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GAINING AN UNDERSTANDING OF *UMNYAMA* FROM THE ZIONIST CHURCHES: A CASE STUDY OF ZIMBABWEAN MIGRANTS IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Masters of Arts in Forced Migration Studies.

Johannesburg, 2011

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DEDICATION

To my family, my brothers and sisters, my nieces and nephews.

To my late parents, brothers and sisters. *Lalani ngokuthula*.

Deo Gratias!

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Lastly, but not least, I owe Bonginkosi Mthombeni a big thank you for reading my script in its entirety for free. *ESigadigadi baba*!

DECLARATION

I, Melekias Zulu, do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is submitted to the degree of Master of Arts in African Centre for Migration and Society at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any university.

Signed:

Date:

ABSTRACT

When migrants move, they move with their religious beliefs and practices. What happens to those religious beliefs and practices in the country of migration? Is there change or continuity in religious affiliation? While much of the literature on Zimbabweans is largely focused on their reasons for migration, the policies, laws and difficulties they encounter in South Africa; this study examines how Zimbabwean migrants use religion in the host country. This study investigates if and how migration affects Zimbabwean migrants' religious beliefs and practices. This study explores how Zionist churches respond to the existential needs of migrants and their worldviews; specifically looking at the responses offered to metaphysical challenges like *umnyama* (misfortune) of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

South Africa has been a country of destination for Zimbabwean migrants for a long time especially in the mid 1950s (Crush et al., 2005b) when there was a great need for labour in the mines as well as other neighbouring countries. Today, South Africa is a magnet for many migrants because of its relative political stability and for being the most prosperous economy in the sub Saharan Africa (Landau and Jacobsen, 2004, Crush et al., 2005a, Crush, 2001).

After the turmoil of 2000 to 2008 in Zimbabwe, the country witnessed numerous human rights abuses, political oppression, party related murders (state related murders) and repressive media laws (Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (HSRC, 2008). There has been also a gradual deterioration of the agricultural sector which was the backbone of the economy of the country; this resulted in the country failing to feed its people. The dire situation in Zimbabwe caused many people to flee to South Africa. Zimbabwean migrants have become the single largest population of foreign people in South Africa (Polzer, 2010). According to Solidarity Peace Trust (SPT) among Zimbabweans are refugees and asylum seekers as well as a number of undocumented migrants (SPT, 2010).

According to UNHCR (2008), Zimbabwean migrants are not refugees but people with special needs or "mobile and vulnerable populations" (IRIN 2009[1]). The debate is that "Zimbabweans fleeing economic collapse in their country have blurred the lines between refugees and economic migrants" (IRIN 2009 and see also Culbertson 2009[2]).

There are no concurring numbers of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa. It suffices for our purpose to say that large numbers of Zimbabwean migrants are an undeniable reality in Johannesburg and that there are visible yet invisible, in the sense that most of them remain undocumented (SPT, 2010:12-13)[3]. In April 2009 to April 2010, the South African

[1] See http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=87434
[2] See http://www.aucegypt.edu/ResearchatAUC/rc/cmrs/Documents/Philip%20Culbertson_Thesis.pdf page 23
[3] See How a Million Zimbabweans live without Official Sanction/Sanctuary in South Africa. Solidarity Peace Trust. Johannesburg. 31 March 2010: page 12; http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/572/desperate-lives-twilight-worlds/ and Police Commissioners Irresponsibly Inflate Numbers; Blame Foreigners for Security Woes. Press Release. 3 March 2010. University of the Witswatersrand. Forced Migration Studies Programme; and Http://www.news24.com/Content/SouthAfrica/News/ 109/08a251bf3334198b041c60100e7618/03-03-2010-59/Immigrants_put_strain_on_police

Department of Home Affairs (DHA) introduced a special dispensation for Zimbabweans which scrapped the visa requirements and created a three months visa free entry which facilitated the mobility to South Africa. This dispensation also protected undocumented migrants from deportation (Amit, 2011). In September 2010, the DHA stopped that dispensation and announced a new moratorium, the Zimbabwe Documentation Process (ZDP), a special permit for Zimbabweans who have in South Africa before 1 May 2010 to be documented by the 31st of December 2010. The ZDP seeks to encourage migrants to register with whatever document they have like Zimbabwean Identity documents, birth certificates and receipts that they have applied for passports. The ZDP also seeks to encourage migrants who have fraudulently acquired South African IDs to hand them in and get Zimbabwean passports which will be issued with a four year work permit. The ZDP had problems because the DHA did not get give sufficient information (Amit, 2011) to applying migrants and also the Zimbabwean Government has been slow in issuing passport. As I write February 2011, the moratorium has been postponed up to 30th of June 2011 to allow more migrants to register.

There have been a number of studies concerning the social, economic, political, health and immigration issues of Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa (Polzer, 2009, Pophiwa, 2009, Kiwanuka and Monson, 2009, Aria et al., 2009) but not enough has been written about their spiritual lives or religiosity. There have been studies conducted among African migrants focusing on the role of churches in their lives and the issues of integration in South Africa (Hlobo, 2004, Nzayabino, 2010, Khumalo, 2009, Jeannerat, 2009). At this juncture, I would like to point out the work of Bishop Paul Verryn of the Central Methodist Church (Johannesburg) with the Zimbabwean migrants and a few studies that have been written on the Central Methodist Church (Culbertson, 2009) and the Zimbabwean migrants (Khumalo, 2009). As (Sabar, 2004:408), declared that "the paucity of attention to religion leaves a major gap in our understanding of African migrants". There is still a need to investigate how migrants cope with issues of poverty, unemployment, sickness, bad luck and other metaphysical (i.e. witchcraft, illness caused by angry ancestors) problems in the host society. It is interesting as well as vital to understand the role of religion in assisting migrants to address these challenges. While we know migrants have difficulties in accessing healthcare institutions (Vearey et al., 2009) when faced with health related problems; we don't know much the extent to which they resort to religiosity in times of sickness, and the extent to which this is part of their help seeking behaviour or whether they resort to religion when

confronted with new life situations and challenges. This is further confirmed by Sabar who says that "it is only natural for Africans to draw upon their religious practices and beliefs in their countries of migration" (Sabar, 2004:408).

This study seeks to elucidate what happens to people's religious beliefs and practices when they emigrate. Moreover, this study also explores how spatial mobility has an influence on vertical mobility of Zimbabwean migrants as they settle in Johannesburg. Vertical mobility[4] can be understood as the ascent to God or the journey to reach God through religious beliefs, expressions and practices which include the search for healing.

This research situates itself within the Ndebele speaking Zimbabwean migrant community whom I came in contact with in Yeoville and Hilbrow in Johannesburg. In this study I explore how the geographical movement has had an influence on religious beliefs and practices of Zimbabwean migrants and how Zionistic Churches respond to migrant's life challenges and search for healing. My interest has been to research how this group of people deal with metaphysical issues (i.e. unexplainable illness, household conflicts) which emanate as a result of migration.

In this study I explore how Zionist Churches respond to the needs of members and or non-members alike that have *umnyama* (misfortune) in their lives. Preliminary empirical work among Zimbabwean migrants shows an understanding of the challenges experienced in Johannesburg as the work of an outside force which disturbs their social relations, fails them in getting employment, and above all thwarts their efforts in bettering their lives. The issues of unemployment, problems in marriages, and problems at work, poor health, and sickness are interpreted within the Ndebele cultural realm of *umnyama* and witchcraft.

The study seeks to explore whether migration promotes continuity or change in religious participation of migrants and also investigate how religion assists migrants to face various challenges in the host society, including health. It is argued here that the event of migration rouses or promotes myriad vertical[5] mobility meaning that the search for God and of healing is sought in different churches other than the churches of origin. In other words, when the

[4] I can describe vertical mobility as the search for God where the migrants feel the intensity to search for God who provides 'quick answers to the problems experienced here and now'.

[5] Some migrants move from one church to other in search of healing. While others also move from one church to other 'looking for' God, where their prayers could be heard and answered. Thus, countless paths are taken in search for God and or healing.

affliction is understood through the cultural lens of the Ndebele worldview then the answer or cure may lead to a change in religious affiliations, to religions that recognise/address that reality as perceived by the affected or ill migrant.

The following are my research question and objectives:

1.2 **Research Questions**

1. How does geographical mobility affect religious beliefs and practices of Zimbabweans migrants in Johannesburg?
2. If and how do Zionist Churches try to assist Zimbabwean migrants to confront new realities in the host society as well as assist them in their existential needs (i.e. unemployment, poverty, illness etc)?

1.3 **Research Objectives**

1-To investigate if and how mobility affects the religious practices and beliefs of Zimbabwean migrants in the Zionist Churches (e.g. incorporation, change or continuity in religious affiliation).

2-To explore how the Zionist Churches respond to the existential needs of migrants and their worldviews; specifically to explore the responses offered to metaphysical challenges (bad luck) "*umnyama*" of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg.

3-To expose the understanding of sickness and healing in the Zionist theology (of the faith leaders and their members) and how it influences the perception Zimbabweans have of their own circumstances and challenges as migrants in Johannesburg (e.g. unemployment, poverty, sickness, hostility and risks of deportation, xenophobic attacks).

1.4 **Rationale**

This research is framed within the SANPAD[6] Research Project at the Forced Migration Studies Programme that looks at the role of churches in assisting migrants in Johannesburg to deal with psychological trauma and human suffering.

As mentioned earlier on much attention has been given to the social, economic, and political and immigration issues of Zimbabwean migrants without in-depth research on their spirituality/religiosity. However, there has been some work on migration and religious participation in South Africa; focusing on Congolese and Nigerian migrants (Hlobo, 2004, Jeannerat, 2009, Nzayabino, 2010). These studies have not explored how churches interact with migrants' worldviews and culture. This study aims at filling the existent gap in our understanding of Zimbabwean migrants and how they use religion in moments of crisis, how they perceive of their situations and find answers in religion. Religion is important in the lives of Africans and serves as an instrument of political and social expression. Thus, this study elucidates how Zimbabwean migrants deal with issues of poverty, unemployment, fears of witchcraft, xenophobia and misfortune and uncertainties of migration using the Zionist churches as sources of social identity, belonging and healing**.**

[6] The South Africa Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD) was established in 1997, by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

1.5 **Structure of the thesis**

This study is divided into five chapters that seek to address the above mentioned questions of the research work: Chapter one introduces the research work and provides some background information on Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa and introduces the relationship between migration and religion. In chapter two, the methodology of this study is outlined and the research methods are explained as well as the process of fieldwork. Chapter three reviews present the theoretical chapter that will assist in analysing the findings. Chapter four presents the research findings focusing on the role of migration and religion in the lives of Zimbabwean migrants and the role of Zionist churches in responding to migrants' challenges and afflictions. In chapter five, the discussions on the findings and the conclusion are presented.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 **Methodology**

The research used as a case study the Zionist Churches. The purpose of selecting the Zionist churches is to learn how as "healing and welfare centres" (Edwards, 1983a:177); they respond to the existential needs of Zimbabwean migrants. The research used the following qualitative research methods: in-depth interviews, participant observation, group discussion (Goodwin and Horowitz, 2002).

This study is a qualitative research which has sought "*to establish the meaning of the phenomenon from the view of the participants. This means identifying a culture-sharing group and studying how it develops shared patterns of behaviour over time*" (Creswell, 2009:16). For example, I identified Zimbabwean migrants who came from Matabeleland South, in Zimbabwe. These migrants are Ndebele speaking who since arriving in Johannesburg had converted into Zionist churches.

This in-depth qualitative study is not conclusive but aims at elucidating "a deeper and richer picture"(Goodwin and Horowitz, 2002:43); of what is going on in a particular setting among a group of Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg that are members of Zionist Churches. That is, the bearing of migration on religious beliefs and practices in the lives of Zimbabwean migrants and how religion helps them to make sense of their perceived and lived world of poverty, hostility and metaphysical challenges like *umnyama*.

My participation in the culture (as a Ndebele speaking person) and in-depth interviews conducted made the study contextual which is the strength of the qualitative research (Gray, 2009, Rolfe, 2006). Therefore, a large sample would have been unnecessary; this study has selected a small sample. I contend that Zimbabwean migrants' social reality as it exists (in Yeoville, Berea and Hilbrow as examples) can be observed and reported accurately using qualitative research method (Babbie, 2007, Gray, 2009).

2.2 RESEARCH METHODS

2.2.1 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviewing is a "type of interview which researchers use to elicit information in order to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewee's point of view or situation" (www.leeds.ac.uk/educol). The purpose of the interviews was twofold: Firstly, to explore how Zionists respond to the challenges of new realities in the host society as well as to explore what are their existential needs. Secondly, to investigate changes and continuities in the religious beliefs and practices of Zimbabwean migrants that took place as a result of geographical mobility. The interviews were semi-structured; the researcher had an interview schedule with open-ended questions. Open questions begin with words such as 'How', 'Why' and 'What' and they bring rich responses which sometimes the researcher would not expect (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003, Gray, 2009).

Moreover, this open-ended approach allows the researcher to "explore subjective meanings that respondents ascribe to concepts or events" (Gray, 2009:373) and are "culturally salient" (www.fhi.org) to the migrants. Thus, open questions proved to be convenient for the study; I was able to pose follow-up questions on issues that needed clarity (ibid).

My religious and cultural experience in Ndebele culture, proved to be helpful in establishing trust and acceptance in a short space of time. Also, the fact I am an Ndebele speaker, facilitated in building a rapport with potential interviewees. The interviewees were met at their places of worship which I deemed to be neutral, non-threatening and comfortable ground where interviews could be conducted with assuring and familiar people and environment.

2.2.2 **Participant observation**

To complement the semi-structured interviewing; participant observation was another technique employed by the researcher in order to get an inside view (Gray, 2009). Participant observation is understood as detached view to allow events, actions and experiences to be seen through the eyes of the researcher without interference from those involved (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, Gray, 2009). A participant observer does not take part in events but actively watches events, actions and experiences as they unfold and records that information (Creswell, 2009). My purpose of participant-observation was to investigate if and how migration affects people's religious beliefs and practices in order to complement the information I would have gathered with the other methods used. Attached to that, also observe how the Zionist churches respond to issues of *umnyama* and how they heal the afflicted. The groups were informed of my participation at the beginning of the services by the faith healers/prophets.

As Gray contends direct observation (overt observation) when people know that there are being observed, may change their behaviour and challenge the validity of results (Gray, 2009). In some of the services of Zionist Churches, I observed that the members were putting up 'performances' to attract or please me[7]. Maybe, my presence as an ex-priest also had a bearing on the participant's behaviour but I will discuss this issue on the section on reflexivity. For example, at Daniel's Gospel at Yeoville, I found the testimonies and the singing different on the day (16-/5/2010) I was introduced as compared to the last Sunday when I just joined the congregation as one of them. I found the same at the Freedom Church of Zion, where I thought that the testimonies were meant to entice me to join the church. The change observed has some methodological implications and involves some ethical considerations (Babbie, 2007) and I had to rely on my own understanding of the situation and own judgement. I will discuss on this in the ethical consideration section. Thus direct observation can have limitations. After the services, I had a chance also to chat to members and establish a rapport which was useful in the subsequent research days in case I needed more information or had other follow up questions.

[7] In this case, covert observation looks like a plausible approach but it presents ethical issues. Therefore, I had a dilemma. Some researchers would advocate for covert observation (Gray 2009, Slack and Rowley 2001).

