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SINGING AND DANCING IN HOLY SPIRIT:  
AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE XHOSA ZIONIST  
HEALING SERVICE

Research Project submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS (Clinical Psychology)  
in the Department of Psychology  
of Rhodes University

by

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NOVEMBER 1984

GRAHAMSTOWN

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish first to thank Professor Dreyer Kruger for acting as my supervisor. His genuine interest in this project, and his deep understanding of the issues with which it deals, have been a source of stimulation and growth for me.

To Robert Berold, Margaret Anema, and Conny Mater, I express my appreciation for the continued insight and support they offered in our discussions of the research.

I am grateful to the Human Sciences Research Council for their financial assistance.

Finally, I wish to dedicate this project to the members of the Zion Apostolic Holy Church of South Africa, who so willingly accepted my presence at their services. In particular I acknowledge the sincerity and patience of Archbishop Robert Ntshobodi, who opened to me the world of Zionist worship. Without his truly spiritual participation this project would not have been possible.

1.1 PREFACE: PLAN OF THE RESEARCH

This project takes as its subject a particular example of ecstatic Christianity of the African Zionist type, practised by a group of urban African persons in Grahamstown, South Africa. The study is concerned specifically with the meanings of music (singing and drumming) and movement (dancing and clapping) in the context of a Church service whose overall intention is the employment of spiritual powers in the healing of sick persons.

The present Chapter provides some essential background, which will situate the service-reality in a broader existential framework. The healing service may best be approached with some perspective on the following substantive areas:

1. The socio-political and cultural situation of urban blacks.
2. Ecstatic religion, and the position of music and dance.
3. The Zionist Church movement in South Africa.
4. An African world-view.

These areas are addressed in the following pages.

Chapter Two discusses the qualitative approach used in the research, the methods of data collection and interpretation, and presents the informants. It goes on to describe the service which was used for the collection of the song-texts.

Chapter Three presents explications of the data. The songs are examined first as texts, and are then situated in the service context. The four modes of service activity are viewed as performances, and a thematic structure which reveals the meanings of each activity is presented. Finally, these activities are integrated in an account which understands the service as a unitary project of worship.

In Chapter Four the explications are discussed in an attempt to comprehend the essential meanings of the service-reality. The service is seen as resolving

aspects of dualism, through the enactment of the service activities. This resolution leads to a possibility of the reassertion of order and the discovery of existential meaning. Spiritual healing is then examined in the light of the above interpretation. Finally, Zionist worship is resituated in the township context, where it appears as a pragmatic and effective response to the desires of a section of the township population.

## 1.2 SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL SITUATION OF URBAN BLACKS

In this brief summary I present some social and political factors which have been, and continue to be, influential in the lives of urban black people in South Africa. My aim is to correlate such sociological factors with their implications at the individual psychological level. With Manganyi (1973) I assert that the socio-political and cultural terrain as a whole, informs and transforms the existential identity of the individual. South African cross-cultural research has largely ignored the concrete material influences which delimit the experience of being-black in contemporary South Africa.

Such decontextualized research can only offer a restricted understanding of the structure of existence of its subjects. What follows, taken together with section 1.5, will locate the phenomena of this study in a broader context.

### 1.2.1 Political system and social consequences

Contemporary South African social structure is defined and maintained by the political ideology of separate development. Lines of political cleavage are racially or 'ethnically' based, and thus social separation of the various racial groupings is almost total. The ideology is rationalized and legitimated by the pluralist argument: that in a multi-cultural society each ethnic group has the right to maintain its cultural identity and integrity, by self-determination in separate political arenas and social sectors.

The result of this policy has been the creation of a rigidly-defined class-caste system, held in place by an all-embracing statutory framework, which governs

place and permanence of residence, geographic mobility, labour rights, political representation and education. The white group can be seen to constitute a dominant class, maintaining political and economic hegemony through their exclusive use of the franchise, and enforced where necessary by a powerful state apparatus. Urban blacks have no franchise in their area of residence, being 'absentee citizens' of a National State. In effect urban blacks are governed without real control over power or self-determination.

Economically, there is a sharp division between income levels, unemployment rates, and therefore quality of life for the white and black urban groups. Blacks may be seen as constituting a reserve of labour which is crucial to the labour-intensive economy. Urban Blacks thus live in satellite residential areas in close proximity to, but clearly separated from, the white urban complexes which they supply with labour. These are called locations or townships. Ideologically such populations are only present in 'proclaimed white' areas due to their status as 'guest labourers'- The implication is that their tenure of residence is temporary, and that they may be repatriated to a National State if they do not meet the legal requirements for urban residence. (This view is presently under review, but is still the legal reality.)

The above situation has greatly influenced the social and psychological experience of township existence. Urban blacks live with a real and felt sense of powerlessness and impermanence. They retain little autonomy and are excluded from access to economic resources. West describes the township resident as being:

"poor and voiceless. He lives insecurely in a complex of townships with row after row of uniform houses with inadequate facilities. Schools are overcrowded and he is likely to have difficulty in educating his children. He lives in an area where crime is rife, and where a variety of complex laws and regulations affect him directly, although he has no say in them." (1975: 15)

This existential situation is one which undermines self-esteem and a sense of competency "as an effective, self-steering agent in one's psychological environment." (Manganyi, 1973: 11)

#### 1.2.2 Urbanization and cultural shift

The past sixty years has seen massive development of an industrializing economy in South Africa, and this is the reason for the rapid urbanization of a large proportion of the rural black population. The migrant labour system removed groups of tribal Africans from their stable indigenous context, placing them in the alienating environment of the urban hostel. As industrial demand became more intense in the 1940's, groups of rural Africans settled in urban areas on a permanent basis. Such groups have accommodated themselves to the novel demands of urban existence by appropriating certain elements of the Western capitalist culture. Simultaneously, they have lost their connectedness with their traditional social structures and systems of meaning. (See e.g. Mayer 1961; Wilson and Mafeje 1963; West 1975, for discussion).

The result of such rapid social change is that the group is faced with a diminished sense of community solidarity, and the individual with a sense of existential dislocation and absence of meaning. The syncretic township culture which has emerged in urbanizing contexts throughout Africa, is a collective attempt to create an existential identity relevant to the changed circumstances of life in the city. However, township culture is in an embryonic and unstable stage of development, and the intrusive pressures generated by the South African socio-political situation are great. The township dweller thus occupies a world characterized by anomie, rootlessness and discontinuity with a shared past. Syncretic religious activities, such as the Zionist service examined in this research, are one mode of response to such feelings. They should be understood as offering the dislocated individual an authoritative interpretation of his existence, in a form which answers both to the lost security of the tribe and the emergent threats of urban life.

### 1.3 A VIEW OF ECSTATIC RELIGION

All religious forms are based on the cornerstones of belief, ritual, and spiritual experience. Some religious groups emphasize the importance of systems of belief, or of ritual performance, while others encourage the active experience and expression of spirituality. Lewis (1971), in his seminal view of ecstatic experience, defines such

"ecstatic encounters as the seizure of man by divinity. In these transports of mystical exaltation man's whole being seems to fuse in a glorious communion with the divine." (ibid: 18)

Basically then, ecstasy refers to a sense of identity with a supernatural power. Such transcendental experiences are usually conceived of as arising in a state of mystical trance, a mode-of-being in which the experience of self and the world is dramatically altered. In many religious movements, including the Zionist Christians with whom I am concerned in this study, the trance is regarded as a form of supernatural 'possession' by a recognized spirit or power. This is how the experience is interpreted by the group itself, and I do not wish here to take up the issues of validity or reality in spiritual experience.

Spirit possession holds an ambiguous position in ecstatic religions. A distinction is usually made between 1) involuntary possession by a spirit - this is an uncontrolled trance, interpreted as illness; and 2) voluntary possession of Spirit - this is a controlled trance, interpreted as spiritual power. Persons who have learned to cultivate the power of experiencing demonstrable ecstasy at will, become recognized as 'masters of spirits'- As such, the mystic has

"a unique claim to direct experiential knowledge of the divine, and where this is acknowledged by others, the authority to act as a privileged channel of communication between man and the supernatural." (ibid: 19)

Such persons live out their gift for transcendence in the context of a social group, as inspired priests who can heal the spiritually afflicted by virtue of their mastery of cosmic powers. The spiritual vocation of the healer is usually announced by an uncontrolled state of possession, traumatically experience. If this state is reinterpreted, not as illness but as a 'holy calling', it comes under personal jurisdiction. Such controlled trance then constitutes the evidence of voluntary possession, and enables the healer to cure precisely those afflictions which he himself has mastered:

"It is precisely by demonstrating his own successful mastery of the grounds of affliction that the inspired priest establishes the validity of his power to heal." (ibid: 70)

What the priest offers his cult members is the possibility of control, which suggests that the ecstatic emphasis in religion is essentially a response to a particular social situation. Such a social world is characterized by

"acute and constantly recurring environmental pressures which militate against the formation of large, secure social groups. The societies in which possession cults persist are those composed of small, fluid, social units exposed to exacting physical conditions, or conquered communities lying under the yoke of alien oppression."

In such circumstances

"men feel themselves constantly threatened by exacting pressures which they do not know how to combat or control, except through those heroic flights of ecstasy by which they seek to demonstrate that they are the equals of the gods. Thus if enthusiasm is a retort to oppression and repression, what it seeks to proclaim is man's triumphant mastery of an intolerable environment." (ibid: 35)

It is not surprising that ecstatic religions attract their following from among the most disadvantaged groups in a society: women, the poor, blacks in South Africa, recent urban immigrants. Such people share in common a position of

subordination and insecurity, showing their frustration and hopelessness in various forms of dis-order. It is the inspired priest who offers clear evidence that the grounds of dis-order may be contained and controlled - he himself has been confronted with the chaotic aspect of the Divine, and has developed a stable and dominant relationship with these forces. Further, he is able to harness such power and apply it purposefully to minister to the needs of his community. In the service ritual

"man triumphantly proclaims his supremacy over elemental power which he has mastered and transformed into a socially beneficent force. The gods enter the priest at his bidding, and are thus brought into direct confrontation with society and its problems. It is by dragging the gods down to his own level, as much by soaring aloft to meet them, that the priest enables man to deal with his deities on an equal footing." (ibid: 189)

So the ecstatic mode of service experience plays an important role in affirming the ascendancy of order over chaos. In so doing, it offers a second and related reward: a defined sense of social identity. Ecstatic experience is lived-out in a tightly structured social group, which comes to provide the primary focus of allegiance and social identification for its members. These are people who, in their secular existence, occupy ambiguous sociocultural positions. The exclusivist and immensely supportive nature of the religious organization becomes a major provider of meaning, in a world stripped of much existential reward.

