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Spiritual Circles: ritual and the performance of identities in the Zionist Christian Church

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Masters in Dramatic Art

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the research report contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the report itself.

Signed:……..

Acknowledgements

Thank you Lucky for your warm hospitality, for introducing me to your congregation and for answering all my questions. I am also hugely grateful to the *New Gospel Church in Zion of Africa* congregants for answering my questions and allowing me to observe, photograph and film their church services. You always made me feel welcome.

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To my fellow students and performance explorers with whom I have shared this academic journey: I am really grateful for the creativity, laughter, frustration, ideas and friendships shared along the way

Dedication

This research report is dedicated to my father Rob, and my daughter Jazmin.

Dad, thanks for the opportunity of an education. You are an amazing example of determination and courage in the face of challenge.

My beautiful Jazzy, thank you for being there right from the beginning and for being a part of this journey with me. You are a joy in my life.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine how spiritual identities are constructed and enacted through ritualised behaviour in Zionist Christian Church services. Another aim was to identify the significance of specific religious objects and activities in order to investigate how these contribute to the performance of identity in the Zionists. The investigation was rooted in various ritual performance theories (Turner, 1982; Schechner, 2002).

The study utilized qualitative research methodology. The research data consisted of casual conversations with congregants, six open ended and semi-structured interviews, numerous photographs and approximately three hours of raw video recordings. Additionally, one vignette interview was conducted where congregants responded to photographs and video footage of their church service. Most of the data was gathered on site at the *Melville Koppies* nature reserve in Johannesburg. One congregation, the New Gospel Church in Zion of Africa, participated in the study.

The investigation revealed that Zionist identity is performed on both the individual and collective levels of Zionist culture. The results indicated that identity is constructed through a series of religious acts and symbolic behaviours and that identity formation occurs through performance. It was also discovered that Zionist church services are highly ritualized and that spiritual identities emerge through 'restored' behaviours prescribed in the ritual context. The belief in the 'Holy Spirit' was also discovered to play a significant role in the emergence of spiritual identities.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

We will know one another better by entering one another's performances and learning their grammars and vocabularies (Turner in Schechner and Appel, 1990, p. 1).

1.1 General introduction

In a country as diverse as South Africa, the integration of discrepant cultures into one another through social, political, cultural and religious influences is evident. Furthermore, and particularly in the case of the Zionist Christian Church (ZCC), historical factors such as colonialism have played a part in these integration processes. The ZCC is one example of how elements of separate cultures have been integrated and combined to form a new culture that is defined not by these separate parts, but by its existence as an autonomous body. In the case of the ZCC, this new culture is a religious one. This research intends to examine the ZCC with a desire to understand how identities are constructed and 'performed' through their church services. I intend to develop this analysis within the framework of the performance of identity, and with particular focus on theories and practices of ritual behaviour in a religious context. However, I will not focus explicitly on religion, as this research does not intend to be located within a theological paradigm. Nor will this research delve into any philosophical exploration of religion within the ZCC context. Instead, the scope of enquiry into religious dimensions will be limited to considerations of how religious beliefs manifest through spiritual performance and action during ritual process.

If one lives on the edge of *Melville Koppies Nature Reserve* in Melville, Johannesburg, as I do, the sounds of rhythmic drums can be heard from across the reserve every Sunday afternoon. I imagine that many nearby residents who have never actually witnessed the Zionists worshipping have heard their church services and recognize the sounds to be that of the Zionists. These residents are hearing a performance of sounds and music without seeing the source. However, if these same residents were to take a stroll on the nature reserve, as I eventually did, they would witness church services unlike the 'normal' services familiar to most people. It is here that 22 African Independent Church (AIC) congregations gather in their

respective circles to participate in their church services.[1] This report focuses on one particular congregation, the New Gospel Church in Zion of Africa (NGCZA).

Over one hundred years ago the first western Pentecostal missionary, a member of the 'Christian Catholic Apostolic Church of Zion' based in Chicago, arrived in South Africa from the USA (Anderson, 1991). This missionary, named Daniel Bryant baptized the first group of Zionists in South Africa. There were twenty-seven men in this group, and among them were the great founders and leaders of the Zionist Churches in South Africa. Eventually, due to various political and social reasons, African church members formed breakaway congregations founding what is generally known today as the African Independent Churches (AIC) (Anderson, 2000). The breakaway groups emphasized and followed the basic religious teachings of the original group baptized by Bryant (Makhubu, 1988). According to Anderson (2000, xvii), 'African Independent Churches are churches begun by Africans in Africa for Africans'. The ZCC is the biggest AIC group in South Africa and there are literally thousands of ZCC church congregations all over the country.[2]

1.2 Research Focus

This report analyzes the performance of religious identity in the Zionist church service. The discussion on identity is examined through the lens of performance theory. I will refer to members of the ZCC as 'Zionists' throughout this report. Any aspect of the service in which participants perform an activity, be this activity dancing, singing, healing, drumming or praying are considered in relation to identity within the religious context. The all-important entity of the

[1] All the congregations on the reserve are members of the Association of African Independent Churches of Melville Koppies. The associations' register of churches number is 20070826. The congregations are sometime made up of two or three different groups who will meet in different 'circles'. It is because each church service takes place on circular concrete platforms that the association refers to the different congregational gatherings as 'circles'. The congregation relevant to this report is The New Gospel Church in Zion of Africa, and their two groups meet on Circle 28 and Circle 88 (see appendix A).

[2] For further elaborations on terminology pertaining to the use of words such as Zionist, Zionist Christian Church and African Independent Churches, see (Anderson, 2000), (Makhubu, 1988) and (Thomas, 1999). The term 'Pentecostal' as a defining form of Christianity is relevant to the ZCC. According to Anderson (2000), Pentecostalism emphasizes 'freedom of the spirit', especially the practice of 'speaking in tongues'. However, Anderson adds that ZCC is not a Pentecostal church in the western sense of the word, but rather that it tends toward Pentecostalism through a similar emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

‘Holy Spirit’ in the Zionist belief system will often be referred to. To the Zionist, the Holy Spirit is not merely a concept but is very real and experiential. Almost everything they do in church is fuelled by the intention to invoke the Holy Spirit. Consequently, I will write the words ‘Holy Spirit’ in capitals throughout to acknowledge and emphasise the centrality of this spiritual entity for the Zionist. Other considerations relevant to notions of identity are the physical spaces where activity occurs and signs and symbols that represent identity, such as the long robes worn by ZCC members, and the wooden staffs carried by men. I argue that identity is manifested through what church members wear, what they do during their service and how these actions are done. In other words, identity is manifest through performance. By researching primarily that which can be perceived, focus falls toward questions of how the human body acts as a vehicle to express identity. In this way, those aspects of ZCC performances that can be observed, experienced and occur through ritual activity will be analysed. Furthermore, I will pay attention to the interactions and relationships that exist between ZCC members during ritual activities. An assumption is that the construction and performance of identities are connected to the interactive dynamics of the participants. In particular, the healing dynamics inherent in the ZCC rituals involving verbal and physical interactions suggest that the construction of performed identities are to some degree determined by the ways in which people engage with each other.

It is acknowledged that an understanding of expressions of identity within the community of the ZCC is related to notions of identity outside the community. According to Strauss (1981), spiritual encounters are on the one hand socially constructed forms, and on the other hand are non-rational expression of altered states of consciousness. He asserts that behaviour that accompanies a religious experience conforms to socially accepted norms, which are prescribed by the greater socio-cultural contexts within which individuals’ live.

> A social psychology of religious experiences requires the radical claim that experiencing itself is socialized. Yet these are by definition transpersonal and transocial phenomena seemingly involving the cessation of normal conscious functioning (Strauss, 1981, p. 58)

Affiliation with a socio-cultural context is instrumental in shaping individual and group identity. Therefore, if Straus’s above assertion is accepted and applied to the case of the Zionists, it follows that religious performance reinforces identification with a socio-cultural context.

Considering social identities of church members outside the context of their church service in their everyday lives may reveal important links to determining how identities change, and to what degree identities within both contexts are related. Social roles and religious roles are somehow and sometimes connected. However, this research will remain focused on issues of identity that are centered on the church service of the ZCC without exploring how these identities relate to social contexts. Besides the historical connection between the ZCC and broader social dynamics mentioned in the second chapter, the scope of this report does not allow for an exploration into the connection between the social and the religious domain of identities. Instead, I acknowledge that by omitting this discussion I am leaving behind the question of how social contexts contribute to the formulation of spiritual identities, and what meaning spiritual identities have in social contexts.[3] However, by omitting considerations of social identities, I am also proposing that spiritual identities are autonomous facets of the construction of performed religious experience.

1.3 Unpacking 'Identity'

The term 'identity', as central to this research, needs some attention for the sake of clarification. Identity is understood as that which represents or signifies group and individual perceptions and experiences as members of the ZCC. Additionally, identity is considered to be able to be differentiated, constructed, displayed and made explicit through performed behaviours. The concept of identity as performed begs the question of whether identities are temporary signifiers of meaning, relationships and events, or whether they are permanent 'labels' that are significant beyond performance and the ritual frames of religious activity. This report will consider identity from two levels of analysis. Both these dimensions of identity are seen to arise from, and are contained within, the physical 'circular' spaces from which spiritual identity erupts. Firstly, identity is seen to exist through affiliation on the collective level, where all congregants in the church service hold the identity of a 'Zionist' church member, more specifically, that of a member of the New Gospel Church in Zion. Secondly, the notion of personal identities related to members' behaviours, expressions, the wearing or carrying of symbolic objects, states of consciousness, and interactions with other members during church

[3] For a deeper understanding of the role and function that Zionist church services play in the context of the broader socio-cultural context, and the relationship between these two domains, see Thomas (1999).

services, is seen to exist on the individual level. These two levels, the collective and the individual, will not be explicitly separated in this report but will be woven into the discussion as mutually reinforcing dimensions. The collective notion of identity is the symbolic frame around which individual notions of identity become possible to conceptualise. Within this frame, individual identities come to life and are embodied in form. These identities are given context and therefore meaning, and their meanings are expressed through spiritual behaviour. Behaviour, also seen as performance, reinforces the notion of Zionist identity during the ZCC services. All activity that takes place during 'spiritual time' is connected to individual identities, and it is from individual performances of these identities that the collective profile of the Zionist frame is constructed. Furthermore, that ZCC spiritual identities are displayed during church time implies that they are temporal in nature. The notion of identity existing as a temporary condition within a definite time frame will be explored with reference to Turners' (1982) concepts of liminal conditions. This will lead to the concept of 'liminal identities' - those that manifest through ritual performance and exist only during this activity. The focus is therefore limited to identities that exist within the spiritual, liminal context. Identity formation is seen to occur through the performance elements of the ZCC rituals.

1.4 Rationale

Theorists exploring notions of identity construction have been preoccupied with gender, race, class, ethnicity and other binary oppositions. One of these is Butler who maintains that gender is an expression of identity and is performed, that it is expressed through behavior (Butler in Bial, 2004). Similarly, Schechner (2002) maintains that race is constructed like gender and that it is a cultural construct. However he notes that as a cultural construct, 'racial identifications change in relation to culture-specific historical forces' (Schechner, 2002, p. 133). The racial category of 'coloured' in South Africa, for example, denotes a specific racial type, whereas in the USA, 'coloured' refers to all non-white people. Post-colonial theory has been preoccupied with cultural and political notions of self and other as located in identities of the colonizer and colonized. Bhabha has termed the practice of colonized people who adopt the culture of their colonizers and perform this cultural adoption through everyday behaviour as 'colonial mimicry' (Bhabha in Bial, 2004). With respect to Bhabha's colonial mimicry, post-colonial theory is seen to use racial difference and cultural affiliation to serve as the basis for identity

and distinction between the colonizer and the colonized. Postcolonial theory, racial theory and gender theory do not seem to problematise identity from the ritual and religious dimensions of human experience. This research brings the notion of identity into the religious domain and explores how spiritual identity is constructed and manifested through ritual process.

It is significant that approximately 30% of South Africa's people are members of the largest African Independent Church, the ZCC (Anderson, 2000). Many of these church members find refuge in the church community from the hardships and challenges in their everyday lives (Thomas, 1999). Affiliation with the ZCC provides these people with a resilience that is rooted in spiritual identity (Thomas, 1999). For one church member, the Sunday church event is so significant in his life that he considers it 'our big day' for him and his spiritual community. He says:

Just like my birthday, every Sunday reminds me of my birthday. If I am not in the church I am not feeling good the whole week, there is something that is not right. On Sunday I feel stronger, every Sunday I feel stronger (interview).

Many church members consider the church to be such an important aspect of their lives that their daily attention is focused on their spiritual beliefs. Speaking about his Zionist identity, one member said:

This thing is in my blood. I always think (about) God everywhere I go, I just think about God and other things in church…my mind is on the church all the time.

South Africa's nation building efforts hinge on the rich diversity of races, cultures and ethnicities formulated in Archbishop Tutu's notion of the 'Rainbow Nation' (http://en.wikipedia.org).[4] This symbolic national identity requires significant effort on the part of all people to truly understand each other's experiences. Through these efforts it becomes possible for the formation of unity based on mutual respect that overcomes political, racial, ethnic and religious divisions, and embraces that which we have in common in our 'humanness'. Yet our differences are reflected in what we do and how we express our beliefs.

[4] 'In a series of televised appearances, Tutu spoke of the 'Rainbow People of God'. As a cleric, this metaphor drew upon the Old Testament story of Noah's Flood, and its ensuing rainbow of peace. Within South African indigenous cultures, the rainbow is associated with hope and a bright future' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rainbow_Nation#Symbolic_identity).

Turner (1982) implies that it is through interaction with other cultures that an understanding of these expressions evolves. He maintains that 'we can learn from experience – from the enactment and performance of the culturally transmitted experiences of others…(Turner, 1982, p. 19). Through this research then, I hope to contribute to intra-cultural and inter-cultural understanding of a significant segment of South African society, the ZCC. The ZCC religious ritual performances are the platforms for expression in the ZCC. I will therefore address notions of identity as expressed through religious belief and enactment, using the ritual services of the ZCC as an illustrative paradigm.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Performance theory, and in particular theories that relate to ritual processes similar to those of the ZCC, are useful analytical tools for the purposes of this report because they focus on what can be observed and on what is being performed through behaviour. Often behaviour results in points of contact between participants who are sharing the same performance space. Goffman says that 'A performance may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants' (1959, p. 15). Similarly, Schechner maintains that 'performances exist only as actions, interactions and relationships' (Schechner, 1999, p. 24). Performed identities originate and are moulded through these interactions between people; they do not exist in isolation. Actions, interactions and relationships are the meeting points for diverse individual identities, and when identities are embodied in performance, their latent essence takes on new form.

Schechner (1999) provides a list of eight kinds of situations in which performances occur: 1 - In everyday life. 2 - In the arts. 3 - In sports and other popular entertainments. 4 - In business. 5 - In technology. 6 - In sex. 7 - In ritual. 8 - In play (2002, p. 25). He further defines two types of ritual: sacred and secular. The ZCC church services can be classified as sacred rituals because the specific form of performance is associated with expressing or enacting religious beliefs (Schechner, 2002). In using the word 'performance', I refer to Schechner's (2002) notion that performances consist of repetitive activity, which he calls 'twice behaved behaviours' or 'restored behaviour'. 'Every action, no matter how small or encompassing, consists of twice-behaved behaviours' (Schechner, 1999, p. 23). Under these 'restored

behaviours', Schechner groups actions, including those expressed through ritual activity as in the ZCC, as being consciously separated from the person doing them (Schechner, 1999). In this way the concept of 'restored behaviour' points to a quality of performance involved with a certain distance between 'self' and 'behaviour' (Carlson, 1996, p. 4). The implication of a separation between self and behaviour is that identity is not located in actions, but is expressed through actions. Geertz confirms this when he says that, "…behaviour must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behaviour – or more precisely, social action – that cultural forms find articulation" (in Schechner, 2002, p. 29). If the ZCC ritual is a cultural form and culture represents identity, then this identity will be 'articulated' through performed behaviour. Furthermore, 'restored behaviour' points to an important characteristic in ritual performance: that of repetition. This implies the notion of performed identities occurring repeatedly while displayed through ritual activity.

1.6 Literature Review

Although considerable literature exists on the Zionist Christian Churches in South Africa, it is for the most part heavily grounded in either the historical context of colonialism or a theological study (see Anderson 1991, 2000). The Zionists also feature in global literature that focuses on the crossroad of religion and anthropology (see Morris, 2006; Bowie, 2000). These entries are sufficient to provide introductory insights but fall short of exploring ZCC identity as enacted through their religious rituals. Furthermore, little research has been devoted specifically to the performing elements of the ZCC ritual services. Naude's (1995) case study of the Oral Theology of the ZCC focuses on hymns and their interpretations between various languages within the churches. Although he places the ritual performances at the forefront of his enquiry, Naude does not refer to how these hymns are performed, what function they serve in the service and how these performances relate to notions of identity.

The chosen literature considered as relevant to this research examines the relationships between religious belief and the enactment of these beliefs through ritual practice on the one hand, and the wider political, social, historical and cultural contexts of these religious practices within South Africa on the other. Notions of identity are bound to considerations of how these respective religious practices have been influenced by historical and political dynamics such as

colonialism and apartheid. Within these macro parameters, issues of identity with relation to gender and ethnic affiliation are prominent (see Coplan 2003; Muller 1999). Furthermore, because of the political context of South African history, the relationship between political elements and religious practice is a common theme. This research intends to focus on religious identities primarily within the ZCC church, and on how these identities are performed. The focus on religious and spiritual ritual practice remains common with other literature, however the framing of identity construction as occurring within belief and through performance in the church services differs as a primary focus to the other literature considered.

Descriptions of ritual enactments in the ZCC in South Africa can be found in an accessible and sensitively written case study by Thomas (1999). Her ethnographic accounts of living with a ZCC community for two years provide some valuable reference material for this project. Thomas (1999) argues that through the religious ritual performances of the ZCC, church members are able to overcome political oppression and psychological stress caused by economic hardships. Although this perspective may present the ZCC members enacting a collective identity representing resilience, her focus is not specifically on notions of identity. Thomas (1999) includes a broader focus on the relationship between individuals' lives within the church and in their everyday lives, which does reveal identities of participants in relation to the church. The research, however, is limited to exploring constructions and performances of identity mainly within the church context. My focus is on identity as a construct of performance and not on the how these church performances serve as a function of enhancing meaning and resilience in peoples' lives. Thomas' (1999) research is however very useful as a cross reference to a different ZCC congregation to the one I am studying, especially with regard to comparisons of elements of religious performance.

What congregants do, and how they do this, is central to my investigation of how identities are performed. I questioned church members about how they feel or see themselves differently before, during and after attending Church, as a result of what they do during church services. Drumming, clapping, singing and 'circle dancing' are common characteristics of the Zionists' church services. The individuals that perform these acts are apparently displaying a function of various roles in the church. For instance, the identity of a 'drummer' is performed through the act of drumming. Furthermore, traditional healing experiences involving trance and spirit

possession have clearly been incorporated into ZCC church services. Makhubu, who is an academic and leading member of his ZCC community, maintains that for Africans, "the belief in the holy spirit is a corollary to the belief in the spirits of the ancestors" and that manifestations of healing through 'spirit possession' (1988, p. 62) by the Holy Spirit are characterized by indigenous and traditional aesthetics of ritual performance. Makhubu (1988) is concerned with identities of cultural and ethnic orientations as expressed through ritual enactments. For Makhubu (1988), enactments of spirit possession reinforce indigenous identity in the context of colonial history and oppression. He does not discuss notions of identity of 'self' and 'other' related to spirit possession. I also explore notions of temporary and liminal identity performance in relation to the altered states reached and enacted through spirit possession. The quality and nature of these types of 'altered states' of performances are considered in relation to the role that possession plays in the ritual activity of the ZCC. Who becomes possessed, to what degree and to what end?