2.2.3 **Group discussions**

A group discussion is basically a "discussion among participants who have an agreed topic" (www.thefreedictionary.com). In this study, a four group discussion were organised with the same participants for four consecutive Sunday evenings at Yeoville at prophet KBZ house. The meetings lasted from a one hour to two hours. The participants were faith healers/prophets and myself to discussion whether migration had a bearing on religious beliefs and practise, the issue of *umnyama* and the role of Zionist churches in lives of migrants. The participants of the group discussion were four faith healers, between 40 and 50 years old, Zimbabweans who discovered their callings while in South Africa. They belonged to the following churches New Apostles of Christ, Freedom Church of Zion, St. John the Prophet, and Daniels' Gospel Church.

The group method allowed me to question systematically and simultaneously the four faith healers based on the semi-structured interview schedule which has questions prepared for them (Babbie, 2007). (See appendix A on Question for faith healers) The group discussions, I found to be important in assembling a collective voice and picture and for checking the validity of individual statements of others (Nankoz and Wai Yan Shik, 2009). I was the facilitator of the discussions which were actively participated by the migrants. The discussions were flexible, informative and valuable: helped in capturing "real-life data in a social environment"(Babbie, 2007:303).

2.2.4 **Sampling**

I used the purposive sampling method which selects participants on the basis that they are typical of a wider population (representative sample) and availability and willingness to participate in the study (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The interviewees then referred to other people leading to snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is where those already interviewed refer to knowledge sources (Gray 2009) and those are people who meet the criteria for the study. Finally, I also identified potential respondents during the course of participant observation, a method called spot sampling. After the service, I approached potential interviewees and tried to establish a rapport which became handy in doing follow up questions.

From May until September 2010, I sought migrants to participate in the study through chain referral sampling; the initial contact people referred me to other people (www.fhi.org). My criterion for screening potential participants was the following: Firstly, I looked for Zimbabwean migrants who were Zionistic members (*amaZiyoni*). Secondly, I chose those participants who were staying in Yeoville, Berea and Hillbrow (study location) as I could easily reach them. Finally, I sought participants who had experienced religious switching upon arriving in South Africa, had experienced *umnyama* and had sought healing from Zionist churches. I began my search of participants in Yeoville where I used to reside and then moved to Berea and Hillbrow. I explained to the potential migrants to be interviewed the purpose of the research in order to have willing participants and told them what was expected of them if they participate. I assured them that their names, ID and or passport details and places of residence would not shared with anyone but that I would use pseudo names or codes (Lewis and Ritchie, 2003, Gray, 2009).

The study focused on Johannesburg, one of the South African cities which have a huge migratory flow dating from the discovery of gold mines (Landau and Gindrey, 2008, Rogerson, 1997) above mentioned places are common among new arrivals in the greater Johannesburg city and there is a large number of Zimbabwean migrants amongst many other foreigner migrants (Pophiwa, 2009, Vearey et al., 2009). As noted by Greenburg and Polzer, Johannesburg is a city of refugees and asylum-seekers and is a popular destination of migrants (Greenburg and Polzer, 2008). The main purpose of selecting Yeoville, Berea and Hilbrow[8] is based on my own personal experience that these places have large numbers of Zionistic Church members as can be witnessed every Sunday in the streets. On Sundays, in buildings or courtyards sounds of Zionistic members drumming and singing on top of their voices can be heard.

[8] According to www.migration.org.za/project/new-african-cities-project, Yeoville, Berea and Hillbrow are largely made up of cross-border migrants from Zimbabwe.

Table 1

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE MIGRANTS INTERVIEWED

Gender	Age	Religious trajectory	Year of migration to SA	Occupation	Education Status	Criteria for selecting/interviewing
Male	44 (Code 5M)	Raised catholic-switched to Zionist church in 1985	1980	-Former security guard now faith healer	-Grade 7 ('O' level) (Zimbabwean System)	-snowball sampling
Male	32 (code 1NN)	Raised catholic-Switched to Zionist church in 2006	2005	Boiler maker	Ordinary level ('O' level) (Zimbabwean System)	-snowball sampling
Female	40 (code 4JG)	Born Pentecostal-switched to Zionist 2004-5	2004	cook	'O' level	-snowball sampling
Female	45 (code NK)	SDA Switched to Zionist church In 1997	1995	housewife	'O' level	-snowball sampling

Table 2

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE FAITH-HEALERS IN THE GROUP DISCUSSION

Gender	Age	Religious trajectory	Year of migration to SA	Occupation	Education Status	Criteria for selecting/interviewing
Male	Btn 40-50	Raised Lutheran. Switched to the Zionist church in 2005	2004	waiter	Form 2	Snowball sampling
Male	Btn 40-50	Raised Pentecostal. Switched to the Zionist church in 1992	1990	Full time faith healer	'O' level	Snowball sampling
Male	Btn 40-50	Raised Methodist. Switched to the Zionist church in 2005	2000	Factory worker	'O' level	Snowball sampling
Male	Btn 40-50	Raised Methodist. Switched to the Zionist church in 2003	2002	Self employed	No formal education	Snowball sampling

2.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.3.1 Vulnerability of Migrants

According to Jacobsen and Landau "*research into vulnerable populations like refugees, some of whom might be engaged in illegal or semi-legal activities, raises many ethical problems. The political and legal marginality of refugees and IDPs means that they have few rights and are vulnerable to arbitrary action on the part of the state authorities*" (Jacobsen and Landau, 2003:187). In the light of the above statement, it was of paramount importance that I comply with research obligation 'do no harm' to safeguard participants. I made sure that I get from participants informed consent, voluntary participation, and in turn guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity (Babbie, 2007, Lewis and Ritchie, 2003). I gave the participants (interviewees and group participants) a letter of consent which stated their freedom and their rights to participate in the study which they signed.

As a Zimbabwean, I found that fellow Zimbabwean migrants as a group in the selected areas were reluctant and anxious of authorities. Some of the interviewees expressed concern that the police use other Zimbabweans to 'sniff' them out. At this juncture, I was moved to confirm again the confidentiality of the information I was gathering. I explained too that I was gathering data anonymously meaning all the interviews I did had no identifiers such as names, addresses and cell phone numbers but was using codes that I alone would understand They are insecure in the host country and are afraid of giving true information, especially regarding their status in terms of regularised documentation. For example, one interviewee named NK initially told me that she was from Pietermaritzburg, born and bred there. As we established a rapport, she let the cat out of the bag*:* She was Zimbabwean! It became vital that in all the interactions, I gain the mutual trust and be viewed as student doing research among fellow Zimbabweans. Throughout the interviews, I saw that the people I interviewed were stressed, insecure and had low self esteem maybe as a result of migration and new challenges in the host society. This required me to be sensitive as I do my research work.

2.4 **Informed Consent**

The principle of informed consent underscores that human subjects may in the light of the information given agree or refuse to partake in the study (Gray 2009). I learnt that informed consent is a series of steps or a process (www.fhi.org). It was not just about the participants signing forms. Instead it was about gaining the confidence of the Zionist leaders, who in turn sought for me willing participants and explained to their members who I was and my purpose. It was the Zionist leaders too who gave me oral consent to observe their churches services. This was a typical cultural approach to issues as in the Ndebele culture, the elders are the guardians who would evaluate and assess before granting permission to individuals in the community. This process ensures the protection of the rights of the participants (Gray 2009).

The interviews were done on voluntary basis. The selected participants were informed about the purpose of the research, their role, and freedom to participate and withdraw anytime in the course of the study and were asked to sign consent forms to confirm that they understood (www.britsoc.org.uk/about/ethic.htm). The consent forms ensured the informants of anonymity[9] and confidentiality[10] (securing individual confidentiality statements from all informants and coding data with numbers instead of names to protect the identity of participants, using pseudonyms for participants (www.britsoc.org.uk/about/ethic.htm) of their participation in the study (Babbie 2007; Gray 2009). Somehow the informants were noted to be uneasy when initial approached and the consent forms brought assurance. In the course of the interactions with the informants, it was clear that they would not want that it be known back home that they have switched religious affiliations. Therefore, I, through regular communication sought to build the confidence and trust in the participants that all data gathered would not expose their identities (Gray 2009).

I made it clear from the outset that there is no material or financial benefits for the informants. Thus, I talked to the participants that they have to make a free choice in participating in the study and in the course of the interactions I learnt that other people thought that the people I was interviewing were 'cashing in' on the study. It is vital that

[9] Babbie (2007: 65) describes anonymity in research work as when "neither the researcher nor the readers of the findings can identify a given response with a given respondent".
[10] Babbie (2007: 66) describes confidentiality as "when a researcher can identify a given person's responses but promises no to do in publicly".

voluntary participation is attained without incentives, inducements or even threats (Babbie, 2007; www.socialresearchmethods.net). This was important for the credibility, reliability and objectivity of the study (Rolfe 2006; Gray 2009). Above all, I strove to adhere to the following ethical principles but not without difficulties:

- Beneficence – 'do positive good'
- Non-Maleficence – 'do no harm' (www.fhi.org)
- Informed consent
- Confidentiality/Anonymity
- Veracity 'truth telling' (www.britsoc.org.uk/about/etic.htm).

2.5 Limitations

One of the main limitations I encountered was in the focus groups discussion with faith healers. Initially, moderating the group discussion was a major challenge; we had a lot of derailments and also domination by one of the participants. Somehow the participant named JN1 was influential and the other three tended to agree and endorse whatever he said. In the subsequent discussion, I decided to talk him in private and explain with no harm to him and his feelings that in discussions I needed to hear the views of the other three, too. He took my request kindly, after that, I assumed the facilitation of the discussions.

Another challenge was methodological. I was divided about the use of covert observation vs. obvert observation. I found that when people know that there are being observed (overt observation), they may change their behaviour and this challenges the validity of results (Gray 2009). I therefore contemplated overt observation which has ethical dilemmas though some researchers advocate for it (Slack and Rowley, 2001, Gray, 2009). Attached to this was an event when I attended a church service as a participant but my spectacles then made me stand out. Somehow all eyes were on me and I felt that my presence was loud and therefore made people uneasy. In this church service, I felt that people were uneasy with a strange bespectacled guy in their midst. In Zimbabwe, in my locale, people in dark eye glasses are often associated with government agents. The way forward: In the following church services I removed my spectacles and fitted in as one of the crowd.

2.6 Reflexivity: The Voice of the Researcher

According to Grey,

"Reflexivity involves the realization that the researcher is not a neutral observer, and is implicated in the construction of knowledge. Far from being a disinterested bystander, the researcher is seen as someone whose observations are by their nature, selective, and whose interpretations of results are partial" (2009:498).

Thus, reflexivity is a concept that is used to describe the relationship between the researcher and the object of research (Babbie, 2007). In other words, reflexivity describes the influence of the researcher in gathering data, transcribing, coding and in the final writing of the report. As a former priest with a background in Catholic theology, I was challenged by certain interpretations of the Bible and religious practices such as praying out in loud voice of the whole congregation, sprinkling with a broom (*umthanyelo*) and seemingly 'structure-less' services. I struggled to understand why the emphasis on ridding suffering from the world as I am coming from a doctrinal school that somehow romanticises suffering and encourages its acceptance. Somehow the Zionist teachings were contrary to all I know and believe in. As Babbie argues that " ultimately, you will not be able to fully understand the thoughts and actions of the cult members unless you can adopt their points of view as true- at least temporarily"(2007:287). I realised that I had to immerse myself in their worldviews and furthermore, "treat the beliefs with respect than as objects of ridicule" (ibid).

I was then faced with the prospect of what to do if I am asked to pray for someone as I had told them that I am a former priest. I reasoned that I was there in services to observe and get to know their worldviews not to do pastoral work. I am a student intending to write a research paper! But I would not have refused.

Next, in the group discussions and some services, I felt issues of authority, power and status thrust on me. Instead of discussing issues pertinent to the moment; I was turned into a reference point. For example, if there was an argument about meanings of biblical verses; I was asked to confirm or disagree. Of course, I had my own opinions which I tried to keep to myself which were they different to theirs. The fact that I was a former Catholic priest was more important to them than being a researcher. So I was being offered power and high status than the people I had set out to study: Zion members, faith healers and prophets.

I was considered rich, that I had money from the fact that I was a former priest. After group discussions and some observations, I was asked if I could help in boosting the church's coffers or make a donation for the intention of getting a larger space for worship. When I explained that I was on a scholarship which covered my tuition, rent and provisions, I sensed that I was not wholly believed.

The fact of doing research among my fellow country men and women presented the difficulties of keeping social distance. I am Zimbabwean, a migrant like they are and above all understand their struggles, desires and aspirations. I had to be aware that I do not impose myself. Attached to this, is the fact that I speak Ndebele: It helped to break barriers and gave me an insider's view. As Babbie (2007:288), concedes "problems are part and parcel of field research". I sought to strive to maintain scientific objectivity by focusing intently on research work and its objectives.

2.7 Translation

The study had the interview questionnaire in English which I translated into isiNdebele as he conducted the interviews and then translated to English to ensure linguistic equivalency (see Appendix C & D). From the outset, I never foresaw potential problems. As the interviews went, I realised that some terms cannot be easily translated as they lose meanings, weight and emphasis. For example, the term '*umnyama'* is not just misfortune but portrays migrants' perceptions, lived experiences and their culture. How do you possibly translate experiences and perceptions? Thus, since I am not a professional translator, this was a handicap for the study. But to overcome hindrance, it was necessary to make follow up interviews in cases where I felt I had missed the point to get clarifications. My knowledge of the culture and the language were also my strength in facing the challenges. Furthermore, I encountered difficulties in figures of speech and Ndebele lingo used here in Johannesburg which often interviewees used and assumed that I understand. For example, the word "*ukumaketha*" (influenced by the English word 'market') meaning to 'search for a job often carrying a CV'. I most often heard migrants say, "*ngilomnyama, angitholi umsebenzi ngingaze ngimakethe*" meaning "I have misfortune, I search for jobs but in vain". I would ask some migrants to interpret for me this lingo.

2.8 Data Analysis

According to Grey (2009), data analysis starts when the researcher transcribes field notes from interviews, observations and discussions into readable format, then codes data into themes which is important for theoretical sampling (where new cases are selected on basis of theories and concepts emerging from the analysis). It is important that the researcher familiarises with field-note and observes interesting, unusual and significant issues (Creswell 2003). It is recommended that the researcher reviews or amends the codes. Finally, the researcher looks for connections between concepts emerging from the data. This is vital because it helps to develop theories about the connections which can be confirmed by evidence in the literature. Data analysis is not once off event but it evolves as new data emerges.

My data was collected by means of interviews, participant observation and group discussions using a questionnaire. I created a summary template for all the interviews, observations and groups discussions where I made a thematic analysis of all data gathered (Babbie 2007). Creswell describes coding as "the process of organising the material into chunks or segments of text before bringing meaning to information" (2003:186). Thus, in my coding process, I generated themes like religious beliefs and practices, blending of beliefs, healing and migration. Under each theme, there is general description of the information that is grouped under one theme (see an example from the data analysis summary template in the table below). These themes are linked to my research questions: Whether migration has a bearing of religious beliefs and practices and the role of the Zionist churches in helping migrants to make sense of the perceived world and its challenges. And how the Zionist churches address the issue of *umnyama* and how they treat it.