In summary, the ecstatic emphasis in worship points to a dialectical and complementary relation between the secular experience of the devotees, and their presence to a sacred world. Low is made high, rejection become consummation, the grounds of despondency become the basis for celebration. This compensation is enacted in a context of intense group solidarity, where the afflicted individual is able to reaffirm his membership of a community whole.

It would appear that music (incorporating singing, clapping and drumming) and dance are often closely associated with the experience of ecstasy in such religious ceremonies (Rouget 1977). In understanding the relation of such activities to human experiencing, several views are available:

1. that certain patterns of sound and movement activate neuro-physiological functions and have psychophysiological effects.

Bührmann reports:

"The Xhosa claim that the rhythmic stamping movement of the dance, associated with drumming and clapping of hands, stir up certain bodily functions which freshen their blood, strengthen their bodies and clarify their thinking."

(1979: 25)

2. That the emotional intensity of the associated social situation generates energy, and/or releases inhibitory controls.

As Shirokogoroff notes,

"The rhythmic music and singing, and later the dancing of the priests, gradually involve every participant more and more in a collective action. When the audience begins to repeat the refrain together...only those who are defective fail to join the chorus. The tempo of the action increases, the inspired priest is no more an ordinary man, but an incarnation of the spirit; the spirit acts together with the audience, and this is felt by everyone." (in Lewis 1971: 53)

3. That the singing and dancing activities

"induce intense introversion of psychic energy. Attention and libido are withdrawn from external events and objects, and turned toward the inner life and inner events."

(Bührmann, *ibid.*)

4. That trance music, in particular, is the means by which devotees can communicate and identify with (most commonly by glorifying him/her) the divinity responsible for the trance. Rouget stresses that ecstatic cults

"aim fundamentally to realize a relation of alliance with a divinity (whether god, spirit or ancestor) and at the same time with the society where the cult functions. As a multichannel language, trance music is the unifying factor around which possession ceremonies are built. It unifies the society of devotees with society as a whole, the living with the dead, men with their gods, man with himself. Thanks to it, the change of personality is lived simultaneously at the conceptual, emotional, and motor levels." (1977: 237)

In essence the above views suggest that music and dance play a central part in socializing man's encounter with the Divine. This they do by encouraging bodily activation, spiritual awareness, and common group identity.

#### 1.4 THE AFRICAN INDEPENDENT CHURCH: ZIONISM AND HEALING

In what follows I examine briefly the growth and the characteristics of the AIC movement in South Africa. I discuss primarily the Zionist type of Christianity, of which the Church studied in this research is a typical example. I then present an outline of healing practices within a Zionist context.

The AIC movement must be understood as a secession from missionary Christian influence in the 19th century. The growth and attraction of the AIC may be closely correlated with the emergence of rapid urbanization in South Africa, especially between 1930 and 1960. Two major types of independent churches may be distinguished: Ethiopian and Zionist. Ethiopian churches are characterized by chief-type leaders who exercise legalistic authority, while Zionist churches are usually led by prophets who gain their authority through personal charisma. (Sundkler 1961: 106)

Zionism refers to any Christian movement "which emphasises the guidance of uMoya, the Spirit, and healing as central concerns." (ibid: 68) Such churches show a definite continuity in their theology between traditional and orthodox Christian belief structures. They may be defined as syncretic movements, combining elements of both systems into a new and unique theology. Both Sundkler (1961) and Pauw (1975) give full descriptions of this syncretic theology. Schutte suggests that Zionism implies a dual religious orientation, in which the "traditional beliefs in powerful spiritual beings (the ancestors) and church members' understanding of the Christian idea of the Holy Spirit merge in their concept of Spirit (uMoya)" (1974: 116). Thus the Spirit is in itself a syncretic construction which encompasses Jesus, the Holy Ghost, angels, and the ancestors.

Continuity with traditional belief is also apparent in many Zionist practices. Baptism by immersion is an important ritual performance in Zionism, similar to traditional purification in indigenous religion. The Spirit acts as a source of revelation through dreams, visions, and healing power, expressing itself through the agency of the prophet. This is analogous with the traditional diviner's relation to the ancestors. Xhosa Zionist services employ rhythm, singing, and a circular dance in much the same form as do traditional Xhosa in their healing ceremony (intlombe). But perhaps the most significant syncretic development within Zionism has been the reintegration of worship with healing. In traditional practice these activities were indivisible, and West (1975) suggests that the separatist movement in African religion is largely ascribable to the loss of this integrity in mission Christianity.

The rapid growth and attraction of the Zionist movement in urban areas may be generally understood in terms of the integrative possibilities which these churches offer the alienated and socially insecure town-dweller. The size of the congregation is very small, thus enabling the member to form social relationships in an intimate setting. The Church is a closely-knit group, bound by a common experience of adversity and urban misfortunes. Members tend to be drawn

from the ranks of the newly-urbanized, who form the lowest socio-economic stratum of the township. To such persons the church offers the emotional security of a cohesive and supportive network. In this safe environment the dis-cultured find a sense of social and spiritual definition, an identity founded on a shared ideological orientation. Church members participate in many joint activities outside the service, and can count on economic support in times of need. The Zionist religious organization may thus be seen to fulfil effectively Thomas' four social needs of "sociability, status, security, and approval" (1970: 284).

The most obvious attraction of Zionism remains, however, the relief from affliction which it promises, in the form of spiritual healing. Becken (1975) and Sundkler (1976) have stressed the emergence of various new quasi-medical 'diseases' amongst urban Africans. Such problems may be seen as psychosomatic responses to the manifold environmental stresses inherent in township existence: unemployment, family separation and conflict, violent crime, anomie and isolation. For these 'problems in living' the Zionist Church has a holistic cure. Calling on the ultimate power of the Divine as his authority, the Zionist prophet offers the troubled person a diagnosis which can explain misfortune in terms which are directly meaningful to both parties. Through such explanatory accounts the fear of the unknown is replaced by the security of the known, the chaos threatened by illness becomes the order which defines good health. Essentially the healer is a meaning-giver, reintegrating the alien symptoms within a whole existential framework.

Diagnosis and treatment proceed in an atmosphere of fellowship and concern. In the communal context of the healing-service, the sick are made the focus of caring attention and become reintegrated with the community. In their crisis of isolation they can draw on the intimate personal involvement of a familiar group or peers. The congregation of the Zionist Church plays an important supportive role in the interventions of the healer. Edgerton (1971: 269)

defines the curative factors in indigenous healing as being "suggestion, faith, confession, catharsis, and group support." It is the congregation, under the guidance of the healer, who offers the social setting for these factors. Sick members are encouraged to have faith, and the evidence of common belief suggests the efficacy of healing. By emphasising confession, dancing and singing together, and possession, the Church offers a cathartic experience which is legitimated by others. In summary, the troubled person experiences a reassertion of order and integrity at the individual, group, and cosmic levels of existence.

#### Zionist healing

"can be defined as a salutary change of life orientation which involves the whole person, restoring the equilibrium of all aspects of human life under the divine impact of grace." (Becken 1975: 239)

### 1.5 THE AFRICAN WORLD-VIEW

Our experience always happens within, and takes its meaning from, a total context. It is thus crucial that we situate the Zionist spiritual experience within a wider context of African indigenous belief. The literature on African philosophy suggests that the Bantu peoples of sub-Saharan Africa do share a broad cosmology. (See Senghor, 1956; Tempels, 1969; Mbiti, 1970; Manganyi, 1973; Ngubane, 1977 as examples.) This cosmology constitutes a framework of beliefs which guide and determine the way we approach our world (and World approaches us). A world-view is implicit in our understanding of any particular phenomenon or experience. We wish to discuss here the basic tenets of such a 'Bantu ontology': vital force, the hierarchy of forces, the integrity of the person, and relatedness of self and world.

#### 1.5.1 Vital Force: the nature of existence

African cosmology sees Being as concrete (apparent in the world) and dynamic (subsisting in mutual relations). Some concept of 'vital force' most accurately signifies the nature of being. Vital force is not an attribute of being; rather,

Force is the nature of Being. This 'vital force' is not a unitive concept, a magical animating power 'behind' all existence. African thought does not view existence as abstract - our being must be experienced rather than explained. So vital force is present in the world.

#### 1.5.2 The Hierarchy of Forces

Being is differentiated into a system of forces which are qualitatively distinct and are ordered in a hierarchy. Interaction between categories of force is possible: within the monistic totality which is cosmos, all forces are mutually related. Reciprocal relations of influence between vital categories are possible precisely because all being is life force.

"For the African, matter in the sense Europeans understand it, is only a system of signs which translates the single reality of the Universe: being, which is spirit, which is life force. The whole universe appears as a...network of life forces." (Senghor, 1966: 4)

Beings are ranked in this ontological hierarchy according to the vital power or vital energy they are seen to embody. At the apex (or above it) stands God, understood as Spirit and Creator. He is the source and end of all life forces, and as such "he gives existence, power of survival and of increase to other forces. It is he who has force, power in himself." (Tempels, 1969: 61) His presence is thus inherent in every instance of being.

Below God stands humanity, understood as the present generation on earth as well as those who have died. The dead are held in reverence, for they mediate between living humans and God, the source of vital force. They have wisdom, understood as a metaphysical knowledge of the nature of forces. They can communicate this wisdom to humans, and can influence their lives positively or negatively.

#### 1.5.3 Person and World

The African world-view does not countenance any division of the person into a body and a soul/spirit/mind. Rather the human being is a living unit, an

instance of vital force. Further, the individual person is never a separate entity in himself. He exists in a world-with-others: "man is involved in an ongoing interdependent relation with his world and fellow beings." (Schweitzer, 1983: 126) Because he is present to a shared common world, there are no boundaries which restrict his openness to others' meaningful experience. Self subsists in his relatedness to a known and ordered system of forces, of which the human collective is the centre.