Makhubu's (1988) literature includes descriptions of what and why church members do what they do, but not how they do this doing. For the most part his work is usefully descriptive but without much analytical content. Included in his descriptions are specific but brief explanations of the spiritual significance of what he calls 'weapons of the spirit' such as sticks, drums and robes (Makhubu, 1988, p. 85). I argue that these 'weapons' are integral to the construction of symbolic and performed identity. The connection between the aesthetics of performance - that which is perceptible to the senses - and identity, is important to this study. This is because identity is seen as a construct of not only what is being enacted, but also how this enactment happens, and what happens as a consequence. In other words, focus falls on the process of performance.

Anderson (1999) provides a valuable analysis of the connections between African notions of spirit and the Zionist interpretations of the Holy Spirit. He does not explore the relationship between identity and the enactments of religious belief but focuses on explanations of why certain enactments of spirit occur as they do. His theological study of the ZCC is centered on doctrines of the spirit as manifested through belief and practice. He presents spiritual enactments of the Holy Spirit as a characteristic of ZCC practice and therefore also presents these enactments as symbols of spiritual identity in relation to traditional African practices. By

referring to ‘traditional African practices’ I mean activity that has its source in the rituals and rites of passage (birth, initiation, harvests, death) of the indigenous black South African rural population. The report remains focused on how the ritual performances within the ZCC church serve to reinforce internal notions of identity, without being bound by its relevance to external factors. Anderson’s (1999) primary concern with notions of spirit will be valuable in supporting my argument that identity construction and performance within ZCC ritual practices tends to be determined by the belief in the spiritual dimension. Where Anderson (1999) is concerned with spiritual belief in the context of an African world-view, I explore questions of how such belief determines the form of spiritual expression in the religious rituals, and how identity is constructed from this form.

Another study undertaken on religious ritual practice in South Africa that is similar to the ZCC is by Muller (1999) on the Nazarite woman’s performances. Muller’s (1999) research focuses on constructs of ritual performances related to gender identity. For Muller, the "constitution of ritual and expressive culture…” in the Nazarite performances is ‘…a feminized and sacred practice…’ (1999, p. 1). Muller (1999) focuses on the ritual practices of young virgin girls and married females in the Nazarite church. Identity is located in the status of female as either ‘virgins’ or ‘married’. Muller (1999) examines primarily the expressive forms of the rituals in the Nazarite church that reinforce these female identities. Through ritual activity, Muller shows how the female body is celebrated as being pure. The status of ‘virgin’ deems women as ‘sacred’ and this sacredness is expressed through the proceedings of ritual. Muller therefore shows that identity is performed as certain rituals occur with the sole intent of expressing recognition of the virgin status, and shows how these identities are performed through hymn, dance, prayer, drumming and a display of various symbols either worn or held. Where Muller (1999) places her focus on constructs of the female gender in relation to forms of religious expression, I include gender as one possible determinant of performed identity in the ZCC. By identifying two different identities that are both constructs of gender, namely virgin girls and married females, Muller (1999) is also alluding to social dynamics beyond the church that determine their identities. Similarly, I am interested in identities of ZCC participants that are constructed beyond the proceedings of church and in everyday life, but only if these identities are somehow explicitly expressed through the ritual performances of the ZCC.

A final study relevant to this report is that of Coplans' (2003) research on the spiritual activity by various religious groups, including ZCC congregations, in the Lesotho Mountains. Coplan shows how processes of syncretism are seen to be occurring in the collective religious participation of these various groups.

1.7 Methodology

This research was conducted within the qualitative paradigm because it attempts to understand peoples' performed identity in terms of their own accounts and explanations of their behaviours. It is not possible to measure these accounts; they vary from person to person. The analysis of congregants' behaviour is based on both my own observations as an outsider, and on the subjective perspectives of the subjects involved. By questioning participants on their behaviour, and on the behaviour of others, I attempted to understand how participants conceive of their own spiritual identity and that of others in relation to the activity that takes place during the church services.

Conquergood maintains that 'performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice' (in Bial, 2004, p. 311). Here he is referring to the possibility of narrowing the gap between knowledge based in theory and observation, and knowledge gained from direct experience. Performance studies, through more participative methods, enable the researcher to move 'between different ways of knowing'; the more distanced 'view from above' and the more participatory and experiential 'view from a body' (Conquergood, in Bial, 2004, p. 311).

Based on the above framing of two possible positions of the researcher, I intended to attempt to navigate the spaces in-between a distanced perspective and an experiential one. Of course, the participation of the researcher as observer does not always place the researcher in a qualified position to draw accurate conclusions. This is because, for example, it is difficult to determine to what degree behaviour of the subjects, and therefore, constructions of identity, change due to the researcher's presence. Through participation, however, the researcher is able to embody firsthand knowledge (Bacon, 2006). Turnbill (in Schechner, 1990, p. 76) has suggested that subjective participation of the researcher provides insights 'that could not be had by other

means'. With regards to this research, it was clear that I would never achieve this degree of participation in the ZCC short of becoming an actual member of the church. I was told, for example, that if I wanted to dance in the sacred circle, I would need to wear a church uniform, which was only permissible by being officially baptized into the church. However I believe that I penetrated the figurative 'periphery' that separates the experience of researcher, and that of the Zionists in action, to a large degree. I was able to be physically very close to the ritual proceedings and eventually it felt as if my presence was accepted as a member of the process.

1.7.1 - *My role as researcher*

It was clear from the outset that my presence at the ZCC services was that of 'outsider'. This was due to a number of factors. Firstly, I am not an official member of the ZCC. Secondly, I am of a different race to the ZCC members; being white I was immediately conspicuous as all of the ZCC members are black. Construction of identities based on racial differences is not the focus of this research, however it is important to acknowledge that by being of a different race to the ZCC members, I am also an outsider based on different ethnicity. This difference has implications for the way in which data is interpreted and read especially with regard to spiritual identities. This is because the ZCC rituals are culturally influenced modes of expression as recognized by the syncretic nature of the rituals. The intangible and highly subjective spiritual experiences seem to be facilitated by the culturally coded and structured procedures of the rituals. My challenge as researcher was to interrogate these experiences through data collection and to interpret this data with a consciousness of my position as an outsider. Thirdly, I do not understand the languages spoken and used. Although I made use of an interpreter at times, much of the nuances were no doubt lost. For this reason, the use of a performance framework allowed me to focus on interpreting a 'language of gesture' and movement as much as the spoken word. Lastly, I was not always actively involved in the ritual proceedings but rather conspicuously located on the edges, with either a camera, video camera or note pad.

The degree to which my presence influenced the participants' performance is difficult to determine. It is also worth mentioning here, however, that it was possible for me to remain fairly hidden in the surrounding bushes and still take photos and video during their services so that my presence was 'forgotten'. I did make it very explicit that I was using a camera or video

camera before I captured the data both for ethical reason but also to reduce my role as a 'tourist' researcher and to become a participant in the process. In this way I merged and remerged, appeared and disappeared, as an accepted participant whose presence was not perceived of as an outsider's gaze but more as a welcomed guest. It was hoped that by becoming a recognized and accepted visitor to their services that my presence did not affect their performance to a degree that would render the visual data captured inaccurate or imposing. Having mentioned my position as 'outsider', it is also necessary to mention how I was greeted by the ZCC. One female congregant thanked me for coming to their church services. She said, 'we like to see you around'. From the outset, my enquiries and presence was warmly welcomed. I was encouraged to film, take pictures and ask questions. Not only did the Zionists accept my 'otherness' but they were also willing to allow me into their 'sacred space'. My impression is that a sense of pride and respect permeates through their religious practice and it felt like an honour to have been treated in such a welcoming way.

1.7.2 - An Ethnographic approach

This research contains definite elements of an ethnographic approach. According to Hammersley (1994), ethnographic approaches vary but are all focused on the study of people or groups of people. He lists six general features of the ethnographic method which include: the analysis of empirical data, data from 'real' world contexts, an unstructured approach to data collection, data is gathered from a range of sources, involves a single setting or focus group and that ethnography involves the interpretation of the meanings of human functions and actions. One important consideration in relation to the type of ethnography of this research is that of the time frame of the research. Most ethnographic research involves a relatively long period of research and data collection where the researcher is able to blend into the culture in focus and with the subjects (Hammersley, 1994). This research, being over a period of about three months and mainly on Sunday afternoons, was a relatively short period. According to Hammersley (1994), it is necessary to learn the culture one is studying and to experience their way of life before valid interpretations of their behaviour can be made. This would imply that as an ethnographic research, this study is somewhat amputated due to the short period of data collection. I maintain however that this does not mean the research is less ethnographic; it is just a different type of ethnography, one that has been condensed due to time constraints.

Furthermore, this also implies the potential for a deepening of the research, one that is grounded in a deeper familiarity of the subject over an extended period of time. Nonetheless, as this research is based on observations made through the lens of performance, the analysis focuses on what can be perceived through both the outsider and participants' senses. It is this common ground, a shared sensory experience of that which is being performed, that my participation in the ZCC services took root.

1.7.3 - Selection of Participants

Of the twenty-two ZCC congregations that practice on Melville Koppies Nature Reserve, I focused primarily on the 'New Gospel Church In Zion in Africa'. This congregation consists of two separate groups that practice nearby, but in separate physical spaces. These physical spaces are round slabs of concrete (circles) that have been specifically laid down for the worshippers. All the circles have been numbered, and my focus groups were number 29 and 88 (see appendix A).

All the congregations that meet on the Melville Koppies reserve have very similar church services in terms of structure and content. However, I intended to deepen the enquiry into identity and performance by choosing to focus on one congregation, with the possibility of formulating generalisations at later a stage. Finally, the above participants have been selected over other circles primarily due to one informant, Lucky, who is a practicing member of circle 29.[5] He speaks English well, is the secretary of *The Association Of African Independent Churches Of Melville Koppies* and was the first person to introduce me to his pastor and other church members. Lucky offered to act as a mediator between my presence at the church services and the service proceedings. He is also the person to whom I will deliver copies of any photographs, interview transcriptions and video material once this report is completed.

This research does not focus on differences between the performance aspects of the various congregations. Instead, the discussion on the relationship between performance and religious identity is drawn from data collected from this particular sample congregation. Through Lucky

[5] Lucky is my informants' real name, and he has given me permission to mention his name in this report.

I was more easily able to explain who I was, and why I was interested in the church services. I believe that this led to the Zionists feeling comfortable with my presence during their church services, and my questions, every Sunday for eight weeks. Furthermore, the congregants of NGCZA warmly welcomed my curiosities. I focused on members of the church services and their actions in these services. Members were identified as those that were observed participating in the service by virtue of being physically present on the concrete circle while the service was in progress.

1.7.4 - Data collection instruments

1.7.4.1 Observation

Some time was spent before, during and after ZCC services observing and having broad conversation with participants in order to gain some first impressions and general ideas. This also helped me to review my research intentions based on these initial impressions. As an outsider and a non-member of the church, I assumed that there existed certain protocols of behaviour that I would not yet be familiar with. A gradual understanding grew through my observation due to my consistent presence during a period of eight consecutive Sunday afternoons. This enabled me to observe the Zionist in a way that minimally intruded or influenced their behaviour. Furthermore, I participated where I could, such as making appropriate monetary donations during services where possible. I would also often dance and move to the 'music' from where I was positioned, which was greatly appreciated. In these ways I became a participant observer and gained a 'participatory understanding' of the ZCC ritual services (Conquergood, in Bial, 2004).

Observing the structure of the ritual church services on a number of different occasions revealed general rules and patterns of behaviour. Field notes were taken during these interactions and observations. Conversations were, where possible, directed toward questions related to the behaviour of participants during services, and reflections on field-notes of how these behaviours relate to issues of identity.

1.7.4.2 Interviews

I tried to secure a range of interviewees that would best represent gender and age diversities within the NGCZA congregation. Interviews were conducted primarily on site, with a few exceptions. On one occasion I invited a pastor and his wife to my house for tea, where we watched some of the video footage I had taken. The discussion that followed was based on general comments and an informal question and answer session. The interviews were conducted normally before the church services began, while two were conducted while the service was in progress. Open-ended interviews were used primarily due to the language differences, but also in order to be less directive and provide the interviewees with possibilities to speak about what they wanted to. However, questions were centered on how individuals explained, thought, perceived and felt about their actions and behaviours. Furthermore, multiple participants were asked similar questions (although individually and at different times) and comparisons of these answers were made. I was interested in collecting data that would feed a discussion on the notion of spiritual identity and the ways in which identity was performed within the spiritual context.

1.7.4.3 Recorded data

Data was gathered through field notes, recording and transcribing interviews, photographs and video recording. It was deemed important to gather data by taking photographs due to the focus on behaviour and action of the participants. Photographs freeze action and therefore that which is being performed. Coupled with the intention to gain subjective perspectives of notions of identity as observed in expressed action, these frozen images could be reflected and commented on later by participants. I therefore intended to create a series of vignettes consisting of photographs taken of participants in the ZCC services. These vignettes were shown to participants later and they were asked both specific questions related to their participation, and more general questions related to collective actions.

Similarly, video recordings were shown back to participants, resulting in much delight and laughter, and they were questioned about the footage. I spent much of the time that I observed the Zionist partially behind the lens of a video camera. Instead of this isolating me from the Zionist, I felt that the additional perspective offered by the video camera allowed me to

experience the performance of the congregants in a more involved way. From behind the video camera I was drawn into what I was observing, and there were define moments where I experienced a 'heightened creative state of being' called 'cine trance'. Stoller (1992, p. 169/170) defines cine trance as 'a kind of profound dialogue between ethnographer and "the Other", leading to a phenomenologically informed and shared cultural anthropology'. The inclusion of a video camera gave me an opportunity to be a more active observer.

Another advantage with video recordings is that it is possible to capture sound, and in this way sound samples were included in questions relating to actions and identity. All photographs and video footage taken were strictly by permission from the ZCC only and it was agreed that I would not use the material for anything else besides this report without seeking permission first.

1.7.5 - How the data was analysed

Data was analysed by searching for recurrent themes, concepts and explanations related to behaviour and identity to establish validity and authenticity of collected data. As suggested by Rubin and Rubin (1995), I was looking for suggestions from the data that dealt with particular themes. I then placed into separate categories all the material from all the interviews and conversations that spoke to one theme or concept. I then compared these different categories to find variations in explanations and meaning, and also to find similarities and common accounts of participants. In this way I hoped to discover how identities were constructed and performed, and if notions of group identity were different to notions of individual identity, as expressed through performed behaviour.

I also presented many photographs and video clips to the Zionists that I had taken of them during their church services. I asked them to explain the contents of these recordings in their own words. In this way I was able to merely point out various points of interest thereby avoiding 'labeling' any event or behaviour in my questions. These experiments with picture and video vignettes were not only wonderful icebreakers that facilitated conversation with laughter and fun, but also proved very helpful in allowing the Zionist to talk about what they deemed most important without my initial prompting.

1.7.6 - Time Frame

The Zionists do not practice their services if it is raining. Fortunately there were no delays in data gathering that might have occurred as a result of the weather. The Zionists that practice on Melville Koppies meet every Sunday from about 2:30pm to about 4:30pm. Therefore, in order to observe a substantial number of different services, I had to spread the data collection over a fairly long period because there were only two hours per week for collecting data through observation. However, I was able to conduct adhoc interviews and hold informal discussions before and after church services. This data collection for this research occurred between August the 15th and December 15th 2008.

1.8 Chapter Layout

Chapter two, *'The syncretic roots of Zionist identity'*, introduces a historical connection between the origins of the ZCC and the forms of spiritual activity as they are practised in the present day. Zionist collective identity is rooted in processes of syncretism, where elements of western Christianity have been incorporated into traditional African modes of expression. The syncretic roots of the forms of ZCC rituals are deemed a necessary avenue to explore in light of notions of performed Zionist spiritual identity. This is because these historical syncretic influences have played a role shaping the present day forms of Zionist worship. I do not maintain that Zionist identity is syncretic, but rather that the performance of this identity, and the nature of this identity, is rooted in syncretic processes.

Chapter three, *'Identity as performed'*, will explore more closely the relationship between identity and performance. I will consider ZCC services as theatrical performances by introducing the theatre metaphor. The ways in which Zionist religious culture is expressed through performance is another component of this chapter.

In the fourth chapter, *'The Ritual Frame'*, the ZCC services are contextualized within characteristics of ritual performance. I will introduce the 'ritual frame' and explore how the spiritual contexts of the Zionists are separated by, and contained within the ritual frame. Within this frame, activity and behaviour is guided by existing structures and rules that influence the

proceedings and order of activity. Turners' (1982) concept of 'liminality' will be incorporated into the discussion. I maintain that the emergence of spiritual identities occurs through performance within liminal conditions. I will therefore propose the notion of liminal identities in this chapter.

Chapter five, *'Weapons of the Spirit and symbolic behaviour'*, explores the symbolic significance of objects, called weapons of the spirit, used in the ZCC religious rituals. The analogy of 'spiritual warfare' informs the discussion. Through the ritual proceedings these objects take on the symbolic qualities of weapons when used in conjunction with ritualised actions. I will also explore how behaviour is spiritually symbolic during the ZCC services and contributes to the emergence of symbolic identity.

Finally, chapter six, *'Performing the Holy Spirit'*, looks at the significance of the Holy Spirit in the performance of religious belief amongst the Zionists. I will explore various activities occurring during ZCC services that are manifestations of the influence of the Holy Spirit. Shifts in states of consciousness will be considered to result from ritual process. These shifts lead to what I call 'acts of power': manifestations of the Spirit such as healing, prophesying and speaking in tongues. The discussion will consider identities that arise as a result of altered mind states and religious performance. An important identity formulated in this chapter is that of 'spiritual messengers'.

CHAPTER 2 – THE SYNCRETIC ROOTS OF ZIONIST IDENTITY

Dance and music were an integral part of religious experience, and were often the means through which trance-like states were reached whereby mediums could communicate with the ancestors. By re-introducing dance into worship the African people were reaffirming the value of their cultural traditions (Glasser in Blacking, 1981, p.37ff).

2.1 Introduction

Whilst walking on Melville Koppies one Sunday afternoon, I crossed path with an elderly ZCC man who was on his way home after attending church that day. He was tall and thin with a beard, and was dressed in a blue church uniform, carrying a stick. I greeted him and he warmly reciprocated. Being willing to engage with me, I began to ask him about the history of the ZCC and his beliefs. When I asked if he was aware of, or believed that the ZCC movement had any roots in the culture of the missionaries that came to South Africa over 100 years ago, he responded by saying:

Before the missionaries came, Africa was in darkness. They (the missionaries) brought the message of Jesus to Africa and we were saved. Now there is light in Africa.

When the first African converts established breakaway churches, Christian doctrines and concepts exerted an influence on, and were influenced by, traditional spiritual beliefs and ways of conceptualizing and experiencing these beliefs. Anderson maintains that 'there is something in the Bible, as well as in human experience in Africa and elsewhere, that transcends…and defies all our explanations and rationalizations' (2000, p. 30). Here Anderson is alluding to the non-rational experience of spirituality, and the expression of spiritual beliefs.

This chapter will explore the syncretic elements in the ZCC spiritual experience. I intend to firstly acknowledge the roots of how identities pertaining to the ZCC have been formed, and then to pave the way for a more detailed focus on the performances of these identities through spiritual practice in subsequent chapters.

2.2 The merging of spiritual practices

When two or more cultures begin to interact with each other via the human experience, identities may begin to merge through processes of integration. However, most members on the ZCC have no knowledge of, nor any apparent interest in the historical foundations of their movement. Any attempt to single out 'African' elements of the ZCC rituals from 'western Christian' aspects of their spiritual experience is useful only to illustrate a key point - that the Zionist churches 'have made possible a dialogue between the African traditional (spiritual) world and Christianity at an existential level' (Anderson, 2000, p. 31). Similarly, Thomas (1999) says of a group of Zionists she has studied, that the church 'brings together a community of people whose cosmology arises from the synthesis of pre-colonial African religion and Protestant Christianity' (p. 15).[6]

Anderson (2000, xvii) writes that the ZCC is a church 'begun by Africans in Africa primarily for Africans'. This process began to filter their religious identities through a combination of their adopted beliefs (Christianity) and their African forms of expression. The ZCC is one such religious identity that has developed through syncretic forces into an autonomous and significant religious collective of people in South Africa.

Writing about ritual performances, Schechner says that:

> …Integrative performance hybrids spread on the wings of colonialism; commerce, religion, and the migration of populations…the resulting hybrids embody new meanings even as they create new ways of worship and new aesthetics (2003, pg. 251).