Table 3

DATA ANALYSIS: SUMMMARY TEMPLATE

THEME	SUB-THEME	DESCRIPTION OF DATA
EMPLOYMENT	Skilled jobs	Teachers, nurses, have to settle for low salaries
	Non-skilled	Domestic work, security guards, petrol attendants, till operators, Low salaries, long hours of work
	Informal employment	Selling toys, pirated CDs, veggies, clothing, mechanics, selling pillows, sheets, cross borders traders
	Challenges	Discrimination, low salaries, threats of dismissal, long hours, fending for oneself and sending groceries/remittances to Zimbabwe, harassment and arrests by police and confiscation of goods, documentation problems
RELIGION	Religious switching	Raised as a catholic but now Z.A.C. (Zionist) 1NN, 2NN, Raised as Pentecostal 5M, Raised as Catholic 4JG, Contact with other churches 5M, have worshipped in many other churches but am home now (Zion), at home I sometimes join them as they go to the SDA - NK, we are Zion and Catholic at my home-that is not a problem, in the churches that I went I was not helped/healed but here I was helped/healed; my aunt/uncle/ friend/homeboys/relatives are Zion-N1N, so after arriving and staying with them I joined Zion-5M, was unemployed for a long time till I joined Zion, have no alternative but join Zion as my aunt is also a member but am now comfortable, helped me spiritually
	Beliefs	Answering of prayers evidenced by getting jobs, conceiving, good health, divine healing-laying on of hands, faith healing-use of symbolic objects-Z1, speaking in tongues, prays often, my God hears and answers, I am a new person, my God is with me-5M,-N1N, my enemies have no power over me, evil spirits have no power over me-N1N, I see that God is indeed my protector, 'Zion helps' *iZayoni iyasiza*-N1N, 4JG, God always answers our prayers, importance of faith, invocation of the Holy Spirit in casting evil spirits and

		in seeking help, invocation of Jesus as the first ancestor, prophet/faith healer is an instrument of God, emphasis on the here and now, salvation is here-5m, -N1N, Z1
	Practices	Am a better person, respect my family, carry blessed water with me for good fortune, carry blessed salt for good fortune-5M, N1N, NK, pray everyday, importance of brewing beer and slaughtering a cow/goat/sheep in honour of the ancestors, having Zionists uniforms, wearing cords of prayer around the wrists and waist, fasting (*ukuya enhlane*) has become a way of life-a day/s of fasting, drinking water and praying in designated place in secluded area-often in the bush/wilderness-Z1, 4JG, importance of *ukuphalaza* (induced vomiting done by drinking a lot of water mixed sometimes with herbs) to rid the body of *izidliso* (any eaten poison) which attract *umnyama*, I have stopped smoking and drinking-Z1, N1N, NK, 5m
	Blending of beliefs	Importance of baptism usually in a river or dam, Wearing of rosaries as Zionists, Talking about Blessed Virgin Mary, appeasing/recognising ancestors, recognising bewitchment-4JG, Christ seen as an ancestor, went to talk with them after he died, traditional norms important too to live a good life here in Johannesburg, non-reading of the Bible at some services, wearing of *isiphandla* (Zulu custom showing that one recently had *umsebenzi* meaning a ceremony in honour of ancestors), herbs are from God too, polygamy is okay as long as the man is able to take care of family-Z1,
	Sense of belonging	I felt at home in the Zion church-N1N, 4JG, NK, I am among my fellow country men,
XENOPHOBIA	Jealous	They don't want foreigners to progress past them - 1NN, accuse us of working for lower wages, accusations taking of women, over-crowding in the flats caused by us-Z1, resentments of hatred, running away from our country instead of solving things,
Church	Integration	Unites us, bring us together, makes us work for the common good, encourages tolerance of all people as we made in the image of God, helping one another in settling and finding jobs, accommodating the homeless, worship with Zulus, Sothos, Vendas and Shangaans-4JG, -Z1

	As social capital	Helping one another in times of need, emotional assistance during bereavement and financial assistance in the repatriation of a body and the burial (*siyangcwabana*), church as a burial society-members pay subscriptions fee every month, finding jobs for each other, borrowing money and returning it, new friends and relatives, new bonds of fellowship (*ubuzalwane*), counselling elders/faith healers/*umthandazi* of marital problems-'bedrooms issues', church as a *stokvel*-members contribute R100 every month and we use the money to buy bulk groceries at the end of the month, I am settled now after joining Zion-Z1, 4JG,
	Transnational	Imported Zionism to Zimbabwe, we have follow under Bishop Jeremiah of Lingwe, founded Apostles of Christ; church has affiliated to New Church of Zion in Jerusalem in Zim, New Freedom Church of Zion is affiliated to a church in Zim, Easter celebrations bring members together and anointing/appointing of faith healers, churches headed by Zimbabwe nationals, creates links for those want to cross to SA by providing migrants to be with contacts *abazalwane* (relatives, friends and fellow worshippers) who will accommodate them, help in building churches back home-Z1, 4JG
	Regional identity and loyalty	I am Zimbabwean1NN, I am home, '*ngingowalapha*' I belong here, I am not a stranger, its not a problem staying here and then in Zimbabwe-1NN, NK, 5M, I have a family here and in Zimbabwe, my brothers are all here but my parents are in Zimbabwe, my children are schooling here, I go to Zimbabwe once a year to help tilling, spending holidays with family-4JG, Z1

CHAPTER 3

3.1 **Theoretical Framework**

This study explores the question of migration having a bearing on religious beliefs and practices in the lives of migrants and this is explored through the case of Zimbabwean migrants participating in Zionist Churches in Johannesburg. The theoretical framework begins by discussing the relationship between horizontal and vertical migration the discussion then moves into healing within the history and theology of Zionist churches highlighting also the merging of the cultural particularities of Ndebele. Finally, this section explores both the concept of *umnyama* and how the Zionist church seeks to integrate migrants in the host society.

The theoretical framework of the study is supported in concepts and theories of the sociology of religion and also uses approaches on health and culture taken from Anthropology in order to address the meaning of religion for Zimbabwean migrants and specifically their understanding of *umnyama* as well as the healing interventions of Zionistic Churches.

The discussion begins by examining how migration and religion relate to each other and focuses specifically on whether migration could lead to religious switching or dropping and or enhanced religious participation. The theology of Zionistic Churches will be presented and highlighted to show how Ndebele Culture serves as cultural background for the Zionistic Churches to operate. The meaning of sickness and healing will be dealt with as understood in the Ndebele culture and how the Zionistic Churches respond to them. Finally, the study will seek to explore how the migration event heightens the concept of *umnyama* which means bad luck or misfortune but is connected to various other cultural aspects of the Ndebele culture and how Zionists Churches acknowledge its presence, confront it in ritual practices and set their members free.

This is study is inspired by the constructivism theory which "assumes that social reality is constructed by and through symbolic and cultural interpretations, webs of meaning and signification built and used by human actors" (Watts, 2000:4). The above mentioned theoretical approach recognises that the researcher is not removed from the process of constructing and conveying knowledge. Rather stresses that the researcher and his participants "jointly co-create (co-construct) findings from their interactive dialogue and

interpretation" (Ponterotto, 2005:129). In other words, the researcher-participant dialogue uncovers "deeper meaning" of the reality under study (ibid).

3.2 **Migration and Religion**

Much of the literature on migration and religion concurs that their cross cutting dimensions have been understudied and there is a need for further studies on both (Hagan and Ebaugh, 2003, Levitt, 2003, De Vaus, 1982, Bibby, 1997, Gozdziak and Shandy, 2002). There is further concurrence that geographical movement has implications on religion or on vertical mobility (Hagan and Ebaugh, 2003, Levitt, 2003, De Vaus, 1982, Bibby, 1997). According to Lenski (1963) quoted by Bibby, "spatial mobility facilitates or at least normally accompanies vertical mobility" (Bibby, 1997:290). This is a debate based on geographical determinism. Geographical determinism asserts that the "event of migration has a bearing in migrants' lives" (Bibby, 1997:290). Movement whether it be regional or international is seen as having a bearing on religious beliefs and practices (Bibby, 1997). In support of this argument; Stump and De Vaus put forward two theories: Firstly, "dislocation model" that presumes that migrants could experience a decline in commitment after moving from familiar situations, which includes their religious participation. Secondly, "adaptation model" that proposes that migrants tend to reflect their new milieu including adopting a religious affiliation common in their new environment (Stump, 1984, De Vaus, 1982).

Van Tubergen supports the adaptation model by putting forward the theory of accommodation:

> *"According to the accommodation hypothesis, the religious commitment of migrants tends to adjust to the religious context of the receiving region, thus increasing when migrants move to more religious destinations and decreasing when migrants move to more secular regions*" (Van Tubergen, 2007:749).

Men espouses the adaptation model in writing about Cambodians in America who converted from Buddhism to Christianity (Men, 2002). He found that Cambodians left Buddhism because in the new context (America), Christianity had more advantages and protection as a belief system that it leads to survival and advancement and final as a response to Christian American who accommodated them on their arrival (Men, 2002).

However there are different positions regarding whether migration leads to religious change. Some argue that religious mobility (the change in beliefs and practices) already occurs when young people abandon their parent's religion (De Vaus, 1982). Or that some merely switch within the same denominational sub group such as from one conservative Protestant church to another conservative Protestant church. Instead, some argue that active participation in one's church hinders migration especially in older people (ibid). De Vaus and Myers argue that if religion is highly valued it may influence migration decisions to a greater extent than if religion is less valued. They also noted that older people have less life-course transitions (De Vaus, 1982, Myers, 2000). There are also micro-level factors like sex, family, minority religious affiliation and employment and migrant's context (environmental conditions) (De Vaus 1982) as contributing to either decrease or increase in religious participation which transcend the issue of mobility.

According to Connor, "the migratory journey itself can lead to an increased spiritual consciousness for the migrants" (Connor, 2008:244). Therefore, the need to find a church or religious that fits the aroused spiritual consciousness which is triggered by either a hostile environment such as xenophobic tendencies, hard life, unemployment, threatens of deportation, hunger to mention a few. The newer realities could be triggering sad memories of the past like in persecution, political violence, displacement which are experiences that some Zimbabwean migrants might have experienced back home. As a result, such past experiences and harsh environment demand or need spiritual empowerment that addresses such realities at a spiritual level. At this junction, this is where migrants might experience vertical mobility either by having increased religious participation or switching religious affiliation as they try to make a meaning of the life situation vis-à-vis their relationship with God (Nzayabino, 2010). This is supported by Connor who said that the "impact of the context is more critical in determining immigrant's religious participation than micro-level factors" (see also (Baumann, 2009:254, Connor, 2008).

Burwell et al posits that migrants have a tendency to change in religiosity as "mandatory for acceptance" (Burwell et al., 1986) in the context where they find themselves. This means that the people who receive the migrant and the environment exert some pressure for migrant to change religious affiliation. But I would add that migrants change religious participation in order to have the concrete life issues addressed. Therefore, the ever evolving nature of Johannesburg and its social structure have a bearing on migrant's religious participation and the specific challenges migrants go through. Religious beliefs and practices are modelled to

fit, address the new socio-cultural and environmental contexts (Sabar, 2004, Men, 2002). This is further evidenced by Chitando, who in citing Frieder Ludwig (2003) says that the latter "observed patterns of continuity and change in religious expression and organisation between the churches in Nigeria and those in the Diaspora" (Chitando, 2004). The same experience was also noted by Sabar (2004) in describing the African Churches in Israel: Firstly, he observed that they worshipped on Saturday instead of Sunday to accommodate the workweek in Israel. Secondly, they do not engage in missionary work in Israel because of its illegality. Thirdly, they refrained from expressing their religion in parades and processions. Fourthly, they modified services to appeal to young people. Finally, key rituals were adapted and others invented to accommodate varied national and ethnic backgrounds.

Though the literature is not conclusive on whether migration has a bearing on religious beliefs and practices however there is empirical evidence that show that one affect the other. What is clear from a number of studies is that the receiving context, the new environment does influence religious beliefs and practices to adapt and or change (Baumann, 2009, Adagome, 2004, Adagome, 2010, Gozdziak and Shandy, 2002, Men, 2002, Sabar, 2004).

3.3 THE THEOLOGY OF ZIONIST CHURCHES AND IT LINKS WITH MIGRATION

3.3.1 Zionistic Churches and their roles in migrants lives

The Zionistic Churches are part of the independent African Churches[11] with historical and theological roots in the Classical Pentecostal movement. They are the biggest groupings of Black churches in Southern Africa and are found in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Swaziland and South Africa (Anderson, 1992). Zionistic Churches stress faith healing and spiritual inspiration. The Zionistic Churches are numerous, small churches with leaders who may or not be affiliated to other churches, wearing robes with various colours but usually have green, white, blue, red, yellow elements (Jules-Rosette, 1997, Maxwell, 1999).

According to Edwards, the

> "*Choirs are mainly female chanting mostly one line or verse, dancing, prayer, worship in houses or open spaces, often bare footed. They dance and drum during the services to an ecstatic state which induces visions and promotes healing*"(Edwards, 1983b:185).

The beliefs and practices of the Zionists have their source both within African traditional cultures and within the Christian framework (Jules-Rosette, 1997). Some elements are stressed and assimilated, while others are rejected or downplayed. For instance, the return to ancestor worship or veneration is rejected but the use of drums, clapping, singing and use of herbs is accepted. The cultural modes of expression help in the healing process by providing an effective base for Christian healing as compared to western oriented churches which in this case would negate the use of herbs. The traditional way to healing is transformed by the Christian view of the immanence of the Spirit of God and his power to save, heal and liberate (Bate 1995; Edwards 1983). The fact that Zionists can operate within both traditional cultures and the Christian framework is important for two reasons. Firstly, there is no dichotomy or dualism in operation. Tradition and Christianity are blended together to an extent that Anderson (1995) would call 'indigenised Christianity'. Secondly, their members

[11] Zionist churches are classified under African Indigenous/Initiated/Independent/ Instituted Churches which broke away mission churches around the beginning of the 20th century from and or were founded independently of European missionaries churches and were headed by Africans (Sundkler 1948; Allan Anderson 1992; Asonzeh Ukah 2007).

are able to identify with Africanised Christianity and have their concerns taken seriously and dealt with. For example, issues of witchcraft are recognised and dealt with.

Zionistic Churches deal with fundamental existential issues of African life. For example, evil is recognised, taken seriously and opposed. As Edwards, says that "the Zionist Church member is able to find, in the faith and practice of his church, an effective counter to the evils of witchcraft and sorcery that are so real to him"(Edwards, 1983b:192).

Religion and healing can never be separated. Healing is of central concern and it can be said that is the primary existence of Zionistic churches (Edwards 1983; (Schoffeleers, 1991). Zionistic Churches attract new members and non-members who seek help, support and the practical assistance that other structures of the urban host society of which they are part of fails to provide. It functions as a welfare organisation or better still "a hospital" (Edwards 1983:181).

It has been observed that the process of migration weakens family and communal bonds which act as "mechanisms for social control and protection" (Stack, 1994:204). Therefore, Zionistic Churches as experienced now provide family atmospheres and act as buffers against perceived dangers, illness and became healing centres. Zionistic Churches have adapted traditional rituals, customs, the prophetic practices that discover and remove evil manifestations and exorcism of demons. The message of deliverance from sickness and evil spirits and the empowerment by the Holy Spirit in a hostile environment is readily accepted in the lives of Zimbabwean migrants like other African people.

The Zionist Churches have it as their mandate to deal with *umnyama* as understood by their members and seek to bring relief, help, cleanse, free and cast it away (Anderson 1992). This mandate stems from their calling from God to be healing centres. As Anderson further notes, Zionistic Churches deal with "concrete social problems such as daily misfortunes, illness, encounter with evil and witchcraft, bad luck, poverty, barrenness" (Anderson, 1992:19) (see also Schoffeleers 1991: 4). *Umnyama* is also understood in general by the traditional African people as well as the Ndebele people as an illness which needs healing. *Umnyama* as illness prevents physical mobility, spiritual mobility, social mobility and economic mobility. This means that a human being as a whole is affected and has what Comarroff (1980) calls 'social death' which the Ndebele people perceive as needing healing.