Individual well-being thus depends on an awareness of community security and participation. It follows that any displacement in person-world relations will be experienced as a disintegration of identity, which is expressed as sickness or affliction. Restoration of well-being involves an affirmation of harmony with the cosmic order. Such a re-ordering is enacted in a context of group solidarity; here the individual can concretely experience his belongingness to a community, and thus resume his position in an ordered and meaningful world.

CHAPTER TWOMETHODOLOGY AND SUBJECTS2.1 THE RESEARCH SETTING2.1.1 The chief informant

After a careful investigation of the population of healers in Grahamstown, Archbishop Robert Ntshobodi was approached and invited to act as informant for this research. He was selected for two reasons. It was established that he is a Zionist healer of thirty two years experience, and is held in high esteem amongst township African Christians, both as a spiritual healer and as a religious leader in general. It was agreed that a person of his status in the Zionist Church would be able to offer an authoritative account of Zionist healing procedures. He had already acted as a central informant in two recent investigations (Thorpe 1982; Schweitzer 1983) and seemed at ease in the interview situation. Further, he declared himself most willing to participate in the research, and to introduce me to the services under his jurisdiction. Through Mr. Ntshobodi I met and held informal discussions with two other prophets of his Church.

Mr. Ntshobodi is a 51 year old man who was introduced into Zionist Christianity after a prolonged adolescent period of spiritual dis-ease. A dream revealed to him that in Johannesburg he would find a Minister of Zion who could help him. He went to Johannesburg and became an apprenticed prophet in the Apostolic Holy Church of Zion. About thirty years ago he returned to Grahamstown, eventually forming his own Church (ZAHC). He is today Archbishop of this Church for the Eastern Cape region. By day he is a maintenance worker, spending most of his free time in voluntary unpaid Church activities. His clientele is drawn from the entire Border region, irrespective of Church affiliations.

2.1.2 Description of the service (11/4/1984)

The Zion Apostolic Holy Church of South Africa (ZAHC) has about one hundred permanent members of its Grahamstown branch. Healing services are held every

Wednesday night, in an outer building on the property of Mr. Ntshobodi. The service selected as typical attracted a congregation of about 40 persons.

Prayers begin unobtrusively, with only a few members of the Choir present. Singing is quiet and desultory, and drumming intermittent. As more members arrive, the mood of the gathering changes: singing becomes louder and more emotive, and is accompanied by powerfully rhythmic drumming and fast clapping. The unison of these expressions offers a palpable feeling of groupness. After 30 minutes the room is crowded, with people forming a circular arrangement around two concentric circles painted on the centre of the floor. Men are on the left and women on the right as one enters the room. Most of the women constitute the Choir, and lead and sustain the singing. These are the permanent 'members' of the Church. (It is interesting to note the close resemblance in structure and procedures to the traditional intlombe healing ritual, described by Bührmann 1981). When it becomes clear that no further persons will arrive, Mr. Ntshobodi reads a text from the Bible. The Choir then sing the Lord's Prayer, while the prophets 'pray in tongues'. This ends what appears to be the first section of the service. Following Kiernan (1974) I call it the 'period of Prayer'.

A 'period of Preaching' follows, consisting of a passionate exhortatory sermon by the Minister. This is interrupted four times by spontaneous communal singing. After the preaching, containers of Holy water are placed in the centre of the circle and blessed by Mr. Ntshobodi. They are removed and the prophets begin a circular anti-clockwise movement around the circle. Sustained unison singing forms the background to these activities.

The circular dance marks the advent of the 'Healing period'. The prophets appear to enter a trance-like state, and at this time several congregants become 'possessed'. The prophets begin their healing work with the possessed individuals, holding them carefully on the floor while they 'lay hands' and pray

ecstatically. Less seriously afflicted persons step into the circle and are vigorously slapped, shaken, and palpated. The healers are extremely active, while the sick ones stand passive and mute. After most of the congregation have been thus attended to, the junior prophets and Choir members are themselves healed. The entire healing period is remarkable for the atmosphere of joy and mutual commitment which it engenders. This is in large part due to the deeply-expressive melodic quality of the singing, as well as to the high level of activity in the room. Besides the circular dance in the centre, every member is also swaying and stamping rhythmically on the beat. Even as a stanger I felt very much a part of this intense group experience, and shared in the joy and excitement of participation.

When all have been healed, Mr. Ntshobodi gives a brief sermon and a prayer of benediction, and the Congregation sing a last closing song in atmosphere which is suddenly marked by a feeling of peace, tranquility and closeness.

## 2.2 APPROACHING THE RESEARCH

### 2.2.1 Methodological suppositions

Social-scientific work which seeks to investigate religious phenomena in non-Western cultures has generally avoided the meanings which these phenomena hold for their practitioners. Research which lays claim to any existential validity (as opposed to logical consistency) must faithfully represent the unique meaning-structures of the subjects concerned, in their socio-cultural context.

The few studies of Zionist Christianity which have been undertaken, have been more concerned with passing judgement on syncretic belief-systems (Sunkler 1961, 1976) or with issues of social organization (Thomas 1976; West 1975) than with the religious experience as it is lived by participants. Such research imposes a Western perspective on the phenomenon, distorting its essential meaning by superimposing extrinsic schemata of analysis.

Recently, two studies have appeared which do not attempt to reduce Zionist thought to preconstituted theory (Thorpe 1982; Schweitzer 1983). The present work follows in this tradition of qualitative research. It takes as its area of interest the close examination of a number of related activities which represent worship in the Zionist healing service. A broadly phenomenological stance is adopted, insofar as the world is seen as being constructed by human acts of interpretation, and the validity of experiences is not prejudged.

In remaining consonant with the data of experience, and in regarding consciousness as an intentional phenomenon, research may gain access to meaning. It is by explication of intentions that the meanings revelatory of a phenomenon become available. Such meanings must be interpreted in order to gain an integrated understanding of the significance and relevance of the phenomenon in its existential context. In positing this, I move with Ricoeur (1971) somewhat away from empirical phenomenology, towards a hermeneutic approach which more adequately encompasses the complex intentional project which is the healing service. Hermeneutics is a linguistic process of argumentation, rather than a natural-scientific assertion of truth-value. The meaning of human activities is always contextually bounded, and thus every understanding of the phenomenon is relativized as an interpretation open to alternative formulations.

However, the validity of the interpretative work must be judged only by its demonstrable consistency with the data of the participant perspective. For this reason my primary presentation of data stays close to the chief informant's own expressivity. In this way readers may gain for themselves an immediate apprehension of the meanings of the phenomena explicated in this paper. Having offered a participant perspective, I then move to a more general interpretation of the service process, arriving at a deeper understanding of the essential structure of the service project.

### 2.2.2 Data collection and interpretation

During the course of 1984, twelve Wednesday night services of the Zion Apostolic Holy Church (ZAHC) were attended. I was made welcome at these ceremonies: from the fourth meeting on I was given an office-holders' robe to wear, and was invited to join in with the various prayer activities. My research status and perspective was thus that of participant observer.

Tape recordings were made of the songs sung at several services. One ceremony (11/4/1984) was selected as being representative of the structure of Zionist worship. The songs were transcribed, and translated by two members of the African Languages Department of Rhodes University. A series of tape-recorded interviews were then held with the chief informant. These were free-ranging and non-directive discussions, in which he was asked to give his own understandings of the meaning and employment of the songs and other activities in the service context. Questions were kept to a minimum, and were couched in a naive style. This approach was designed to encourage Mr. Ntshobodi to confront and thus explicate his own perspective on the primary life-world of the service. It was decided not to use an interpreter after two had been tried. The use of an interpreter was felt to interfere with Mr. Ntshobodi's spontaneous expression, and with the meanings he was communicating. The interviews were transcribed, and form the data-base for the accounts presented in Chapter Three.

This research constitutes an interpretation twice-removed from the world of spiritual experience to which it refers: it is my representation of one individual's interpretation of a group experience. However, Mr. Ntshobodi may be considered an 'expert witness' in that his understanding of the service-reality is instrumental in constituting that reality for his congregation. Through his accounts of the meanings of the service activities, the service revealed itself as a unitary group project to realize certain specific intentions. I became convinced that the essential meaning of the phenomena lay in an explication of their mode of effectiveness in appropriating these desirable experiential

goals.

In interrogating the accounts, essential themes emerged which reflect accurately on the constituent meanings of service phenomena. My contribution has been merely to structure these meanings in a more formalized discourse, thereby making lived experience intelligible as meaningful action. Section 3.3 may be seen as a diachronic representation of the unfolding of service intentionality, while 3.4 offers a synchronic understanding of the modes of realization of these intentions. Together they offer an appreciation of the service as a group project to transform being-in-the-world. The interpretation of Chapter Four seeks to comprehend this project in a total context of existential meaning.

RESULTS

3.1 THE SONGS AS TRANSLATED TEXTS

What follows below is a complete English translation of all the songs used in a Z.A.H.C. healing service. They are presented in order of their performance.

Song 1

Let us thank Jesus because he died for us  
He showed kindness by dying for us  
Thank you Lord, thank you Lord, have mercy on us

We children of the blind, heaven came to us

(As verse 1)

(As verse 1)

The black and white should pray together

It should be heard from all of them, by singing for the Lord

(as verse 1)

S.2

I wish, O Lord (Jesus), I would praise you with all my heart  
To get rid of my cruelty; Amen, amen.

S.3

Repeat of S.1

S.4

Send me (X 3) my Lord

I am going to work for you (X 3) my Lord.

S.5

Hosanna, hosanna ..... (repeated)

S.6

Our Father who art in Heaven hallowed be thy name  
Thy Kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those that trespass against us  
Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil  
For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the Glory  
Forever and ever  
Amen

S.7

Give me strength, O lamb of Calvary,  
And patience, merciful one.

S.8

Repeat of S.6

S.9

Praise the Lord; hallelujah, amen.

S.10

There is a light in Heaven!  
They have crossed over the river Jordan.

S.11

O Lord (Jesus), be praised!

S.12

We are going to tramp on (knock) this demon  
Yes, yes, my Lord.

S.13

The fire of the Gospel is burning (X 2)  
We are not afraid of saying the Word of God.