From the perspective of the performance of spiritual beliefs, when religious belief systems overlap and feed the evolution of each other, 'integrative performance hybrids' are formed. This 'existential dialogue' is manifest most visibly in the ZCC in their ritual practices and modes of expression. The central expression of spiritual belief is to be found in their highly ritualized church services. The ZCC ritual structure is rooted in historical processes of blending cultures of Western missionaries and traditional African practices (Makhubu, 1988). The

[6] An African American researcher and an ordained minister of the United Methodist Church, Elaine Thomas conducted 12 months of fieldwork between 1991 and 1994 in South Africa on an African Independent Church called St. John's Apostolic Faith Mission Church, outside of Cape Town (see Thomas, 1999, Under The Canopy).

'blending' of cultures can also be seen as the blending of identities, syncretic identities, if identities are at all seated in cultural affiliation. In this light, the ZCC religious culture can be seen as a spiritual community that has integrated some of the systems of Western Christianity into traditional modes of enactment through ritual.

2.3 The historical context of syncretism in the ZCC

Although this study is not primarily concerned with the historical context of the ZCC, it is necessary to acknowledge the social and political forces rooted in historical dynamics that have influenced and shaped the ZCC rituals, and therefore also ZCC identity. This is because if we are to understand the performative dimensions of the ZCC identity, we must consider the influence of ritual syncretic elements embedded in the ZCC history.

The first Christian Pentecostal missionaries who came from the USA in 1904 were white westerners. It was these first missionaries that introduced to indigenous Africans the belief framework of Zionist Christianity (Morris, 2006). The missionaries initially imposed their relatively conservative modes of church participation onto the Africans (Haupfleisch, 1997). However, when Africans broke away from the mainstream churches to form independent churches, the results were 'syncretic movements and religious forms that constituted a mode of resistance to the culture of colonial domination' (Morris, 2006, p. 185). Some of the original African converts, reacting to liberate themselves from the oppressive nature of the Western missionaries, and to embrace the message of Christianity without abandoning their traditional roots and cultural modes, set in motion a process of syncretism.

A useful definition of syncretism provided by Zarrilli, McConachie, Williams and Sorgenfrei is:

> Syncretism refers to the merging of different systems of beliefs, social practices, or aesthetics, from sources inside and/or outside of cultures. The resulting hybrids or fusions may represent a disproportion of influence by the dominant power; they may represent an integration that respects the influences of the less powerful (2006, pg. 492).

The term 'syncretism' was first used by the discipline of comparative religion to denote a process 'whereby two or more religions are merged and absorbed into one another' (Balme,

1999 p. 2). Religious syncretism has been well documented in relation to colonialism and is a feature of religious change. This religious change is historically a result of conflict or exchange between different religious cultures. Like the ZCC, the syncretic nature of Catholicism and traditional Shamanic practices in Brazil serves as an example of religious syncretism (Schechner, 2002).

However, it is important to note from the outset that the forms of ritual performance characteristic of the Zionists on Melville Koppies can and should be considered as autonomous practices in their own right. Questions of identity are not determined or defined by historical roots of syncretism, but by the nature of the Zionist rituals as they are presently practiced. Most Zionists that I spoke to are not even aware of the syncretic history of their church movement, nor does it seem to matter to them. This lack of identification on the part of ZCC members with the historical processes of syncretism provides some insight into the degree to which they perceive the religious identity of the ZCC to be rooted in historical events. Therefore, I would like to make a clarification from the outset regarding the use of the word syncretism in relation to the Zionist rituals. It would be an inaccurate simplification to label the Zionists as a syncretic religion without placing a separate emphasis on the forces and disparate elements that *resulted* in the forms of Zionist worship as they exist today. As Anderson (1991) has suggested, agency should be given to the Zionist themselves. If we are to accept a post-modern belief that there is nothing new in the world, only new constellations of that that already exists, then the Zionist rituals should be considered autonomous forms (Lehman, 2006). Zionist identities therefore become defined by who they are today, and not by how they came to be.

2.4 Performance of syncretic identities

Historical considerations have shaped the beliefs of the ZCC members and therefore also the means by which these beliefs are enacted through performance. Behaviours, actions and activities performed by the Zionists during church services all serve the purpose of their intentions, such as possession of the Holy Spirit and spiritual healing, and at the same time reinforce Zionist identity through the performance of these acts. As will be discussed in later chapters, some examples of performance behaviour include drumming, wearing church uniforms or the recital of the Ten Commandments before each service. All these components of

performance contribute to the reinforcement and construction of Zionist identity, on both individual and collective levels.

The performance dimensions of church activity amongst the Zionists are deeply rooted in the merging of at least two forms or doctrines of belief and expression. With reference to the ZCC utilizing African dance and music, Haupfleisch says that:

> The primary factor in all this is the process of hybridization…the mingling and borrowing which created something not quite African, not quite western, but somewhere in the middle (1997, p. 54).

The 'something' in the middle that Haupfleisch refers to is much more than an arbitrary form. According to Balme (1999), syncretism in the religious context is a development over time that has been influenced by cultural factors. The syncretic process of combining two or more forms, belief systems, traditions and identities, results in a new and unique constellation of human expression. When this expression manifests through performance, identity is also performed.

A pastor or an evangelist from a ZCC must first baptize any person who wishes to become a member of the church. The act of baptism is symbolic; the initiate washes away all their 'sins' of their previous life so that they can enter the church community pure, cleansed and saved from their past wrongdoings. Once baptized, a person is considered a new member of the church, a new person with a new identity: that of a Zionist. The initiate 'receives the Holy Spirit', a new religious identity, through the process of baptism (Anderson, 1991).[7] The ritual of baptism is therefore a rite of passage where a transformation occurs. Anderson writes:

> For many of the Pentecostal and Zionist church members, baptism is the only way to become a member, to identify with that church and its teachings and therefore to be 'saved' (2002, p. 157).

[7] The existence of the Holy Spirit is very real for the Zionists. The centrality of the belief in the Holy Spirit as both an entity and an experience is a central reference in verbal religious expression amongst the Zionists. Consequently this report will make generous use of the words 'Holy Spirit' whilst acknowledging that this term is potentially contentious to some readers.

Once a person has been baptized, they will be issued with a church uniform that is considered sacred and holy. The church uniform is a powerful symbol of Zionist identity, and when first worn by its members, is one of the first performances of expression of their new identity. I will revert back to the importance of the uniform and the ways in which it is 'performed' at a later stage, but for now the intention is to emphasise the notion of the *performance* of Zionist identity.

Hauptfleisch (1997) distinguishes eight separate and distinctive categories of forms of performance in South Africa. These eight categories are: 1. Indigenous, traditional, contemporary – 2. Indigenous, contemporary, communal – 3. Imported, Western, communal – 4. Indigenous, Western, communal – 5. Imported, Western elite – 6. Indigenous, Western elite – 7. Indigenous, 'alternative' Western – 8. Indigenous, hybrid.

Although these categories exist alongside one another, they overlap and elements of each can be found in the other (Hauptfleisch, 1997). In terms of the syncretic nature of the ZCC rituals, Hauptfleish's categorisation of performances provides a useful insight into understanding some of the facets of traditional African performances (category 1) that have been carried over and integrated into the ZCC services (category 2), and acknowledges the imported traditions and belief systems of early twentieth century Western culture (category 3), in particular Western Christian beliefs and practices, that have influenced the shaping of the ways in which the ZCC rituals have been structured. I will briefly consider the first three of these categories, as they are most relevant to understanding (and contextualizing) the syncretic roots of the ZCC rituals in South Africa.

The first category Hauptfleisch identifies he calls 'Indigenous, traditional communal' (1997, p. 49). This category 'represents the kind of performance traditionally associated with Africa: ritual dances and songs, ritual festivals and the like' (Hauptfleish, 1997, p 50). Within this category Hauptfleisch notes a few elements that are common to the 'old' forms of performances it deals with. Three are worth noting because, I will later argue, they can be observed in the performances of the ZCC rituals.

Firstly, Hauptfleisch notes the strong relationship between music and performance that can be widely observed in all South African cultures, especially the 'rhythmical base of traditional South African performance…' (1997, p. 51). The combined use of drums, song and dance is an integrated part of many traditional cultural performances in South Africa. One need only attend a traditional African wedding, for example, to witness elaborately choreographed dances, powerful singing and strong drumbeats. A second element noted by Hauptfleisch is that of the narrative and oral traditions, which he says are often integrated into performances or exist alongside dance forms. These include song, storytelling and even addressing an audience directly. Thirdly, the communal function of performances is noted, which serves to not only entertain the community, but also holds a social function that is '…generated through, participated in and shaped by the community and its needs' (Hauptfleish, 1997, p. 51). Communal identity is performed through the various media noted above.

The second of Hauptfleish's categories we will consider he calls 'Indigenous, contemporary, communal', and it is within this category the ZCC fall (Hauptfleish, 1997, p. 52). With the advent of Christianity through colonization in the early 20th century in South Africa, one of the (many) directions that the development of traditional performance forms took was towards a synthesis of both Western Christian belief systems and African religion and performance. These new performance forms, while retaining some of the traditional ritual and communal elements of their origins, began to orient themselves toward an incorporation of the western belief systems imbedded in Christianity. Dancing and singing are dominant components of the ZCC rituals (Hauptfleish, 1997). Glasser (1990, p. 3) says that:

> …In the early 20th century with the establishment of separatist African churches, not only were traditional musical structures introduced into hymn singing, but also traditional style dances were used as a form of communal worship.

Hauptfleish's third category (imported, western communal performance) is the 'Colonial equivalent' of the first category. It is the category that relates to the 'imported traditions of eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century western…culture' (1997, pg. 54). In particular to this report, the traditions of Christian practice and religious expression by the early westerners lent themselves to the joint formation of category two with category one (Hauptfleish, 1997). Identities imbedded in traditional African cultural expression merged with

those in colonialist Western cultures, resulting in a separate identity that reinforced and shaped the evolution of performance through these new impulses.

2.5 Contemporary syncretism

The syncretic nature of the ZCC religious rituals has already been mentioned. From a historical perspective, these processes of syncretism seem fixed in the past and static in the present. Schechner says that the process of hybridizing performance forms '…is open-ended; change is always occurring (2003, pg. 251). Coplan (2003) has presented an essay on his preliminary findings of religious rituals that take place in sacred caves in Badimong, on the Lesotho-South African border, where the syncretic process thrives, in which the ZCC are participants. He says that the ZCC have held informal ceremonies in this place since the 1970's. According to Coplan:

> Every form of local belief from pre-Christian Basotho divination to mainline Protestantism and Catholicism is not only welcome but mixed together at Badimong, and ritual forms can switch among them instantaneously, according to the plan or temporal progress of a celebration or even the spiritual transports or inclinations of individual celebrants. Two churches of very different persuasions can hold service together to broaden and intensify their range of spiritual energy…(2003, p. 982).

Coplan's insights have implications for questions of identity in the ZCC church. If identity is a construct of how beliefs within the church are enacted, are these identities then compatible with similar but different beliefs, and if so, how is the enactment of these beliefs changed in the syncretic context? Coplan points out that the process of 'mixing' results in participants combining materials of performance. For instance, clothing, beads, cosmetics, dance styles, languages and ritual music from different participating groups are combined in ritual performances. This would indicate that for the ZCC, the forms and styles of ritual performance they employ are compatible with other belief systems and visa versa. The implication is that identity within the church that is expressed through actions and symbols in ritual participation is temporary and transitory. I will explore this possibility with regard to the ZCC. However this example serves to validate the assertion that Zionist identity is not fragmented, and may further contribute to the formation of new identities through syncretic process.

2.6 Conclusion

The historical merging of two different cultures has influenced the Zionist religious rituals. On the one hand western Christian doctrines arrived in South Africa with the early missionaries. On the other hand, traditional African modes of expression were incorporated into the religious activity of the original Africans who embraced Christianity. Zionist religious performances are not syncretic, but are informed by syncretic processes found in the performative dimension. Accepting the autonomy of Zionist performance forms in the light of syncretic histories, Zionist identity is seen to manifest through performance and spiritual activity. The next chapter explores more closely the dynamics of performed identity.

CHAPTER 3 – IDENTITY AS PERFORMED

Praise the Lord!

Praise the lord! Praise God in his temple! Praise his strength in heaven!
Praise him for the mighty things he has done. Praise his supreme greatness.

Praise him with trumpets.
Praise him with harps and lyres.

Praise him with drums and dancing,
Praise him with harps and flutes.

Praise him with cymbals.
Praise him with loud cymbals.

Praise the lord, all living creatures!
(Extract from Psalm: 150).

3.1 Introduction

The Zionists often reference the above extract from the Bible. They interpret it as an invitation to pray to God in any form that they please, and to 'praise him' with 'drums and dancing'. 'By means of performance' the Zionists mark their identities (Schechner and Appel, 1990).[8] This chapter intends to contextualise the research within the parameters of the relationship between identity and performance. Identities are seen to occur in the context of religious performance process and this chapter deepens the view that the Zionist church services are performances of a religious sort. The notion that Zionist church services are a form of performance containing an element of theatricality will also be introduced through the theatre metaphor. Through applying the theatre metaphor I intend to emphasise the performative elements of the ZCC services and acknowledge my position as an outsider with a theatrical background.[9] In other words, I intend to view the Zionist church services as a form of religious performance that has

[8] 'By Means of Performance' is the title of a volume edited by Schechner and Apple, (1990).

[9] The word 'performative', along with performativity, are central terms in performance theory and are 'used loosely to indicate something that is "like a performance" without actually being a performance in the orthodox or formal sense (Schechner, 1999, p. 110). As Schechner himself admits, they are difficult terms to pin down as they can be applied to an unlimited array of contexts in which performing occurs.

aesthetic impact; it can be seen, heard and felt. [10] Another important consideration included is that of how the ZCC performances display cultural content through the church services. The connection between culture, performance and identity is briefly explored.

3.2 Performative identity in the ZCC services

ZCC services take place in specific, spiritually charged situations and the performance manifestations of identity are determined by the context of religious practice. The task of discovering why participants come to believe in what they do, and why they express their beliefs in specific ways, was made easier by asking them about their observed actions. Participants were able to relate their actions to specific rules, expectations or prescribed functions of various roles that they inhabit, and identity is seen to be embedded in the performance of their actions. Identity is a construct of the form of performances and the performance of these forms.

ZCC identity, although separate from profane manifestations of identity, do not occur in isolation to the world beyond the context of the religious domain. They are connected in many ways to the greater social context through the people that participate in the church services. The performance manifestations, and therefore performed identities, are undoubtedly influenced by the experiences of church members as they go about their social lives. As mentioned earlier, the scope of this report does not allow a consideration of these secular influences, and while they are acknowledged, the ways in which identities are performed and made manifest in the spiritual context, regardless of the roots of these identities, remains the focus.

A useful approach to understanding the nature of the ritual performances of the ZCC, and how identity is manifested through behaviour, is offered by Schechner (2002) in a model representing seven overlapping functions of performance. All performances, he maintains, serve certain functions but the exact functions they serve are difficult to identify. Schechner (2002) maintains that very few performances serve only one or two functions, but rather that

[10] The word 'aesthetic' is understood to be that which is experienced through the senses, and therefore the sensory impact is considered an integral component in the way in which identity is performed in the ZCC services.

the functions of performances overlap and that rituals tend to serve the greatest number of functions compared with the commercial domain of performance.

> A Broadway musical will entertain, but little else…a charismatic church service heals, entertains, maintains community solidarity, invokes both the sacred and the demonic, and, if the service is tolerable, teaches (Schechner, 2002. p. 38).

Where the primary intention of a commercial performance is to entertain, the element of efficacy (effecting change) is dominant in ritual performances (Schechner, 1999). Ritual performances serve the purpose of effecting a change in the participants or in the situations in which participants exist. When changes in people or situations come about as a result of ritual activity, and therefore changes in identity, efficacy has occurred (Schechner, 1999). In the ZCC, one of the primary intentions behind their ritualized services is to effect change through healing, and most activity is centered on achieving these types of transformations (Anderson, 1991).

Performance is 'always for someone, some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance even when, as is occasionally the case, that the audience is the 'self' (Carlson, 2004). If identity is relative to an 'audience', or an 'other', an observer, then identity could be seen not as a construct of only what is being observed, but how that which is being observed is being interpreted and read. Furthermore if this 'other' (audience) is observing itself, as Carlson points out, then the distance between self and other exists not in a physical sense of two or more separate people, but in the sense that one is conscious of oneself performing and can witness this performing of self. If 'self' can be conceived of as a personal identity, then the notion of the witnessing of self implies a separate aspect of this identity, one that is doing the witnessing. On the one hand the performer is involved in action, on the other hand the performer is also aware of 'self in action'.

Carlson (2004) identifies three broad, basic concepts of performance. Firstly, he mentions those performances that display the use of skills. Secondly, he refers to performances that display recognized and culturally coded patterns of behaviour, and thirdly, those that emphasize degrees of success of an activity. The ZCC church services fall under the second of Carlson's conceptualizations of performance. Neither the use of skills nor the measure of success is an

immediate or important characteristic of the ZCC services. Instead, church members display behaviours that they are familiar with and recognise. The inherent meanings and purposes of these behaviours are embedded within the intentions behind the forms of behaviour during the church services. These intentions, coded in the cultural tradition and rationale of the church services, manifest themselves through the performance medium.

3.3 The dramatic metaphor

The term 'performance' is probably the most commonly understood as that which exists in the theatrical or dramatic encounter. However, the academy over the last few decades has spawned a much wider conceptualization of what constitutes a performance.[11] Carlson (1996, p. 4/5) says that:

> The recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behaviour raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as "performance," or at least all activity carried out with a consciousness of itself.

Applications of the term 'performance' have grown and have spread its 'umbrella' from the theatrical stage and widened to the life stage. Although theatre itself is a mirror of life, the theatrical metaphor is a popular application and analytical tool of social activities among performance theorists.[12] In the theatrical situation, performers take on superficial roles and characters in order to enact these roles through performed behaviour. By assuming a new role, even temporarily, the locus of *performed* identity shifts from the personal identity of the actor to the actions and behaviour of the character being portrayed by the role. Once the performance is complete, the theatre performer will 'de-role' and his/her behaviour and actions will once again form an extension of personal identity.

Mckenzie (in Bial, 2004, p. 27) speaks of the 'theatricalisation of ritual' and the 'ritualisation of theatre' as the conceptual meeting point of cultural performance theory. He maintains that:

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[11] See Schechner (2002) for an excellent introduction to Performance Studies. Broad and differing theoretical viewpoints on performance studies are well introduced.

[12] See, for example, Turners Social Drama Model, where he equates the dramatic analogy and the sequence of the theatre performance with a four life phases of crisis and resolve of this crisis (Turner, 1982).

…The field of cultural performance and the paradigm of performance studies cannot be *thought* (his emphasis) without citing theatre and ritual. They remain, as it were, specific and historical touchstones for any general theory of cultural performance (Mckenzie, in Bial, 2004, p. 26).

When considered through a performance lens, the ZCC rituals are extremely theatrical to the outsider in that they contain elements of a theatre spectacle. Although entertainment is not an intention behind the ZCC rituals, church members nonetheless express their deep enjoyment of being involved in the process. On participant put it: 'I love to sing!' By entering into the circle stage and the spiritual context, the Zionists take on the role of church member and are willingly consumed, in varying degrees, to the performance activities characteristic of the church service. The ZCC church services occur on set, circular 'stages', there is the use of 'props', music, singing, dancing, verbal expressions, organized patterns of movement, a 'script' contained within the ritual framework, and the inclusion of the outsider/researcher is considered to constitute an audience. Not all participants in the ZCC services are equally active in the proceedings all the time. Oftentimes it is very evident that some members are merely standing on the edges of the circle and observing the proceedings, taking on the role of active observer more than active participant. They are all nonetheless both observers and participants. While the theatre performance can be regarded as an aesthetic manifestation of an artistic process, the ZCC services are cultural manifestations of a religious belief system. ZCC rituals are performances not in the theatrical sense of 'pretend' or 'superficiality', but in the sense that they are enacted through the same media found in a theatrical performance. However, objects in the ZCC rituals take on significance beyond their token value when 'performed' within the contained intent of spiritual expression (Schechner, 1999). One difference between the two performance domains of theatre and ritual lies in the differing functions and intent of the performance itself. Although the specific intentions behind a theatrical performance and the ZCC services may be different, the characteristic structure of both performance forms, as alluded to by Singer below, can be seen to be similar.