3.3.2 **The Ndebele Understanding of Illness and Healing**

I will be discussing in this section the general African understanding (which the Ndebele culture is part of) of causes of illness and healing. The Zionist churches use the same African paradigm of understanding the causes of illness and healing. Thus, providing an explanation of sickness and how treatment is administered in the African context helps to understand migrants who turn to Zionist churches for healing. This further sheds light on the role of the Zionist churches in the lives of migrants.

3.3.3 **Illness**

Illness and suffering are universal human experiences which come to be endowed with cultural meaning (Garro, 2000a). According to Schoffeleers, "*illness carries a much broader spectrum of meanings in non-Western cultures, referring not only to physical or psychic ailments but also to range of other misfortunes. Illness is in the first place conceived of as a species of misfortune alongside such other species as bad luck at hunting, reproductive disorders, physical accidents and loss of property*"(Schoffeleers, 1991:1). Illness[12]/sickness[13] can be understood in naturalistic and personalistic views: In naturalistic views illness is view as impersonal, systemic terms as emanating from natural forces as heat, cold, dampness or an upset in the basic balance of the basic body elements. The intervention is done, for example, with western medicines which aim at promoting bodily balance and maintenance of good health (Bate 1995).

In personalistic views, illness maybe caused by the patient's sin/not caused by the patient's sin or sent/ not sent (Edwards, 1983b, Garro, 2000b, Comaroff, 1980, Comaroff, 1981, Schoffeleers, 1991). Illness is a result of disharmony. A person must be in harmony with her/himself, with his/her body, with his/her family and wider society, with the natural cosmos, with the world of ancestral shades and spirit powers, and with God (Edwards, 1983b, Garro, 2000b). This is where the Zionists view on illness matches. The Zionists churches also operate from the worldview that there is a cause for illness which can be the patient's sins or someone wanting to harm the patient or it is the ancestors who are angry with the

[12] According to Bate (1995: 189), "illness is usually defined as the perception of and response to disease. Illness is always a cultural construct".
[13] Bate (1995:119) describes "sickness as a behaviour which is deviant to the society's norms".

patient. Whatever the reason for the illness, the Zionists seek to reorder a person's life, to bring health, harmony and peace through prayer rituals.

3.3.4 **Healing**

A Zionist healer is seen as person with "*special powers of clairvoyance and healing which he offers to the service of the community. Through direct intuition, extra-sensory perception, visions and dreams. The (Zionistic healer) has access to knowledge in modes familiar to the people*"(Edwards, 1983b:179). In other words, the Zionist healer is able to predict, heal, and divine and is empowered by the Holy Spirit (Peltzer, 1999, Bate, 1995). The Zionistic healer is sometimes called a prophet (*umprofethi*) or a faith healer or prayer person (*umthandazi*) (Bate, 1995). Sometimes the prophet is of a higher rank than the faith healer and sometimes these titles are used interchangeably (ibid).

Healing is understood as divine healing and faith healing. Divine healing is often characterized by the laying on of hands on the sick person by the faith healer. The laying on of hands is sometimes accompanied by anointing with oil (Anderson, 1992, Bate, 1995). Faith healing instead involves the use of tools such as strips of cloth worn round the body, copper wires, candles, holy water prayed for by the prophet (Anderson, 1992, Bate, 1995).

The paradigm of healing involves in the first stage: the diagnosis identification of symptoms which are threefold in nature and removal of the cause of disharmony (Edwards, 1983b). Firstly, the healer prays that the Spirit enlightens him about the patient's symptoms or lays hands on the patient and feels what exactly troubles the patient (the transference of symptoms from patient to healer). Secondly, the "diagnosis is through dreams and visions given by the Spirit"(Edwards, 1983b:184). Thus, a healer is shown who is coming for treatment, the nature of the sickness and the appropriate treatment. Thirdly, the diagnosis is through "direct intuition" (ibid). For example, a healer would straight away know the patient's sickness. As Edwards says, "the healer experiences himself as being in harmony with the source of knowledge and healing and in touch with patient at a deep level" (ibid).

The second stage of diagnosis is the identification of the cause of the illness which at many times is interpersonal. The interpersonal level mainly focuses on sickness which points to the sins of the patient or to witchcraft. In the Zionistic practice of healing (similar to traditional

African healing), a patient's experience of sickness illness (symptoms) as presented to the healer is identified and managed within the paradigm of causality (Comaroff, 1980). The faith healer's knowledge comes from *uMoya oyiNgcwele* (Holy Spirit) who is the source (Anderson, 1992). For example, side pain or straining of muscles (*isihlabo*) is often thought to be caused by sorcery (sent by an enemy). Unlike in Western thought, who "drive diagnostic categories from perceptions of somatic and psychic disorder" (ibid: 644).

Therefore, healing is basically about the "reconstitution of physical, social and spiritual order" and better understood within of the "socio-cultural system" of the Ndebeles like all African traditions (Comaroff, 1980:639). The Ndebele culture and society is the window through which concepts of illness and healing make sense and through which illness is then construed as misfortune. The migration event with it crisis and uncertainties heightens the understanding of *umnyama* for the Zimbabwean migrants.

I would like to point out that the experience of *umnyama* is an outcome of socio-economic and political context as felt by Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg. The migration process with its side effects like loss of social status, poverty, unemployment, hostility and jealousies (emanating from the contestation of jobs, fights over women, living space as perceived by black South Africans [14]) in the host nation prompt the perception of these experiences to be interpreted as *umnyama*. Therefore, to borrow an expression: the need for "spiritual risk management" (Vásquez, 2009:277). Zionistic Churches do recognise and offer deliverance from *umnyama* and this comes as great relief to the Zimbabwean migrants.

[14] See 'Xenophobia': Violence against Foreign Nationals and other 'Outsiders' in Contemporary South Africa. Migration Issue Brief 3. June 2010. University of the Witwatersrand. Forced Migration Studies Programme. (www.migration.org)

3.4 **The Concept of *Umnyama***

> *"According to African perceptions, a status of dignity (isithunzi) is achieved through self construction, through one's ability to create social value, to maintain or enhance one's livelihood...A person who has achieved these virtues is described as being alive (ukhona, uyaphila). But it is also possible for a person to be overcome by the power of evil spirits, by misfortune, or by the machinations of one's fellow beings. Such a person is described as being in a state of umnyama or darkness"(*Tlhagale, *2004:51)).*

My reason for quoting Tlhagale at length is that the passage is vital in understanding African thought regarding the state of being alive (*ukuphila*) in relation to others and also fundamental in understanding the concept of *umnyama* in its common usage. This is the perception of many African people that they have or had *umnyama* which therefore necessitated seeking healing from the Zionist churches.

The term *umnyama* means in IsiNdebele (Zimbabwe) bad luck or misfortune. The term describes a state of life where an individual experiences an imbalance in his/her life with the result being un-wellness or misfortune in whatever one strives to attain (Comaroff, 1980). Tlhagale in quoting the Comaroff describes *umnyama* as "the status of being eclipsed by negative forces as 'social death'" (Tlhagale, 2004:51). Furthermore, *umnyama* is described in terms of events like e.g. miscarriage, a couple of sudden deaths, loss of employment, loss of a spouse's affection, strange and prolonged illness, seemingly accidental injuries, seemingly hatred from everybody, generally bad luck in life (Lubkemann, 2002).

Misfortune can be attributed to the "*active, purposeful intervention of an agent, who may be human (witch or sorcerer), nonhuman (ghost, ancestor, evil spirit) or supernatural (deity or other very powerful being*)" (Garro, 2000b:307). It is in the exploration of *umnyama* that one sees the Ndebele cultural understanding and Christianity blend without conflict and thus making Zionist churches appealing to many people in their worldview.

The experience of *umnyama* and especially the personalistic understanding of illness disturb social relations between the living-living and the living-dead. For example, a man who feels that he has *umnyama* in getting employment will suffer himself, his family and other dependants and will look/wonder where it is coming from; who is causing *umnyama* or sickness for him. This misfortune hinders socio-economic integration. Again, a person who is

ill or has *umnyama* has a disrupted relationship between him/herself and the ancestors[15]. Therefore, "*rituals have to be performed to re-establish the cosmological order and the social reality and to integrate the person back onto his/her normal state and into the social realm*" (Men, 2002:225).

Therefore, the function of Zionist Churches is "protect and assist their members in their confrontation" with socio-economic matters (Bate 1995:117). For example, the Zionist churches protect members through prayers, blessed water, cords of prayer and organise jobs for the unemployed and strengthen them not to lose their jobs through misfortune (Edwards 1983; Bate 1995). In the healing process, when a person is baptised or born again; s/he becomes a new person and partakes in a new society which is represented by the particular church. The cleansing or purifying process reintegrates a person in the society. This is where religion provides integration, cohesion and stability in the society (Men 2002). This theoretical view is based on Emile Durkheim thinking that the prime role of religion is to socially integrate people into a religious community (Elliot and Hayward, 2009). This viewpoint is consolidated by Martin West (1975) as quoted by Bate (1995) argues that

> *"Churches have a social role which helps mould the society in which they exist. Zionists help people to adjust to the urban environment they find themselves living in. The members of these churches also help one another in more practical ways such as with 'employment opportunities', getting information about the city, and its ways' and through mutual financial help in times of crisis, illness, bereavement and other difficulty" (1995:132)"*

[15] Note, some Zionists churches as part of AICs do recognise the ancestors while others negate them. Sometimes the ancestors and the Holy Spirit work hand in glove in the invocations for security and protection of members (Anderson 1992). While in some AICs, ancestors are equated to evil spirits which should be denounced (Adogame 2004).

3.5 **Church and Integration**

Much of the literature (Hlobo 2004; Levitt 2003; Adogame 2004; 2010; Sabar 2004; Akcapar 2006) concurs that migrants seek churches or religious communities that directly address their spiritual consciousness, that help in social integration/cohesion and that help in creating a home away from home. Migrants seek religious groups to help "to make sense out of a disordered world" (Burwell et al, 1986: 357). This assertion is supported by Akcapar, who says that "religion plays an important part in the formation of personal and social identity among immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers during the integration process*"* (2006:818). This is further supported by Gozdziak and Shandy (2002: 129-130), who says that "religion has social benefits, provides social networks to exist and grow, shields the migrant from discrimination and finally, provides a place for cultural reproduction". Adogame (2004; 2010) noted that the Aladura Churches[16] in diaspora employed the new arrived migrants in their churches depending on their skills and facilitated free language instruction. Thus, for the migrants churches became bases for arrival and easy introduction in the community. Moreover, Churches also promise upward social mobility which migrants as vulnerable populations are desperately in need of, in hostile contexts where as an outside it's difficult to make a breakthrough and be integrated (Adogame 2004).

In summary to the chapter, there are strong arguments (Connor, 2008, Adagome, 2004, Gozdziak and Shandy, 2002, Van Tubergen, 2007, Stump, 1984, Sabar, 2004, Men, 2002) that the migration event with its crisis in months of moving and settling increases the religious participation of migrants. I would add that the challenges of migration (poverty, unemployment, hostility of locals) and the receiving context influence the choices that migrants might make concerning religious affiliation. The Zionist churches seem to be responsive churches which address concrete life issues of migrants.

[16] The Aladura churches are similar to African Indigenous Churches (AICs). They originated from Nigeria and have spread worldwide (Adogame 2004).

CHAPTER 4

"*Human migration is a fact of history. People have been on the move from the earliest times, often over great distances and for a wide variety of reasons, including trade, epidemics, economic opportunities, asylum, war, persecution, natural disasters, even adventure. Most significantly, when people move, they carry ideas, beliefs, and religious practices with them*" (Hanciles, 2003).

4.1 **Results and Findings**

The results of this research work are divided into four main sections. The themes are presented and then analysed in an effort to highlight the key findings. The discussion centres around concepts of vertical migration, indigenised Christianity or syncretism, sources of *umnyama* and its management, the Zionist churches and integration, the Zionist churches as social capital, the trans-nationalism of the Zionist churches and the transformation of migrants lives since becoming members of Zionist churches.

4.2 **Vertical Migration**

Religion provides a sense of belonging and identity. It has been noted that migrants travel with their religious beliefs and practices to their places of destination. Questions about what happens to people's beliefs and practices as they move to new countries have been posed by several authors (De Vaus, 1982, Bibby, 1997, Van Tubergen, 2007). With migration some people keep their religious affiliations, some switch and some drop out altogether. Existent literature (Finke, 1989, Bibby, 1997, Levitt, 2003, Hagan and Ebaugh, 2003, Akcapar, 2006); shows how migrants use religion in lands of destination to integrate, to discard old relationships, life-styles and affiliations and to create new relationships and loyalties. This section discusses how migration changes migrants' beliefs and practices as well as how migrants who become Zionists members experience changes in their worldviews: that can be described as a complete conversion. A quotation from one of the interviews conducted illustrates a change in beliefs and practice by a Zimbabwean migrant.

Ngathi ngifika eGoli ngafikela kobabomcane. Ngahlala ngingasebenzi isikhathi eside. Ubabomcane weye ngigcinile. Ngelinye ilanga wathi siye eziyonini lapha yena ayesonta khona ukuze bangithandazele. Kwabanzima kimi ukuba ngale, ngoba ekhaya sikhonza eRoma. Ngathandazelwa. Ngahlanjululwa. Ngaphiwa amanzi abusisiweyo ukuba ngigeze ngawo. Kwakungo 2000. Emva kwenyanga ezilutshwana, ngathola umsebenzi ekhefa. Ngakholwa ukuthi bengilomnyama. Ngabona ukuthi iZiyoni iyasiza, ngahle ngabambele kuyo kuze kube lamuhla. Izinto zami zihamba kuhle. Sengiphila impilo njengohlengiweyo njalo ngiyazi ukuthi UNkulunkulu ulami.

-44 year old man

When I arrived in Johannesburg, I was received by my paternal uncle. I was unemployed for a long time. My uncle saw to my needs. One day he invited (me) to go with to the Zionist church, where he worshipped, so that they could pray for me. It was difficult for me since I was born Catholic but I (felt) obliged. They prayed for me, cleansed me with holy water. It was the year 2000. A few months later, I got a job at a restaurant. I believed that I had misfortune (therefore I was unemployed) I saw that the Zionist church helped me, therefore, I hold unto it steadfastly till today. (Everything is going ok for me) My life is alright. I am now saved and I know that God is with me.

It is clear from the above extract that change in religious affiliation is facilitated by the receiving context who in this case is the paternal uncle who was a Zionist member. This was confirmed in the case of eight respondents, where the environment which accommodated them influenced the change in religious denomination. The literature asserts (Bibby, 1997, Stump, 1984, Van Tubergen, 2007) that the receiving context influences migrants and this reflects the religious beliefs that are predominant in their new milieu. The change in religious affiliation is important as it shows solidarity with the household that receives the migrant; it is part of negotiating the living space as a newly arrived migrant. Moreover, migrants feel that reflecting the new environment would lessen the burdens, stresses and problems of settling in, as reflected in the below quotation.

Ekufikeni kwami lapha eGoli. Ngangihlala lomkami kodwa impilo yayinzima ngoba ehola imali encane. Ngazama 'ukumaketha' kodwa ngaswela umsebenzi. Izihlobo zethu zathi angize eZiyonini ngathandazelelwe. Mina lomkami sasi ngena iSabatha. Sathi thina ngeke. Kodwa ke ubuhlungu bempilo, ukudubeka lokuswela nje kwangenza ngaya eZiyonini ngo1997. Emva kwalokho ngabona impilo yami iguquka. Lomkami wami walandela, sakhonza sonke.