### 3.2 EXAMINATION OF SONGS AS TEXTS

It was originally intended to explicate the songs given above as independent texts, with the aim of disclosing aspects of the lived-reality of the service. However, a scrutiny of the text reveals a conspicuous lack of manifest content. Mr. Ntshobodi's accounts of the use of these songs bear little necessary relation to their meanings as written-documents. These texts stand in need of interpretation, rather than of explication: in what is not-written we will find meanings revelatory of the service-reality. In this belief I began to look beyond the text-as-written. But first let us examine what meanings are available.

One of the most notable features of the texts is the lack of a systematic conceptual framework. It is suggested here that the very lack of cognitive/philosophical content is the key to any understanding of the spiritual project of this Church. Such an absence of explicit theology implies that the songs are used as vehicles of faith rather than understanding; that the healing-reality of the singers is based upon belief, not knowledge. What limited manifest content there is, can be seen to support this assertion.

Certain of the texts (notably songs 1, 2, 4 and 7) provide a clear statement of the singer's attitude towards self, the Divine, and the relations between them. Man addresses himself to the Divine realm (personified as Jesus) in a stance of supplication; he opens himself to a power which is outside himself, and is the source of all Good. Viewing himself as fallible and vulnerable, man surrenders control of his destiny rather than taking autonomous action to change it. He affirms his own powerlessness, as well as the supremacy of the Divine Power. This voluntary abnegation has its reward: by actively giving over his agency, Man gains the possibility of engaging with the Divine, in an attitude of open receptivity. Within the sacred relation which is brought-into-being, Man finds those qualities of the Divine which he has requested in good faith.

Taken as a set, the song texts point beyond their apparent horizons of meaning, towards an understanding of the whole service as an act of Faith. The majority are not amenable to purely textual explication. I submit that they must be approached as vehicles for expressive intention, finding their meaning only in performance in a specific context. In Mr. Ntshobodi's accounting of the use of these songs in the life-world of the service, we will gain an understanding of the texts as lived-out in experience.

### 3.3 THE SONGS IN THE SERVICE CONTEXT

#### 3.3.1 The songs as intentional vehicles

In discussing the meanings of song in the healing-reality, Mr. Ntshobodi stressed that each song was employed with a specific aim at a particular point in the service. He wished me to view the service as a unitary project which culminates in the attainment of dual 'peaks of intention': (a) being in Holy Spirit - an experience of being present to, and infused with, the Power of the Divine; and (b) the work of healing the sick - an activity that requires the presence of Holy Spirit for its successful enactment. The songs, taken as a group, stand as one mode of expression whereby these intentions may be actualized.

Mr. Ntshobodi identifies two distinct categories of song text, each type contributing in a specific manner to the realization of the intentional peaks of the service. The first type he calls Special or Chosen songs:

"These are songs that are meaning something. They can not put you in power. Rather they are talking, saying something to us. You can say they are like a key...to open the next part of the service."

Thus the function of the Special songs is largely instrumental. They are the vehicles for the performance of specified tasks, which must be enacted in order that the service may proceed. They are purposive, directing the singers in

the active unfolding of their relation with the Divine. Included in this category are songs 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 12.

The second type Mr. Ntshobodi calls Praise songs:

"These do not mean anything, they are songs that are giving you power. We are just happy, showing the people how good Jesus is, just praising Him."

So the Praise songs are largely an avenue for expression. They have little cognitive content, functioning rather as vehicles for the affirmation of emotional experience. They open up and maintain the relation with the Divine realm, without transforming it. Included in this category are songs 1, 3, 5, 9, 10 and 13.

Song 11 is seen as embodying aspects of both Special and Praise songs. I will account for this below.

It is clear that the service progresses through a fairly regular alternation of Special and Praise song-performances. This alternation is by no means random: taken together, the two types of song are seen to constitute a dialectical movement of meaning, through which the dual peaks of intention in the service are realized. The basis of this dialectical tension lies in the alternation between 'work' and 'celebration', as embodied by the succession of Special and Praise songs. To work in song is to take action with the aim of transforming experience; to celebrate in song is to contemplate the action taken, with the aim of integrating the new experience.

The rhythm or pulse inherent in the creation and resolution of this dialectic is the key to an understanding of the service-reality. The songs only become intelligible when considered as elements in a hermeneutic structure which defines the service as a unitary intentional project. In what follows below, I explicate the emergent meanings of this project, as exemplified by Mr. Ntshobodi.

### 3.3.2 The metaphor of 'the road to Jesus'

Mr. Ntshobodi consistently used the following metaphor in imparting to me his understanding of the service:

"Jesus said we are walking in two roads - the one is going to Jesus, the other to Satan. One path leads to darkness, the other to light, to Heaven. All the songs and dancing are helping me in this path to Jesus - they are all joined together."

This suggests that by participation in the service activities we change our way of being present to the world, that we become aware of the possibility of a Sacred aspect of our existence. This experience only becomes available through our involvement in an intentional project. The songs act as 'stepping-stones' in the fulfillment of this transformation, and they take their intentional meaning from their contribution to the unfolding experience of the service. In what follows, I show the song texts to be revelatory of the process of encountering the realm of the Sacred.

With Song 1 we enter the sacred space exemplified by the Church, invoking the presence of the Divine in this song of Praise:

"we are saying 'let us pray to the Lord'. Everyone is coming from every side to the Church, because now we say 'let us do this'."

Song 2 is a Special song of confession:

"when we are all collected in one place, now we confess. I must arrange myself, because I'm going to take a journey... The first thing you must do is to cleanse yourself."

By opening ourselves to our fallible humanity, we prepare the way for the possibility of a changed experience of self.

So S. 1, 2 and 3 (repeat of 1) together constitute the preliminary approach to the Sacred. The human condition is contrasted with the Divine reality, and the hope of a closer relation is expressed. Encounter with the Divine means a deliverance from our secular reality.

Song 4 is a Special song in which we declare ourselves as willing participants in the workings of the Spirit:

"Having cleaned, now I am ready to get on the road. We are getting ready to heal, to work. We are asking Jesus to come to us, to help us save these souls."

Song 5 is a Praise song which exemplifies the affirmative and integrative meaning of this category of expression:

"We are happy now on the road. The people are waiting for Jesus to come straight into their hearts. They are happy and forget all their troubles. We must all be in one heart before saying the Lord's Prayer."

Thus we wait, in a context of increasing group solidarity, for that which we have asked to become available.

Song 4 and 5 together suggest a period of eager anticipation: we feel closer to the Sacred realm, and await its presence in an atmosphere of shared expectancy. Attention is withdrawn from the secular world, and increasingly concentrated on the Divine.

Songs 6, 7 and 8 are all Special songs and as such usher in a period of intense working-together in preparation for the healing ceremony proper. In S.6 the Choir alone sings the Lord's Prayer while the prophets pray in tongues. Mr. Ntshobodi comments:

"Now we are on the way. I'm confessing my sins again. I asked Jesus to send me; now he has given me the permission to go. I must open my heart more now, with the prayer Jesus has given me - it makes you more clean."

This song provides the Sacred context within which the prophets first encounter the Divine power, while the Congregation offers support.

Song 7 constitutes a request by the prophets for an alliance with the Divine:

"This is the key to work. Jesus has sent me to heal sick people. Now I want Jesus to give me the strength to do His work."

Gaining this strength means 'to be in Holy Spirit'. It is at this point in the service that the prophets enter fully into the Sacred realm, and thus can appropriate aspects of the Divine power which define this realm.

At song 8 the entire Congregation is brought into the realm of the Sacred, as all sing the Lord's Prayer:

"This song is Chosen for joining together, the key to open hearts. We are giving them the chance to pray - it is a prayer for strength for the house."

Thus at this point the Congregation becomes a unified group, joined in their common presence to the Divine.

Songs 6 - 8 taken together, constitute the work needed for entry into the Sacred, first by the healers, then the congregation.

Song 9 is a song of Praise by which the Congregation affirms and celebrates its integrity as a group. By singing this song we consolidate and intensify our awareness of being-together.

Song 10 is the song of Praise which constitutes the fullest recognition of our encounter with the Divine. At this point the first 'peak of intention' has been reached:

"Each and everyone is looking to Heaven. We can see those prophets and Jesus spiritually. We are with our old ancestors,

our Fathers, who are waiting in paradise. By believing in the name of Jesus, we are together with all spirits. This makes us feel happy and strong."

The above describes the concrete experience of being present to the infinite horizons of space and time which constitute our history. We have transcended a bounded secular world for the unbounded world of the Sacred.

Songs 9 and 10 together constitute a recognition of fusion with the Divine. The demarcations between individual selves, and between Man and the Divine realm, are submerged in an immediate apprehension of unity.

With songs 11 and 12 we perform the work of healing. Song 11 is unique in that it offers dual meanings, as a Special and Praise song. Work and celebration become indistinguishable as the second 'peak of intention' is reached:

"You are talking about the important works, the miracles which Jesus is doing for his people. The people must know, when they are healed, it is not with our strength. They must not say we have done good things and praise our names. This Work is done in their Saviour's Name, and they must praise Him."

Thus the work of healing the sick proceeds through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the source and author of Divine power. Only by affirming this power, do the prophets appropriate the strength necessary to heal.

Song 12 is a Special song for increased strength when victory over evil is imminent:

"Here I am winning with the demons. This song is for beating. By singing, the Congregation is giving more strength to those who are praying against the strong bad spirits."

By focussing our intentions and standing together in our task, we find the conviction ('strength') needed to triumph over evil.

Songs 11 and 12 together constitute the use of Divine power. The Congregation and healers remain in direct relation to the Sacred realm, and are thus able to employ the power which flows from this relation. The Congregation maintains and strengthens the bond with the Divine by singing these prayers. The healers give themselves over as channels, through which spiritual Force finds expression in the material dimension of healing.

After all the afflicted members have been healed, the service is closed with Praise song 13:

"We have seen the miracles and wonderful works of Jesus. Now we believe in Jesus, there is a force in our hearts. We must remember Him all the time. People who have been healed must not be afraid to preach to others, to tell that Jesus is a good man."

So the service closes with an affirmation of the entire experience to which we have been present. With a feeling of conviction and pride we return to our secular existence, secure in the rightness of our shared project. Although the service is over, we will carry into our ordinary lives some of its lasting rewards.

