they are finished. They believe that the accused person is going to win the case.

3.3.5.1.2 White colour

White colour represents “good luck.” Students and business people are encouraged to use white colour. In case of the students, the light will brighten their minds and give them clear understanding. For the business people, the light will make their businesses to flourish and attract customers to flock in multitudes. If a person wants to go somewhere, he or she must first light the candle. If maybe all family members belong to the same Apostolic church, when one has gone somewhere, those who remain at home will light the candle for him or her until his or her destination.

By so doing, they are making his or her journey to be well protected. In Xitsonga, they say: “*ku basisa tindlela*” which means there may be light and safety along your way. In case of a person who has gone away looking for a job and does not like to

visit home, they take the shirt to the prophet and let him pray for the shirt. They then call the name of the victim. Sometimes they take the shirt to the bush and light the candles for the whole night until they are finished. The one who seeks assistance must fast and pray until the prayer is answered.

They sometimes request prayers from the church members or giving R2-00 during offering service saying: “*Ndzi kombela Gezani leswaku a vuya ekaya*” (I am requesting Gezani to come back home).

3.3.5.2 Ash (*Nkuma*)

Traditionally, “*nkuma*” is used in most of their healing practices. For an example, when a child has nightmares and experiences a sleepless night, they take the ash “*nkuma*” right from the fire place “*xitiko*” pray for it and rub the whole body of the child. Then the child will be well and have a nice sleep. They call this process as “*xiwacho*.” They usually mix salt with ash to make “*xiwacho*.” The researcher was informed that if a child has to be given an ancestral name, they make use of “*xiwacho*” and the child won’t be given that name anymore. The researcher was further informed that if an adult has badly dreams or even being threatened by the evil spirit, he or she may rub his or her body with ash and all those evil things will vanish.

They say that when they pray for the sick people, they first rub their hands with ash before laying hands upon them. If a person experiences problems in his or her stomach, they mix water with ash and let the person drink it. They pray for the mixture before being used and always encourage the sick person to have faith when drinking it. One of the church members indicated that if a person is demon possessed, they rub the entire body with ash “*nkuma*” so that the demonic spirit will be threatened by that whitish colour, and then they come out from the body. This is another way of casting out demons.

3.3.5.3 Water

Water is another source of healing practices. The resource person says that they just fetch water either from the river, well or tap as long as the water is prayed for. They do not use water only, but mix it with “*nkuma*.” They do not just go and fetch the

water without being instructed by the prophet. In Xitsonga, they call it “*xileriso*.” There are two types of water to be used: “*mati ya pongo*” (running water) and “*yo miyela*” (still water). They usually call this as “*mati ya xikhongelo*” (water for a prayer).

3.3.5.3.1 *Mati ya pongo* (running water)

They say that one should be instructed by a prophet of what type of water should be used. In Xitsonga, they call it “*xileriso*.” If a person used to fight with others or is short tempered, he or she must use “*mati ya pongo*” to bath with. They mix the water with the ash. They use this type of water to make the situation better. They believe that if a person is a bull fighter, he or she will be instructed to use “*mati ya pongo*”, and that person will change his or her behaviour. They say that it also makes a person to overcome evil things.

3.3.5.3.2 *Mati yo miyela* (still water)

They also call this as “*mati ya xikhongelo*.” This is meant for every church member. They can use it for their daily activities. They usually call it as “water of blessings” (*mati ya mikateko*). Those who are looking for jobs are instructed to go and fetch cool water from the river or tap. The Bishop will pray for the water and give it to the person concerned. All church members are encouraged to use it for some extra blessings. They indicate that, if a person has stomach sicknesses, warm water is to be used for vomiting. They believe that by vomiting, they are releasing the sicknesses out from the body. A lady from a Rainbow Apostolic Church gives this testimony: “I used to be short-tempered and fight with other people. Since I joined this church, my life has changed. I have been instructed by a prophet that I must vomit once per month using pure warm water”.

They say “*ku phalaza*” which is a Zulu name, meaning “*ku hlanta*” in Xitsonga. I am following the instruction even now because it works for me.” They believe that when a person is short-tempered, he or she has got “*nyongwa*” in Xitsonga (bile). This happens when a person is bully. Vomiting is mostly used by the Apostolic Church for those who have eaten poisonous things to be cured. An apostolic female elder gave me this testimony: “I had a problem in my tummy, there was something moving inside me. I consulted different doctors and some other churches, but the pain never

stopped. I decided to attend the Apostolic Church where a prophet gave me warm water mixed with salt and let me drink a 5litre bucket so as to vomit the thing which was troubling me. I vomited and a clot of blood came through my mouth. From that day, I am a free member of the Apostolic Church”.