NaKent, 45 year old woman

When I arrived in Johannesburg, I was staying with my husband. Life was tough as he was earning low wages. I tried to look for a job but failed. Our relatives invited me to the Zionist church to be prayed for. My husband and I are Seven Day Adventist members: we refused to go. But the toughness of life and poverty forced me in 1997 to join the Zionists. After that my life changed for better. My husband joined the Zionist church too.

Thus, some of the interviewed migrants (four out of eight) had moved from the mainline churches like Lutheran, Roman Catholic Church, Seven Adventist Church, Methodist Church to become fully fledged members of the Zionists churches. These migrants saw the Zionists churches as "helpful" (*iyanceda, iyasiza*) and being "life" (*IZiyoni yempilo yethu*). The Zionist churches become the migrants' lifeline, a reference point, without which life is rendered meaningless.

Furthermore, there was a notable change in these migrants' perception of God. As one prophet said that 'our God hears the cries of the poor, downtrodden (by sickness/illness) and the sick' (*UNkulunkulu uyezwa ukukhala kwabampofu, abagulayo, labacindezelwe yemikhuhlane*). The migrants' see God as directly intervening in their lives compared to prior joining Zionist churches. They see themselves moving from unemployment to employment, from misery to happiness, from spirits possession to spirit liberation. The image of God being actively involved in people's lives is evidenced by the faith that migrants have. They believe that by actively participating as Zionists, God will hear and answer their requests as one migrant shared with me:

Ngilokhu nganguZayoni, UNkuluknkulu uyami phendula imithandazo yami. Ngilomsebenzi. Ngiyakwazi ukuzibhadalela irenti njalo ngithumele ekhaya. Ukholo lwami njengomZayoni lungilethele izibusiso. *Nyasha Ncube, aged 32*	*Since becoming a Zionist, God has answered my prayers. I have a job. I pay rent and fend for my family back home. My faith as Zionist has brought me blessing.*

The faith healer/prophets in their sermons also bring about a positive image of God and exhort all migrants who are diseased, unemployed, infertile, suffering and poor to call on God and to come the Zionist churches where God has manifested himself.

The mainline churches teaching of acceptance of suffering[17] is negated here. For Zionist suffering is not acceptable. Prophets/faith healers invoke the spirit of God (*uMoya oNgcwele*) to dispel evil possessions, bad luck (*umnyama*), infertility and disharmony at home; to create opportunities of favour, peace and harmony in a person's life. The understanding of the Zionist churches as 'hospitals' (Anderson, 1992) is embedded in the teaching and everyday practices urging the sick to come to the church and be healed.

Some other reasons for religious switching are the search for *inhlanhla* (good luck or prosperity), healing, good health, employment, the solving of intra-household problems and witchcraft. In cases of women migrants, events such a sick child and a child's death influence their decision to change affiliation to the Zionist churches as observed also by (Pfeiffer, 2002). Through social networks, the Zionists churches have come to be understood by the migrants interviewed in this study as 'springs of well-ness' (*umthombo wokumpila*). The Zionists churches are 'hospitals' that never fail those in need as attested by migrants in formal and informal discussions as well as in the interviews. For example, MaNdlovu, a member of Daniel's Gospel Church said that "*I have been able to conceive my two sets of twins because of the water that is blessed here. We have been able to live healthy lives, my aunt and I and our families. The blessed water is used to chase evil spirits, to rid the body of*

[17] See http://www.loyolapress.com/an-acceptance-of-suffering.htm; Mark 10: 29-30, Luke 9:23

sickness and illness that are cast upon people, to create luck in one's life and I generally, to keep one healthy and protected[18]".

This notion of Zionists churches somehow contributes in their growing numbers of members. I witnessed in the services I attended that new people came referred to that the church each time. On the 5th of September, I attended a service at the New Church of Zion in Jerusalem led by prophet Mthembo, there was a large number of migrants who came because they had heard from fellows migrants about the prophet and his healing services (at the beginning of the service, all new members and those who came specifically for healing were asked to rise and were welcomed). Many migrants came for prayers employment, end of household conflicts and sickness. There were a large number of women relatively young as compared to men. Some were pregnant, some brought sick children and some came to ask for prayers for their families. Towards the end of the service, all congregants got blessed water meant to create luck in their lives and dispel *umnyama.*

The switching to the Zionists churches cannot be quantified here but some (4 out of 8) migrants said that they had fully converted from other churches to Zionism. As I participated in the services I became aware of the way in which people refer to Zionist churches as able to address concrete daily issues and therefore, some migrants came and were converted after experiencing changes in their lives. Of course, some migrants came only for healing/prayers but the faith healers/prophets made a point in that in their services they convert as many as possible by offering protection as asserted by Bate (1995) and especially eradicating *umnyama*. This in turn, creates good opportunities for an individual to prosper in life. For example, in the New Church of Zion in Jerusalem (5th, 12th of September and on 17th October 2010), migrants were prayed for and given blessed water to cleanse them and rid their bodies and lives of *umnyama*. There were explicit promises that 'soon' they will prosper in their lives: "*In the name of Jesus, you will get jobs, you will conceive, you, women, your husbands will spend quality time with you at home and be responsible from now on, you (single persons)will find the right man or woman to marry*" (Prophet Mthembo).

[18]A quotation from a migrant called MaNdlovu, 44 years old, on the 1st of May 2010

4.3 **Indigenized Christianity or Syncretism?**

It was evident from the participant observations in the services that Zionist churches blend different cultural beliefs, different religious beliefs and practices without contradictions but in harmony. The migrants and locals who were members seemed at ease and comfortable with the way healing sections were conducted. Some of the blended beliefs and practices that I witnessed were: Firstly, a prophet/faith healer called Gama I interviewed had a rosary around his neck. Upon enquiry why he was wearing it; he explained that he was born Catholic in Zimbabwe and the rosary was given to him by his grandmother during the time he was sick as a young man. He believed that he was healed because he and his grand mother prayed the rosary fervently. He said that the rosary was part of his belief system as a Zionist. Secondly, some migrants who are Zimbabweans had *isiphandla* (goat skin worn as an armlet) which was a pointer that they practiced ancestor veneration. One prophet explained that though it was a Zulu custom, as Ndebeles they were part of the Zulu heritage and it was fitting that they practice too this custom. Thus, the prophets encourage ancestor veneration as an important cultural ritual that must be done by the migrants. Thirdly, the prophets interpreted the causation of illness in terms of the traditional African worldview as does the traditional healer. The way of divination as done by the prophet/faith healers is similar to the traditional healer. The prophets said that they divine the problems of migrants through the power of the Holy Spirit. While as Bozongwana (1983) asserts the traditional healer claim the ancestral spirits as sources of power. Finally, the prophets as well as traditional healers use water, ashes and herbs for healing purposes. From my observations and formal discussions, I am in agreement with the statement that Zionist churches are "principal religious custodians of African culture and traditional religion" (Mofokeng, 1990:47).

There are debates about Zionist churches as being syncretic churches (Adagome, 2004, Anderson, 1995, Pfeiffer, 2002, Jules-Rosette, 1997, Schoffeleers, 1991, Landau, 2009). Syncretism is defined as the "combination of different systems of philosophical or religious belief or practice[19]". In the Zionist churches, syncretism is observable but I would like to steer away from theological debates and focus on the contribution of the Zionist churches in the lives of the migrants.

[19] www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/syncretism

4.4 **Change of Beliefs**

The interviews show that the migration process had a bearing on migrants' beliefs. It was interesting to discuss with migrants who were formerly members of mainline churches about how their beliefs had changed. Some migrants came from a religious background where prayers are formalised (prayers are written down and repeated in exact same way by all congregants) and silence revered; where preaching in church is reserved to the priest or the minister of the word for the day (the selected person to share the bible on the day); where one could sit and never be noticed in the big crowd. The enthusiasm of migrants when they talked about their experiences in the Zionist churches was something that I noticed with great surprise. Some migrants talked about the importance of praying aloud because one could 'empty' their feelings, frustrations as well as expressing sincere gratitude for healings, employment and other graces received. Others talked about the importance of having prayers for everybody, where everyone in the church came forward to be prayed for by the pastor. As I observed in Zionist services that divine healing takes a central part in the service. Divine healing is where the faith healer/prophet lays his hands on the sick/ill, infertile, divorced, or unemployed, on all people who are there for their specific problems and intentions. Sometimes as the faith healer/prophet laid his hands on the migrant; he will suddenly stop and ask the petitioner to give up wrongdoing or detect/diagnose the source of the petitioners' problems and suggest the treatment. I observed this kind of diagnosis in the New Church of Zion:

> Prophet Mthembo looked at a young pregnant and sickly looking woman. He said that she was 6 months pregnant. She confirmed. He told that she was sick because her mother in-law had cooked porridge and spiced it harmful herbs to cause induced abortion (*ukucitha isisu*). He told that he mother in-law had visited them at the beginning of September and stayed with them for two days. After she was gone, the pregnant lady began to be sick. She confirmed this (people exclaimed and murmured how evil was the mother in-law). She was asked to come forward and kneel. The prophet began to speak in strange language (speaking in tongues? after the service, I asked two women if this was speaking in tongues and they confirmed it). He asked the lady if her husband was in the crowd. She pointed at his direction and he was asked to come forward and kneel too. The prophet spoke again in strange language. He told the young man that he was not working but managed to fend for his family (*wathi kuye uyahlanganisa* meaning that he was a thief). The young man just looked down. He told him that in the coming weeks he will be jailed if he does not change his ways. He then laid his hands on them and sprinkled water on them, gave them some to sip. He then told the woman that she will be well. (Field notes, 5 September 2010, Yeoville).

The fact that the faith healers/prophet could diagnose intuitively (without needing to ask) migrants' problems was an event which in itself was attractive to the migrants I interviewed. Some migrants were pleased that a prophet like Mthembo or Mathe (Zionist Church of Nazareth) by merely looking at you could diagnose your problems and the fact that if he is wrong you could disagree and agree if he is correct. Note, the same format of divining and consultants agreeing or disagreeing can be found in Ndebele/Zulu culture. For example, if people consult a *sangoma* concerning sickness in the family. The *sangoma* then divines that they have come for luck in the lottery. The clients are allowed to disagree and explain their purpose for consultation. A credible *sangoma* will know and divine correctly the purpose of his clients and his clients will in turn confirm that.

In the services, the fact that everybody was free to share the word at anytime they were inspired was important for the migrants I interviewed. I noticed that in some services, the prophet could be interrupted anytime by someone who had received an inspiration and wanted to share it with the congregation. After which the prophet would concur and or expand on what the previous speaker had said. It was also intriguing to hear that the migrants' belief in God was heightened and aroused to a high level: migrants talked about 'how nothing was impossible with God' (*UNkulunkulu kayehlulwa lutho*). Thus, God is seen as all powerful and working through the prophets/faith healers who are his instruments. Faith healers/prophets in turn try to cultivate and present a positive image of God who is approachable and interested in each individual case. As a result, migrants approached God in faith through his instrument the faith; the healer/prophet, through whose intercession daily life problems are solved.

4.5 **Making the New Belief Visible**

One of the visible marks of a Zionist member is the cords of prayer worn around the neck, hand wrists, the waist and ankles. These cords are of various colours: some are white, blue, green, red and they can also be a variety of all the colours. Some of the migrants interviewed shared how they came to wear cords of prayer. One migrant explained that "*after I was baptised and cleansed, I was given cords of prayer (intambo zeZiyoni) for protection against evil spirits that had tormented me and caused umnyama all my life*". Another woman stated, "*These cords protect me from miscarriages, I was besieged by evil spirits. I had two*

experiences of miscarriage and one child death. I have now two healthy children". Thus, cords of prayer are meant to protect against external threats such as illness, miscarriage, infertility to mention a few and create good fortune for the wearer. When I asked if they were comfortable of wearing the cords of prayer in public, the responses were in agreement over the fact that there are necessary for protection and that *one eventually got used to wearing them*. But do they wear them when they go back home (Zimbabwe)? The majority said yes and a few said no. Those who said 'yes' asserted that Zionist churches were part and parcel of their lives. Those said 'no' cited problems with families back home when they would notice that they had switched religious affiliations.

Another interesting phenomenon was the wearing of *isiphandla* (goat skin worn around the wrist) as a wristlet. Some of the migrants I interviewed had *isiphandla*. When I asked, why? The main answer was that it was also a protective element from external threats as well as a sign that one had recently honoured his/her ancestors. As far as I know, it is a Zulu custom. I asked why they had adopted a Zulu custom as Ndebeles from Zimbabwe. One prophet said that, "*it doesn't matter whose custom it is. It is important that we honour our ancestors and ask for the blessings in life. After all, we are Nguni people too. So that is our tradition too*". In the group discussion, I learnt that there are other cultural customs Zionist practice and or encourage their members to do as well. For example, ancestor appeasement/veneration (and parent remembrance) emerged as the cornerstone of African people. The faith healers/prophets argued that all African people need to be in communion with their ancestors who influence their day to day lives, who protect them from evil and bless them to prosper in life. Thus, migrants need to brew beer and slaughter a beast in honour of the ancestors for them to progress well in life. Linked to this according to the faith healer/prophets, *umnyama* was caused by the disregard of ancestor appeasement and remembrance of one's dead parent/s. This applied also to young people who may not know the customs well enough to practice them. True to the maxim that says, "*Ignorantia legis neminem excusat*[20]*"* meaning that ignorance of the law is not an excuse.

From the participatory observation I conducted in Zionist services, I noticed profuse usage of holy water and salt. Water was mixed with salt then blessed in many 20 litres containers. Everybody was sprinkled sometimes getting soaking wet. This was highly appreciated as it signalled cleansing which in turn generated good luck. Most migrants had small plastic bottle

[20] www.wikipedia.org

of coke or of other beverages in which they put the holy water for use in their homes. One migrant told me that, "this water is good for chasing away evil spirits. I sprinkle my home, drink it to purify myself, and also use it *nxa ngisiyamakhetha*[21] (when I look for a job)". Salt, especially course salt (granules of salt), is important also in chasing away evil spirit and also for creating luck. In the services, the prophet/faith healers blessed the salt and each member was given some granules of salt to keep. These ensured protection from external threats. Those who were '*markertering*' (searching) for a job were encouraged to always have a granule of salt in the pockets or wallets for good luck.

I asked one migrant how she felt about using holy water and carrying salt when looking for a job. She answered that, "*we Zionists believe in the power of holy water and salt. Our lives have changed. I can travel to Zimbabwe and have no problems at the border or with the police. I am covered and protected*". Some migrants claimed that they also take holy water and salt from the prophets back Zimbabwe to sprinkle and protect the homes, cattle and fields. The use of faith healing objects is a very important element of the Zionist churches and this has been stressed in the literature (Anderson, 1992, Bate, 1995).

There are other religious practices that migrants have embraced like strict fasting (*ukuya enhlane*) marked by drinking water only with no food and praying in designated place in a secluded area often in the bush. Some migrants said that they had never fasted for several days drinking only water before but now it was a way of life. The prophets sometimes gave members prayers for the days of fasting specified for each person according to his/her particular intentions. I never got to know the prayers as they meant not to be shared. Another religious practice, was *ukuphalaza* (induced vomiting) done by drinking a lot of holy water mixed sometimes with herbs. This practice is highly encouraged to rid the body of *izidliso* (Bozongwana, 1983) (poison) which causes *umnyama*. As one prophet explained, "*we eat a lot of medicine to counteract the infected foods either by spouses, jealous relatives and or enemies. This attracts misfortune generally in our lives. Therefore, one must do ukuphalaza at least once a mouth*."