#### 3.4 MEANINGS OF THE SERVICE ACTIVITIES

I turn now to an understanding of the specific modes of activity within the service, explicating their meanings as performances. The four modalities of activity in which the congregation participates are:

1. The Singing of Songs
2. The Beating of a Drum
3. The Clapping of Hands
4. The Dancing in a Circle

I shall examine Mr. Ntshobodi's accounts of the meaning of each activity in turn, presenting a thematic structure which is revelatory of each phenomenon.

Finally I attempt to integrate these activities at a meaning-level which discloses the service-reality as lived by participants.

### 3.4.1 The Meaning of Singing

#### (a) Singing as an expressive activity

Singing is seen as being similar to, but more than, talking. They have words in common:

"When singing, there are words that mean something - there are words in talking and words in the song. You are talking the words by singing."

But singing offers a broader dimension of expression:

"When singing, those words, you pull them...as a rhythm. In saying things the words are short. But when singing you can stretch out the words and make them long."

So the use of music allows a range of expressive variation, inherent in the possibilities of timing, duration, pitch, rhythm and vocal inflections. These musical characteristics add an expressive dimension to the cognitive dimension of the words. Singing and hearing the song awakens feeling:

"When singing I'm using more spirit than in talking. The song is like a key - it is the key to open the heart. You will feel in your heart as if you are going to cry, as if a bit worried. But you are not worried, you are quite happy. You feel as if you can cry, or do any such thing.. you can fly, or go straight to Heaven, or see Jesus. It's a good feeling. You find more and more words talking about Jesus, when your heart is worried about Him...There is a change in your heart."

So singing appears as an emotional dis-covering: we find in ourselves an undifferentiated emotional potential. The experience of singing in this specific context, means an opening-up of expressive possibilities. It leads us to an enhanced awareness of our feeling-selves, represented here as 'spirit' and 'heart'.

## (b) Singing as a focussing activity

In our everyday secular existence outside the Church we are preoccupied by our various worries and problems:

"we were away from Jesus, far from him by our evil doings; we are doing our own things in our own places. Now in the Church we must forget our own things, we are doing the things of Jesus: to follow and be faithful to Jesus."

So in order to be fully present to the experience of the Holy, we have to suspend our usual egocentred way of being. In song we find a way of focussing our attention on the immediately-given, the present experience:

"If you can sing together now, there is a change. What happens is that we are not thinking another thing now, because the song is leading us. We can only think about one thing, the thing we are singing about.

If we are talking, there is a time I must wait for you to talk. I can think about many other things although we are talking together. But the singing, it stops everything. Just leading you straight to what you are singing about. Not a crack of space is left to think about other things - just one thing!"

It was shown earlier that all these songs are 'about one thing' - God in the aspect of Jesus. So we are led by the singing away from self-absorption, as object of consciousness, into the experience of contact with the Holy. Being present to 'just one thing' means to attend fully to what is immediately given in experience. Thus the dimensions of temporality (past/present/future) and spatiality (the extended world outside) become greatly constricted. I occupy a world which is filled with the present object of my attention.

Singing is a continuous activity: It calls for ongoing participation, a flow of self-expression which requires unbroken and focussed attention. There is apparent here an emergent dialectic of the activity of singing: it is simultaneously heard, as an ongoing experience; and is produced, as ongoing

expression. To say 'the song is leading us' is to recognize that we are attending both to our own creative activity, and to our engagement with others' productions. As such the song-being-sung comes to dominate awareness, we feel drawn exclusively to that which we are singing about. "We are only doing one thing."

(c) Singing as transcendental communication

Having explored the meaning of singing as a vehicle for the focussing of consciousness, the individual's experience of, and intention in his singing will now be examined more closely. Singing is the means of

"Opening your heart to Jesus. The song is like a key - it is the key to open the heart. The song is the praise that makes God feel what we are asking Him to do."

So clearly, in singing these hymns, we are expressing our desire for a direct and immediate contact with the Holy, the transcendental realm of experience. We open ourselves to this relation precisely by engaging with our emotional centre (cf. (a) above) and suspending our ordinary way of being-with-self (cf. (b) above). We are thus able to give ourselves fully to the relation with Other. Singing in Church means the active invocation of this concretely-experienced relation:

"Our songs like to mention His name...When you are saying His name you keep looking straight at Him. Like you find a man just closing his eyes and singing about Jesus. He sees Jesus on the Cross."

So we apprehend the presence of the Holy in our immediately-given experience. We wish to establish a personal link with this realm, and the song of praise becomes a sacrifice with which we offer ourselves to God:

"Each person now must confess himself to Jesus and repent."

Commenting on Song 2 ('a confessing song') Mr. Ntshobodi says that

"here you are giving yourself straight to Jesus. Tell him straight that you have done wrong before Him. Now you want Jesus to forgive. Asking Him to give you another heart, the heart that follows Him straight."

This song signifies the opening-up of an individual relation between God and the person, who by examining his human fallibility (conscience) in the presence of the Divine, hopes to identify himself with the Good which defines the Holy. All the later singing then maintains and strengthens this connectedness with the transcendental realm.

(d) Singing as group integration

Above we showed that the individual must be able to orient himself entirely towards the Holy, with a specific intention. Mr. Ntshobodi often stressed the group dimension of such a restricted intentionality:

"When singing about Jesus, you mean he must be praised by each one, and me too. These are hymns of praise, they must be sung together. When singing, all of us in the Church are doing one thing, making one voice together. Now each and every heart here is doing one thing...is in the Hymn. The song in every Church is the first thing; if you are not right, you can't be with the people in the Church. When a person comes into the Church, his heart is not with the Church. Now when singing together, you are arranging your hearts."

So it is by the shared experience of group singing that disparate individuals create for themselves a context of group unity. Song 1 was described by Mr. Ntshobodi as

"a song for visitors, for people to fit in."

Throughout the service the importance of group participation is emphasized. At all points it is the song that is the unifying activity, the vehicle for a

compelling experience of belonging and sharing. Singing is the congregation's contribution to the healing-work of the service; it is during healing that the integrative possibilities of singing-together become most clear:

"The Congregation have got their own gifts to give. They help me by singing. It is pushing me to do it, win the victory, I must beat the demon. Now those persons, they are just the branches of the Church. If I say 'do not sing, I will do the work myself' it is like I am taking a saw and cutting them, they will die in Spirit. They were also sick before, they know how dangerous the demon is. So they want to help. We must all fight the enemy, so it must go. We must all do one thing, because the Church is one."

So we can see here that the singing creates a sense of group unity, and affords all members a means of participation in the central project of the service. The shared song presents a unified front against the forces of evil, helping the prophet to accomplish his work of exorcism. Every member contributes to the common aim of the group, thus experiencing themselves as a vital and necessary member of the group. "We are all doing one thing."

(e) Singing as access to spiritual power (amandla)

By appropriating this transcendental relation in a context of groupness our experience of being-in-the-world changes:

"the song is sending a person, making a person feel strong.  
Your body feels stronger and your spirit feels stronger.  
The songs can send you straight to talking the true thing..  
they are giving you power."

So clearly, while singing we become more available to our potentials as whole human beings. We feel activated by an emerging access to our psychic and bodily energies. This 'power' is experienced as the presence of Holy Spirit (uMoya) in us, and between us in the Church. The group dimension in calling forth

this 'power' is crucial:

"This power comes from above. But the songs are giving you power, which comes from the Congregation. Now the people here are with the Spirit. As the people are singing and praying, now the Holy Spirit is getting more."

This ambiguous accounting of the source and nature of Holy Spirit is intrinsic to the service-reality, and should be examined rather than explained away. All we can safely assert is that spiritual power is an access to the realm of the Holy, but that the singing of the Congregation is the process whereby this power becomes available in our earthly realm of experience. Appropriation of this 'power' is felt as a joyous experience of increased vitality. our way-of-being is fundamentally altered - we feel 'out of ourselves':

"You feel as if you are just in Spirit, that you haven't got your body. You can't say how you were at that time, because you have been changed... It's the Spirit that's controlling you then. That's why the Bible says 'we are born again as new creatures' when we are in Spirit."

So to be in Spirit means to become keenly and concretely aware of our own possibilities as transcendent beings. We suspend our usual mode of self-experiencing to participate in the energy which flows from the Holy dimension of existence. It is the song-as-praise which mediates this shift from embodied-self to self-as-spirit - the self becomes a force, joined with the source of power which is the Holy Spirit. This experience is inherently rewarding, but finds its true value in the work of healing the sick.

#### f) Singing as a healing activity

We have shown that Spirit (uMoya) is appropriated through the experience of communal singing. Mr. Ntshobodi stresses that he and his prophets must be in this state in order to heal, because

"The Spirit has got gifts... I can't fight the demon when I'm in flesh, I have to be in Spirit. Because the demon is also a spirit, the evil spirit. So I must be in Spirit."

Now whereas the prophets have the 'gift to heal', the Congregation does not have this ability. But they are also 'in Holy Spirit' and are

"given the song to sing. They just start singing because something inside says they have to - the Spirit takes them. So the healers and singers are working in one Spirit."

Mr. Ntshobodi finds this group participation strengthens his conviction and abilities in his healing-work:

"the singing is pushing me to do it, win the victory, I must beat the demon. This goes like a rugby match, where I sing to give my team strength to win. You feel more and more strong, so then the Spirit can do something for you."

So the healing process appears explicitly as a group project, one in which all the participants create a unified front of spiritual power:

"we must all fight the enemy, so the enemy must go. The singing is like fighting, so the demon must see 'I haven't got a friend here, I must go away'."

It is this solidarity, expressed in the song-performance, which convinces the evil spirits that they must leave the afflicted.

#### 3.4.2 The Meaning of Drumming and Clapping

I turn now to an appreciation of the bodily aspects of worship in the Zionist service. Drumming and clapping will be taken together because of their close relationship as essentially rhythmic activities.

## (a) Bodily activation and expression

Mr. Ntshobodi begins his account of drumming by linking it with the regularity of human pulse:

"The drumming in the service is going with the rhythm of the song, and the beating of the heart. Now in our service everything is going by heart, and by the blood; so the drum is going with the heart."