3.3.5.4 Bulb Syringe (*Xipeti*)

They use a bulb syringe when one feels that he or she is unclean. They mix joko tea, trekker tea, FG tea, kloof tea, salt and ash. They boil light tea. This will make their blood well circulated. It is also used when a baby has constipation. If a woman does not conceive, they boil warm tea and let her use a bulb syringe. Sometimes they give her warm kloof tea to drink. Sometimes they give it to both a man and a woman. When they realise that the woman is pregnant, they uproot the roots of green grass and tie them with the wool size of the woman’s waist. Then they boil with water. The woman will tie her waist with that wool (*ku bohela*) in Xitsonga. Before they do this they put the snuff on the “*Gandzelo*.” This is also practised in tradition.

3.3.5.5 Woollen ropes (*Tintambu ta tiwulu*)

It is said that ropes are used according to one’s illness. Traditionally, they use six colours such as red, white, black, yellow, blue and green. One cannot just put on the ropes without being told by a prophet. The prophet will tell you the colour as per prophecy, depending on the kind of sicknesses. In addition, he will also tell you the timeframe for the use of the ropes. Once they become healed, they are no longer allowed to put on the ropes. If a person is healed, the ropes should be removed.

3.3.5.5.1 Green wool

According to their beliefs, the green colour is used for the little ones. When a baby is born, they tie the baby with woollen ropes. If the parents of the baby are members of the church, they tie the baby’s hands, legs, waist and neck. They call it “*muthuso*” in Xitsonga and the word is borrowed from “Sepedi.” When the child grows up and the ropes tighten the child, they take them off. They also use green colour together with white and red colours as they represent good luck. If a person needs blessings, he or she must bath his or her entire body using fountain water, milk and eggs facing the eastwards while positively talking about his or her wishes. They do not use soap.

They light a white candle while holding an egg and crush it with hands and smear on his or her body being talking.

3.3.5.5.2 Black wool

Black represents “darkness” or “bad luck.” The black colour is used when somebody wants some couples to divorce or to separate those who are in love. They dig on the cross road and put the black crossed wool and cover it with soil. They buy a 1litre bottle of coke and break it on top where the wool has been put. They then call the names of the victims, for example, “Gavaza and Gezani must be separated.”

3.3.6 Fortifying (*Ku Sirhelela*)

3.3.6.1 Fortifying a person (*Ku tiyisa miri*)

3.3.6.1.1 Woollen ropes and cloth

In Rainbow Christian Church, each member is supposed to fortify his or her body with woollen ropes (*ku tiyisa miri*). They believe that they are protected from witchcrafts or sorcerers; they tie themselves around their waists with red or green wool, depending on the instructions given by the prophet. They are told not to take off the waist rope for the rest of their lives. They believe that if they do not tie themselves with ropes, they are not protected. Their lives are in danger, and that they may die at any time. They sometimes tie their hands, legs and necks, and this is a temporary measure. For the young babies, they tie their hands, legs, waists and necks with green or red wool to protect them from evil spirits or witchcraft.

In the case of a newly born baby, who is still kept in the house for a few weeks, that is, three to four, they tie the baby with a white cloth having some knots. They also put a “*muti*” called “*dupa*” so that the baby will be protected from all evil spirits. They do not allow everybody to enter in that house where the baby is kept, especially those who are still sexually active. The mother of the baby is not allowed to talk to such people. They are told that if they talk to them, the baby will die. They also use these colours even if a person has severe pains in his or her stomach.

Only pastors and young boys who have not yet started dating are allowed to prepare the ropes. Women are forbidden. They sometimes prepare the ropes in the bush, depending on the instructions given by the prophet. When a person experiences some headache, they tie a woollen rope around his or her head having some knots. Sometimes they tie his or her hands, legs, waist and neck, depending on the prophet's instructions.

3.3.6.1.2 Blessed stick (*Nhonga ya xikhongelo*)

Only male members of the Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church are to carry blessed sticks during their services. They tie their blessed sticks with wools, depending on the instructions given by the prophet. It is said that a person is not allowed to touch another person's stick. They believe that if one touches someone's stick, it might result in taking someone's prophetic spirits or powers. Everyone must hold his stick while dancing and be careful not to put it down until the service is over. They believe that some of the sticks are fortified by the "*inyanga*." Some members take their sticks to the *inyanga* so that they may have more power.