Singer maintains that a cultural performance 'has a definitely limited time span, a beginning and an end, an organized program of activity, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance' (see Bell in Bial, 2004 p. 89). Here Singer (2004) is applying the theatre metaphor to cultural contexts, and his description can easily be applied to the ZCC

rituals. All the elements he describes above are evident in the ritual performances of the ZCC services. As performances, the ZCC rituals can be highly entertaining to the outsider, perhaps due to the relative strangeness and unfamiliarity of the performance itself. More so, the drumming is highly engaging, the clapping and slapping sound in rhythms, and the melodic songs, chants and hymns are rustic but beautiful. The incorporation of sticks into the energetically charged circular dancing creates added visual patterns of movement as the Zionists move in circles. The dancers display facial expressions of focused intensity as they whirl in ordered patterns, directed by rhythmic and repetitive drumbeats, the singing of hymns and clapping. While they whirl and dance, their long uniforms lift at the edges, and the entrancing spectacle begins to move on its own.

3.4 Performance of culture

Schechner maintains that anything can be studied 'as' performance. However, something 'is' a performance:

> …When historical and social context, convention, usage, and tradition say it is. Rituals…and the roles of everyday life are performances because convention, context, usage, and tradition say it is (Schechner, 1999, p. 30).

In other words, the cultural practices in specific contexts of a group or individual may be considered to be performance due to relative prolonged continuation of various activities pertaining to that culture. Although the Zionist do not call their church services a performance - they call them church services – they refer to elements of the service using performance terminology such as; 'dancing', 'singing', 'music', 'listening' 'clapping' and 'moving'. The Zionists do not attend church to observe as an audience. Instead they attend to be part of the service, to participate in the performance that is expressive of their religious culture. Although this still does not show *who* or *what* actually 'says' that the ZCC service is a performance. Considered through the lens of the researcher, however, the church service *becomes* a performance, while remaining a church service. It is both a religious event and a cultural performance.

This research considers issues of identity to be closely related to cultural affiliation and the ways in which people perceive of their own cultures and that of others. In terms of the aspects of culture that can be observed, certain sets or norms of behaviour in given contexts may reinforce affiliation with a collective of people. Turner (1980) says that: 'Cultures are most fully expressed in and made conscious of themselves in their ritual and theatrical performances (in Schechner and Appel, 1990, p. 1). Beliefs, traditions and other aspects of a culture that identities are constructed from are sometimes expressed through actions. Furthermore, identification with various norms of behaviour includes the ways in which these acts are organized and arranged, symbols that accompany behaviour and verbal acts such as sound and speech. Culture itself can be defined in terms of observable acts that are easily accessible (Bell in Bial, 2004). Fabian says that '…cultural relations are better understood when tensions, even contradictions, between action and acting, life and theatre, are acknowledged' (in Bial, 2004, p. 176). In other words, culture can be perceived to be that which is performed. Bell maintains that:

> …People think of their culture as encapsulated within discrete performances, which they can exhibit to outsiders as well as to themselves…Cultural performances are the ways in which the cultural content of a tradition is organized and transmitted on particular occasions through specific media. Thus, these performances are the specific and particular manifestation ('instances') of culture…(in Bial, 2004, p. 89).

Zionist church services are highly organized and follow very specific structures, routines and time frames. The services occur primarily on Sunday afternoons, whether they are 'normal' services or a variant ritual such as those marking the death of a members' spouse. 'Specific media', such as sticks, uniforms and bibles, are used to facilitate the religious performances. Fabian maintains that 'much of cultural knowledge is performative…' (in Bial, 2004, p. 176). The Zionists display their religious culture through ritual performance, and in so doing, the Zionist mark their identities.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown various ways in which the Zionist religious practices can be conceived of as performances. A brief consideration of an ever-expanding panorama of performance theory was intended to place the ZCC services in the middle of this theoretical continuum. The

ZCC services were identified as specifically ritual performances, and these rituals were exposed as expressions of a religious culture. The chapter that follows explores further the context within which identities are performed in the ZCC church services, namely the 'ritual frame', and will move towards grounding this research in the domain of ritual performance.

CHAPTER 4 – THE RITUAL FRAME

In order for groups to know themselves and others, they must announce their identities. They do this by engaging in social practices that highlight their symbolic place in the world...Identity is often constructed through a series of ritual practices: special performances call attention to group attributes and to the sacred essence of the group itself (Hermanowicz and Morgan, 1999, p. 198/99).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the ritual process in the ZCC services before contextualizing this within characteristics of ritual activity. Notions of identity as they exist in the ritual frame will be explored along with concepts related to ritual processes and behaviour. In particular, Turner's (1982) concept of 'liminality' will be employed as the seedbed of emerging identities. More specific encounters and situations will be given throughout the report, however the description below serves to provide an overview of what a typical Zionist church service on Melville Koppies might look like. The performances of spiritual identities are seen to occur within the ritual frame. These identities are marked by behaviours leading up to ritual activity, and also by behaviours during ritual proceedings that construct spiritual identities.

One of the questions related to how identity is performed, relevant to this research, is that of whether identity, if performed in liminal conditions, only exists when it is performed. And if so, then are identities continuously changing, being re-shaped, re-invented or integrated into other identities? The notion of 'liminal' identities, identities that are fleeting and temporary, will be introduced. Some of Schechner's (1999) concepts related to ritual; that rituals result in 'transformations' and 'transportations', are also seen to bear an important influence on notions of identity formation.

4.2 Spiritual spaces

The west side of Melville Koppies is scattered with a number of concrete, circular shaped platforms that have been built by the local authorities for the Zionist to conduct their church

services on. These simple platforms can be likened to a performance stage where the Zionists perform their rituals. Indeed these are sacred physical spaces that hold ritual activity contained within a demarcated area. Such performance spaces relate to the word 'temenos', which refers to the classical Greek circular stages considered to be sacralised enclosures (Bowie, 2006). Shrubs, trees, long grass and rocks surround these circular spaces on Melville Koppies. The close proximity to nature emphasizes the separation from social contexts and the concept of a sacred domain applies well to the ZCC circular spaces. From an African point of view, Chinyowa (2005, p. 27) says that:

> In the African theatrical tradition the idea of the *temenos* is closely associated with the cultural philosophy relating to the 'magic circle'. In both African material and non-material culture, the circular shape…symbolizes the people's sense of beauty, nurturance, growth and community.

This indicates that there may be a culturally informed degree of conscious choice in the shape of the circle as the Zionists' space of worship. Furthermore, the significance of the circle is that it is symbolic of an African tradition of togetherness (Chinyowa, 2005). When I questioned the ZCC why they worship in circular patterns, a common response was simply, 'that's how we worship'. Nonetheless, the circle in the ZCC acts as a symbolic and physical container where collective Zionist identity arises *through worship*, and from which spiritual identities are performed. There is only one entrance into these circular stages, and bushes and rocks surround the remainder of the circumference. Before entering the circle, all members will remove their shoes and place them on the ground outside of the circle. In this action, respect is being shown to the spiritual context of the proceedings. One church member explained during an interview why he thought people remove their shoes, with a reference to the Bible:

> In my point of view, I think there is passage in the Bible; when God was talking to Moses the tree was burning… God said: "take your sandals off, because you are standing on holy ground". So I think they take it from there, if you are coming to a holy place you must take your shoes off.

This removal of the shoes is also a symbolic act that reinforces the notion of 'sacred space' and contributes to the separation of mundane ordinary life from the ritual space. It can also be interpreted as the symbolic removal of profane identities that exist in social contexts. The idea of the removal of such identities reinforces the notion of the addition of new identities as

represented by, for example, the church uniforms, the spiritual performance 'costumes'. By stepping into the circle, the Zionists move from the profane into a sacred and liminal condition.

4.3 Describing a typical ZCC service

Upon entry into the circle, all the men will position themselves seated on the left and the women on the right. Apparently this is done primarily to discourage any distractions that might occur by mixing male and females in the circle. Behaviour changes upon entry into the church circle and the normally accepted ways of behaviour outside of church are contained and informed by the formality of entering the ritual circle. This was simply expressed by one member when she said that: '…you behave differently in church, you become different…' At some point, a song or hymn will begin that marks the beginning of the church service. Often a male voice begins followed by the beautiful harmonies of female voices. After this initial song, the secretary, who is a normal church member, reads out loud the 'Ten Commandments' from the Bible. Following this the pastor will deliver a sermon, normally while standing and holding the Bible. I have not seen any pastor actually read from the Bible, instead the females in the congregation take turns in reading various passages from the Bible during the sermon. The time frame of the sermon is approximately thirty minutes, during which one or two men have been warming up the leather skins of their drums outside of the circle next to a small fire that has been made.[13] When the time is right, the skins are tight and the sermon is complete, the drummers will enter the circle with the drums strapped around their bodies. A song will then follow, and according to a church member who said, '…the song first, the drum will follow', it is the song or hymn that determines the rhythm of the drumbeats. This is the start of worship time and it is marked by all members standing up in preparation for the more embodied performance of spiritual expression.

The latter part of the church service after the sermon will continue for at least an hour and a half, sometimes more than two or three hours depending on the day. While two or three men beat their drums, a chorus of song and hymns penetrate the rhythms, causing some congregants

[13] According to the rules and agreements made between the ZCC on Melville Koppies and the authorities responsible for the maintenance of the Koppies, fires are not allowed unless they are made on top of metal bases that have been provided. While I have seen these metal bases lying around, I have never seen them being used.

to begin their typically circular dance movements around the perimeter of the concrete circle. The patterns of movement are very precise and the dancers (or worshippers) seem to move in and out of different tempos and patterns together, and with ease. This indicates that the dancers are familiar with set movement patterns scripted into the ritual frame. Typically, the dance patterns consist of the dancers moving in circles in one direction while simultaneously spinning on their own axis and moving in the opposite direction. The movements are repetitive and beautiful to observe. These patterns will then change with different hymns and changes in drum tempo and rhythm. Together with the drumbeats and the song, the dancing patterns begin to activate the dancers into heightened states of activity. The dancing, says another Zionist, 'gives me power'. This is manifest in sporadic encounters between members over the course of the church service, where sticks are brandished, dancers fall over each other, random and breathy sounds erupt from foaming mouths, and hands are placed on the identified 'sick' church members in the circle. These congregants take on the identity of the 'sick' through the way they position their bodies, their physical situation in the centre of the circle, normally seated in the centre of the circle surrounded by the circle dancers and sporadic ritual activity. Should they achieve transformations and healings during the church rituals, they move through the identity of being 'sick' and exit with a new aspect of personal identity characterized by having been healed. The causes of sickness range from physical ailments, to emotional problems, to the presence of malignant spirits that are haunting the sick person.

During this heightened activity, the prophets, apparently empowered with the Holy Spirit, 'see' what is ailing the sick through visions, and what the sick will need to do in order to be healed. These prophets will relay these visionary messages they receive from the Holy Spirit during a concluding segment of the ritual. After the drumming, dancing and singing has ceased, each prophet will take turns to speak to one or more of the sick people and relay their insights to them. They might do this also by laying hands on the sick person while they speak. Normally the remainder of the congregants will stand around the circle, like an active audience, and listen to the prophesying that is happening, which may continue for lengthy periods. Remedies include the wearing of particular items of clothing, prescribed activities such as fasting, or the consumption of various herbs or medicines (Makhubu, 1988). During the healing prophecies, some members may exit the circle thereby exiting the ritual frame, both physically and

emotionally. At this point the church service winds down until all have exited the circle and the structures of normal life once again begin to dictate behaviour and actions.

4.4 Ritual and Liminality

Schechner says that:

> Many people identify ritual with practicing a religion. In religion, rituals give form to the sacred, communicate doctrine, and mold individuals into communities (2002, p. 45).

Rituals are highly context based and driven by the common intentions, the conscious or unconscious agreements made by the participants (Schechner, 1976). They provide an orderly structure to the lives of the participants, a familiar framework that guides their experiences to uncertain outcomes (Bial, 2004). Rituals are also based on repetition of fixed procedures that provide a point of reference to evaluate experiences that arise through participation (Schechner, 1976). Barbara Meyerhoff writes that:

> Rituals are reenactments, not original occurrences, and they are repetitive and highly stylized. These features control and delimit as well as inspire and arouse strong subjective states (in Schechner, 1997, p. 249).

Each Zionist Church service follows more or less the same procedures each Sunday, and these procedures are characterized by similar manifestations, such as the circular dance movements. The element of repetition exists in the drumming and clapping, in the continuous motion of the movements, and these experiences occur following a set routine prescribed in the ritual proceeding. It is within this repetitive frame that the conditions for deep subjective states arise. During these subjective experiences, participants enact all kinds of behaviours that occur from within the ritual frame, behaviours that might result in transformations of individual identities. In the ZCC, a member who enters the circular space as a 'sick' person, might be healed and exit the circle a transformed person. It is difficult to determine the degree to which the transformative experience of being healed has on any individuals' behaviour or self-perception. My primary informant claims that he became a Zionist believer after his ailing hand was healed during a church service. He said that his hand had been very painful for years, yet after one

ZCC service when he was prayed for, he lost the pain in his hands. That a transformation of sorts has occurred implies a shift in identity.

In ZCC religious performances, it appears that all activity is contained within a ritual framework, including prescribed 'rules' and established patterns of behaviour. Schechner writes that:

…Religious rituals are clearly marked. We know when we are performing them (2002, p. 45).

Although there are prescribed rules for behaviour in the church that are determined by ritual proceedings, any behaviours that are born out of the ritual frame are sanctioned and accepted as part of the healing process. One member explained that when the Holy Spirit is guiding action, then '...you can do anything. You can jump, cry…anything.' The paradox here is that prescribed behaviours give birth to irrational and random actions and situations that would not be acceptable outside of the ritual frame. In terms of prescribed behaviours, the form of the frame facilitates a freedom from this form. In these situations participants are freed from the structures and norms of ordinary life that influence, determine and dictate behaviour. Turner (1982) calls this liberation 'anti-structure' and applies the term to ritual experiences.

According to Turner (1982), anti-structure occurs during ritual proceeding in a phase he calls 'liminal', where participants in ritual experience a temporary suspension of structural norms. Turner's concept of 'liminality', which he developed from van Gennep's theories on rites of passage, points to the possibility that performed identity may emerge from within the ritual frame that guides the activity of the action (Turner, 1982). One of Turner's attempts to describe liminality is that of:

…a fructile chaos, a fertile nothingness, a storehouse of possibilities, not by any means a random assemblage but a striving after new forms and structure, a gestation process, a fetation of modes appropriate to and anticipating postliminal existence (in Schechner, 1997, p. 12).

In another article Turner says that in the liminal period, subjects:

> …pass through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state…liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremony (in Bial, 2004, p. 79).

The notion of identity weaves its way in-between the above two descriptions of liminality, and is prone to change in the liminal phase precisely due to the temporary nature of the liminal condition. The pre-liminal phase exists prior to ritual activity where participants are still bound by the rules of normal life. When participants enter into the liminal phase, in the case of the ZCC by removing shoes or by entering the circular space, they begin to shed the constraints of normal life and therefore also the constructs of profane identity. In the ZCC members refer to each other by either the terms 'brother', 'sister' or by their positions in the church, such as 'pastor'. No longer are notions of identity bound by everyday life, but by the spiritual context of the church service.

Schechner says that in the liminal phase, 'a person is "betwixt and between" social categories and personal identities' (Schechner, 1999, p. 57). However, these conditions of liminality that are supposedly non-ordinary experiences are familiar to the Zionists as they can be observed during most church services. Mckenzie refers to the normative state of liminality as the 'liminal norm' (Mckenzie in Bial, 2004, p. 27). The performance of liminal identities is therefore also considered normal in the context of the church service. To the church members, behaviours that occur as a result of ritual process are part and parcel of every Sunday event. To the outsider, these same behaviours seem striking and out of the ordinary. Spiritual identities that are performed during church services are familiar to church members, but unfamiliar to the outsider.

Liminal experiences imply a transformation from one state to another, a 'transition between two states of more settled or more conventional cultural activity' (Carlson, 1996, p. 20). In the ZCC services, the mysterious domain that exists in-between these two states is not bound by any fixed or preconceived ideas of behavior or experience. In these contexts behaviour is driven by irrational forces, such as the Holy Spirit, that do not express profane identity, but those that exist in the spiritual context. These behaviours are enactments of identities, regardless of the nature of these identities. This may seem to be a rather flimsy account of the nature of identity. However, even if a person is rendered 'identity-less' by the liminal

condition, as Schechner (1999) maintains, then this condition can also be considered an identity, albeit a temporary identity. If identity is performed, and if this performance arises in the temporary 'fertile nothingness' of liminality, then identity is also temporary during the liminal phase. The post-liminal phase marks a reincorporation into profane life and the regular norms once again apply (Turner, 1982). It is characterized by a reintegration, a reincorporation of the participant/s back into everyday normality (Turner, 1982). At this time people assume their regular identities once more and leave behind their spiritual identities that remain dormant potentials in the ritual frame.

4.5 Communitas: a collective identity

Turner (1982) suggests that the liminal experience of participants may lead to a social bonding, a feeling of communitas between the participants. This subjective state "may occur not only within isolated individuals but may be expanded beyond the individual to include small groups and even individuals and the greater community" (Meyerhoff in Schechner, 1997, p. 248). These subjective experiences may be 'contagious' and passed onto observers rendering them participants in the process. In this way the experiences of individuals become shared with all the participants through the act of witnessing, and participating in that act. The notion of Zionist identity is reinforced when communitas occurs due to the occurrence of a group solidarity that results from this condition of heightened social cohesion (Schechner, 1999). When I asked one of the Zionist the vague question, 'Who are the Zionists?' he answered with emphasis: '*We* are the Zionists.' During communitas, identity dominates at the level of the group and collective affiliation. I asked one pastor if it was his responsibility to care for the sick members of the church. He responded by saying:

No it is not my responsibility; it is the church's responsibility. If someone is sick then each and every one is hurting.

This expression of shared and empathic responsibility implies a cohesive ethos in the ZCC church community where everyone in the church is interconnected to the subjective experiences of each other. The combined actions, behaviours and emotional states of all the members in the church manifest as a performance of Zionist identity on a collective level.

4.6 'Transformations and transportations'

The liminal condition may result in transformations of individual identity. On one occasion I witnessed a young boy being officially incorporated into the church during a special ceremony that was held specifically to welcome him into the church as a fully-fledged church member. From that day on I always saw him wearing his church uniform. In this case, he experienced a permanent change in identity, a 'rites of passage' where he became a member of the church and his personal identity became characterized by being a member of the ZCC church (Turner, 1982). Although Turner's concept of liminal experiences applies primarily to permanent changes in status and identity such as the example of the little boy, the conditions of liminality that occur in the ZCC rituals provide the 'fertile' ground for the emergence of spiritual identities. These identities either come to life through performance in the ZCC services, or new and temporary identities fill the 'void' created by the stripping, or de-roling, of profane identities. Some of these identities are embedded in roles and statuses, such as that of 'pastor', or 'evangelist', or 'drummer', that come to life only during the church service. More than simply a role or status, these spiritual identities determine how church members perceive each other and themselves, and through this altered perception brought about by the ritual frame, behaviour is affected and identity is performed through this behaviour.

While some participants of the ritual process experience a permanent transformation of personal identity, others may experience a temporary transformation of self-perception and reality, only to return once again to their original statuses. Schechner (1999) calls the latter case of temporary transformations, transportations. He says that:

> A person can fall into a trance, speak in tongues…and "get happy" with the Spirit – experiencing overwhelmingly powerful emotions. But no matter how strong the experience, sooner or later, most people return to their ordinary selves (Schechner, 1999, p. 63).