Here the heart is viewed in its aspect as vital/physical centre of the body, and blood as the vital fluid. The bodily dimension of existence is seen as central concern of the service-reality. Drumming acts as a mediator between spirit and flesh: the emotional awakening of the singing and the activation offered by the experience of drumming, become available to each other.

Hearing the drum, we feel stronger: we wish to identify ourselves with that compelling pulse. Note that

"The drum is like a heart beating of a fresh person, a healthy person: strong and regular. That's why the drum must be beaten by a strong person. Whenever a person feels sick or drowsy or weak, his heart is beating weak. Now when he hears the sound of the drum, he will try to follow that sound... Everyone becomes strong- he feels he can dance. The drum is giving them the action, the exercises, the heartbeat."

In its assertive statement of regularity, the rhythm of the drum becomes a reference point for the possibility of bodily health. By inviting us to action, the drumming leads us out of our absorption in our own lived-bodies. We wish now to express ourselves as living-bodies. Clapping offers one means of expressing this activation in bodily movement:

"The clapping is going with the song, it is the way our bodies are singing. The body speaks by clapping and by stamping."

In the same way as drumming, the activity of clapping makes a link between the domain of the spirit (singing) and the body (physical movement).

(b) Clapping and drumming as group integration

There is only one drum in the service. Everyone is drawn to that same pulse:

"The sound is making everybody be in one action. You are going to dance about the beating of the drum, not more, not less, just one way. When we are doing something, we must all do the same, so we are together. Our pulse of the heart now becomes in one strength... Even the one who feels he doesn't want to do anything will now join in."

The drumming is a rhythmic experience shared by all. Throughout the service it is present as the orienting backdrop, intending the participation of every member in shared group activity. Similarly, the clapping is a rhythmic expression which involves everyone and offers a sense of togetherness:

"that clapping, it seems as one person who is clapping."

But some members are not able to participate in this group unity, although they attempt to join:

"in the Church there are people who are sick and worried, they have nerves. When we are clapping, he's going to clap wrongly, not the same as the others. He will clap out of time. This evil spirit makes him tired - he's trying to be with us, but cannot catch us."

Thus the prophets are afforded a useful diagnostic opportunity for the identification of persons with problems. The problem shows itself directly, in the way one is blocked from participation in a group process of bodily expression.

c) Access to Holy Spirit and healing power

By showing its presence in the room, the evil spirit serves further to unite the Congregation in efforts against it.

"That spirit doesn't want the clapping and drumming, because it doesn't like a person to be in Spirit of God. When we are together, that spirit cannot join us. We are in Spirit of a healthy person, so he is left out. That drumming is the pulse of a healthy person."

In this account Mr. Ntshobodi makes explicit the meaning of clapping and drumming as modes of appropriating Holy Spirit. This they do precisely in their performance as integrating activities. Further, the drumming acts as an exemplification of health, and it is this shared statement of vitality which gives the group its power over the forces of dis-order.

### 3.4.3 The Meaning of Dancing

In discussing 'dancing' below, I refer to the activity engaged in by prophets and members of the choir. This is a circular motion around the centre of the Church floor, and is referred to by Mr. Ntshobodi as 'running in the circle'. The congregation also express themselves in movement, by stamping rhythmically and swaying their bodies. Where Mr. Ntshobodi comments on the meaning of movement per se, this may be taken as relevant to every participant in the service. Where he refers to the meaning of circular movements, this is relevant only to those centrally concerned with healing.

#### (a) The circle as an image of the Divine

In accounting for the meaning of the circle in the Zionist Church, Mr. Ntshobodi referred to the circle as signifying man's connectedness, his special relation, with the Holy realm:

"The circle in the service is a keeping holy. It is a symbol of holiness, like the round circle in the head of Jesus and the Apostles."

Thus the circle is a 'holy shape' which is actualized in the service by the activity of circular movement. Mr. Ntshobodi views this as a bodily expression of worship:

"In Revelations it says: the Apostles and believers in Heaven were making a circle, and the throne of God was in the middle, and they were singing and praising God. And John asked who these people were. The Voice said, 'these are coming from the earth, those who were praying day and night in the name of God.'"

So the intention of enacting a circle-in-movement is explicit: it is the creation of a sacred space, within which God can make Himself apparent, and where we can open up a communicative relation with the Divine.

(b) Dancing as bodily prayer

It is in dancing that the body finds its experience of the Divine, and expresses its joy at this participation:

"The running is good because the blood is the soul of the flesh - the blood wants to praise God as well. When dancing and praying, the blood becomes happy. When praying, uMoya goes into the body and to the blood. By dancing we are sending this Spirit to the blood as well."

So dancing appears as a physical dis-covering: by involving ourselves in an activity of strenuous body-movement, we realize our undifferentiated physical potential:

"In that circle you feel so light you can fly, as if you are not walking on earth. You are showing the strength of God in your flesh".

The experience of dancing in this specific context, means an opening-out of our expressive possibilities as living-bodies. It leads us to an enhanced awareness of our vital selves, represented here as 'flesh' and 'blood'.

The circular dance thus offers the possibility of access to the Holy realm.

"The prayers and the moving are going together. When you are dancing you are just praying as if you are

looking at the Cross to Jesus. The songs are above you. Everything now is as if you are in heaven, it is all coming from above."

Thus in the circle the dancer is present to an immediate experience of the Sacred.

(c) Dancing as an integrating activity

By dancing in a continuous circle, the participants are creating and affirming the possibility of being-together. As Mr. Ntshobodi points out:

"To make circle we are on one level - we are doing one thing. And when we are praying in this circle, now our prayers are one, the same thing. We must do one thing because uMoya is one. uMoya can only come when we are together."

This statement taken with the accounts in (b) above, highlights the dual meanings of the circular movement. As bodily activation and expression, it is the way the flesh can worship. In constituting a joint group project, the dancing provides the context of togetherness necessary for an appropriation of Holy power.

(d) The circle in healing

Group integration is a prerequisite for the healing activities:

"We feel strong because unity is strength. If we are together, doing one thing, we can manage to fight the Devil."

The circle, as a representation of Unity, is felt to offer the dancing participants powers of spiritual vision. Usually the circle is danced before the healing activity begins, enabling the prophets to gain access to the 'gifts of the Holy Spirit'. But when more severe dis-order is felt to be present, the circle becomes an important diagnostic tool:

"If a person has wrong spirits, you can see it in the circle. In the circle they are doing one thing, so we put people in there so we can easily see what is wrong. The circle is like a holy light, so we can see the sickness clearly."

By dancing in a circle, the healers together become present to a transpersonal world, a mode-of-being in which the existential horizons of fellow-men are concretely and immediately available to experience.

#### 3.4.4 Integration of activities

The foregoing explications of the service activities exhibit a marked symmetry of thematic structure. The division of the service process into categories of activity was an analytic distinction, allowing subtle differentiations of meaning to emerge. In the lived experience of the service participant, no such divisions appear: he is engaged in a unitary project of worship. Together the service activities constitute modes of prayer, and intend a specific goal. In what follows, prayer in the Zionist healing service emerges as an activity which discloses human meaning, and thus transforms experience.

Mr. Ntshobodi's accounts of the service activities exhibit a central pre-occupation with the notions of 'power' and 'strength'. All action appears to take meaning from its ability to put one 'in Holy Spirit' or 'the Spirit of God'. The entire service addresses itself to the process of acquiring, intensifying and employing spiritual power (uMoya), with the aim of healing the sick. uMoya refers both to the cosmic aspect of existence and to the sense of vital being which we discover in our relatedness to this Sacred realm. All the service activities bring us into a closer relation with the Divine, thus allowing us access to the power which defines this dimension.

As modes of active expression, the forms of prayer serve to invoke the presence of the Spirit. By fully involving ourselves in contemplation of the Divine,

we encounter ourselves as whole human beings. Spirit and flesh are equally engaged in the awakening of vitality:

"The song takes away the worries, it is helping everyone to feel happy. The drum is giving those with weak hearts the action, the exercise. So the song is for the right spirit, the feeling; the drum is for the body and the action. Everyone becomes strong - he feels he must dance, and clap hands."

Thus by participating in the act of praying, we become aware of our personal power as living beings,

The service is essentially a group project: the modes of prayer require for their enactment the involvement of a number of people in a joint activity. Individual and group stand in a dialectical and complementary relation to each other: by opening to ourselves as whole beings, and focussing on the cosmic dimension, we become open to the possibility of being-together as a group; but equally, it is by praying together that we discover our selves and gain access to spiritual power. In constituting an integrated community through collective experience, we pool our individual resources of power, giving the group sufficient strength to combat the forces of evil:

"When we are doing something, we must all do the same, we are together. In Acts they say 'The Apostles were in one Spirit' - that's why in the Church we use the drum, so we can do only one thing, like the soldiers saying 'left-right'. Now when we join, all together, to do this same thing, then the Spirit joins us.

Now the evil spirit cannot be with us, because we are in Spirit of a healthy person. Such spirits like a person to be feeling alone and weak, thinking all day. So they try to run away."

Belonging to a unified group transforms individual experience:

"When the people are in Holy Spirit they are hot. Their hearts are burning with spiritual fire. This Spirit is like the fire of God. Then you feel very strong, you can see many visions, you can do many wonderful things."

The metaphor of fire burning is Mr. Ntshobodi's attempt to convey his experience of relatedness to the Sacred realm, a relation which is made possible through participation in communal prayer. He expands this metaphor to illustrate the meaning of the whole service process as an intentional project:

"The Spirit comes through singing, dancing, clapping, and drumming. Because those things are the same as when you are making a fire. When they start, it's like you are taking paper and matches - now we make the fire. When the fire is burning, you take a pot and put water on the fire. You take a seat, and now it's the chance of the fire to work. I made the fire, but it is boiling the water.

So when we are praying together, we are waiting for the fire. When it comes, we are going to work. Like putting the pot on. The fire of the Gospel is going to search out what is wrong in the Church. I am still there, but the fire is working through me."

The formulation offered above is crucial to any understanding of the healing-reality. It suggests that we choose to gather together, as active agents, to perform a task. Once the process has been set in motion, it is no longer a volitional activity, mediated by ego. We become present to an autonomous, self-regulating experience. Our healing power is attributed to Divine agency: we become channels for the cosmic forces to express themselves in the mundane world.