However, change is not only in beliefs and practices but a worldview change is experienced when migrants join Zionists. The faith healers/prophets described how migrants who became Zionists changed their behaviours and became complete new people. Maybe what was asserted by Sherkat and Wilson reflects that process; "members of lower-status groups are

[21] The word '*ukumaketha'* is Ndebele/Zulu lingo derived from the English word 'market'

socialised to prefer stricter and more conservative religious ideas" (Sherkat and Wilson, 1995:994). Zionist churches are conservative and have stringent norms for would-be members. Some male and female migrants said that they stopped smoking and drinking, womanising and prostituting and concentrated more on families and building better and health relations as found also by Pfeiffer (2002).

In conclusion to the section, I would like to point out that horizontal migration has demonstrable influence on vertical migration as shown in the case of the migrants studied here, religious beliefs and practices are changed, altered and heightened to a new level of spiritual consciousness. Of course, there are other factors such as employment, education, marital status, children, social and cultural background and the socio-political situations (Bibby, 1997; Stump, 1984) which influence the change in religious beliefs and practices. Thus, the migratory process coupled with the social environment that migrants are faced with facilitates vertical migration as supported too by Nakonz and Wai Yan Shik (2009). In consensus with Bibby (1997), the interviewed Zimbabwe migrants have mirrored the religious styles of their places of destination and moreover, they have contextualised their cultural and religious beliefs and practices to suit their new world.

4.6 **Sources of *Umnyama***

In the interviews and in formal and informal discussions with migrants, it became clear that social upward mobility was hindered by *umnyama*. As migrants journey to South Africa, the main objective among main others are getting a job, being able to support family (or families), building a social status and being seen as progressive in life. *Umnyama* basically means misfortune or imbalance in one's life. According to the migrants, *umnyama* is a state of being where one's life is overshadowed by blackness which causes sickness, failure at work, intra-household fights, poverty and unemployment. A close look at what is *umnyama* reveals that it is hurdles that prevent social upward mobility. According to the migrants and the faith healers/prophets, there was general consensus that people in life should prosper. This was confirmed by NK, aged 45, who said, "*if you are working and you fail to progress in life. How do you explain that? If your money disappears as soon as it lands on your hands, how do you explain that? If every month end day, either you are mugged or you lose money... You have umnyama for sure*".

The signs of *umnyama* are connected to social mobility like unemployment, unexplainable car accidents or injuries which leave migrants unable to fend for themselves. In an interview with Nyasha Ncube, aged 32, he thought the disappearance of his safety boots from his room was *umnyama*. Note, the act of disappearance alone signed misfortune. When his boots reappeared, his friend told him not to wear them as he was already suspicious of the reappearing of the boots and saw it was an indicator of witchcraft. Nyasha was obstinate, he wore them and this resulted in him having swollen feet. He said that his feet were swollen to an extent '*to match the leg of an elephant'*. As a result, he could not work. This was a sure sign of *umnyama*. I would like to give an analysis of the disappearance of the safety boots of Nyasha Ncube. As already mentioned, the disappearance of the boots together with the reappearance of the boots is viewed suspiciously. The fact that after Nyasha wore his boots again, he had swollen feet confirms the suspicion. Above all, the issues of the disappearance and reappearance of shoes and the swelling of feet show that Nyasha was 'weak' and therefore, someone dared to bewitch him. In the interviews and discussions, I heard, it was evident that a person would have *umnyama* if they are 'weak' or have been 'weakened' by an evil agent or migration itself. Thus, in life one has to be 'strengthened'. This is where Zionist churches come in handy. They offer security and protection by prayers, blessed water and cords of prayer as was for the case for Nyasha to be healed. Nyasha underwent cleansing rituals to get rid of *umnyama* and be healed of his swollen leg. He wore cords of prayer around the hand wrists and the ankles and in his room hung cords of prayer across the door frame. In this saga, lying dominant are issues of jealousy (as Nyasha was viewed as successful by the neighbours who are locals) and competition for employment with the locals which are result of migration. Migration, therefore, brings more risk for migrants who strive for upward social mobility and face competition with locals for jobs, housing, and social status.

I would to list the sources of *umnyama* as I gathered them from the interviews and group discussion. According to migrants, *umnyama* comes from jealous from friends, relatives and enemies as a result of the fact that one has a job and is seen as successful; from bewitchment; from angry ancestors and from migration where migrants fail to observe rituals and other customs that are culturally prescribed. In the group discussion with the faith healers/prophets, one prophet illustrated how migrants get *umnyama* saying that migration also weakens migrants and exposes them to the many challenges of the big city. Then predisposed migrants may fail to perform protective rituals or to communicate adequately with their ancestors.

Abantu bayaphongukusuka emakhaya. Abanye bayatshontsha imali yokuza eGoli. Abaye abavalelisi emakhaya. Labaphansi bengatshwelwanga ukuthi umntwana uyangaphi. Njalo abanye bayasuka bengaqiniswanga. Khumbula endulo umuntu wayethi engakahambi: Waye geziswa ngezihlahla, ayethunqiselwa ngemphepha njalo aphiwe intelezi. Kusezelwa ukuthi angangenwa yimimoyo ekuhambeni, atholakale eqinile. Futhi, angakhathazwa yimimoya yabantu abangalunganga. Manje, umuntu uyaphongukusuka. Nango esiya eGoli. Yikho abantu belomnyama.

-prophet Mthembo, aged 45.

Some people just leave their homes without saying goodbye to families. Some steal money for transport to Johannesburg. Even the ancestors are not told formal where (their) child has gone to. Remember in the olden days, before one undertook a journey. S/he was washed with herbs and incensed with herbs and given a talisman. This was done to protect the person in the journey against evil spirits and evil people. Today, people just leave homes. Off to Johannesburg, they go. This is why they have umnyama.

The above text box shows how the migration to Johannesburg taken without parents blessing, stolen money, cultural customs of journey heeded and ancestral blessing results in a person incurring *umnyama*. I heard many stories of how some migrants came to Johannesburg like running away from school, home and deceiving families to think that one has gone to a rural home especially in case of young people. Some migrants left their spouses and families without telling them that they were travelling to Johannesburg. Of course, some did say goodbye to relatives. The prophets argued that there was a need even today for people to be 'strengthened' before migrating. They recounted stories of people who tried to migrate to South Africa and elsewhere only to be turned at the border having proper papers or even be arrested and deported for mistaken identity. They insisted that cultural norms of undertaking a journey had not been observed and the ancestors were angry that they had not been informed. Therefore, the ancestors made it difficult to travel.

I also gathered from one faith healer, Joachim Gama of Daniel's Gospel Church, that the migration event itself causes *umnyama* in a migrant's life. Mr Gama said that,

"*You see, when you are at home you are not exposed to many different people of different cultures. Some carry with them evil spirits (imimoya emibi) which can harm you if you are not "strong". Here in Egoli, there too many different people and it important to be 'strong'.*

Culturally, when you leave home certain rituals made be done to strengthen you and you arrive at your destination, you must do the same. We, Christians believe in prayer and blessed water. I encourage our members to carry blessed water whenever they go and stay. You see, as you move from place to place. You "inhale evil spirits" (ukuhotsha imimoya emibi) and meet different people carrying harmful things and this causes misfortune (umnyama) especially if you are not 'strong'. This is the situation here".

When analysing the above statement, I collated that the migration event makes a migrant vulnerable to evil spirits and witches and wizards. A vulnerable migrant would be one who lives home without cultural rituals done to strengthen him/her or without prayers. Thus, emigration should be embarked on condition that one has been 'strengthened'. Other telling examples are the following pictures (page 57) of migrants crossing the Limpopo River. They had been prayed for as they left by their faith healer and were carrying blessed water on them for the journey. The conversation with Mr. Gama shows the blending of worldviews without clashes: Christianity and Ndebele thought.

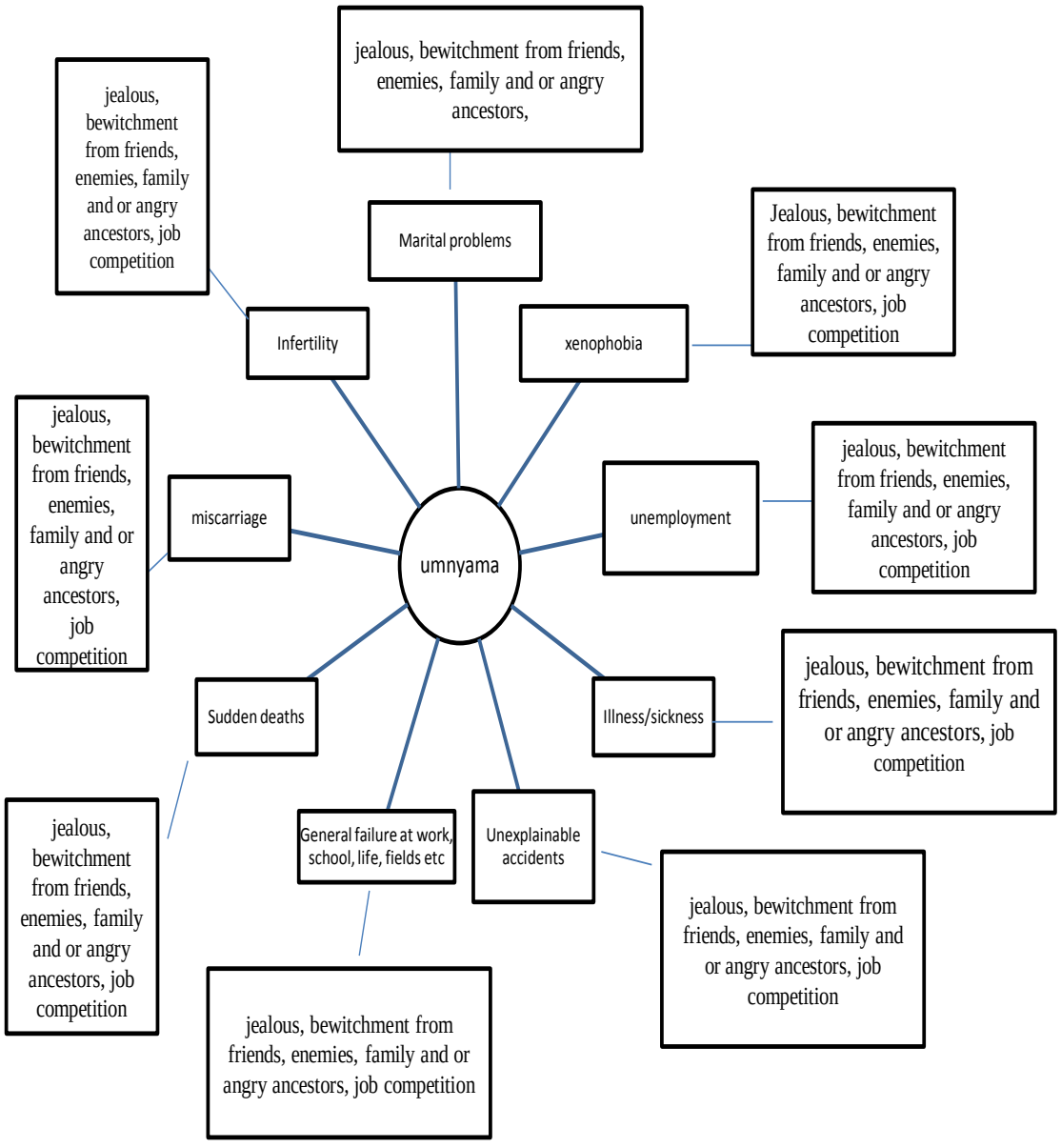
Photos



These pictures of some Zionists members preparing to cross the Limpopo River from Zimbabwe into South Africa were taken by me in early July 2010. Note, one of the men is holding a small baby. One of the men who knew the route said a prayer for protection and sprinkled the water that he carried in a small bottle into the river and off they went.

The table below (Table 4) shows other social issues that migrants saw as a sure sign of having *umnyama*. For example, infertility and sudden deaths are misfortune and there are usually caused by jealousy from friends or relatives or workmates or enemies and or angry ancestors.

Table 4



Sources Anderson, 2002; Pfeiffer, 2002; Bate, 1995

4.7 **Spiritual Risk Management**

Migrants have perceived notions of what is potential harmful to their wellbeing. These notions are built through cultural worldview and which in turn prescribed the treatment of the perceived threat. For example, culturally, if a person thinks that the cause of ill-health among his/her family member is witchcraft (*ubuthakathi*) will consider as a possible solution to engage the services of *isangoma*[22] or *isanuse* who will divine and ascertain the cause; if it is witchcraft. Then the *sangoma* or *isanuse* will cleanse the family with herbs and 'strengthen' the household to prevent further attacks of the witches (Bozongwana 1983). To borrow concepts from Vásquez (2009:277), I would like to refer to the "paradigm of suspicion" and "spiritual risk management". The concept of 'paradigm of suspicion' means a worldview of perceived threats to one's life; while 'spiritual risk management' means ways of dealing with the perceived threats towards one's life by a church (ibid). Accordingly, migrants have their own paradigm of suspicion which the Zionist churches understand, recognise and manage through spiritual exercises done by the faith healers/prophets.

I will give examples of the perceived threats of migrants and how the Zionistic churches manage as I collected from my participatory observations:

1. The prophet Mthembo called a middle aged man to stand and come forward. The prophet asked him his surname (which was Moyo). He told Moyo that he owned several trucks and kombis but that three of trucks were broken down and that the mechanic had not turned up after several promises because he was stabbed by thieves and was in hospital. (Moyo confirmed that he owned several trucks and kombis) The prophet challenged Moyo to go to Johannesburg hospital and look for him and come back the following week to tell him if it was true. He then told Moyo that his business was unsuccessful because they were '*tikoloshes*' sitting in his cars thereby preventing people from riding. He promised Moyo that he will rid his car of the '*tikoloshes*' by prayer and that Moyo should have faith (Field notes, 5 September 2010).

In this particular case, Mr. Moyo came to consult though he did not say so himself but the fact of his presence implicitly confirms this. His troubles were disclosed; his *umnyama* in business and the solution was prayer.

[22] Bozangwana (1983:34) says that *isangoma* is a male spirit and *isanuse* is a female spirit which is both a doctor and a fortune teller.

2. Prophet Mthembo called a young lady to stand up and talked her she was pregnant (3 months and 2 days). The lady confirmed this. The congregations clapped. He then asked where her husband was and she looked down. He asked if the guy they were staying together was her husband. She shook her head and said no. He asked her if she was working and she said that she had just been dismissed from work as a waitress. He told her that she had brought upon herself *umnyama* because of her lifestyle. He asked the congregation and her if they wanted to know *owamithisayo* (the one who impregnated her) and of course people said yes. He said that he was in Botswana. He further said that she had chosen the current guy to raise the child signalling cheating on her side. He asked her if she loved the guy in Botswana and she said that she did love him. The prophet promised her that the guy will be back soon (the coming weekend). He then advised her to drop the other guy. He called her forward and laid her hands over her. He sprinkled her with water and gave some water to drink (Field notes, 5 September 2010).

In this case, I wondered why this young lady had come to this service because of the embarrassing details of her life that were splashed for all to see. Maybe it was the very issue that was troubling her and the fact that she was jobless. The solution to her problems was the laying on of hands and sprinkling with blessed water plus the promise that the real boyfriend will come soon. An interesting feature is who gives the name of *umnyama* to an event. I think that most of the migrants who came for the services had already a 'feeling' that 'things' were not going on well in their lives. This 'feeling' about an event or events in migrants would be construed as *umnyama*. I would say then that *umnyama* is a language of distress. But the onus of confirmation lay with the faith healer or prophet who actually named the event/s as *umnyama*. For example, prophet Mathe of the Zionist Church of Nazareth said that during the service some people did not understand what was happening in their lives when they could not find employment after numerous applications, when they dismissed from work following unfair allegations, when they miscarried, and when they just feel ill without an explainable cause. He said that it was a result of *umnyama* and to murmurings of agreement from people.