People experiencing transportations (temporary transformations) will return to the original state from which they left. However, a transformation, whether permanent or temporary, has implications for shifts in identity. The term transformation implies something completely new, something that replaces the older version of whatever it is that is being transformed. The term transportation similarly implies that the locus of identity is temporarily found in an 'other'

domain. Conditions of transportation and transformation, in the context of ritual activity, refer to both physical movements and psychological shifts and altered states of consciousness. As identity is determined by modes of perception, a shift in the mind state of an individual may lead to non-ordinary modes of behaviour typical of the liminal condition. Altered identity is performed through these changed behaviours. In the case of transformations, these changes in identity are permanent and the behaviours that accompany these new identities either change or they take on new meanings. With transportations, altered identities and the corresponding changes in behaviour resume their original, pre-transported states.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has suggested a foundation for further exploration into the notion of temporary identities, or liminal identities, that arise during ritual activity. The ritual frame is constructed from the prescribed and repeated patterns and proceedings of behaviour that occurs during ritual time. In the case of the ZCC, the metaphor of the ritual frame extends to the physical circular stages upon which religious behaviour takes place. Within and upon this spiritual container held together by the ritual frame, spiritual identities are constructed and performed. The incorporation of spiritual objects into the ritual frame, the subject of the next chapter, results in symbolic significance of these objects and the behaviours associated with them.

CHAPTER 5 – WEAPONS OF THE SPIRIT AND SYMBOLIC PERFORMANCES

…Like the elements used in healing, ordinary items…such as sticks, crooks, a staff, robes, drums and uniforms all have a very deep religious or theological significance...These are said to be spiritual weapons to fight evil (Makhubu, 1988, p. 85).

5.1 Introduction

It is easy to notice the Zionists in the area of the Melville Koppies on any given Sunday afternoon. Against the backdrop of the shrubs, trees and rocky paths on the Koppies, the Zionists can be seen casually walking and talking, while congregating in their respective church circles. There is a sense of togetherness and community in the Zionists as they prepare to participate in their sacred rituals. Like soldiers preparing for battle against the enemy, the Zionists, bearing their 'spiritual weapons' and clad in church uniforms, gather in numbers on the symbolic battlefield; the circle in which the service will take place, to ward off evil and sickness through 'spiritual warfare'. Everything the Zionists do during their church services, it seems, they do with the intention of invoking the Holy Spirit. The belief in the devil or Satan as a malignant and evil spirit is present in the ZCC. Through the Holy Spirit the Zionists seek and pray for victorious outcomes by defeating these evil forces.

Bibles, uniforms, sticks, drums and other various items form a part of the whole 'picture' that makes up the Zionist visual profile. These items are the 'specific media' that are used as tools and 'spiritual weapons', where inanimate objects become antennae to 'receive' spiritual power to fight evil. In this chapter, issues of identity in relation to the performance of these items, through both the act of simply wearing or carrying them, and through the utilisation of these items during ritual proceeding, will be explored. The focus on objects as spiritual weapons will be limited to a consideration of the uniforms, sticks and drums. These implements seem to be the most significant and pronounced of the symbolic objects used in ritual performance. All of

them affect the behaviour of Zionist members in ways that bear a direct influence on their spiritual expression.

Makhubus' above analogy of these items representing spiritual weapons, and therefore the Zionist as being warriors, will be employed throughout this chapter. Following this analogy, ritual behaviour in which spiritual weapons are present will be referred to as 'spiritual warfare'. In this way the notion of performance being symbolic is also suggested.

5.2 Symbolic behaviour

Even before the church services have begun, the Zionists are already performing their culture, their religious identities, through what they wear and through the objects they carry with them. Spiritual weapons reinforce Zionist spiritual identity in various ways when present in conjunction with behaviours and acts that have religious significance pertaining to the belief system of the Zionists. In this way, identities are considered imbedded in symbolic performance.

If we are to agree with Judith Butler's assertion that identity is performed, and that behaviour and actions are forms of performance, then the effect that symbols have on behaviour is also a construct of identity (Butler in Bial, 2004).[14] In Zionist rituals, the symbolic significance of spiritual weapons is emphasized through behaviour, and this behaviour is at times also symbolic. On one occasion during a church service, two dancing men, upon reaching a heightened moment, began to pound the ground with their sticks around three 'sick' people in the centre of the circle. With the drums thumping and the clattering sound of the sticks being beaten on the ground, a dramatic encounter was created. The spiritual warriors, through the symbolic act of beating their sticks on the ground, were engaged in spiritual warfare by warding of evil, sickness and pain from the identified 'sick' people. But the stick did not beat itself on the ground; it was through behaviour and action that the stick was a part of this symbolic encounter.

[14] Judith Butler (1956 -) is an American philosopher and performance theorist. Her work has focused on a theory of gender identity performativity, where she maintains that gender is not a biological condition, but a performed act. For more on Butler see Schechner (2002) and Bial (2004).

5.3 Meaning and symbolic performance

Inanimate objects may hold a certain inherent symbolic quality in themselves, but they come to life when observed through and in conjunction with action. Symbols, which if carried or worn by a participant in religious ritual, become symbols being 'performed' and thus also their 'meaning' is being performed. A staff or stick is no more than a piece of wood, but when it is carried and held like a weapon, it immediately takes on the symbolic quality of a weapon. Spiritual weapons serve as powerful symbols and not as practical weapons. According to Geertz, symbols can be defined as 'any object, act, event, quality or relation, which serves as a vehicle for a conception – the conception is the symbol's "meaning"' (1973, p. 91). The symbolic message of 'stick as weapon' is communicated through action: it is performed. When a stick is 'performed' in conjunction with other symbolic items, such as the uniform, it serves to further articulate the symbolic quality of these other items. The notion of a spiritual warriors' uniform becomes much more striking when observed being performed with a 'stick as weapon'.

A performance is more than just it's form; it is also the meaning that the form intends to convey (Peacock in Schechner and Appel, 1990). Hidden beneath the form of ritual performance lies meaning, and it is through behaviour that this meaning emerges and comes alive (Peacock in Schechner and Appel, 1990). Action in Zionist rituals can be considered an attempt to communicate meaning. Combined with symbolic objects, action helps to 'ignite form with meaning' (Peacock, in Schechner and Appel, 1990, p. 208). The repetitive, circular dancing patterns of the Zionist are one of the ways in which they worship. But the dance form takes on a different meaning when the dancers are carrying sticks as they spin in circles. The inclusion of sticks in the movement conveys the meaning of a spiritual war especially since the Zionist know the sticks serve the purpose of fighting evil intent. Often during the services, the circular dances erupt into symbolic fighting where the sticks are swung in the air, beaten on the ground and sometimes also used to hit other worshippers.

However, the reading of this 'meaning' is not always possible to the outsider. The interpretation of certain behaviours needs to be decoded through familiarity of why these behaviours occur and what the intentions of these actions are. A member of the ZCC will

therefore identify with certain symbolic actions due to their understanding of the ZCC religious culture. As members of their congregation, their identities have been constructed from accepted patterns of behaviour and reinforced through their own participation in their religious practices.

5.4 Communication of identities through symbolic performance

'Rituals are communicative performances' (Myerhoff in Schechner, 1990, p. 246). 'Spiritual weapons' are symbols that facilitate communication between church members and the divine entities of the Holy Spirit and God. As spiritual warriors of the Zionist army, their armory facilitates members achieving spiritual contact with divine entities. Rhythmic drumbeats, the brandishing of sticks and the wearing of the uniforms help the Zionist to communicate with the Holy Spirit. Drumming creates the momentum to dance and move, which often results in behaviours that are explained by reference to the Holy Spirit. A reverend articulated this when he said: '…if you dancing, you see others are falling down you can communicate with the Holy Spirit'. An elder female member said that her uniform gave her 'power', a reference to the intoxicating effect of the subjectively experienced presence of the Holy Spirit. All members questioned referred in some way to the sticks as tools for spiritual communication. The stick is a prayer instrument that, through its symbolic significance, facilitates worshipers in their various prayer activities. Prayer is a form of communication and performance, and most activities during church services are considered prayer or worship. All the objects included in religious practice have been prayed over and are in turn used as prayer tools. Their 'everydayness' is washed away by sacred intent through prayer. By using them as personal prayer tools, each individual in the church establishes a sacred connection with the objects. When used in conjunction with behaviours, they become a part of the construction and performance of individual and group identities. In this way identities are *communicated* through performance.

The forms of communication that arise through ritual performance are particular to the ZCC. It is common to see some of the healers beating, tapping or touching the sick with their sticks during ritual dance. Those who have been identified as being sick, or who have voluntarily come forward with this temporary identity, normally sit on the ground in the middle of the spinning dancers. The Zionist claim that whoever is beaten will not feel pain provided that the

Holy Spirit is guiding the action. Through the dancing, members enter altered states where they are able to receive spiritual visions about the sick. Explaining the onset of visions, one prophet explained that:

This thing, it comes from a vision to you, even if you got a pain…then that vision tells you that there is something here, or that person is sick. Like a snake you can see it.

These visions often result in symbolic behaviour. One prophet referred to his stick as an 'injection', stating that when he hits a sick person he is 'injecting' them with spiritual healing. He does this due to a prophetic instruction he receives from the Holy Spirit, which is made manifest in the use of his behaviour and use of his stick. In this case the act affirms individual spiritual identities, that of 'prophet'. We will proceed by looking more closely at how Zionist identities are affirmed through the performance of spiritual weapons.

5.5 Church uniforms

Perhaps the most significant religious item used by the Zionist that contributes to the construction and performance of their spiritual identity is the church attire. I asked one congregant how she felt when she put her uniform on; she replied by saying ' we feel Holy!' For men, the uniform typically consists of a long robe that hangs down to the ankles. Normally a thick belt made from the same material is also worn. Women don a similar basic uniform, but often wear an additional headpiece and an extra thin clothe over the shoulders and on top of the uniform. In reference to the church uniform, and citing a reason why uniforms are worn by the ZCC, one of the members referred me to a verse in the Bible:

Awake Awake, O Zion, clothe yourself with strength
Put on your garments of splendor… (Isaiah 52:1)

It may be argued that this verse is a metaphor and that the word 'garments' might refer to an attitude or personal characteristic. Zionists however, translate the Bible quite literally (Anderson, 2000). The verse seems to be interpreted by Zionists as an instruction to wear a garment that will aid them in their spiritual activities and warfare against evil. It is considered a sacred item to the Zionist. The Zionists uniforms are perhaps the most identifiable and distinguishable visual symbol in their spiritual armory. Simply by wearing the uniform, their

collective identity is performed. But the uniform also serves as a symbol of mutual affiliation with other members, and provides a sense of belonging to a particular congregation. The uniform sometimes includes a thick belt with the name of the congregation inscribed in bold clear letters on the material. This belt is either worn around the waist or hangs around the neck as a scarf. The basic uniform is a deep blue for men and mostly white for woman. One congregant explained: 'The white for woman, the blue one for men; the white one is according to the prophecy, once they tell you that you have a problem in your tummy or something, or you have evil spirits follow you, you have to buy a white one…it will cleanse all that'. All the members receive their uniform upon being baptized. The 'rites of passage' that is typical of baptism is immediately followed by the initiate receiving a uniform. Like a new warrior preparing for battle, the initiate is handed the garments of a new identity, which signifies affiliation with a Zionist congregation.

Besides the deep sky-blue and white uniforms, some members wear other colours too, mainly either white, red, green or yellow. Any deviations from the basic blue are due to a prophetic instruction from the Holy Spirit that is given by another member. Through the ritual proceedings, fellow church members relay 'messages' they receive from the Holy Spirit instructing particular members to wear a particular colour for an indefinite length of time. The Zionists believe that by wearing a coloured cloth or 'belt' around a particular ailing body part, for example, will result in healing (Anderson, 2000). Some of the members have been wearing coloured uniforms for more than ten years already. In a sense, the coloured uniform becomes a part of the wearer's spiritual identity. Apart from the basic blue, which symbolizes membership with the ZCC, church members do not feel that the colours themselves hold any spiritual significance. Instead the colours will assist in the healing of the wearer. The Zionists I questioned did not know why any particular person has been instructed to wear a particular colour. Instead the symbolic significance of the wearing of a colour and not the colour itself is what matters most.

> I have the impression that the prescription of colours…serve as manifestations of willingness to heed the commands of the Holy Spirit, rather than a specific value being attached to the particular colour (Deneel in Anderson, 2000, p. 164)

There does not seem to be any particular pattern or hierarchical rule determining when certain colours are worn or by which members. In terms of identity, the specific colour of the uniforms worn plays little role in differentiating one member from the other. Instead, it is due to the fact that just because a colour other than the basic is being worn that it becomes apparent that the wearer has received a spiritual instruction to wear that particular colour for specific purposes. Thomas maintains that the 'colors are a sign that unites ritual participants into a particular family of believers' or congregation (1999, p. 5). By wearing certain colours, a spiritual groups' identity is also performed. Through receiving instruction and the act of wearing a different colour, 'divine' acknowledgement reinforces spiritual affiliation and participation.

The church uniform plays a role in changing peoples' perceptions of themselves in the church. Almost every person questioned indicated that they felt different in some way, or like a different person when they put the uniform on. One man said: 'Even if you watch me on my face when I touch my clothes you can see that this person is different'. The uniform holds a spiritual power for church members. Wearing the uniform is seen as a means to receive the Holy Spirit. Even though a person is a member of the ZCC beyond the Sunday service and during their normal everyday lives, when they put on their uniform and arrive at church, many respondents said that they feel like a different person. An example is the following response regarding the question of the uniform by a female church member:

> …When I put on my uniform I leave everything. The time I put on the uniform is the time my mind enters the church…I become a different person because the way I was doing before changes, everything, then I look different…

This response also indicates a psychological shift of attitude, self-perception and behaviour through the symbolic notion of 'entering the church' when the uniform is worn. This female church member claims to become a different person because of the changes in the way she does and sees things, changes in the way she behaves. Even though the claim to 'become a different person' is metaphoric, the implications of becoming a self-perceived 'different' person are that a shift in identity takes place. Therefore, if behaviour is affected by wearing the church uniform, then it follows that the resultant change in identity also changes a person's behaviour.

The change in behaviour expressed by this respondent is also tied to the functions that the uniform is seen to serve; that of receiving power from the Holy Spirit for healing. The uniform facilitates healing by moving the wearer toward an 'anti-structural' psychological state, through permission to behave in a different way, one that is sanctioned by the uniform (Turner, 1982). This change in behaviour, regardless of why the change has come about, is necessary for the ritual church service to proceed according to prescriptions of the ritual frame. It is not possible at this point to identify which behaviour changes can be attributed directly to the uniform because there are other behavioural influences involved, such as the sticks. However, it is possible to maintain that the church uniform plays a role in shifting identity, and in the performance of this shifted identity, through behavioural changes.

5.6 Staffs and/or sticks

The symbolic significance of sticks as spiritual tools in ZCC rituals has already been mentioned in this chapter. Although women sometimes carry sticks, it is mainly the men who carry them, and they do not put them down at all during the service. In my observations I did not see any females carrying a stick during church services, yet I was told by one of the pastors that it would be perfectly acceptable for a female to carry a stick. The stick is therefore an extension of gender identity performance in that primarily male church members carry them. Furthermore, while most men carry sticks, only a few will actually brandish them or hit others with them. Those who do, normally recognized prophets, explain their actions saying that they were 'full' of the Holy Spirit.

The Zionist often say that they receive 'power' from the sticks, which means that such use of the sticks allows the Zionists to gain access to spiritual strength found via the Holy Spirit. When in these intoxicated states, behaviours and actions are influenced and formed around the use of the sticks to a large degree. The sticks create sound, movement and visual punch and are physically felt by those sick people who may receive a spiritual beating. The sick in turn react, apparently not due to pain, but as a response to the implications of being hit as an identified sick person in that moment. There does not seem to be any clear objection to being hit, instead the event is understood as a normal and necessary part of the healing process. In this way, spiritual identities are articulated through the behaviour that the sticks facilitate.

The staff is a powerful symbol of spiritual power for the Zionists. More than a symbol, it is also a prayer tool used to help invoke the Holy Spirit for healing purposes. A pastor explained that he holds his stick when he prays even when he is at home away from the church: 'Even when I am in my room I take my stick and pray, always praying with it'. This indicates that the stick exerts an influence on behaviour for some members, at least, outside of the church too, and therefore also indicates the significance of the stick as a prayer tool. One member explained: '…there were people in the Bible who were carrying sticks; when they went to pray they carry sticks so that is why we carry sticks…It is for praying.' However, in Zionist church services the conception of prayer is not limited to the conventional image of a person kneeling down on the ground with lowered head, although this occurs too. All activity is considered prayer and any use of the stick is also a form of prayer.

The sticks are consciously utilized in the patterned movements the Zionists perform. As symbolic spiritual 'props', the sticks serve the purpose of 'parting the water' to make way for the Holy Spirit.[15] It is a powerful spiritual antenna that helps its bearer to 'receive' the Holy Spirit. One member, a prophet in the NGCIZ, spoke of his stick as an 'injection' that is used to 'inject' people with the Holy Spirit and with healing. This 'injection' of Spirit manifests through performance in various ways: rhythmic tapping of the stick on the ground, random and sudden movements of the stick in the air, violent swings and impromptu 'stick-fights', and sometimes even stick bearers striking a fellow ritual participant, usually one who has been identified as either physically, spiritually or emotionally 'sick'.

Staffs are an essential complement to the church uniform in that they represent the spiritual weapons that are carried with the 'warriors' uniforms. These sticks are not arbitrarily chosen but are bestowed upon the receivers through prophecy or intervention by the Holy Spirit. One congregant said '…you cant just have it, they prophet you what kind of stick you must have…' Another echoed this when she said:

[15] The phrase 'parting the water' is a reference to Moses and the Miracle he performed according to the Bible. When Moses lifted his stick in the air, the sea parted.

The sticks you don't just go into the bush to get it. If you are suppose to carry a stick, the Spirit will come and tell you to find a stick, sometime the Spirit will tell you to put a cloth on the stick, a yellow or white cloth…for more power.

A pastor showed me his stick and then proudly rolled out a bright yellow cloth, which was attached to the stick. He had had this stick for seven years already and was told by a prophet to attach it onto his stick. He claimed that the yellow cloth helps him to receive the power of the Holy Spirit and that it helps him to do his spiritual work as a pastor. He was not the only member that had a cloth attached to his stick; a few other men also had similar cloth but of different colours and sizes. However, this pastors' piece of cloth was a personal part of his spiritual arsenal. Upon preparing for the church service to begin, he would proudly unroll the yellow cloth that had been wrapped around his stick. In this simple act alone his behaviour, and therefore also his spiritual identity, was influenced by this piece of cloth.

5.7 Drums and drumming

There are always a few men carrying drums before the church services. Typically, the drums are hand made with leather skins wrapped over a course wooden drum-like frame. During the initial sermon two or three men would remain outside of the circle and make a small fire. The drums would be placed with the skins facing the fire onto the ground. This was done so that the skins become warm and tighten resulting in a clearer and more consistent tone when played. Only a few of the men were responsible for playing the drums, an activity that they took great pride and pleasure in. However, any church member would be allowed to play should they be interested and able to do so. By choosing to be a drum player, for whatever reasons, the identity of these men is influenced by the task of the role. The performance of drumming is woven into their spiritual identity.

The drums play an integral part in the ritual services and also in the pronouncement of Zionist identity. From beyond the hillsides of the Koppies and where the church circles are out of site, the drumbeats of the services can be heard. If the uniforms are the primary visual indicators of Zionist identity to the observer, then the drumming is the primary element perceived by the ears. Comaroff says that: 'The pounding drum…declares the onset of the special work of ritual time and space…the drum is *the* signal of Zionist identity' (Comaroff, 1985, p. 230).

When the sermon is over and sporadic, soft singing or clapping begins, the drum skins are already warm and tight. The drummers secure the drums against their bodies with a thin strap attached to the drum. They enter the circle space and after a few moments begin to beat their drums. Often the rhythm is prompted by a song that the congregation has begun to sing, or from a clapping rhythm from one of the women. The beats are very repetitive and simple, but when two or more different beats are played together the rhythm becomes more complex. The sound invokes movement and before long the circular dancing begins.