This change is concretely and immediately felt as a fundamental shift in being:

"The Spirit is talking when you are hot. You can just feel this fire in the whole body, but you can't explain afterwards how you felt. You have been changed spiritually, the

fire is using you. I have become like the instrument... of Jesus. The Spirit works through a person - it must have flesh. Because the Spirit is of Heaven, where there is no flesh and blood. By being baptized, I have changed my old spirit and got the Spirit of Jesus. This fire is like the engine in a car - I am the body, and the man who is driving us is the Spirit, like an engine."

Thus to be in Holy Spirit means to unite the cosmic and mundane aspects of being, with the intention of employing the power which flows from this identity. Spirit and flesh find a reciprocal relation: Man needs God to fight evil, but equally the Divine requires a human frame through which to assert its power in the world. In prayer the identity of opposites is realized: the aim of the service is the incarnation of spiritual power. The experience of 'being in fire' is a concrete instance of 'the Word made Flesh'.

In realizing this identity, we appropriate the consuming yet creative strength of fire. We feel ourselves to be vital, healthy, active beings, with great conviction in our power as a group. The Church has become a holy space, infused with the presence of the Divine. We use our fiery strength as a weapon in the cosmic battle against the forces of dis-order:

"We burn the evil spirit - he feels scared. The sick people are troubled, they are bringing their wrong things to the fire. These evil spirits are dangerous to others, so we take them and burn them in the fire. Then no one else can get that thing."

So Good triumphs over evil by consuming it with spiritual power. Such force has also a restorative aspect:

"when you lay hands on a person, you feel that fire coming out of your body, joining straight away with that person. It's the same as a strong battery - you can charge the weak battery. So when we are praying, this fire comes, and goes to that person; now he can feel strong too."

Healing through group worship has a dual meaning. As a curative process it alleviates the symptoms of affliction, under the authority of Divine intervention. As a spiritual experience it promises permanent release from the grounds of dis-order, under the impact of Grace. Those who have been healed do not feel mere relief; rather they are now able to join with the Congregation in a positive expression of joy and faith:

"That's why we sing at the end 'Watsha umlilo Evangeli - the fire of the Gospel is burning'- Those people who are healed now, they know the fire is burning because they have seen you do these things - taking their evil spirits and putting them in the fire. Now they know the Gospel is strong, and so they believe in the miracles which Jesus has given."

In summary, the service provides an effective healing context only insofar as it accomplishes a real and felt sense of group integrity. It is through the various modes of communal prayer that the group establishes and maintains identity. In belonging to this community, we discover our own potential and encounter the sacred realm. We use the power which flows from relatedness to incorporate those persons who feel separated from the group. Reintegration with the community constitutes 'being healed', and results in an intensification of group solidarity. This is the ultimate aim of the service, explicitly affirmed by further prayer.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I aim at presenting a coherent account of the Zionist healing service as an intentional project which discloses meaning to the community of participants. The scope of this study has been limited to an understanding of the nature and meaning of music and movement in the service context. As such, it cannot hope to offer an exhaustive explication of the healing-reality. However, the service is a ceremony which constitutes itself almost entirely on the basis of shared expressive activities. The accounts of these activities may thus be seen to reveal an implicit understanding of the life-world which underlies and informs the experience of the service. In Chapter Three I provided outlines of the intentional structures of the service phenomena, showing how these structures are revelatory of the overall aims of the ceremony. In what follows I attempt a more general interpretation, which seeks to link the intentions of the service with broader structures of meaning relevant to the existence of the African urban individual.

#### 4.1 THE RESOLUTION OF DUALITY

One of the pervasive themes to emerge from the accounts of the service activities is the resolution of various aspects of dualism. The service process stands as a project to realize the possibility of integration or unity at three 'levels' of human being: the individual or personal, the social or group, and the cosmic or transcendental dimensions of existence. The data suggest that it is through the overcoming of these dualisms that the Congregation finds an experience of relatedness to the Divine realm. This relation is characterized as 'being in Holy Spirit' or 'burning with spiritual fire' and is felt as a possibility of enhanced strength or power.

##### (a) Individual integration

The activities of communal prayer together facilitate each person's self-experiencing. This they do by eliciting the active participation of the self

in its spiritual aspect (the singing of sacred songs) and its bodily aspect (rhythmic dancing and clapping). Spirit and flesh become available to each other, united by their common intention of relating to a cosmic mode-of-being. In the strenuous physical expression of prayer, the body is felt to 'get amandla' (power), and this potential to act is felt also as spiritual energy - 'the heart becomes glad'. Reciprocally, addressing the Divine in song activates the spiritual centre, and this potential to feel excites the body - 'the blood also becomes happy, wants to praise God'.

Essentially the service activities facilitate the possibility of being an undivided self. The access to self means an emergent awareness of one's being as an instance of vital force. For the Zionist, Divine presence is experienced as a concrete reality rather than a cognitive construct. Palpable evidence of cosmic relatedness is attested to in bodily terminology: 'you show the strength of God in your flesh' and 'your heart is on fire'.

(b) Group integration

The service is continuously shared communal activity, enlisting the active participation of a whole group in a common project. Self and others become united in a collective experience of being-together. The individual as an encapsulated subject is submerged by the very nature of prayer: singing a common song, clapping rhythmically, and dancing in a circle are modes of activity which demand a joint effort for their enactment, and thus promote a compelling sense of togetherness. The group nature of Zionist prayer awakens the person to a direct realization of his potential for belonging to a community. Access to the group means an emergent awareness of the spiritual power inherent in standing-together with fellow-man - 'we feel strong, because unity is strength'.

This suggests that the service activities reveal the possibility of being present to a transpersonal world, a mode-of-being in which the individual is grounded in primary openness. Participants become able to relate to their own

and others' experience unconstrained by the parameters of an objectified material world. The energy generated through joint activities may be appropriated by group members, and reciprocally, the renewed vitality of each individual also becomes available to the whole group. By constituting themselves as a community in this way, persons affirm and legitimate the possibility of existing in relation to a cosmic mode-of-being.

(c) Cosmic integration

The resolution of the duality of person and of community reveals the possibility of integrating the cosmic and mundane realms of existence. The service activities specifically intend such a relatedness, which for participants means the incorporation of a transcendent dimension of being within the immanent reality of the service. By addressing themselves to the Divine in an attitude of reverent supplication, the Congregation comes to stand with God - 'it is as if you are in Heaven; everything is coming from above'. Equally God manifests His presence in material form - 'you are showing the strength of God in your flesh'.

Thus the service-reality affirms the possibility of a complementary relation between God and Man. This identity with the Sacred realm is experienced in an immediately meaning-disclosing way: 'when the heart is burning you feel very strong, you can see many visions, see inside a person'. To discover transcendent being means also to realize ones immanence as vital force, existing in an actual cosmos with other forces. This power of the Spirit may be used to combat those anti-vital influences which threaten to disrupt human life.

#### 4.2 ORDER, MEANING AND POWER

In overcoming dualistic being, the Zionist healing service points to an emerging order, which stands in opposition to the chaos which threatens everyday secular existence. The Church becomes a Sacred space which offers the possibility of coherent existential meaning. It is only by understanding the African ontological stance that the service phenomena become intelligible as modes for the

disclosure of meaning. This ontology (cf. 1.5 above) views the cosmos as an indissoluble whole, characterized by order, harmony, and unity. This whole is composed of sets of relations between vital forces, including human beings. For African being, the supreme good subsists in a sense of relatedness to a harmonious universe, while evil springs from one's disconnectedness with the system of forces. The service stands as a project to reaffirm man's relatedness to a unitary cosmos which incorporates a Divine presence.

The service phenomena disclose meaning on two levels. The texts of the songs themselves point to the desire for a close relationship between person and God, thus orienting the intention of congregants towards realization of this possibility. All action in the service is an isomorph of cosmic being - that is, the activities parallel the structure of African ontological belief. This they do in two ways. As expressive activities which awaken vitality, they affirm and reflect the experience of being as vital force. As shared group activities they affirm and reflect the ordered relations which characterize the harmony of the universe. Thus by enacting the service ritual in music and movement, the Congregation are already participating in a transcendental project which explicitly evokes the cosmic mode-of-being. The Zionist metaphor of 'the road to Jesus' accurately captures this intention.

Apprehension of the vitality and order which define the cosmos, offers the possibility of appropriating an ordered personal existence. This is the central meaning which the service reveals. The chaos of existential isolation is superseded by the knowledge that one belongs, as part of an orderly system of cosmic relatedness. The group is merely the concrete vehicle through which this meaning emerges, standing as an immanent signifier of transcendental unity. One must first rejoin humanity, which is always the centre of the cosmic whole. This reintegration (of self, community, and world) is expressed in the language of a direct relation with the Divine, in its' aspect as Holy Spirit. The fact that this relation becomes available only within a group context attests to

Zionism's continuity with the traditional world-view. For the African, a sense of existential identity is affirmed in and through the experience of community membership. As Mbiti (1971) suggests: "I am because we are, and we are because I am".

In relating directly to a cosmic mode-of-being, the person becomes available to his own spirituality, his existence as vital force. This creative union is a source of transformation and regeneration: imbued with vitality (power), it offers the individual strength and meaning. The relation is experienced as a connectedness with a powerful and instinctual source of energy.

#### 4.3 THE NATURE OF SPIRITUAL HEALING

Any understanding of healing by spiritual power must incorporate the above accounts of the life-world of the service. The healing process is a pragmatic deployment of the power gained from transcendent being. As such it reveals the same formal structure of meaning as do other service phenomena. In essence the prophet, with the support of a unified group, is offering the sick person the possibility of relatedness to a cosmic mode-of-being. But in order to grasp the nature of 'cure', we must first assess the meaning of affliction - whether this refers to symptoms of physical or psychological dis-ease.

The sick who present themselves for healing within the Zionist service are literally suffering from a dis-order of their existential being. They have been confronted with their powerlessness in the face of a dangerous and threatening world, which represents chaos, disorder, and evil. In their struggle towards a more harmonious existence they are unable to utilize their own vital energy, nor appropriate community support. For the African, social disintegration is spiritual death: the sick are expressing their perception of disconnectedness from the source of vitality which is, most immediately, a sense of community belonging. The loss of vitality or wholeness manifests at the bodily level of being, as symptoms of weakness, fatigue, somatic stress reactions, or malignant

spirit possession.

