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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
CELEBRATION IN BLACK PREACHING

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ABSTRACT

The Christian faith in God is undergirded by the good news of God's intervention in human life. This intervention of God is good news because the sin of humankind has resulted in alienation with God as well as rendering humankind incapable of restoring fellowship with God. This good news of God's intervention in human affairs through the act of His son Jesus Christ is the centre of Christian kerygma. One outstanding feature of this proclamation is celebration. Salvation offered and given to ailing humankind is cause for celebration for God has paved the way for reconciliation.

In Black preaching this note of celebration is remarkably achieved in the extravagant use of figures of speech and imagery drawn from traditional African religiosity, for the African human life in whatever state and condition is cause for celebration. The African responds to life at all levels of encounter with celebration. In sorrow and joy, in sad moments and moments of delight, in want and in plenty, the voice of the African will always rise up in spontaneous acts of celebration.

In normal human conversation the use of the African idiom and allegory drawn from their cultural worldview creates unique style. In the use of these the African past is expressly drawn into the present to emphasize the belief in life as a gift from God, a gift to be acknowledged and celebrated. Therefore living through all sorts and conditions of life sharpens the deep feeling and expression of this celebration. The song, praise and dance for the African therefore flows from this spiritual engagement with God in life.

The biblical message and the daily experience of life is for the African preacher a stage from which the human drama with God is understood. The nature of God is seen in relation to God's encounter with sinful humankind. God's mercy and grace inspires humans to live their life in confident trust in God. The vicissitudes of life for the African have no dampening effect for life rather they sharpen the awareness of God's surpassing mercy and sustaining steadfastness upon his creatures. Thus in similar vein with the African moroki, the Black preacher calls and inspires his/her audience to celebrate, to engage with life in perfect African celebration.

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PREFACE

My most sincere and deep gratitude goes to many friends, colleagues and fellow Christians for whom I was pastor in all churches we have served within the Methodist family. Many who will read this essay will realize how much influence they have exerted on my life and thinking. To each and everyone I say thank you.

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To my life companion, Peggy, I can never be able to say enough how much she and our children have meant to me. Their patience, warmth and love have taught me and held together the spirit of our family. I thank God for this gift — Monompe le bataung le ka moso!

INTRODUCTION

The Black preacher stands in and speaks from a world of his own. Being an African the traditional cultural milieu is drawn from the African worldview. Therefore his/her articulation of the Christian faith will be in these cultural terms. The Christian message received from Black preachers will be wrapped up in African dressings.

In Africa Christian faith was received from western Christianity and was appropriated through foreign cultural concepts. In the long years of African Christianity the Black person has identified truths of the Christian faith that resonate easily with African cultural concepts and values. The Black preacher's message abounds with examples of such truths.

The purpose of this investigation is to isolate and address one such truth of the Christian faith. This is the element of 'celebration' in the proclamation of the Christian faith. While celebration is common to all preaching irrespective of the cultural background of the preacher, in Africa it has special significance in the understanding of the Christian faith. In the exercise undertaken here we will attempt to observe how a Black person appropriates this Christian truth of celebration.

The meaning of celebration seen through African eyes sheds new light on the Christian faith. The holistic view of celebration involving both the spiritual and physical person, as conceived by the African, greatly enhances the communal aspect of the Christian faith. The joy and exuberance of the African traditional act of celebration tallies very well with the great joy and liberating power of salvation in the Good News of Jesus Christ.

It is not the intention in this essay to deal at length with the intricacies of preaching, namely, hermeneutical principles, exegesis, or sermon forms and types. However a very brief survey of the theories of preaching by a few western homileticians will be done. This for the sole purpose of creating some dialectic process between these and the case studies on Black preaching that have been undertaken. In this way it is hoped that some contrasts and comparisons will be made. It is of particular interest for this essay that the element of celebration in preaching will find expression from both sides.

Some examples of celebration in ordinary African life will be cited. It is hoped that some of these may also be apparent in the case studies of Black preachers. And once again that from this a better perspective on the Black preacher's message will be gained.

The element of celebration is chosen and treated here as a theme in the belief that celebration as such is typical of African expression, and that the African celebration of life in joy and in sorrow, in plenty and in want is unique. Therefore when celebration is observed in the context of Christian worship new insights are revealed. It will then be possible to receive and to accept African concepts as being authentic in expressing religious beliefs. The Black Christian as reflected in the message of the Black preacher will then also be seen and accepted as genuinely Christian.

This essay also attempts to draw out a picture of Christianity that is truly African. It propounds a Christian faith that can be seen as a response of Africa to the Good News of Jesus Christ as proclaimed by the Christian church. Initially the encounter of Africa and Christianity was a meeting of two worlds, namely western Christianity and African traditional religiosity. Thus we may rightly say that the western Christian carried the gospel message across to Africa in western cultural vessels. Through later developments that Christianity acquired African vessels which bore a distinct African colour. Our investigation is concerned with the authentic Christian message as carried in African cultural vessels, and more particularly as expressed in the celebration aspect of preaching.