The drums play an important role in the church service by establishing and maintaining the momentum for worshippers to project themselves and each other into trance states through performance. In these conditions prayer is taking place and behaviour is affected. The drumming directs much of the ritual performance and facilitates worshippers in prayer and spiritual activity. Movement is affected by the drums, as is clapping and other sounds made by the dancers. The drums evoke behaviours that texture Zionist identity in the moments they are performed.

5.8 The Bible

Many Zionist bring their Bibles to church. The Zionists explain their actions and beliefs with frequent references to the Bible, which is not only a powerful spiritual weapon, but also the sacred map on their spiritual journey. When the pastor delivers his opening sermon he always does so while holding the Bible, and will sometimes wave it around in the air when he refers to it. When a congregant reads from the Bible, as often occurs at any moment during the service and especially at the end of the service during prophesying, everyone else becomes still and focused on the words. The Bible is the physical key to spiritual knowledge and insights. Readings and verses from the Bible are interpreted more literally than in more conventional Christian churches'. This more literal approach seems to have influenced and guided the formation of the forms of worship and performance during the ZCC services (for example, see Psalm: 150 on page 37 of this report). The Bible also serves as a confirmation of the syncretic roots found in Christian religious doctrines followed by the Zionists. In short, the Bible is a primary spiritual tool and a prominent symbol of Zionist religious identity.

5.9 Conclusion

Without the weapons of the spirit discussed above, spiritual identities amongst the Zionist would manifest through performance in completely different ways. The uniforms, sticks and the drums together make up the spiritual armory that the Zionists bring onto the religious battlefield. They are symbolic items that project and facilitate the intention of prayer, worship and healing for the church members. These intentions result in both particular and spontaneous behaviour during ritual proceedings. The implementation of spiritual weapons and their particular purposes are prescribed according to the ritual frame, and the way in which they are used affects the behaviour of participants. This occurs through the sensory impact the spiritual weapons have, through the ways in which they induce altered states in the worshippers, and through their symbolic significance as weapons to fight evil. Spiritual weapons, by influencing behaviour and the way individuals see themselves and others, bear a direct influence on the performance form of spiritual identities in the sacred context of the church services.

Religious behaviour, however, is not driven by spiritual objects but by the overpowering influence of the Holy Spirit. The belief in Holy Spirit in the Zionist services is the invisible ingredient that feeds the ritual process with spiritual momentum. The next chapter explores the significance of the Holy Spirit in the Zionist services.

CHAPTER 6 – PERFORMING THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit gives people the mystical and second sense to see things, which is believed to come from the Christian God, and which in former times would have been a sign of possession by ancestral spirits alone; it is also the ultimate authority in divination, and the remedy for spiritual and physical sickness (Armitage in Anderson, 1991, p. 38).

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will initially focus on contextualizing the spiritual significance of, and exploring the role of the Holy Spirit in the ZCC. I will then identify certain behaviours and actions that arise as a result of 'powerful altered states' that are characteristic of possession and trance (Myerhoff in Schechner, 1990, p. 245). These shifts in consciousness are brought about by the experience of, as one congregant said, being 'in the power of the Holy Spirit'. The experience of the Holy Spirit in ZCC religious ritual is manifested through acts of worship, healing, prophecy, exorcism and speaking in tongues (Anderson, 2000). Such behaviours, born out of religious belief, can be attributed to a performed identity that is 'spiritually influenced'. Transformations of personal identity are connected to the experience of these spiritual activities.

> States of religious ecstasy, prayer, meditation, or…ritual-induced mystical experiences are pertinent to the question of transformation during performance…(Myerhoff in Schechner, 1990, p. 248).

The practice of fasting, a common preparation for spiritual activity among the Zionist, will also be examined. The notion of 'liminal' identities applies because the influence of the Holy Spirit on behaviour during ritual process is temporary, and behaviour 'normalises' once the church service has ended. If possession by the Holy Spirit is seen to alter self-perception, then identity is also altered.

6.2 Performing theology

Although this report is not focused on exposing any theological principles or underpinnings, it is impossible to ignore what seems to be a close relationship between theology and performance in African spirituality and in the ZCC religious practice (Anderson, 1991, 2000; Makhubu, 1998). 'Spirit type' churches such as the ZCC seldom have an explicitly formulated and formal theology that structures their services and the way in which they engage with their spiritual beliefs (Anderson, 1991). The centrality of the Holy Spirit in ZCC theology is *enacted* during church services, and members' responses to their religious beliefs are manifested through the performance of religious expression. The independent churches "…have little of an explicit theology…but they have a praxis and a spirituality in which theology is profoundly implicit" (Hastings in Anderson, 1991, pg. 33). Theology is expressed primarily as an experiential response to religious beliefs, as opposed to primarily a cognitive understanding. Belief is therefore highly *experiential.* A connection between belief and identity filters through the notion of performed theology. Religious beliefs evoke typical responses in the ritual frame of the ZCC, and these responses are aesthetic 'textures' in the collective profile of ZCC identity.

Theology, or religious belief, is expressed and made explicit through the performative dimensions of religious practice. In the African religious context, theology:

…comes to life in music and song, prayers and sacramental acts of healing and exorcism,
…liturgy and dress, church structures and community life (Carr in Anderson 1991, p. 33).

The presence of the Holy Spirit is seen to influence identity, especially in the way the Holy Spirit influences behaviour. This is apparent in the way the Zionists express a clear separation between traditional African religious practice and ZCC services where the two religious domains provoke very different responses.

6.3 The Holy Spirit and traditional African practices; 'water and oil'

Traditional African cultures are very familiar with the concept of the spirit world (Makhubu, 1988). The spirits of the ancestors are thought of as the Spirits of God, much like the Holy Spirit is considered to be in traditional Christian belief systems. Makhubu (1988, pg. 62) says that:

The world of the black person is the world of spirits. So believing in the Holy Spirit is not much of a problem. The belief in the Holy Spirit is a corollary to the belief in spirits of the ancestors.

This is not to say that ancestral spirits and the Holy Spirit is the same thing for the Zionists. In fact the Zionists make a clear differentiation between the two and in this way separate traditional religious practices from their church services. One congregant claimed that trying to combine the two religious domains was like trying to 'mix water and oil…they don't mix'. The Zionists I interviewed distanced themselves from traditional practices involving ancestral spirits and maintained that the Holy Spirit is not an ancestral spirit, but is an aspect of Jesus and God.[16]

However, the point that Makhubu (1988) makes is that the familiarity of super-natural forces inherent in traditional African culture influenced the ability of the emerging African Independent Churches to incorporate an experience of the Holy Spirit into their church services. Anderson says that: 'We may consider the African traditional spirit world to be the fertile ground that prepared the way for the 'coming of the Holy Spirit…'(Anderson, 1991, p. 51). In other words, an understanding and belief in the existence of the Spirit world in traditional African religious culture was possible to be transferred to the concept of the Holy Spirit in the ZCC.

The connection between culture and identity has been touched upon earlier in this report. In terms of identity performance, behaviours that are influenced by ancestral spirits relate to traditional African religion and cultural practices, whereas those behaviours that are attributed to the influence of the Holy Spirit arise from within the context of the Christian religious culture of the Zionists. The latter behaviours therefore express Zionist identity.[17]

[16] Most Christian based religions acknowledge unity in the Holy Trinity, which comprises 'Father (God), Son (Jesus) and 'Holy Ghost' (Holy Spirit) (see Morris, 2006).

[17] Makhubu (1988) does cite a few rare instance when Zionists will combine traditional practices with their Christian beliefs, and in so doing create they form hybrid spiritual practices. But he does emphasise that this is very rare.

6.4 The role of the Holy Spirit in the ZCC

Receiving the Holy Spirit, or Spirit Possession, is a fundamental practice in the Zionist church services and is central to the process of healing and prophesying (Anderson, 2000). Some church members refer to being 'full' or 'drunk' when in the intoxicated state (of being 'possessed') by the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the most commonly used word by the members to describe this state of being is 'power'. Any behaviour or action that cannot be explained rationally by the ZCC members is attributed to either the intention to receive 'power' or to the state of being in 'power'. Therefore, receiving the Holy Spirit is an endowment of power where the recipient performs extraordinary acts (of power) as manifested through speaking in tongues, visions, prophecy, healing and random, spontaneous behaviour due to possession by the Holy Spirit (Anderson, 1991).

One church member said that healing is very important in the church: 'the whole service is about healing'. The Holy Spirit is the primary 'ingredient' that enables acts of healing and other expressions of power to occur. All of these manifestations are highly performative and largely interactive for the congregants. Explaining how power works, one congregant said: 'To have power; if you lay your hands on someone who is very sick, they can be ok'. Other activities such as dancing, praying, clapping, drumming and singing serve the purpose of invoking the Holy Spirit. I call these activities 'acts of invocation'. At some point, these rhythmically driven activities result in the altered states of awareness described by the word 'power'.

However, the Zionists believe that the Holy Spirit is always present, not only during church services. One member explained that 'the Holy Spirit is always there, even if I am walking down the street, the Holy Spirit is there'. Therefore, the influence of the Holy Spirit renders behaviour not only an indicator, but also suggests a manifestation of the different *degrees* to which any particular church members are influenced by a deep subjective experience of this presence (of the Holy Spirit). These shifts in states of consciousness, or altered mind states, result in church participants assuming degrees of temporary identities. Transformations in consciousness also imply transformations in identity because self-perception is directly related

to consciousness: self-perception can only occur by being conscious of the self that is being perceived.

6.5 The possessed 'actor'

The deep subjectivity of shifts in consciousness presents a challenge to the researcher in trying to analyse and understand them with respect to identity. It is problematic to maintain that a non-rational entity such as the Holy Spirit can be seen to be 'present', and to maintain that shifts in consciousness have taken place through an interpretation of observed behaviour alone. Certain behaviours, coupled with personal accounts, may indicate shifts in states of awareness of participants, but religious experience is deeply subjective, as are spiritual identities. A thorough ethnographic study calls for the observer or researcher to come to these conclusions through first hand experience, a 'total involvement of our whole being' (Turnbill in Schechner, 1990, p. 51). In the case of this research, where religious phenomena were observed, I was not presented with an opportunity to participate directly in the ritual proceedings. I can therefore only speculate on the 'authenticity' of observed spiritual behaviour and the degree to which some of these behaviours were performances in the sense of being a pretend/theatrical act.

This leads to another question: To what degree are congregants' intentions similar in the Church services? Perhaps there are those who participate in the church services because of the enjoyment or the therapeutic effect of completely submitting to the intoxication of the process. Schechner (2002) suggests that: 'People enjoy giving over, surrendering to all-powerful forces, melding into the community, congregation or crowd' (p. 164). On one occasion I arrived in the middle of a church service and found two congregants balancing on branches halfway up a tree that was next to the circle. While the circular dancing continued, they engaged in a conversation of shouting and heavy breathing while perched in the tree. I noticed that many congregants were watching the two men. The event lasted at least fifteen minutes and was almost like a theatre performance of actors in trance. The notion of possession by the Holy Spirit, and the behaviours that result, corresponds to what Schechner (2002) calls 'trance acting'. He says that:

In trance acting, performers are taken over by non-human beings – gods, spirits, demons, or objects. Trance performers enact actions not of their own devising. After the trance is over an actor may or may not remember what she said and did' (Schechner, 2002, p. 163/4).

I do not doubt the spiritual authenticity of these two men but it is worth noting that another man told me he had never seen someone climbing up a tree before. It provoked me to question how often the Holy Spirit was *not* behind these types of manifestations, or whether congregants sometimes gave the impression that they were 'drunk' when they really were not experiencing an altered perception. One of the participants admitted that occasionally actions are faked. He claims that some congregants pretend to be intoxicated with the Holy Spirit and try to compete with each other through the most elaborate displays of spirit possession. In terms of identity this implies that sometimes congregants will become a 'character' in the drama of the ritual performance; their identity becomes the role they take on. Apparently however, these pretences are not common because, one Zionist told me, any person who is genuinely possessed with the Holy Spirit has the spiritual 'vision' to see through the act and expose the pretender. Nonetheless, any 'acted' behaviours would need to conform to some generally accepted range of actions that normally occur during the services and could still be recognized as manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

6.6 Dreamtime messengers

On one Sunday afternoon before the church services on Melville Koppies had started, and the Zionists were gathering in and around their circle, I had a very brief but very insightful conversation with three wise old Zionist men.[18] They had all been members of the church since the early seventies and were still devoted congregants. I asked them about various church behaviours that I had observed to try to understand the subjective experiences of church

[18] These old men were not members of the NGCZA but all belonged top three separate congregations on the Koppies. They were visitors to the NGZCA circle on that day. One was a pastor of his circle and the other two were also experienced and wise in the way of their church. They were introduced to me by Lucky who was eager for me to interview them because, he said, 'they have been around for a long time'. While we spoke several other men from the NGCZ agreed with what they had to say, nodding their heads and contributing at times. This confirmed to me that, although they were from different congregations, that their stories applied equally to the NGCZA. What they shared with me also corresponded to what several other members had said that I had interviewed on the subject of the Holy Spirit.

members who were ‘drunk’ with the Holy Spirit. Other Zionists who were gathered and listening met their explanations with unanimous nods of agreement and amusement.

One of the old men began by saying, ‘The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. You need to pray hard for the Holy Spirit to give you power’. He then continued to use a simple metaphor to explain how a person receives ‘power’ through prayer from the Holy Spirit. The spiritual connection between a ‘believer’ and the Holy Spirit, he said, is like a cellphone that is always switched on. ‘When the Spirit rings, you must answer’, he explained. He continued by saying that when one ‘answers the call’, the Spirit will send a ‘message’. In this message is the ‘power’ to see visions and prophecies, to heal, to exorcise, and to speak in ‘tongues’; a spiritual language. Speaking on behalf of the experience of the Zionists, the old man claimed that by receiving this power ‘…we become messengers of the Holy Spirit’. The role of the messenger, he added, is to do the work that the Holy Spirit instructs. On a different occasion a congregant said something similar regarding the practice of healing: ‘So the Holy Spirit tells you these things and you tell this person…you can touch where there is something wrong, and tell what that person must do’. When I asked the old man what the experience of receiving ‘power’ felt like, a second man explained: ‘It is like a dream’. The third old man added: ‘it is only possible if you believe it is…’

According to these three elderly congregants, a spiritual identity emerges - that of ‘messenger’ for the Holy Spirit - through belief, prayer and intention. The reference to the dream-like quality of their experiences indicates that receiving power from the Holy Spirit results in transformative states that are ‘like dreams’ (Myerhoff in Schechner, 1990, p. 245). Once the influence of the Holy Spirit subsides, the liminal identity of spiritual messenger falls away. In these dream-like states of consciousness, the temporary identity of spiritual messenger is performed in the actions and behaviours of those congregants who carry out the religious protocols prescribed in the ritual process. These protocols I call ‘acts of power’: actions and behaviour that are spiritually influenced. ‘Acts of power’ are manifestations of the spiritual messenger.

6.7 Acts of power

Perhaps the most significant moment in any Zionists life is when they are baptized into the church. This is normally done by immersion three times into water by an evangelist or pastor who conducts the ritual while praying out loud (Anderson, 2000). What makes the event so significant is that whoever is being baptized emerges with a completely new identity. This person is now considered a full member of the church and is therefore 'saved' from the mercilessness of demonic forces. Without being baptized a person will be unable to receive power from the Holy Spirit. Using the analogy of the old man; his or her spiritual antennae will not be set up to receive a signal without having been baptised. The act of baptism is an initiation into the church and the key to unleash the capacities to receive the Holy Spirit through acts of power. However, the experience of 'receiving' the Holy Spirit often requires some preparation, and the practice of fasting is one such process.

6.7.1 - Fasting and prayer

Congregants often refer to fasting as a common form of prayer. The practice is inspired by references to the Bible. One woman explained:

> That's the way Jesus was doing (it). He went for forty days and forty nights without food and water (interview).

As a form of prolonged and intense prayer for the Zionists, fasting serves the purpose of 'getting into the power'. Lewis (in Schechner, 2002, p. 166) maintains that trance states can be induced by such 'stimuli…and privations as fasting and ascetic contemplation'. The person fasting will normally spend anything from one to seven days in solitude on the Melville Koppies Reserve. Living the whole time in solitude, he or she will sleep on the reserve and will not eat or drink anything for the entire duration of the fast. Through focused prayer and concentration, the faster is rendered most receptive to the influence of the Holy Spirit. 'If you fast more the Spirit will come', said one congregant. Through prolonged fasting, combined with prayer, a person becomes spiritually sensitive.

The Zionists claim that when they end their fasts and come to church, they feel like a different person; a transformation has occurred. A pastor explained:

…Once I come (down) from there, ah, you can see now this man has changed. I can see anything; even if you think something bad I can tell you what you think (interview).

Another congregant, speaking about when he returns from fasting, said: 'if you see me when the Holy Spirit comes you will see this man is not Thaban (his name)'. In both of the above responses the congregants expressed an altered self-perception, and claimed that others also perceived a change in their identity too. Fasting prepares and enables the congregant to experience the Holy Spirit and to perform acts of power. One of these acts of power manifests by the congregants speaking in a spiritual language, called 'tongues' (Makhubu, 1988).

6.7.2 - Speaking in tongues

The practice of 'speaking in tongues' usually occurs during prophetic sessions where one or more of the congregants, sometimes all, will erupt into a nonsensical 'language' consisting of utterances, sounds and 'nonsense' speech. Schechner (2002, p. 223) describes 'tongues' as '…a direct vocalization of the divine that has no verbatim translation'. A pastor told me that speaking in tongues would only occur when 'you are in that power'. In Western Pentecostalism 'speaking in tongues' is usually the first indicator of the presence of the Holy Spirit (Anderson, 2000). In the ZCC, it:

…is used for the purpose of revealing the dependence of the speaker upon God. After speaking in tongues…the prophet usually relates in understandable language what he considers the Holy Spirit to be revealing to him (Anderson, 2000, p. 50).

Here again, the role of the spiritual messenger is activated. Members explain that their utterances are messages from God, and that the Holy Spirit is relaying these messages through them.

I often witnessed the Zionists speaking in tongues. Sometimes it would consist of whispers while they knelt down, indicating that it is also a form of prayer. During other times one or two members would be praying over the sick by speaking in tongues. Although I could not understand the utterances, it was clear that these were spiritually charged moments. By speaking in tongues the Zionists were '*doing* something' and therefore their utterances were

also a performative act (Austin in Bial, 2004, p. 147). Talking in tongues is also an act of healing and accompanies prophetic visions.

6.7.3 - Prophetic visions and healing

The Zionist claim that a person will be able to have prophetic visions after prolonged fasting for the purpose of healing. It is apparently also possible to attain this power through the different forms of prayer and worship that are characterized by all the performative acts this report has dealt with: dancing, singing, clapping, and drumming. However, fasting will result in the most profound visions due to the intensified physical and spiritual preparation over a relatively long period. I consider prophetic visions to be temporary shifts in consciousness. One prophet told me that congregants who have the power to see visions 'can see inside you, like a computer…the prophet can tell you that baby in your stomach is a boy or girl'. While he assured me that he *did* mean this literally, not all visions are about seeing; they are also about perceiving kinesthetically. Another prophet explained that when he has visions he is able to 'see' if a person is in physical pain. He says that: 'If a man his foot is paining then I just touching his foot, or his head and I can see what is the pain' (sic). The reason for these visions is to determine what is ailing the sick person/s and therefore to be able to act or instruct appropriately for the purpose of healing.

Acts of healing manifest in a number of performative ways, most of which have already been mentioned throughout this report. Dancing, for example, is considered a form of healing by the Zionists as it facilitates healers to receive healing power. One Zionist indicated that while he is dancing he has extra sensory perception. He said:

> Sometimes I feel I can close my eyes but I see what I am doing, but my eyes are closed…and then I don't get lost, I don't bump into anybody. Maybe the spirit is leading me.

The hitting of sick people with sticks is a method of transmitting the healing power of the Holy Spirit. Exorcism of evil spirits is another form of healing. Sometimes the healer will hit a person because they are '…commanded by the Spirit to do that; if there is a bad Spirit on you…they will chase away the bad spirit by beating you and shaking you' (interview). The Zionists claim that they do not feel any pain from these beatings as they are of the Holy Spirit.