Such people attend the Zionist healing-service with the intention of relieving their discomfort. They choose a prophet who is known to command spiritual powers which arise from his intimate alliance with a Divine realm. The service is a project which enacts its intentions on the basis of collective bodily expression. The sick person clearly demonstrates his problem in the way he participates in the service activities - his diminished vital being is immediately revealed to the healer, in his apathetic bodily expression. He thus fails to join the group. The healer, who lives an undivided transpersonal existence, is enabled to apprehend directly the true source of the person's suffering - his alienation from community and therefore self. The body is used to disclose the way-of-being.

The healing-service answers to the existential crisis in two ways. The healer offers the afflicted a diagnosis which is couched in language accessible to them both. As well as 'naming' the nature of the dis-ease, the diagnosis contains a directive to action. This may be to join the Church, and/or to perform a reparatory task in the social world outside. The healer thus ascribes a personal and relevant meaning to the ailment, and reveals a possibility of control through meaningful action. Diagnosis proceeds within the social context of a small group. In the healing-service those who are well (that is whole) use their vital energies to reintegrate the isolated individual into a cohesive and supportive community. In so doing, they also unite him with an orderly and intrinsically meaningful universe. Healing consists of mediation between the realm of Divine power and the afflicted. The result is a deeply-felt sense of 'coming back to self'. By appropriating an understanding common to the whole spiritual community, the existentially alienated person comes to share the possibility of vital being available to all who believe. The balance between self, community and cosmos has been restored.

Healing thus appears as a hermeneutic project for affirming vital being, rather than any physiological intervention. The 'cure' subsists in the re-integration of a meaningful world-view. For the African Christian, the foundation of belief is the possibility of relatedness to the Divine, and the access to power which subsists in this relation. The healing process constitutes visible and incontrovertible evidence of such a possibility: the prophet and congregation are obviously participating in a transcendental existence, and one can see others being healed as well as experience the intervention of Holy Spirit oneself. The healing phenomenon thus affirms and legitimates an existence which incorporates a cosmic mode-of-being, as being both coherent (valid) and effective (yielding useful results). Participation in the healing experience is transformative; one becomes connected with a source of identity and strength.

Such healing by faith can only be effected in the context of an already-shared cosmology - one is healed by believing one can be healed. The attractiveness of Zionist healing in township culture is testimony to the ongoing meaningfulness of the traditional indigenous world-view. The whole spiritual community shares a transpersonal world, in which transcendental possibility freely reveals itself in earthly existence. Healing, like any effective system of universal meaning, appears as a self-reinforcing process. The fact remains that healing works, for those who associate themselves with the structure of existence which inform the Zionist life-world. In being seen to work, healing also wins new adherents who broaden the base of the spiritual community. In this way Zionism links both socio-cultural and spiritual interests in an effectively integrated response to the needs of its members.

#### 4.4 ZION IN TOWN: THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

In conclusion of this interpretation of the Zionist healing-reality, I wish to refer back again to the situation of urban African existence. In this paper I have characterized the Zionist service as an avenue for the reintegration of

alienated individuals into a meaningful world. From Mr. Ntshobodi's descriptions of the service process, it is evident that Zionist worship is unambiguously a project to attain ecstatic experience. Further, music and dance constitute the very fabric from which ecstatic experience is fashioned. Clearly the healing service is a response to a total existential situation. But to which aspects of this situation does Zionist experience address itself, and how does it fulfil its intentions? Zionist Christianity certainly does appear to be directly responsive to the social anomie and spiritual rootlessness which define township life. The social-scientific research referred to above (in 1.2 and 1.4) is specifically concerned with the social functions of Zion, viewing the Church as offering an adaptive compensatory experience. This it does do, by facilitating a sense of social security and community identity. However, Zionism also addresses the problem of spirituality, and thus serves a transcendental function. In its affirmation of existential meaning, through the possibility of relatedness to a cosmic mode-of-being, Zionism goes beyond compensation to universal experience. The only publication which explicitly describes this function is Schweitzer's recent human-scientific investigation (1984).

Of course, the compensatory and transcendental aspects of Zion are lived-out as a dialectical unity in the enaction of the service activities. Hopefully the accounts in Chapter Three have preserved the integrity of the phenomena. In what follows I attempt to make the intentional structures of the service intelligible by returning them to their concrete existential context. To be healed is simply to rejoin our fellow-men in an undivided experience of being-together. In itself, the healing emphasis in any ecstatic movement points to an underlying lack of cohesion in the surrounding social structure. I have suggested (in 1.2 above) that various socio-political factors militate against the formation of stable and inclusive social networks in townships. Zion reflects this reality in its essentially exclusivist stance. (Kiernan 1974)

The emphasis on social separation is one response to the problem of a heterogeneous cultural heritage and the schismatic nature of social life in town. Such a polyglot and stratified society hardly provides opportunity for a general reintegration. In Zionism this proceeds at the level of the small group. The structure of the healing-service is evidence that the Zionist has opted not to rejoin all fellows, but on the contrary to create for himself a stable and dependable primary community.

This Zionist Congregation specifically excludes the township, seeing it as a field of evil and threatening forces which must be resisted. Evil is the township existence. Hence the taboos on beerdrinking, smoking, gambling, promiscuity, and the use of uMuthi (traditional medicines). The Zionist appropriates a social identity at the cost of considerable exclusion. The reward of the small community is the spiritual meaning which it is able to offer through its expression of collective interest and concern for the individual. This primary group becomes the locus of allegiance for the member, yielding simultaneously a sense of social belongingness and a coherent existential meaning. For the African, these aspects of being are interdependent. Indeed, their mutual realization in the service process indicates that a spiritual existence may only be encountered within a nurturant community.

I stressed (in 4.2 and 4.3) that Zion offers order, and that illness is the encroachment of chaos (understood as evil) on this construction of meaning. Sickness is an affliction generated from outside the Church - from ones' contact with a dangerous mundane world. The Church stands as a haven and must be separate, in order to be effective in offering an alternative reality - the possibility of existing in harmony with a cosmic mode-of-being. The division between the geographic terrain of mundane and cosmic must be unambiguously and rigidly maintained. It is in this clarity of material boundaries that the believer finds his symbolic reassurance and spiritual security. Once incorporated into the Sacred space which is the Church, the individual is able to explore the

possibilities of transcendence. I wish to stress that this avenue of experience is effectively closed without prior access to a social identity, which is mediated by small-group membership. This is illustrated by our data, where the integration of the group clearly precedes relatedness to the Divine, and consequent appropriation of spiritual power. In fact Mr. Ntshobodi's assertion that "when we are all together we can fight the evil spirit" implies that group solidarity is collective power. This power is lived-out as a relation with the Divine realm.

The epistemological ambiguity which has surrounded the source and location of 'power' throughout this investigation should not surprise us. African thought is inherently transcendental, making no division between personal, social, and cosmic aspects of being. The 'meanings' of the service are to be found in the motives which it intends; that is, "in the set of desirability-characters which may explain it" (Ricoeur 1971: 92). The essential possibility which the service reveals is that of control through the reassertion of order. In the context of an anomic, isolated, and disculturated existence the possibility of being present to a universal Order, which transcends yet encompasses the mundane world, is highly desirable. Through the revelation of orderliness in existence, we also affirm the possibility of control over our dangerous and threatening world. Backed by the ultimate power which subsists in our identity with cosmic being, we may meet the intrusive pressures inherent in township life on an equal footing. Such a delivery from helplessness and frustration is eminently desirable to 'those poor souls ground down by life'.

In summary, I have suggested that in the Zionist service individuals find both an experience of social identity and security, and an immediate relation with a universal mode-of-being which discloses existential meaning and purpose. The aim of this research has been to offer an interpretation of the service which is both valid (accords with the data) and revelatory (makes known a lived-

world). I have tried to remain true to the Zionist reality by placing equivalent emphasis on both its compensatory and transcendental aspects. The Zionist service has emerged as a group process which effectively meets a broad range of its participants' desires in a fulfilling experience of vital integration and completion.

#### 4.5 AFTERWORD: RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL REALITIES

Zionist Christianity has been subject to considerable criticism, both from orthodox Christianity and from 'progressive' political quarters. Theologically, Zionism is seen as discontinuous with Christian dogma, in that it incorporates a substantial body of traditional African precepts into its syncretic belief-system. African mission Christians degrade Zionism both on the above grounds, and because they see Zionist exclusivism as a schismatic influence within institutionalized Christianity. This critique may be construed as reflecting the struggle for a religious power-base in African urban society, but it accurately identifies Zion's withdrawal from all identification with the wider township community.

The critique stemming from political consciousness is similar: Zionist separatism is seen as counterproductive in the project to create a sense of unity amongst South African blacks. As I have shown above, Zionists erect a substantial barrier of faith between themselves and black society. This they do as an understandable mode of self-protection. But the multitude of intrusive pressures against which Zion fortifies itself are in large part generated by the material organization of power in South Africa. In the face of externally-imposed social and political strictures, Zionists are

"without political motivation and without any orientation toward public events. Their political apathy is but part of their general unconcern for events outside of their narrow field of interest. Zionists shun political life as they do most other secular activities." (Kiernan 1974: 89)

Zionism, in other words, responds to an intolerable existential situation by an avoidance of its immediate manifestations. This is a social expedient rather than a religious necessity: in excluding itself from a consideration of change at the level of socio-political existence, Zion is able to effect change at the level of individual spiritual being. In so doing it must needs become a socially conservative force in township life. As such it will never be more than a mode of reaction, with no power to transform the real 'grounds of affliction', of which it remedies the symptoms.

This paper has not attempted to provide any sort of summary assessment of the judgements made above. However, through attending to the obvious discontinuities between religious and political discourses, one detects an apparent contradiction within Zion's own structure of meanings. We have seen that the Zionist project intends unity and integration at all levels of being, yet results in an active withdrawal from the wider black society. Thus the political argument that Zion retards progressive reconstruction in South African society is valid. Of course the question of political reform versus spiritual regeneration is in itself an ideological matter not subject to settlement. In this research I have elected to represent the Zionist reality as it appears to its subject, hoping that readers will use the data and interpretations in ways most relevant to their own existences.

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