3.3.6.2 Fortifying the home (*ku tiyisa muti*)

According to the Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church, they use salt and nails to fortify their homes. They dig six holes around the yard, one at the gate, one at the centre and four at the corners of the yard. They put salt and one nail in each hole except the central hole of the yard. In the central hole, they put salt and three nails. This is done by pastors during the night. They sometimes put a long pole at the gate of the yard or at the centre of the home. They put a flag with a sign of a cross or the name of the church at the end of the pole. The flag can be of any colour, except black as it represents darkness. They believe that they are protected from evil spirits or witchcraft.

3.3.7 Murhandziso (Making someone to love)

The person concerned will be instructed to buy a packet of white candles, one pint of milk and eggs. The one who needs to be loved must light all candles and put them around the bath while mixing water with milk and egg. One must perform this while calling the name of the person to love, saying these words:

Nuna loyi a ndzi rhandze hi masiku hinkwawo, a nga fambi, a tshame kwala hi masiku hinkwawo, a ndzi tsuundzuke laha a nga kona. A fularheli hinkwavo, a languta mina ntsena. A rivali maxaka na vatswari, a rhandza mina ntsena.

When they have finished bathing, they leave the candles burning and spill out the water facing northern, southern or eastern direction with the exception of western direction. They believe that if they spill out the water to the western direction, the purpose will not be accomplished as west represents darkness. North, south and east represent light, and this will make the man come to the light. They then give you water to sprinkle in the water prepared for cooking porridge and also when the man baths. They sometimes mix the water with “*muti*.”

3.3.8 Funeral

A Bishop or any ordained elder may conduct a funeral service. All members of the church have to put on uniform during the process of the funeral. If the deceased is a member of the Apostolic Church; the concerned Bishop invites different Apostolic Churches from different places to come and join them in their night vigil. They all dance for the whole night. Usually they celebrate the life of the deceased. Each Bishop puts on the cope of its own colour. Any member of the church is allowed to preach during the night vigil. A Bishop is chosen according to their portfolios to render the morning service. From the house to the tent one of the Bishops walking in front of the coffin recites these words: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (*Hi mina ndlela, ni ntiyiso, ni vutomi*) (John 14:6).

If the deceased is a female, women are given a chance to carry the coffin from the house to the tent as a sign of bidding farewell to their beloved one. Same applies to males. This is also done in the Zion Christian Church. They light the candles for the whole night surrounding the coffin. The light symbolises Jesus as the light of the world. A deceased is clothed in uniform so that he or she will be able to “enter heaven.” On top of the coffin they put a blanket which will be used to cover the coffin when they close the grave. They believe that the blanket will keep the deceased warm and those who are remaining at home will also feel warm. Shabangu (2006:15) says:

... ku vekiwa ni xikhuwana xa mati, nswanyo wa homu ni nhlahle Kumbe sangu leswi mufi a nga ta famba a swi tirhisa loko a ri eriendzweni ra yena ra muya-a-nga-vuyi, a fika a va kombelela tinjombo ni mikateko hi swona.

Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church Funeral ceremony in the tent



Traditionally, they believe that the deceased has gone to another planet. As such, they put different things on top of the grave such as: a mud pot of water, traditional mat, washing bowl and plates with the hope that the deceased is going to use them. Usually all those things were used by the deceased during his or her life time. They even plant corns and vegetables to be used by the deceased. It is practiced even to date by some of the traditional churches. In the tent a group of women will stand and exchange after another to surround the coffin, holding some candles.

This is also a sign of saying goodbye to the deceased. In the cemetery, women will continue to carry those candles until males are finished with their work of closing the grave. Before the grave is closed, a Bishop will take some soil with a spade and sprinkle it to the coffin saying these words: “*ntshuri entshurini?*” (earth to earth). Then

they will put those candles on top of the grave so that the deceased will remain seeing light. A day after the funeral, the deceased's family starts with "*phungula*" (*sauna*) for seven days. A deceased's spouse puts on blue clothes. If a deceased is married, the spouse is supposed to spend one year being "unclean". If it is a child, the parents will spend six months "unclean."

3.3.8.1 Cleansing

After a year, the deceased family organise "*murhindzelo*" (whole night prayer) whereby different Apostolic Churches are invited. The Bishop or ordained elders sprinkle the whole yard with water mixed with ash. Shabangu (2006:21) says:

*... endzhaku ka nkosi ku vitaniwa n'anga leswaku yi ta xuva,
Ku basisa muti. N'anga yi xuva hi ku hlanganisela mirhi ya
yona, ivi yi haxetela va muti hi mati ya murhi wa kona.*

This is the time in which the deceased spouse will take off his or her funeral clothes and put on new clothes (Zacharia 3:3-4):

*Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before
the angel. And he answered and spake unto those that stood
before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him.
And unto him he said, Behold I have caused thine iniquity to
Pass from thee, and I will close thee with change of raiment.*

On that day they slaughter a beast and cook food. They all eat the food and no left overs. Early in the morning they give the deceased's spouse some gifts and disperse. Then the deceased's spouse is allowed to attend church services.