If a congregant who is doing the 'hitting' is not genuinely 'drunk', the Zionists say, then the person receiving the beating intervention would experience pain. The lack of pain from a beating is another indicator of an altered state of consciousness typical of right brain activity.[19] Schechner (2002, p. 165) says that: 'Stimulating the right hemisphere loosens a persons ego, dissolving boundaries between self and other, inner and outer'. The implications for identity of the 'dissolving boundaries between self and other' during ritual activity are that personal identities merge with others thereby momentarily rendering congregants open to take on liminal, spiritual identities.

The laying of hands is another common healing practice. Sometimes by simply touching the sick the healing power of the Holy Spirit is transmitted to the sick. The Zionists look to the example of Jesus who would lay His hands on the sick and they would be healed. They have many stories of 'miracles' and healings that they have experienced or seen through physical contact. One congregant said in an interview:

> I had a stomach problem for ten years. When I came to Zion, the pastor he gave water and prayed for me, and now I'm better. I have been healed.

However, the act of 'laying of hands' seems to occur with the intention to receive a vision from the Holy Spirit, in the form of an instruction to the sick person for future healing. 'If I am putting hands on you then the Holy Spirit tells me that this man is in pain and tells me what he must do', explained one church member. This instruction from the Holy Spirit holds the remedy for sickness. Such a remedy can be, for example, anything from drinking a glass of water to leaving a husband or wife. Anyone can be a healer in the church, as long they 'pray hard' and 'fast long'.

[19] The scientific rationale for trance states is found from a neurological perspective. The left side of the brain guides logical thought and speech, while the right side of the brain guides tonal and spatial perceptions (Schechner, 2002). In every day life the left side of the brain is dominant. Through stimuli found in the ZCC rituals, both hemispheres are stimulated resulting in changes of the nervous system and the body. Reduction of pain is just one of the common effects of the trance states that result from right brain stimulation. (Schechner, 2002). See also Turner (1982).

6.7.4 - Prophesying

Once the prophet has received instruction from the Holy Spirit or has seen the remedy needed for the sick through a vision, his next task is to relay these messages. The proper moment for this arrives towards the end of the service, once the heightened moments of spiritually induced performances begin to subside. The drumming, dancing and singing ceases, but not always, and the sick will gather in the centre of the circle. The prophets, seemingly still deep in trance states, begin to prophecy to the sick and relate their visions to them. Their speech is often fast and energetic and directed towards the person they are prophesying over. Sometimes the prophet will randomly move around, often a staff in one hand, as an accompaniment to his speech. Once he stops prophesying, another prophet might begin in a similar fashion until all the spiritual messages have been relayed. During this time the congregants stand or sit in the circle listening to the prophets 'stories'. Those listening can often hear grunts, 'amens' 'hallelujahs' and other expressions of response from their fellow congregants. The suspense, anticipation and physicality of the ZCC rituals are evident in congregants' heavy breaths and sweat-drenched uniforms. At this time the church service draws to close and the congregants casually leave the circle, put their shoes back on and begin to exit the sacred space of their ritual environment. As they walk down a small slope on the Koppies toward the profane, they leave behind the resonance of their spiritual identities in the sacred circle, and the cycle begins once more.

6.8 Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is central to the spiritual experiences of the ZCC. Their religious beliefs are made explicit through the various spiritual behaviours that typify the ZCC rituals. By invoking the Holy Spirit in ritual activity, the Zionists enter into altered states of consciousness that can also be called trance or possession. In these 'otherworldly' dream states and transformations they take on spiritual identities, especially those of messengers, who perform acts of power for the purposes of healing. Fasting, speaking in tongues, acts of healing, receiving visions and relaying these visions through prophecy are typical manifestations of the spiritual messenger.

CHAPTER 7 – CONCLUSION

7.1 General conclusions

This report has focused on exploring the various ways in which the Zionists of the congregation of the *New Gospel Church in Zion of Africa* (NGCZA) performs spiritual identities during church services. The Zionists' belief system was adapted from the religious doctrine of the Christian Pentecostal missionaries who arrived in South Africa in the early twentieth century. When African members broke away from missionary churches to form the first African Independent Churches, they experienced a liberation of spiritual self-expression. Zionist church services are rooted in syncretic influences. The historical fusion of Christianity and African expressive traditions resulted in syncretic processes, creating new churches, and as a result, new spiritual identities. These identities are located in the Zionists religious belief system and are made explicit through ritualized performance.

The physically demarcated, concrete circular spaces that the Zionist church services are held on are transformed during Zionist worship into religious stages. As participants in ritual process, the Zionists enact belief through interaction and collaborative engagement. There is an order of 'events', and the structure of the service is performed in circular, repetitive rhythms, but on a linear path that has a beginning and an end. Zionist identities, both personal and collective, are constructed through religious performance, and they emerge out of the activity that takes place during church rituals.

The 'ritual frame' is a metaphorical structure that holds the church proceedings together through prescribed protocol and repetitive patterns of behaviour. Within the ritual frame, conditions are 'liminal' and social norms are suspended. Spiritual identities emerge from within these liminal contexts and find expression through 'restored behaviour'. These identities remain dormant until they are constructed and given meaning and significance in the religious domain. In so far as identities that emerge through religious behaviour are concerned, they can be considered 'liminal' because they emerge during 'anti-structural' conditions. Some liminal identities emerge more spontaneously, while others are relatively stable and relate to religious

roles, such as that of 'pastor', which are manifest through specific functions inherent in these roles.

The research also demonstrated that experiences of the Holy Spirit during healing process are highly performative. Zionist performances include 'acts of invocation' – behaviours that serve a common purpose of invoking the Holy Spirit for healing. The Holy Spirit plays a central role in the construction of liminal identities. Zionists seem to enter into trance states, or altered states of consciousness through ritual process. Receiving the 'power' of the Holy Spirit, or becoming 'drunk' with the power of the Holy Spirit, indicates the activation of a liminal identity; the 'spiritual messenger'. A congregant who is under the influence of the Holy Spirit acts as a messenger, receiving and relaying healing instructions. These instructions manifest themselves through what I call 'acts of power' – healing performances driven by the power of the Holy Spirit.

7.2 Limitations

I did not extend the focus beyond the confines of religious space and context. However, as has already been acknowledged, the conditions and situations of congregants in their social dynamics cannot be separated from their religious experiences. Although this research has implied a separation of profane and spiritual identities, an exploration into the social identities of church members may reveal insights into a much broader relevance and influence of spiritual identities in the day-to-day lives of congregants. The experiences of church members during church services possibly impact on their social lives too.

Furthermore, the ways in which the Zionists are perceived by other established church denominations in South Africa, and by other people not connected to the church, needs to be addressed. This is because Zionist identity can be perceived from at least two vantage points: by the Zionists themselves and by non-Zionists. Identity may be that which is self-perceived and that which is received through external perception. Most likely, issues of identity deal with a combination of these double modes of perception. Since this research was primarily focused on spiritual identities that emerged and found expression during church services, the relevance and implications of spiritual identity within the broader context was consciously ignored.

7.3 Implications for methodology

Turner (1982, p. 89) says that: 'Perhaps we should not merely read and comment on ethnographies, but actually perform them' (1982, p. 89). Such a call for greater participatory methodologies has very direct implications for researchers located in schools of theatre and performance. Turner says that by engaging with other cultures through performance experiments and dramatic episodes, and reenacting these episodes, researchers can 'turn back to ethnographies armed with the understanding that comes from "getting inside the skin" of members of other cultures…' (1982, p. 90).

Therefore, one possibility for researchers who are grounded in theatre and performance would be to adapt observations of Zionist performances into a structured experimental process. The data could be organised into a 'playscript'. The performance forms of the Zionists could be borrowed and transported from their religious contexts onto dramatic spaces. Performances of ethnography would occur post data collection in an attempt to 'explore the interface between ritual and theatre…between social and aesthetic drama' (Turner, 1982, p. 90). This would result in a whole new set of data for further analysis that is rooted in a subjective reflexivity.

7.4 Concluding remarks

By performing 'acts of invocation' and 'acts of power', Zionists become physical mediums for the expression of the Holy Spirit. These expressions are made manifest through the vehicle of performance elements that typify ZCC rituals. Liminal identities arise during ritual performance through action and behaviour contained within the ritual frame. The ritual proceedings result in altered states of perception and experience in the congregants, and the deeper they are submerged in subjective experiences, the more blurry the borders between personal and collective identities. The simultaneous performance of Zionist cultural identity and personal spiritual identities are mutually reinforcing; they feed each other and evolve through each other. This dialectical relationship between collective and personal identities can filter beyond ritual performance into the broader lived experiences of the Zionists themselves.

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Appendix B: Interviews

Please note: Certain interviewees preferred to remain anonymous and in these cases the full names are not given.

The interviewer is referred to as A
The interviewee is referred to as B

Interview 1: The Bishop – Johnson

A Please tell me your everyday name
B My name is Johnson

A What is your position in the church?
B My position is a bishop

A What is the role or the function of the bishop? What is your duty?
B My duty is to look after the church, and to preach in the church, and to listen to all the people - to what they say, all the people what they want to say, all the church members they want to say, they allowed to say.
A So your role is to listen to everybody and help them when they need you to?
B Yes

A And is the bishop a position of authority, or is it like a father?
B Yes it is like a father, they call me father because I am the head of the church

A And what will church members call you, refer to you as? (To Lucky): What will you call the bishop in the church, will you call him father or pastor or ….?
B Lucky: He is the head of the church
A Yes but what will you call him? Will you say 'hello father' or hello bishop?
B Lucky: I say 'hello bishop' because there are some pastors who are under him.

A Bishop can you please tell me what is under the bishop?
B Yes, I have vice bishop, reverend 2, evangelist 3, deacon 2, preacher 3, and that's it.

A Does every circle have that number of evangelists, etc.?
B No, each branch is different.

A Bishop, how long have you been a member of the church?
B I can say 1964. I been bishop since 1995

A Bishop, please tell me when you are at church do you feel very different to when you are at home with your family?
B No, not so much because every time if I am at home I feel as if I am in the church because what is happening to me is I want my family to learn what it is I'm doing in the church so there is not too much different. What I'm doing is same as in the church

because I want to be the same, I don't want to be different. If you are the head of the church you must always be looking good, looking smart, looking you. They must look up to me what I am doing, they must learn how I talk. You see they must learn what I am doing - must learn everything about me. But what is happening to me, if something is wrong, I feel pain. If I'm talking to somebody and something is wrong I got a pain, this is not nice. That's why sometimes all these churches, they know that this man (pointing to himself) is a kind man. I am talking nice to them - I take them like I am. If I speak to them I want them to be happy. I don't want them to be sore inside.

A So if somebody is unhappy you feel pain?

B Yes I got pain because I don't know what is happening inside of him, but I want everybody to feel as I am.

A And bishop who is the ZCC? Who are they?

B Give me an example of your question

A Ok I'll try again. When the ZCC has a relationship with God and Jesus, and when you come to church you have communion with God and Jesus. How does the rest of society see the ZCC? How do your friends or family who are not in the church think of the ZCC?

B They just feel that church is good for them - it means the church is a Christian, because Christian is the son of God. They understand that a Christian is the son of god.

A Why do you go to church?

B Yes that's a good question. I go to the church because I love Jesus. I love God because God made me to be in this world, why and how. Because God brings me this world, God gave me easy feet – life - my friends pass away, so God leaves me in this world now to see what I am doing now in this world. My position to go to the church to pray and thank God that he gave me this chance to see what is wrong what is going on - so I love God with all my heart. That's why I feel good in church, that's why I love Jesus. I love God because I see now this world today, when I grow up it was not like this, it is changing.

A And for you when you are in the church, why is the service they way it is. There is a structure? (He answers yes). Why is it that way and maybe not another way? You come together and then you dance and there is a lot of focus on healing, right?

B Yes. I can try to answer this. Um yes of course when we read the bible it says every member they must come together and pray together so that they are in the steps of God - because those people like Paul they got together and taught what God is and what is love. That's why we meet and make dances.

A Any particular verses in the bible?

B What I know is Paul. when he come to people when they do something he say yes, yes, yes

(He gets a phone call in the car, he is late for the service and they are all waiting for him!)

Interview 2: Promise Ingomo

A How long have you been a member of the church?
B 7 years
I am a member of the NGCZ circle 28

A Why do you go to church?
B I go to church because I believe that God bring us to earth so we can do good things - if we don't go to church we do criminal things, that's what we believe in the bible

A When you are in church do you feel different to when you are away from church?
B Yes I feel different because when I am in church I must respect everybody I must do what the bible says, but when I am outside the church some people do bad things so I won't respect them because I am outside the church. Then if I am outside the church I must respect everything that is good.

A So do you behave differently in church?
B Ya, I behave differently
A So how do you behave differently?
B I respect them (fellow church members)
A How do you behave that shows respect?
B Depends what we do. If we are talking I don't raise my voice and I do things with respect

A What do you call people in the church?
B If he is a pastor we call him pastor. We don't call him by his first name because if we call him by his first name we don't show him respect. If he is not a pastor and just a member of church I can him my brother or sister, that's how we do it.

A Do you normally feel different inside you before church and after church? Does church do something to you?
B Ya
A What does it do for?
B The way I feel if I am in church I feel like another person, and if I am outside the church I feel like another person again, I feel like I am two different people.
A Which person do you like the most?
B Mostly I like if I am in the church because I feel I am good. I think everything goes perfectly.

A And there are different positions in the church?
B Yes
A And what is your position?
B Mabalane, if somebody is preaching so I will read the bible for him
A So you are secretary?
B Yes. We are two in circle 28
A On the top you have the bishop?

B Yes then mongamal at top then bishop then pastor then evangelist, then abathumyale - they preach most of the time, so they will change what they are doing those wrong things they are doing. After mabalane, after there is ogosa (usher)

A Is the usher the same person every time, is this person changing every time?

B No same person each time

A Please tell me why you carry this stick, what is the purpose?

B They say there were people in the bible who were carrying sticks, when they go to pray they carry sticks so that's why we carry sticks.

A So its for praying?

B Yes

A I see when you dance in the service you use it then?

B Ya I am holding on it so it can give me power

A What power is this?

B It is the Holy Spirit

A And why do you dance and why in a circle?

B We dancing for God, that's why we do, that's how we show God that we appreciate him

A But why in a circle?

B I don't know

A When you are dancing, how do you feel when you get power? What happens?

B Sometimes I change the way I walk, sometimes I feel I can close my eyes but I see what I am doing but my eyes are closed

A So do you close your eyes sometimes?

B Yes

A And you can carry on moving?

B Yes and then I don't get lost, I don't bump into anybody. Maybe the spirit is leading me.

A So everybody is dancing, what is the function, the purpose of that dance? Is there a function?

B I can say it is for healing also

A Have you ever been sick and then healed?

B Ya, it happens - sometimes you are sick and then you dancing. Even if you can't do anything but you can dance and not feel sick, but after you can feel sick again. Even if you are limping then you can dance without limping but after you feel the pain again.

A So maybe you can answer this in your own way, what does it mean for you to be a Zionist in the ZCC?

B I think as a Zionist, um not quite sure how to answer ….

A When you are dancing in the church dancing and moving, have you experienced going deep into getting "drunk"?

B Yes
A How does that feel?
B Sometimes you feel great about it, even if you are a little dizzy
A Why do you get "drunk" on the Spirit?
B That's the way the Spirit works so that we can see other peoples problems - so that we can help them - how we can heal then if they are sick. If I am drunk I can see if you are sick so I can see how I am going to help you.
A Is this called prophecy?
B Yes
A So do you call it "drunk"?
B I don't know the perfect word
A And when you are "drunk" do you feel you are close to God?
B Yes I feel close to God

A And what does this garment mean to you?
B It is like a uniform to pray, there are so many different uniforms just like a school uniform, that how we use it. This is for praying to God so you can't wear you expensive clothes. Sometimes in church if people are poor they get teased, also if something happens they do not damage their expensive clothes

A And when you put your uniform on, do you feel like you are the person who you are in church?
B If put my uniform on, I feel close to God. If I do not have my uniform, even if I am in the church I feel like I do not have those powers
Like the stick it helps to get power. That's it helps to get power

A And the drumming does that help you?
B It's like part of praying to God, it is how we use it

A If there was no drumming would it be different?
B Yes – it becomes different

A Thank you, Promise

Interview 3: Zim Reverend

A I have been watching you - what is your position?
B Reverend
A Is that different to a pastor?
B I think it is the same
A As a reverend, what is your role or duty?
B A reverend's duty is to looking for the church - everything in the church what is going on in the church, and sometimes the members. If a member has got a child, it is the reverend's duty to look after the child - if someone dies it is the reverend's duty to read the bible and tell the people what to do. If the reverend needs to he can appoint anyone to take the responsibility. In our church anyone can read the bible. In our church we do not go to school to learn to be a rev, no, you are appointed by the church. The people see that you are doing the right thing then they will appoint him.

A What positions are in the church?
B First there is the (shumaele)
A What is this?
B He is like the director in the church. Lots of responsibility, he must open the church and read the bible.
After that there is the evangelist - if someone comes to the church to join the evangelist will baptize people. After that you are promoted to deacon. The deacon must help people if they have nothing but giving church donation to these people, after that you are a reverend, so now I am a reverend.
After the reverend you become amongamale. We have 4 branches here in Jo'burg. In Zimbabwe there are 9 new gospel churches. So it's a big church.
We are supposed to meet together, the rev must discuss the church - how it is going; must we change something? - that is job of reverend. So even the rev must decide if we go to Durban (for example)
A So the reverend is a servant for the church?
B Yes. In other churches you are supposed to go to school to learn to be a rev. In Zionists we don't do this, we walk with church.

A What do the other church members call you?
B They call me reverend. Even here in Melville Koppies, they call me reverend.

A And when you are outside of the church do you feel different to when you are in the church?
B Ya there is a big difference when you outside the church
A So when you come to church and put on your garment, do you feel like something changes?
B Yes a little bit changes – it is not the same like during the week, I think that things is in the mind, so if today I focus in the church on Sunday I think of church only, but if I think of on Monday I think of work. But if somebody is sick, he, it worries me so that is the change I see

A You talk about if somebody is sick - is that your responsibility to look after the sick

people?

B No it's not my responsibility, it's the church's responsibility, if someone is sick then each and every one is hurting. If someone is sick they can be all right or they can pass away so that is worrying the people. I enjoy everyday if I come to the church and none is sick. I am happy if I see everybody is happy. If someone is not happy it worries me too.

A So if someone is sick what do you do?

B So you can go to that man at his house and can pray for him, we can do like that.

A Why do you play drums and dance?

B It says so in Psalm 150. It says you can dance, you hit the drums you can do anything if you keep it happy to God.

A How do you feel when you are dancing? Do you change?

B No only those who have the Holy Spirit - you can have a vision you see, so if you are dancing you see the vision. If you are sick or if something is coming to happen to you, so those people can talk to you and tell you this and this and this is going to happen to you

A I have seen you at church and it seems that sometimes you are drunk with the Holy Spirit?

B Ya – I'll be drunk with the Holy Spirit, or full in the Holy Spirit

A Oh so you call it full in the Holy Spirit. And what happens to you when you are full in the Holy Spirit, do you become a different person, how do you see yourself?

B I see myself as I usually am, only that that thing in the Holy Spirit is overpowering me because if I'm there in the church you can see anything to all the people, anything, you can see each and everyone's problem. So you can see this man has this problem, this man has this problem, etc.

A So what do you do when you are full of the Holy Spirit and can see problems/. What next?

B Next you tell this person what you see and tell them what they must do this and this and maybe they can come right

A And why do you move in circles?

B That is only dancing, the Holy Spirit is working, even if I am not in the church, walking in the road, the Holy Spirit is working. If I am walking, the Holy Spirit can show me anything, if I'm going one way I know, 'no this is not right I must go another way.'

A But when you are playing the drums and dancing does that invite the Holy Spirit in?

B No, that one is keeping the body healthy only. And to make you happy

A Can you become full of the Holy Spirit without dancing?

B Yes you can. So that dancing is easy to communicate with others who have the Holy Spirit. If you are dancing you see others are falling down you can communicate with the Holy Spirit.

A If I ask you what is your identity in the ZCC what is that?

B That's difficult.

A 100 years ago white people came from the U.S.A 100 yeas ago, is this correct?