At other times, the faith healers/prophets would be told by their clients their problems:

"*Sometimes the clients tell me their problems. For example, there was a lady who has problems in conceiving and thought that she was barren. She came to the church*" (Quotation from an interview with Joachim Gama, faith healer (*umthandazi*), 1st of May 2010, Daniels' Gospel Church).

Mr. Gama managed the problem of the lady in the following way:

"*I prayed for her everyday, gave her water to drink and bathe for seven days. I also asked her to fast in the morning (meaning to skip breakfast and spend time in prayer). After three months, she told me that she was pregnant and today she was there in the service with a baby girl*"

As a conclusion to this section, I would like to point out that *umnyama* is seen as a result of either of one's sins or evil spirits or witchcraft (jealousy from friends, enemies and relatives) and or angry ancestors. In other words, I would say that the understanding of sins is a hybrid as it involves Christian notions and African notions such as not performing rituals and relating to the ancestors in a proper manner. *Umnyama* is thus understood as a hindrance to good health, peace and harmony in one's life, social upward mobility and to fertility. The perception of *umnyama* is endorsed by the faith healer/prophet who names it and offers its management. The Zionist churches are relevant in the migrants' lives as they recognise *umnyama*, address it and offer spiritual management of it. It is therefore clear why migrants flow to these churches. The Zionist churches are 'hospitals' that deal offer hope to those who have despaired because of harassment of *umnyama*. As one migrant proclaimed: *IZiyoni iyaphilisa njalo iyasiza!* (The Zionist church enhances quality life and helps in life).

I conclude that migrants resort to Zionist churches here in Johannesburg because of the following reasons: Firstly, the receiving context immensely influenced the changes of religious affiliation to Zionist churches. Some migrants explained that because of their relatives and friends who initial accommodated them, they too, joined the Zionist churches. Secondly, some migrants joined the Zionist churches because of illness. They claimed that they were healed and are continually being protected as Zionist members as evidenced by the wearing of the cords of prayer. Thirdly, although some migrants said that they had experienced *umnyama* before in Zimbabwe, the context (challenges of poverty, unemployment, lack social status, feelings of being illegal and hostility from locals) of Johannesburg heightens the perception of *umnyama*. Fourthly, attached to the previous reason, Zionist churches recognise the context described before and align their work to the needs of Zimbabwean migrants (who fail to observe rituals that should accompany and protect in their journeys). In other words, Zionist churches seem to be responsive in turbulent times for the afflicted. This was witnessed by Pfeiffer (2002) in his study of African Independent Churches (AICs) in Mozambique: He asserted that the AICs have a great

number of followers because of the economic and social inequalities. The socio-economic inequalities at micro level result in intra-household conflicts and tensions that are interpreted as witchcraft, which AICs, can diagnose and treat. I think that in the areas understudy (Hilbrow, Berea and Yeoville are areas of concentration of cross-border migrants), I can safely say that there is a significant Zionist presence and its influence is immeasurable in this study. Finally, Zionist churches blend Christian values and traditional African beliefs; this makes them attractive to migrants especially in dealing with the complexities of Johannesburg described before. This is true in the migrants who come from African backgrounds and hold traditional beliefs and practices from which they may have temporarily distanced themselves when they were part of mainline churches that do not incorporate those traditional beliefs and practices. Therefore, the migration event coupled with poverty, jealousy, competition for jobs and houses drives migrants back to traditional African beliefs. Thus, ancestor veneration takes precedence again.

4.8 **The Zionist Churches and Integration**

The Zionist churches that I attended services in had mixtures of people: there were Ndebeles, Kalangas, Shonas, Vendas, Sothos, Shangani and Zulus. This was evidenced by the songs that were sung which were in the languages of the above mentioned people. The language used by prophets in the services was a mix of isiNdebele, IsiZulu and Sotho. On face value, it looked like migrants and the locals could live together in the church. It was not been possible however, to know how locals felt about their fellow migrant members. From the informal conversations I held with migrants, it seemed that the Zionists bond of fellowship dispelled sentiments of xenophobia (although that may be restricted to the space of the church). One migrant told me that, "*asibandlulani laphi*" meaning that 'we don't discriminate here'. Even one prophet asserted that in the church people work in perfect harmony and that as prophets they worked with all nationalities without discrimination. For example, in my participatory observation, a policeman came forward healing and the following transpired:

> As the prophet was speaking, there came two metro police persons (a man and a woman). Obviously, they wanted to see what was happening. The prophet noticed them. He welcomed them. He asked them if they were seeking help/assistance (*uncedo*). They looked unsure. The prophet assured that he will not say embarrassing

things. And people laughed. He told the policeman that two weeks ago his wife left him with their three children. He told him that he had tried to beg her not to leave but to no avail. He also told him he was not an abusive man. He told him that he had tried to phone several times but she dropped his calls. He told the policeman that she was '*jooling*' (*ukujola* meaning having an affair) with a young man. The policeman opened his mouth in awe and confirmed it. Out of all the people so far divined he was the most confounded. The prophet asked him to step forward and kneel (in the meantime, the police lady moved away to the amusement of people). The prophet spoke in strange language for some time. He then asked the policeman if he loved his wife and whether he will receive if she came back and apologised. He said yes. (I could sense that some in the congregation thought he will be a fool to receive her back. There were murmurings and slow debates began whether he should take her back.) The prophet called for order. He then narrated the story of the prodigal son[23] and the merciful father. He compared the police man to a merciful father and the wife to a prodigal son. This was the only time that the bible was directly referred to. He then reminded the congregation of their own sins and how God continues to be merciful everyday. The policeman was called Mokoena. He spoke isiZulu but I could tell he was Sotho speaking. He prayed for him and sprinkled him with water. He was also given water to sip.

Another asserted that, "'*Ayisibo abazalwane'* meaning that those behind violence (xenophobic) are not Christians." Maybe this is due to the strict control of the moral life of its members. Seemingly, the Zionist churches promote bonds of fellowship that stretch to daily life. According to one prophet, "Zionist members are united by their faith and living the gospel values (of love of oneself and neighbour, peace, truth and justice) in their daily lives." He went on to point out how they worshipped in various places where sometimes they did not understand each other's language but understood the language of healing.

My own perception was that discrimination issues would not arise in the churches because of what all groups sought: Healing! The search for healing goes against negative feelings towards each other and bond people for a common purpose. Unfortunately, this is not a true reflection of society at large. Could it be true that members of Zionist churches did not

[23] Luke 15:11-32 (KJV)

engage in xenophobic violence towards migrants of various nationalities? This would require another study.

4.9 **The Zionist Churches as Social Capital and Migration**

Social capital can be described as "'*fund' from which people may draw when handling stressors. It refers to the functions performed by the individual by significant other such as family members, friends and co-workers*"(Thoits, 1995:64). To this description, I will add the functions that the Zionist churches plays for its members. The Zionist churches provide emotional, instrumental and informational support to migrants (Thoits, 1995; Finke, 1989). I learnt from the interviews that the Zionist churches (especially, Free Church of Zion and Daniels' Full Gospel Church) were involved in the pre-emigration decisions of their members:

Intsha yonke engasebenziyo ekhaya engamalunga ebandla lethu; bayaqoq a imali yukubuya eGoli. Kugoqela lalabo abangasimalunga, abaphendukayo. Abafundisi ekhaya bayabakhuthaza ukuthi batshiye ukuganga bezodinga umsebenzi eGoli. Njalo bayabalungisela indawo zokuhlala ekufekeni kwabo ukuze bengakhathazeke. Kwezinye izikhathi njalo bayadingela ezihlotsheni umsebenzi.

Joachim Gama, faith healer at Daniel's Full Gospel Church

All the youths including those who convert to be members (Zionist); contribute transport fees to Johannesburg. The priests encourage them to leave naughtiness and look for a job in Johannesburg. They organise accommodation for them when they arrive and also organise jobs for them among relatives.

The faith healers/prophets of the above mentioned churches assert that many people convert to Zionism because of the information that it is easier to cross the South African border if you are a member. This is especially observed in the sister churches in the areas of Matopo (Matebeleland South). Thus, these Zionist churches offer protection for those who want to cross the border to South Africa. As a result, some migrants are said to have come through the churches and in turn, the churches looked for accommodation among its members for the

newly arrived migrants. The receiving context be it family, uncles, relatives, friends and church members orient the new migrants in navigating their way in Johannesburg; they provide information on issues like where the church is (which continues to offer protection and guidance), where to hang around for recreation, where to look for a job and how to deal with the police in case one is arrested. Thus, the Zionist churches play a significant role for newly arrived migrants.

I also noticed that after the services, the migrants will gather again and discuss socio-economic issues. Thus I saw that the Zionist churches also operate as *stokvels*[24] and burial societies. For example, in Daniels' Full Gospel Church after the service, one of the assistants of the prophet led the discussions on the monthly contributions (*ukutshaya imali*) which were aimed at buying groceries at the end of the year for Christmas. Each member contributed R300.00 kept in the bank until December, when they withdraw the money and buy groceries some of which they will send back home to Zimbabwe. Some migrants said that the amount of money for the contributions was too much for a single person, as an alternative they would usually decide on a joint venture. That is, two people contributed each R150.00 to make it R300.00 and that in December they will share their allotted share between themselves. The assistant warned those who were lagging behind in their contributions and said that they will be reimbursed their money only but no groceries. Then at the end of the *stokvel* meeting, the burial society meeting commenced. In the Free Church of Zion, Mount Zion Fellowship and in Daniels' Full Gospel Church, the burial societies were chaired by the faith healers/prophets themselves with the assistants as treasurer and secretary respectively. The monthly contribution of the burial society is R100.00 per member. The money contributed both in the burial society and the *stokvel* is banked. The main objective of the burial society is to help bereaved members, organise funerals and the transportation of the deceased member/s back home. They also buy groceries for the bereaved family back home. The burial society is only open to migrants from Matopo District (Zimbabwe) in line with the composition of the churches.

It is within the Zionist churches that people also get information where to find jobs, where to advertise and whom to approach. A twenty-eight aged lady narrated how in 2005 she got her job: "*I was a kindergarten school teacher in Zimbabwe. I told the prophet that I am unemployed and he prayed for me and gave to holy water to drink and bathe. I fasted seven*

[24] A *stokvel* is "an informal savings association in which members contribute regularly and receive pay-outs in rotation" (encarta.msn.com/dictionary_561508245/**stokvel**.html)

days I prayed to get a job. One day, the prophet told me to write an application letter to an address that he gave me and I brought the letter myself to the director of the crèche. The following day, I was called for an interview and got the job".

Therefore, it is by finding jobs for each other, lending money and returning it, by creating new friendships and relations and by counselling one another that the Zionist churches act as social fund/capital that migrants draw from when handling life problems (see also Anderson, 1992). These churches help new arrivals, individual members, and communities and also help their members at a transnational level. To borrow from Liza Thomas (2010)[25] Zionist churches help members to "get by and ahead". The Zionists as groups are closely bonded by their faith and principles, members are made to feel at home and within a 'family' environment. Thus, Zionism is a form "social glue" (Wortham, 2006:456), meaning that members are bound by similar norms and social ties. The churches also act as bridges for members to access resources, assets and jobs as noted before. In other words, the Zionist churches can be understood as families that encourage unity, harmony and love amongst themselves and promote the social upward mobility of each and every member. Below is a diagram from the same lecture that would help illustrate how Zionist churches bonds the social ties of members and helps them to 'get by' and 'ahead':

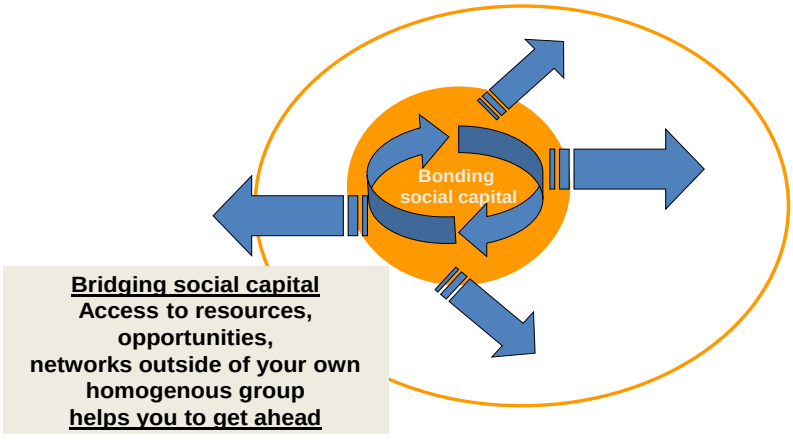


Table 5

[25]Lecture entitled "How can an understanding of social capital help in responding to migrants' health?" Forced Migration Studies Programme. (Masters Student Lecture) 15th August 2010, University of the Witswatersrand, Johannesburg.

4.9.1 **Transnationalism of the Zionist Church**

The Zimbabwean migrants interviewed can be described as transnational migrants. According to Levitt, "*transnational migrants are individual who live aspects of their social, economic and political lives (and religious, I would add) in at least two settings. They establish themselves in host countries while they continue to earn money, vote [and pray] (my addition) in their countries of origin*"(Levitt, 2003:850). The above quotation rightly fits the Zimbabwean migrants I met while conducting my fieldwork. Most of the migrants said that they go home around Christmas time which is also the beginning of the rainy season to help to plough, bring maize seeds, groceries for *amalima* (collective tilling by villagers in helping one another) and come back to Johannesburg after helping with cultivating and weeding in the fields. It emerged in the informal discussions about Zimbabwean elections that some were not interested and have never registered as voters. Their reason as stated was that Zanu PF[26] *always wins anyway!* I also know from experience that some Zimbabwean migrants actively participate in business both South Africa and in Zimbabwe, having formal and informal documents for that end. They share their time in between the two countries. Thus, these migrants whom we call *injiva or inzula or indazula* (slang word used for those coming from Johannesburg) are seen part of the community in Zimbabwe while people local Zimbabweans also acknowledge that they stay and work in South Africa where they may have a legal or illegal status. Therefore, these migrants have multiple identities. This is evidenced by Levitt and Nyberg-Sorensen in quoting Basch et al who say that "*immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement*" (Levitt and Nyberg-Sorensen, 2004:2).

As already discussed before, I learnt from the interviews and the group discussion with the faith/prophets that Zionist churches have links sister churches out in Matopo, Matebeleland South which they support and are part of the fellowship being led by one founder. For example, the New Church of Zion in Jerusalem being led by prophet/faith-healer Moyo is affiliated to Apostles of Christ founded by Bishop Jeremiah of Kezi, in Matopo district. Another example is the New Freedom Church of Zion led by prophet/faith-healer Ncube is which affiliated to a church in Matopo founded by Bishop Ndlovu. In both cases, I heard that members either go to Zimbabwe or they come to South Africa to celebrate Easter festivals or to appoint assistants faith-healers. Moreover, the churches here in South Africa have the

[26] Zanu PF stands for Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front. It is the ruling party in Zimbabwe since 1980 led by Robert Gabriel Mugabe.

responsibility towards the churches in Zimbabwe. They have the financial power though there are few members as compared to the Zimbabwean churches. So they contribute money towards helping their sister churches: money for building new churches, maintaining the buildings and also helping to meet the needs of the founder. Sometimes, they also help in financing the travel costs of Zimbabwean members.