CHAPTER FOUR

COMPARISON

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the similarities and dissimilarities amongst the churches.

Both western churches believe in the Trinity of God, (God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). They differ in justification. Lutherans are justified by faith, (Hebrew 10:38) “my righteous one will live by faith.” Roman Catholics believe in justification through work. In case of traditional churches, they both believe in the Trinity of God similar to the Western churches, and they are justified by work similar to the Roman Catholic Church.

In terms of prayer, both Western Churches use a cross sign saying these words: “God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.” The only difference is that, Lutherans stress the name of Jesus while Catholics stress the name of the Virgin Mary. The Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church also uses a cross sign especially when praying for the food or an urgent prayer. In traditional churches, all females including the youths cover their heads when attending services whether on uniform or not. In Western Churches, female members cover their heads during their services. The difference is that in the Roman Catholic Church, men also cover their heads with skullcaps.

In traditional Churches, they kneel down when they pray, but Zion Christian Church includes their ancestors in their prayers while Rainbow apostolic church stresses only the name of Jesus. Lutherans and Rainbow Apostolic Church recite the Lord’s Prayer while Zion Christian Church and Roman Catholic recite their unique prayers; Zionists praise the gods of Lekganyane while the Roman Catholics praise the name of the Virgin Mary.

Both Western Churches use baptismal font when baptising. Some of the Catholics do immersion even though they sometimes use baptismal font. Evangelical Lutheran Church sprinkles water on to a person's forehead while Roman Catholics pour water on to a person's forehead. In case of traditional churches, they both baptise in the river or dam. Both traditional churches immerse a person during baptism.

In Zion Christian Church, they immerse a person once deep in the water once and say these words: "I baptize Maria in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" while in Rainbow Christian Church they immerse a person deep in the water three times calling on the Trinity of God.

In terms of praying for the sick, only Lutherans lay hands upon the sick without mixing some features. Other churches like Roman Catholic Church, Zion Christian Church and Rainbow Christian Apostolic Church, mix with some features when praying for the sick. The three Churches differ on the method of how they use those features. Roman Catholic Church uses anointing oil, Zionists use "gongondzwana", white paper, green cloth and blessed water" while in Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church, they rub their hands with "ash" when praying for the sick.

The Zion Christian Church, Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church and the Roman Catholic Church believe in prophecies. The difference is that in the Zion Christian Church and the Roman Catholic Church, the prophet points out a person to be prophesied out of the congregation to a private place. For example, Roman Catholics perform prophesy in a chapel (prayer room). They do not allow witnesses while in Zion Christian Church allow them when performing prophecies. The Zion Christian Church perform prophecies in a public place, except when they are in the Zion City Moria whereby prophesy takes place under the unroofed shacks. They usually call it "*ematshangeni*." In the case of the Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church, prophesy takes place during services and it is done publicly. Only the Lutheran Church believe that the word of God is a prophesy itself.

In terms of the uniform, the Roman Catholic Church and the Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church have similar colours. For example, white colour. Zion Christian Church and Lutheran Church have their unique colours, although the black colour is also used by the Roman Catholics.

In African Churches, they use “*phungula*” (sauna) as a source of making the blood to circulate well which is also used by traditional healers. In case of cleansing themselves, both Traditional Churches use a “bulb syringe.” They both mix water with tea. The only difference is, in the Zion Christian Church, they also add a bit of “blessed water” while in Rainbow Christian Church, they add a bit of “ash.”

For the sake of protection, Western Churches depend on the power of God, while in traditional Churches, they both use amulets. The difference is, in the Zion Christian Church, they use “*mutlamo*” (rope made with white cloth) while in the Rainbow Apostolic Christian Church, they use “woollen ropes,” especially the red colour which is also practiced by traditional healers called “*xitshungulo*.”

In the case of a person who works far away from home, and does not return home, in the Zion Christian Church, they take the victim’s shirt and hang it outside the lining wire and sprinkle it with blessed water.

According to the Western Churches, true love is from God the Almighty, while in the traditional Churches, they both make someone to love by giving him “*murhandziso*” while he does not have true love.

In both Western and Traditional Churches, funerals are conducted by Bishop, pastor or priest. In all of the churches with the exception of Lutherans, they practice night vigil and perform their cleansing rituals.