B Our belief is that, as I know and reads the bible. There are certain people who must read the bible only - after the Jews came Jesus. He said all the people must praying God, then the fight between Jews and other people..
(He then cites that Jesus worked 6 days and rested on the last.)
Sunday is our big day!
Even if my boss asks me to work on Sunday I say no because this is my big day, just like my birthday, every Sunday reminds me of my birthday. If I'm not in the church, I'm not feeling good the whole week - there is something that is not right. On Sunday I feel stronger, every Sunday I feel stronger

A Can I ask you about the stick?
B In the bible says Moses must hit the sea and then the water is open and then he can cross.
A So is the stick a tool or a weapon?
B No it is not a weapon.
A Is it a weapon for the spirit?
B Ya - it is a weapon for the spirit
A Sometimes I see while dancing in the circle and you are hitting people. Why?
B The Holy Spirit can tell you are supposed to hit that person, if that thing or sickness can go away so that's why we hit someone all the times.
A Can you hit someone without being full of the Holy Spirit?
B No you cannot. Sometimes you can see 30 people carrying these things (sticks) and maybe you see only one or two using it, so those people who use it are full of the Holy Spirit

A Can woman use sticks?
B Ya - some woman carry sticks, some woman are full of Holy Spirit too.
A Are there different functions for men and woman? I see the woman sit on one side and the men on the other.
B No that thing are making separate. There is only for church policy to sit like that. But it's no problem to mix. But when it is time to teach about the bible and time to listen, if someone is mixing then they can grab another one and distract from the teachings

A Is singing important?
B Yes that is very, very, very important
A Do you feel different when you sing?
B If you starting to sing then you can see something changing now. The time when you sing is the time the Holy Spirit is working, so if you singing the Holy Spirit is working more and more.
Even if somebody is not from the church, if they begin to sing and dance and drum then you can see this man he like this things and he is happy.

A Can anybody prophecy?
B Yes, if you pray harder then you can, now there are only four or five of those guys. But I believe that the Holy Spirit does not discriminate. I believe that all people have the Holy Spirit inside, even if you are not going to the church.
A Thank you

Interview 4: Thembe Hlathlawe

A What is your name?
B Thembe Hlathlawo

A How long have you been a member of the ZCC?
B Since 1994

A Do you have other family who is part of the church?
B Yes, my brothers, sisters and children

A Do you love coming to church?
B Yes

A Do you sing a lot when you are at church?
B Ooh yes I love singing a lot because I'm there – I'm more happy than anywhere else singing

A And this uniform you are wearing do you wear this only at church?
B Yes
A When you put the uniform on does it make you feel different?
B Yes, now when I put on my uniform, I leave everything - the time I put on the uniform is the time my mind enters the church.
A Do you think you become a different person when you put on your uniform?
B Yes I think I become a different person because the way I was doing before changes everything, then I look different
A Why do you wear the uniform?
B To show people that I am a church goer.
A When you are inside the church, does the uniform help you in the service?
B Yes because it gives me power, you know when you like in civil cloths you don't feel like you are in church. People say hello because you wearing something different.

A Do you behave differently when you are in church?
B Yes you behave differently in church - you become different because some words you speak at home you cannot use at church.
A Such as?
B When I'm talking to my children I cannot shout I must speak calm. It's like the way Jesus was doing, even if he was cross he was soft. So we must respect the way he is.

(Friends arrive)

A Please tell me why does the church service happen this way, dancing in circles, singing and clapping?
B In the bible it says you can praise him the way you like unlike other churches. Like some or Seventh Day Adventist (SDA), they only stand, but here we feel free, you can run, do anything, you are free. In the bible it says we can praise him the way you

like so we follow that.

A So everything you do is praising Jesus?

B Yes to show you are happy to be in the church, happy to praise God

A Do you move and dance and sing to help people become healed?

B Yes

A How does that work?

B It's like getting more power when someone is praying you can also pray by singing - it makes other people feel better.

A What role does the Holy Spirit play? When you say power do you mean the Holy Spirit?

B Yes

A Do you have any particular role or function? Do women have a different function?

B Yes we are like church elders

A Everyone?

B No, you see us (all three women in the car), we are wearing these things (indicates embroidery rimmed 'cloaks')

A And how does that effect your participation? What is your role as a church elder?

B We are looking after the church or church members to show them how they must grow up in the church, how they must respect the church, how they must respect everything or whatever, even if some woman is giving birth, we are the ones who go and see the child and circumcise.

A Oh really the men and the woman?

B Yes. That is what we were doing today.

A Isn't that painful?

B It is not like that the practical way – it's like the oils then we burn those things and put the child on the smoke, like steaming.

A What is that for?

B To show that this child is from which church

A So it's a spiritual anointment?

B Yes if we don't do this, then that child will become sick or whatever.

A Why do you clap in church?

B To motivate those who have got the Spirit to see what is happening in the church

A And the songs they are Christian hymns?

B Yes, and they make the Spirit come if you sing the songs

A And the singing and the drums dancing and clapping all help the Spirit come?

B Yes

A If someone is sick do they go into the middle of the circle?

B Yes and we pray for them

A Why do the men carry the stick?

B That is the sign from the time of Moses in the bible the men were wearing white and carrying the stick. That stick I'm sure is for the Holy Spirit , its gives them power to

pray

A Where in the bible does it say this? What verse is important?

B Isaiah 52: it says wake up wake up, wear your cloth and have more power to praise God. And the sticks you don't just go into the bush to get it. If you are supposed to carry a stick, the Spirit will come and tell you to find a stick. Sometimes a Spirit will tell you to put a cloth on the stick, a yellow cloth or white cloth

A And how will you know to use that stick or cloth?

B The Spirit will tell you, the Spirit will come to somebody to tell you

A And why will the Spirit come and tell somebody that you need a stick?

B For more power

A And ladies (to the two in the back), do you feel different when you put your uniform on?

B Yes, we feel respected, we feel holy!

A What does that mean to feel holy? How does that feel?

B Just to be near God, now I am not doing bad things, I am in the right way, I am being guided by the spirit whatever I do - I am not embarrassing the church

A And who are you when you wear the uniform in church? Who are the Zionists?

B We are

A And who is we?

B I am.

A And why do some people sit in the middle and then some men come and hit them?

B They are commanded by Spirit to do that, if there is a bad spirit on you so they will chase away the bad spirit by beating you and shaking you

A Is it painful?

B No, even if they hit you, you don't feel pain

A Do you get filled with the Holy Spirit?

B Yes she does but we don't (they laugh)

A Why?

B I'm sure she becomes more holy, she prays harder. Also she fast more, if you fast more the Spirit will come

A Why is that?

B That's the way Jesus was doing. He went for 40 days and 40 nights without food and water.

A What happens?

B You can feel if somebody is sick, you can touch where something is wrong, and know what that person must do. So the Holy Spirit tells you these things and you tell these person.

A Are you healers?

B We are church elders and we are healing as well

A And when you are not wearing your uniform are you still a healer

B Yes because you can help other people by praying for them. If I don't do this I worry.

Thank you for coming to our church everyday

A You like that?

B Yes we like to see you around

A Do you think the others like this?

B Yes, you see if people see this it is nice to be a Christian, we love what we are doing

Interview 4: The Pastor and His Wife

A Please tell me you name
B Siphus Inkoma

A What is your position in the church?
B I am a minister
A Is that the same as pastor?
B Yes it's the same

A And how long have you been in the church?
B Since 1977
A Wow that's a long time
B Yes it's a long time
A And how long have you been a minister?
B I think now its from 1998 – ten years

A What is your function/role duty in the church
B My duty is to talk with people - if there is something wrong in the church they call me to talk to those people and to see what's wrong there and teach them how they must do as a Christian people
A So, your job is to help and guide church members?
B Yes
A Now for example when you are not in the church, do you still feel like the minister and the pastor?
B Yes I always feel like that
A Why?
B Because this thing is in my blood. I always think about God everywhere I go - I just think about God and other things in church and to explain other things in church. My mind is on the church all the time. And the church makes me happy - Yes very happy because there is no violence in the church

A And when you go to church on Sundays do you feel very different to normal?
B Ya even my body changes.
A When does it change?
B When I touch my clothes it changes. Even if you watch me on the face when I touch my clothes you can see that this person is different.
A How do you feel different? What changes?
B I don't know it is something like Spirit - I don't know where it comes from
A What does it feel like?
B How can I explain?

A So the garment and the stick, when you take these things you feel different?
B Ya it gives me power
A Even when you are not on the koppies?
B Even when I am in my room I take my stick and pray, always praying with it
A So why the stick? What is it for?

B That stick you can't just have it, they prophet you what kind of stick you must have, it in not the same, the other they just take any stick. My stick the prophet has two things that are different that the prophet tells me must have.

A What is different about your stick?

B Mine has got a green string that is tied two sticks, and somebody told me to have that stick with a yellow flag.

A What does the yellow flag mean?

B Its means your power wants yellow things, if your power wants a white or green one, your Spirit works.

A How does the prophet know that you must have this yellow cloth?

B This thing it comes from a vision to you, even if you got a pain or something inside you like a something in your stomach, then that vision tells you that there is something here or that person is sick - like a snake you can see it

A Wow. So how does that person get the vision? What does he have to do to get the power to have the vision to see?

B The other people they stay 7 days fasting, the others 10 day or 3 days then you have that Spirit

A When a person gets a vision can they see?

B Ya - they can see inside you – it's like a computer. If they can see that baby is a boy, even the prophet can tell you that baby in your stomach is boy or girl.

A So who are the prophets?

B In the church there are many prophets

A Are you a prophet?

B Ya - sometimes I'm a prophet

A When are you a prophet?

B Once I pray and turn all my mind to you so I can see what is your problem and that and that, what can be finished that thing, for example to take some water and then you be number 1.

A So if you are a prophet and a minister at the same time?

B Yes after I finished preaching and laying hands on people, after that then we can prophet

A I see at the church it always begins with men and woman sitting and someone gives a sermon. Is that what you do?

B Yes.

A And before you start dancing, what do you do, do you talk about Jesus?

B Ya we talk about Jesus and God and those other prophets what they doing in past years. As we preaching now we must be the same like them, so we must have powers, we must pray to have that power from God

A What does it mean to have power from God?

B To have power, if you lays hands to someone who is very sick, they can be ok

A Can everybody in the church have power to touch someone and heal people?

B No there is different people, the others they don't have power because they are not praying, they are not fasting

A Do you fast?
B Yes I used to fast sometimes
A And if you fast how long do you fast for?
B 2 or 3 maybe 5 days - no drinking water on the mountain
A No water. No food?
B No food
A Nothing?
B Nothing
A Do you sleep there?
B You sleep there - 5 days full you stay there on the mountain
A And then you become…?
B Ya once I come from there, ah, you can know this man has changed, I can see anything, even if you think something bad I can tell what you think.

A Pastor you were saying that some people, if you pray hard and fast for a long time then you can be a healer?
B Ya
A But not everyone is a healer, has that power?
B No
A Can anybody, can Lucky for example go fast for 5 days and be a healer if he wants to?
B Yes he can
A And how do you know if someone is a genuine healer of if they are just pretending?
B You can see if you are praying with him, you can feel that man will be a healer. You have to talk to him so that maybe he can fast so that he can have that power.
A So you can prophecy?
B Yes

A Is the healing very important in the church service?
B Yes
A Is the whole service about healing?
B Yes
A So the whole service happens, the dancing, and then people become healed?
B Ya because we help sometimes a lot of people

A You have been in the church a long time. Do you know the history of the ZCC in Africa? When did the missionaries bring the message of Jesus and God here?
B No I don't know when they come here

A Tell me, is what you do in the church service, the dancing, the singing and the way you move, even the healing and the idea of the Holy Spirit, is it very different to the ancestor spirits?
B Yes its very different
A How is it different?
B Because you can hear they are talking in tongues if they are praying, different languages.
A Can anybody understand these languages?

B No, you can't understand what I'm talking about but me I can understand, sometimes if I'm talking in tongues you can understand sometimes the words.

A When do you talk in tongues?

B When you are in that power, but maybe it takes about 10 minutes or 15 minutes and then you are finished

A So you stay in the power for 10 or 15 minutes?

B Yes

A And how do you get into that power? When you say in the power, what do you say, can you say drunk?

B Ya sometimes you can become drunk in that spirit

A And how do you become drunk in the spirit, get into that power?

B Ay that thing I can't explain because its different. Yes, sometimes even you didn't dance, if you sitting like this, I can just look at you and see your face here that you have a problem of that and that and that thing, you see.

A Can you see now? Are you telling me that I have a problem? (All laugh)

B Ya but sometimes I can just look at you and try to search you and find the mistake

A So when you are drunk in the power, do you feel different?

B Ya you feel different

(We now move to the video)
(Location now changes)
Go on to interview 6

Interview 6: The Pastor and His Wife (continued from interview 5)

Lucky, the Pastor and his wife are sitting and watching video clips and looking at photographs while I question them about these

A Ok, the blue and white uniform, why?
B Pastor's Wife: Ok the blue one is the uniform for every church member, it is a must to have it, other churches have green one or white one but ours is the blue one
A Is that the basic uniform?
B Yes that's the basic uniform. The white for woman, the blue one for men. The white one is according to the prophecy, once they tell you that you have a problem in you tummy or something, or you have evil spirits following you, you have to buy a white one, it will cleanse all that
A So a prophet will tell you what you need?
B Yes
A If you have a physical sickness or a spiritual sickness?
B Yes

A And the women?
B We don't usually put it on, we put it on when a baby is being christened (looking at the photograph of the woman in uniform - blue and white.)
A So this is not the normal church uniform?
B No. And also only the older ladies put this on
A The white hat with the blue cross?
B Yes

A (Photograph of the drums) The drums are obviously very important. Why are they important?
B The drums are important because when people are singing and the drums are being hit…it makes it interesting and also dancing with that drums is not (for) fun or nice but with drums it is interesting

Lucky: When you are dancing you dance according to the tune of the drums so it is part of it, it controls the dancing. Because there are different kind of beating of drums, rhythms. So you can tell that here you must dance like this and this
A Who decides the rhythm?
B Lucky: It is according to the song (The Pastor's Wife also says song here) being sung, they follow the song

A I see sometimes people will be singing and then stop and somebody will start singing again. Who decides when to start singing again and what song must be sung?
B Nobody, anybody can decide and start the song, as long as you have a good voice. And if you don't have a good voice (laugh) it depends but …

A Another photograph – who is this?
B Deacon
A So you have bishop…

B We have the archbishop, then bishop,
A What is role of archbishop?
B He is just the head of the church, we give him the important thing to talk about, but if there is not important thing we don't give him, only the pastor can finish up the work

A Is the bishop respected as a spiritual man?
B Yes, all the church members must respect him. He is an overseer (look to the church)

A So this is in the beginning? (Photograph of pastor preaching)
B Yes
A And do you always read from the bible?
B Yes
A I see sometimes the woman read from the bible?
B No men also

A Do you read from old and new testaments?
B Yes
A Are there any verses that are more powerful?
B There are verses that are for the christenings, then we have verses for church fundraiser
A Are there any verses for healing?
B Psalms 52
A Any other important verses that you use often
B Exodus 20 – The ten commandments
A Do you read the ten commandments?
B Yes every day, that's the first thing
A And who reads the ten commandments?
B The secretary
A Is that your job lucky?
B Yes
A So the secretary reads the ten commandments?
B Yes, and everybody must be quiet
A I see here the ladies have got their bible but not the men…

Ah I see in this picture, this stick is like your stick. There are two sticks tied together pastor?
B Yes
A And was it prophesied that you should have your stick like this?
B Yes
A And how long must you have your stick like that?
B Now it is two or three years
A Will you keep it like this forever?
B Yes unless somebody says that I must change to another colour etc.
A And if you have a different stick will you become a different person again? If you wear a different uniform do you become a different person again?
B No
A I see you are holding a white scarf, what is that?

B I think it is a belt.
A What is it for?
B No it written the new gospel church in Zion
A Does it have any spiritual function?
B No it is part of the uniform

A I see some of the woman have no uniform on, does that mean they are new?
B Some are visitors
A So you have visitors also? So I can sit in the circle if I want also?
B Yes you can sit there

A Photograph: Who plays the drums? Anybody or is it someone's function to play the drums?
B It depends, as long as you know how to

A Are these uniforms the basic?
B No these are visitors from other churches

A Why do you take your shoes off?
B Is according to the law
A Which law?
B For the Zionist church. We have to take our shoes off so that if we are dancing there sometimes shoes carry the thorns
A Do you not take them off for respect?
B Yes it is for respect also because I usually hear them say its easier to prophecy without shoes. If somebody sees somebody take off the shoes they say 'hey! Put on these shoes!" The older people, not the younger – for the children its ok to wear shoes

Lucky: From my point of view I think there is passage in the bible, when God was talking to Moses the tree was burning. When God arrived there God said 'take your sandals off, because you are standing on holy ground. So I think they take it from there, if you are coming to a holy place you must take you shoes off.

A More photographs: So you are all wearing different colours here …..
B Yes but all pastors must wear same colour
A And the cross on the back?
B That's just decoration of the uniform.
A Does it represent anything?
B No just the uniform

A What was happening here? (Photograph of all the pastors meeting)
B The pastors they are meeting to talk about things in the church that may be looked at.
A How often do you meet? is it only the pastors that meet?
B Yes
A Thank you

Interview 7: Thaban

A How long have you been in the church?
B 15 or 20 years

A What is your position?
B I am prayer. If somebody comes into the church I'm putting hands on him and then pray.
A How long have you been a prayer?
B 7 years

A How do you heal someone?
B From the Holy Spirit
A How does that work?
B Yes, it's difficult to understand because when the Holy Spirit comes to me you can hear me talking to the Holy Spirit

A What happens? What do you do to become full of the Holy Spirit?
B I'm praying 3 days or 5 days without eating food.
A Where do you stay when you pray (fast)?
B Here on the mountain.
A For how long?
B 7 times every year, 3 or 5 days.
A Eating?
B No nothing. Just praying whole time.
A And what happens?
B It's difficult to explain.
A Do you become a different person?
B Ya different.
A Who or what do you become?
B If you see when the Holy Spirit comes you will see this man is not Thaban. If a man his foot is paining then I just touching his foot, or his head and I can see what is the pain. If I'm putting hands on you then the Holy Spirit tells me that this man is in pain and tells me what he must do.

A Do you see the Holy Spirit?
B No I cant see it but I feel it

A Will you heal today at church?
B Yes. But it is more powerful if fasting.
A In the church when you are dancing and singing, why do you do this?
B If I'm dancing, I'm just dancing. It is part of the church.

A I see you have a stick with a flag. Why a stick and a flag?
B This is my injection. If you have a pain I hit on top of the pain then the pain disappears. The Holy Spirit tells me this man needs an injection.
A Is it painful?

B No not painful.

A Where do you find the stick?
B I find it from the Holy Spirit. If I take it to the pastor then he prays for my injection.

A The cloth?
B Sometimes you need to put the cloth and this pain can go away.
A So do you also heal people with emotional pain?
B Sometimes I can send you to the doctor.

A When you put your garment on do you feel a different person?
B Everybody must have the blue. But sometimes you must get another colour for the Holy Spirit

A Do you feel different at church than at work in the week?
B Ya.

A When you put on your uniform do you feel different?
B Ya I feel different it is in my blood.

A Can you pray to Holy Spirit and ancestor spirits?
B No not together. If I'm talking with the Holy Spirit, I am changing the language.

A What do they call you in church?
B My church name is 'Intandazele'

A What does the church mean for you?
B It is the most important thing for me

A The drums? Are they important?
B Yes they are very important
A Why?
B Because they use it to make the Holy Spirit come faster
A The same for clapping?
B Yes, and for singing
A What verses in the bible do you read?
B LUKE 21: I read it over and over

A The singing, do you sing many songs?
B Yes

A Does the man and woman have different functions?
B Ya

A What are the main functions?
B The man is job to baptize
A Is that what you do?

B Yes
A What happens when you get baptized?
B You can feel the Holy Spirit comes to you. You come up from the water a different person.
A Before you were in the church were you a different person?
B Ya.
A Have you changed a lot?
B Yes I am very, very different?
A Thank you.