An interesting aspect of Zionist churches as transnational churches is in how religious affiliation is used as a migration strategy as it was found also by Akcapar (2006). Some members converted to Zionisim before migrating and they refer to how these churches facilitate their movements from Zimbabwe to South Africa. Thus, members would fast for a week and be prayed for, cleansed and be given grains of blessed course salt which is used in the journey to ward off evil spirits or persons during their journey. Some migrants and faith-healer recounted their stories of crossing the border (*ukucapha* or commonly known as *idabulaphu meaning crossing the border/journeying to (South Africa*) through un-gazetted routes, jumping fences and walking in the bush for hours with its perils of *amagumbagumba*[27] (robbers, rapists, murders). Some migrants said that they had safe journeys because of successful prayers; while others met *amagumbagumba* who robbed them and stripped them of their clothing. In general, both male and female migrants attested that *idabulaphu* is not safe. While those who meet *amagumbagumba* said that they have *umnyama* which was caused by spiritual weakness, personal sins of the migrants and ineffectiveness of prayers of the concerned parties.

The Zionist churches created links for those who wanted to cross to South Africa by providing would-be migrants with contacts of *abazalwane* (relatives, friends and fellow worshippers) who would accommodate them. Most migrants said that they had no problem in finding accommodation as *abazalwane* were ready to offer them some space to sleep. This also explains why the migrants were giving back financial and material support generously to the churches back home. The churches had played a big role in sending migrants to their destinations and also in sustaining them in the new environment.

In conclusion to this section, some of the migrants interviewed have developed "transnational identities" (Levitt, 2003:851) through the Zionist churches by participating in the home-country church as well as in Johannesburg. The migrants bring with them beliefs, practices and social capital which is replicated back home and back again in the host country.

[27] www.zoutnet.co.za/details.asp?StoNum=5368; www.migration.org.za; www.iom.org.za

Moreover, the influence of the local people is also incorporated and recreated as evidenced by the adoption of local customs. Thus, it can be said that in concurrence with Levitt that the Zionist churches managed by migrants are "*hybridized or recreated religious beliefs and practices that the migration experience gives rise to emerge where local and global religious influences converge*"(Levitt, 2003:849).

Therefore, I would say that Zionists are making Christianity relevant to the migrants' perception and offering support and healing in a familiar way. The "recreated religious beliefs and practice" (Levitt, 2003:849) help migrants to settle and integrate in the host country by offering explanations and solutions to the perceived notions of evil, witchcraft, *umnyama,* and healing illness and restoring to health.

As a general conclusion to the chapter on findings, it emerged in the research work that *umnyama* permeate migrants' lives starting right from migration event, influencing the decision to change religious beliefs and practices and resulting in migrants joining the Zionist church. It is also *umnyama* which influences the decision to stay as Zionist members because of the security, sense of belonging and protection that is offered against it. Thus, helping migrants to self settle and integrate in the host country. Furthermore, I explored how migrants use the Zionist churches as social capital; they 'drink' and 'eat' from the church to strengthen their fellowship and to get ahead.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1.2 Migration

The results of this qualitative research suggest that migration has a bearing on religious beliefs and practices as I gathered evidence from interviews and discussions with migrants from Zimbabwe. The migrants that I had established a rapport with showed signs of change of religious beliefs and practices since coming into the host country. The new environment demands spiritual empowerment that can address the perceptions of witchcraft, poverty, unemployment and *umnyama*. It follows then that some migrants will seek churches, in this case Zionist churches, which offer spiritual empowerment that matches the challenges of the new environment.

I have observed also in this research work that migration is multi-directional: Migrants are not just being uprooted from one place and the story ends. There is a movement to and from. Migrants tend to traverse back to Zimbabwe to see families, family gatherings, attend sometimes burials and attend religious celebrations. Some migrants are business people mostly in the informal sector who come to South Africa to buy goods for resale in Zimbabwe. This multi-directional element of migration promotes a lot of exchanges of social ideas, religious beliefs and practices which give a rise to what Levitt would a call: "hybridised religion". As I observed in my research work, the Zionist churches fit the description of a 'hybridised religion: They conflate of the social reality and religious beliefs and practices of where they come from (Zimbabwe, specifically the traditional society of Kezi) but also the social ideas and religious beliefs and practices of where there are based (Johannesburg). Zionist churches reflect elements of tradition, Christianity and modernity in their religious beliefs and practices.

Therefore, it is fitting that some Zimbabwean migrants are seen as 'transmigrants' because of their ability to participate in two societies: the home country and the host country. As noted by Adogame, the migration event helps to "generate and strengthen social and religious capital"(Adagome, 2010:57).

5.1.3 **Zionist Churches and Their Role in the Lives of Migrants**

Zionist churches are numerous in Hilbrow, Berea and Yeoville areas where the study was situated. In a high-rise apartment or street there can be four or more groups of Zionists with the same norms, religious beliefs and practices but are not united to form one single group. Somehow the issues of leadership seem to be the explanation for the mushrooming of Zionist churches. This is not a new phenomenon as the same can be witnessed back home in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. New formations seem to be part of Zionism. This characteristic emerges is in striking contrast with mainline churches where there are clear-cut organisational and hierarchical structures.

The 'ministry to eradicating' *umnyama* as felt and perceived by migrants makes the Zionist churches vibrant and relevant to daily life situations. Many migrants claim that Zionist churches are helpful in management of *umnyama*. I noted from my research work that *umnyama* is usually seen as the main reason that prevents social upward mobility in migrants. This explains why many migrants flock to Zionists churches for help. However, this 'spiritual risk management' of *umnyama* is not confined only to Zionist churches. I heard and observed that there are several *izinyanga* (herbalists) and *sangomas* who also offer services for the management and eradication of *umnyama*. Some migrants consult *izinyanga* and or *sangomas* and also go the Zionist churches. I have detected that migration as related to *umnyama* is a way of expressing socio-economic and political stress that needs further research. This would help also in understanding the use of religion by migrants.

The migration experience breaks social ties with the religious capital of where one comes from. As a result, migrants look for religious organisations that address and meet their needs as they self settle and integrate themselves in the host society. The migration event coupled with socio-economic factors like poverty, unemployment, lack of social status, perceptions of witchcraft and Umnyama do lead migrants to switch religious affiliation. I posit that migrants look for religious groups that suit their present dispositions in life. On the other hand, the migration experience facilitates and encourages a heightened religious participation. I found that some migrants are not shy to be associated with the Zionist churches. Somehow the Zionist churches have become for the migrants a reference point; their lives are permeated by the teachings and norms of the churches. It is also in the churches that migrants get their security, identity and sense of belonging.

I would like to propose that Zionist churches ministering to migrants have made tremendous changes in their lives. The aspects in which Zionist churches have made a contribution are: Firstly, they have managed to integrate migrants in the host society by linking them with fellow worshippers who accommodate them and offered them a home away from home. In the same vein, they have shielded migrants from the harsh reality (of poverty, unemployment, crime) of host country and also link them with prospective employers. Secondly, Zionists recognize and manage the issues of *umnyama* and bring relief to the migrant sufferers. Thirdly, in the Zionist churches the "role of divine healing and exorcism and the receiving of the power of the Holy Spirit, present a new and rigorous Christianity which offered help to all of life's problems" (Anderson 1995:290). Fourthly, Zionists heal the sick according to the migrant's traditional paradigms of cleansing rituals. All in all, Zionist churches are "sympathetic to African life and culture, to African fears and uncertainties, and to the world of African spirits and magic" (Anderson, 1995:290).

5.1.4 *Umnyama*

I think that an overwhelming sense of *umnyama* is exacerbated by the urges to successes as a goal of migration and also the pressures from home to help/send remittances. Migrants come with high hopes of 'making it' in the 'City of Gold'. They expect to get employment and make a financial breakthrough but sometimes these hopes are crushed, unrealizable, unrealistic and unachievable. Migrants never think that they will have to compete for employment; it is taken for granted that they will get jobs. The issues of low wages, high rentals, feelings and sentiments of xenophobia caught many migrants unaware and therefore, bring a lot of social stress. But note *umnyama* is not merely an idiom through which migrants deal with social stress. It is felt subjectively as well as collectively level as a phenomenon experienced at different levels and signed by certain events in people's lives.

5.2 **Conclusion**

The aim of the research work was to explore if migration has an influence on religious beliefs and practices of Zimbabwean migrants and also how Zionist churches assist migrants to manage the new challenges and meet their existential needs. The use of interviews, group discussion and participatory observation as tools of research work helped meeting the aims and objectives of the study. The contribution of the study was to show how Zimbabwean migrants use religion in moments of crisis, how they perceive of their situations and find answers in religion. This study elucidates how Zimbabwean migrants deal with issues of poverty, unemployment, fears of witchcraft, xenophobia and misfortune and uncertainties of migration using the Zionist churches as sources of social identity and belonging. Furthermore, the study illustrates the significant role played by the Zionist Churches in giving meaning and warding off *umnyama* in the lives of migrants in Johannesburg. The majority of the migrants who are acolytes of Zionism are not educated and use religion as cover from arrest losing or getting employment.

The study made use of constructivism theory to explain how Zimbabwean migrants construct social reality by and through cultural and religious interpretations, webs of meaning and signification of poverty, unemployment, sickness and *umnyama*.

To conclude, I wish to highlight the following points: Firstly, the fact that Zimbabwean migrants draw upon religious beliefs and practices in the country of migration to navigate their way in the new environment. Secondly, Zionist churches as observed in the areas of the study are migrant churches/ transnational churches operating in two worlds: There is the world of origin and the cosmopolitan world of Johannesburg. Thirdly, Zionist churches have beliefs system drawn from migrants who have carried their customs, beliefs, practices and incorporate other customs, beliefs and practices found in the host country to build 'hybridized religion'. This is in concurrence with Adogame who asserted that migrants tend to "reconstruct, organise and identify their religion for themselves and other local people"(Adagome, 2010:58). Fourthly, Zionist churches are therefore, able to address issues of *umnyama* using 'cosmopolitan' healing strategies. This means that they borrow from different cultural practices ways of managing sickness and *umnyama*. Finally, Zionists facilitate the integration (self settlement) of Zimbabwean migrants in the host society by arranging accommodation for the newly arrived, giving information concerning job opportunities and by providing social and religious capital.

This study presented a case study of a group of migrants (Zimbabwean) in Johannesburg. The results are not exhaustive since they are confined to specific situation but present opportunities for further study on Zimbabweans in Diaspora on how they make use of religion and whether migration has influenced their beliefs and practices or not. This research work was not on a large scale but tried to dig what is known about migrants religious experiences in South Africa. The result is that more questions than answers emerge. This is a vast area that needs more research work.

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APPENDIX A: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FAITH HEALERS/PROPHETS

Questions for the Faith Healers/Prophets

1. Can you tell me about your background, please? (Name, Age, Educational level, Nationality, Tribe)
2. How did you become a faith healer/prophet?
    a. Study?
    b. Ordination
    c. Inherited position
3. What is the main teaching of the Zionistic Church?
4. How do you understand the term sickness?
5. How do you understand the term healing?
6. Does your church heal?
7. What role does healing play your Church?
8. How is the process of healing done?
9. Who does healing?
10. How do they know that somebody has been healed? What are the indicators?
11. Who are your members? What do they search for?
12. As a faith healer or prophet do you experience people switching churches? What the reasons for this?
13. How do your members understand u*mnyama*?
14. When is biomedical treatment need? And what for?
15. What tribe are your members?

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ZIONIST MEMBERS

Questions for the Zionistic Church Members

1. Can you tell me about your background, please? (Name, Age, Educational level, Nationality, Tribe)
2. What is your church of origin?
3. Have you switched churches? And why? And when?
4. What is your understanding of Zionistic Churches?
5. How do you understand healing in their church?
6. Have you ever been prayed for? And why?
7. How do you understand sickness?
8. How do you understand healing?
9. How do you understand u*mnyama*? Have you been affected by it?
10. Do Zionistic churches solve the issue of u*mnyama*?
11. What role does a faith healer/prophet play in healing?

APPENDIX C: NDEBELE TRANSLATION OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FAITH HEALERS/PROPHETS

1. Ngicela ungilandisele imbali yakho, ugoqele ibizo lakho, iminyaka yakho, lebanga owafunda wacina khona njalo lokuthi ungumhlobo bani?
2. Wawulilunga lebandla leZiyoni yini ongakafiki eGoli?
3. Ibizelo lokuba ngumthandazi kumbe ukuba ngumprofethi walithola nini njalo ngaphi? Kumbe wafundela loba wagcotshwa loba watshiyela njengelifa?
4. Ibandla leZiyoni lifundisani?
5. Liyelapha yini ibandla leZiyoni?
6. Wakewakhulekelwa yini eZiyonini na? Wawuhlutshwa yini?
7. Igama elithi ‘isifo kumbe umkhuhlane’ owazwisisa njani?
8. Kuyini ukwelatsha? Ukuzwisisa njani? Bakhona yini abalatshwayo eZiyonini?
9. Kuyini umnyama na? Wake wakuhlasela yini? Ubasiza njani abantu abalomnyama?
10. Kuyini okubangela abantu ukuthi bantshintshe amabandla na?
11. Ngobani amalunga ebandla lakho na?

APPENDIX D: NDEBELE TRANSLATION OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ZIONIST MEMBERS

1. Ngicela ungilandisele imbali yakho, ugoqele ibizo lakho, iminyaka yakho, lebanga owafunda wacina khona njalo lokuthi ungumhlobo bani?
2. Ekhaya likhonza ngaphi?
3. Usuke wantshintsha yini inkonzo na? Nxa untshinthile inkonzo, bekubangelwa yini na?
4. Ibandla leZiyoni ulizwisisa njani?
5. Liyelapha yini ibandla leZiyoni?
6. Wakewakhulekelwa yini eZiyonini na? Wawuhlutshwa yini?
7. Igama elithi ‘isifo kumbe umkhuhlane’ owazwisisa njani?
8. Kuyini ukwelatsha? Ukuzwisisa njani?
9. Kuyini umnyama na? Wake wakuhlasela yini?
10. Ibandla leZiyoni lilungisa njani abantu abalomnyama?
11. Umthandazi kumbe umprofethi usiza njani abantu? Bayelapha yini abantu? Basebenzisa ndlela bani na?

Appendix E: Consent Forms

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

GRADUATE SCHOOL FOR HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

FORCED MIGRATION STUDIES PROGRAMME

INFORMED CONSENT FORM: MIGRANTS

This document is to confirm my voluntary participation in the Masters Research of Mr. Melekias Zulu entitled "**What changes and continuities in the religious beliefs and practices of Zimbabweans are taking place as a result of their geographical mobility**"? **How do Zionistic Churches assist Zimbabwean migrants to confront new realities in the host society as well as the existential needs of migrants?**

It is my understanding that the objective is to examine the how Pentecostal/Zionistic Churches respond to existential needs of the migrant's worldview and if mobility affects people's religious practices and beliefs. The Research is being supervised by **Dr LORENA NUÑEZ** of Forced Migration Studies at the University of Witwatersrand. Her phone number is 011-7174084. The researcher can be contacted by phone at 074 4567021.

My participation in this research is voluntary and at my own convenience. It is a narration of my experiences as a migrant and answering of questions that I feel comfortable to answer. I understand that I am not obliged to answer any question and I can stop participating in the research at any time I fee like doing so. I know that I will not direct benefit from answering questions. I understand and agree that the interview be recorded on the understanding that the information is for private use and that it will be safely kept. I also agree and understand that the results of the research may be published. I am aware that these will be used anonymously and that no individual participant will be identified in such publication.

The above agreement have been clearly explained to me by Mr. Zulu, I have read and understood what is being asked of me and I agree to participate in the research.

Participant's signature:_____

Researcher's signature:_____

Date: _____