Lutheran church, Zion Christian Church and Apostolic Church, have the title of a Bishop whereas in Catholics a Pope.

In terms of funeral clothes; a Catholic priest puts on a black cope while other members especially females put on black and purple. Lutheran Bishop puts on a pink cope while other members put on black and white.

In Zion Christian Church, the pastor including all members put on a khaki uniform while in Rainbow a Bishop puts on white trimmed with gold cope depending on the colour of the church while other members put on white, blue, green and red colour, depending on the choice of that particular branch of the Church. Both Roman Catholic and Rainbow Christian church light candles for their deceased ones.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 FINDINGS

The research proved that tradition plays a very important role in African people as they still practice it and passing it from one generation to another.

Through this study, one comes to a realization that African people respect their tradition very dearly. For example, some traditional Churches associate God with gods in their prayers. They also associate their whole night prayers (*murindzelo*) with “*mhamba*” in Xitsonga whereby they perform their rituals for the whole night. The researcher discovered that Africans, no matter whether they are in the Lutheran Church, Roman Catholic Church or whether they are in the African Churches, when coming to challenges, they go back to their roots. The researcher also discovered that both the Western and traditional churches put on uniform for identification, although there are those who believe that they are protected when they have put on uniforms.

However, some members in the traditional churches no longer go to *sangomas*, because they also practice traditional healing in their churches. For example, if a person has problems, they also apply traditional healing to him or her. Sometimes even if they want to kill someone, they perform it in the church.

From the study, it has been discovered that some African-Western churches members consult traditional healers (*tin'anga*) being in the church during the night so that they may not be seen by their fellow Christians. Most people from African churches, no longer go to the traditional healers because they practice “*vun'anga*” (traditional healing) in their churches. In some of the African churches, “witchcraft” is also practiced. For example: “*ku endlelela*” (making someone to die).

Seemingly there is an influence of traditional healers to traditional churches because they both use a bulb syringe, however in traditional churches they mix the process with tea while in traditional healers they mix with “muti”.

In terms of healing, it has been discovered that African traditional churches including Roman Catholics as one of the western churches depend mostly on their traditional features such as anointing oil, water, ash and any other aspects used for healing. Traditional churches believe in fortifying themselves and their homes although some members in the Western churches also fortify themselves and their homes secretly.

The researcher also discovered that the funeral is a very important event in both churches with the exception of Lutheran church. It has been discovered that both traditional churches including Roman Catholics; respect their deceased and believe that they are going to meet with others who died before.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher would like to recommend that in terms of the findings, the following aspects should be taken in to consideration:

- Since tradition plays a very important role in African people; it must be respected and not be undermined so that those who practice it could have peace of mind. They that believe in mixing their ancestors veneration with Christian doctrines should be allowed to do so. Those who feel comfortable may continue mixing their traditional aspects with those of God as long as their conscious do not harm them. In the book of (Matthews 15:1-4), “then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were in Jerusalem, saying: why do the disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? Jesus says: “Honour thy father and mother: and, he that curseth father and mother let him die the death.”
- Each member from any church doctrine must be free to receive healing the way he or she feels comfortable as faith also contributes. There are those who believe in the laying of hands (Mark 16:18), “they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.”
- Due to differences in faith, each doctrine has its own way of baptising and the fact is; they all believe that baptism is a way of accepting Jesus as their

saviour. Therefore, each church should be free to do so since they all baptise with water.

- In terms of using a bulb syringe, there should be proper measurement as they sometimes give overdose which result in making others to lose their lives.
- Attention should be drawn to the Western Churches to the needs of taking African churches into consideration. For example, Africans beliefs must also be catered for in Western churches as they make them feel free.
- The concept of uniform (*xiambalo*) in both churches, must be taken seriously, as it lifts the identification of the church and also make the members look clean and presentable. Uniform also makes them to look alike and promote the spirit of oneness, but those who do not have uniform must also be accommodated in each church and not be undermined.
- It is good to honour their loved ones who passed on when coming to burial process, but they must be careful not to worship them as the Bible says: “Do not worship other gods but me.” (Exodus 20:1-2)

5.3 CONCLUSION

The study examines the similarities and dissimilarities between Western and African traditional churches; and has identified similarities and dissimilarities between the former and the latter. Some of the aspects are similar. For example, they all believe in the trinity of God, baptism and healing. Although they are similar in some of the aspects, each church has its own doctrines. As such, it is not easy for both churches to cater for others' doctrines, because both are proud of their own ways of worshipping God. The research also assists African people to realize the role played by African traditional Churches in their lives, especially in aspects such as healing.

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