Another aspect of this study is to establish how far the Black preacher remains faithful to the essential content of the Christian faith. How his/her message remains a true proclamation of the Good News of salvation to mankind. It also wants to establish the fact that despite the message being contained in African vessels it remains true to the kerygma received from the early church teaching.

ARRANGEMENT OF CHAPTERS:

The chapters are arranged in such a way as to follow the logical sequence of the discourse. After the introduction follows the first chapter that looks at the notion of celebration. The second chapter deals with the manifestation of celebration in traditional African religiosity. In a third we look at the manifestation of celebration in Black worship. The fourth chapter contains case studies on Black preaching from worship services. In the fifth chapter a brief survey of few western homileticians is made. The sixth and last chapter contains the evaluation and conclusion.

The references are kept within the body of the chapters and are reflected immediately after the given quotation or reference. All necessary explanations are given in footnotes. These are mainly explanations of the vernacular terms even when they have occurred elsewhere in the work just to enable the reader to cope with the terminology.

The bibliography follows on the last page.

CHAPTER ONE

CELEBRATION

Celebration of life is inherent within the African worldview. At the announcement of birth, at an encounter with life's vicissitudes, hardships, tragedies, joys and achievements both personal and national, for the African, the moment of celebration is manifest. Consequently the African poet and praise singer, *moroki*, *imbongi* will burst forth in praise, song and dance. The women folk will pour out in ululation, the Basotho menfolk roar in **mokorotlo**, **amaXhosa axhentse ayiyizele**. This indeed is apposite with the sentiments and spirit enshrined in the English word 'celebration'. The significance of this lies in the fact that it is representative of the African cultural response to the truth and reality of the Supreme Eminence, Creator and Ruler of all beings — God.

The Black preacher of our day stands squarely within this cultural tradition. This is evident in his/her method of sermon delivery, the content and objective of his/her message as well as in the desired effect upon his/her hearers. The use of hymns and popular choruses during delivery of the message is designed to intensify the African hearer's response. For indeed the African does not stand passive in the midst of proclamation, rather his participation is clearly marked by a wholistic, spiritual and physical response resulting in body movement and dance interspersed with intermittent ejaculations of 'Amens' and 'Alleluja's' in spontaneous affirmation. Ross Snyder has posed a question and given an apt answer:

"What do you mean by 'celebration'? By celebration we mean, - to appropriate into ourselves, with reverence and enthusiasm, the life which has made and is making us a people." (Snyder, 1971:39)

Thus the Word so preached and perceived takes on dynamic proportions. The African's whole being is challenged to total response of body, mind and soul. It is not surprising therefore that both the Black preacher and congregation are often characterised as being emotional in sharp contrast to their more academic and logic-bound Western Christian compatriots.

While listening carefully to the Black preacher it will be observed that 'life', that is, in the social context of the preachers, often constitutes the starting point of his/her message. This life, is not only experienced but also accepted as being in accordance with God's holy designs. In this way the Black preacher from the start discerns God's own plans in the intricacies of life. The element of celebration in Black preaching therefore basically stems from this presumption - God is in it all! Concurrently this represents the African's traditional sentiments about the inseparable involvement of the Supreme Being in the life of his people.

An example drawn purely from a traditional praise should make this clear: A Mosotho Moroki praises Chief Lerotholi, son of King Moshoeshoe of the Basotho nation during that nation's wars with the Orange Free State Afrikaner trekkers:

Tholo, lekharietse la Moshoeshoe,	-	Antelope, wreath of Moshoeshoe,
Lekharietse la pelo ea Peete le	-	Wreath of the heart of Peete and
Mokhachane		Mokhachane
Mohlanka oa Molimo	-	Servant of God
Molimo o mo lumeletse ho loana	-	God has given him leave to war
O re Chaba sona ha sea lula feela,	-	Says the nation is not without help
Se lutse le poho e ntse e koeba,	-	It is in the presence of a fighting Bull
A re a koeba, lichaba ra pholoha,	-	His war excursions saved nations,
... Ho phele Bakone, ho phele Basotho	-	Bakone (Xhosa) And Basotho survived
Ho phele le ba ha Kwelela	-	He saved even the Kwelela (Zulus)
(Damane, 1960:7)		

Chief Lerotholi is here praised and hailed as a warmonger albeit so by God's will. This is a common insinuation in African maboko-praises for kings and their commanders. Thus depicting these monarchs and their deeds, mean or glorious, as God's own designs.

Let us look at another example from our contemporary youth. Here also the old-age traditional African concept, that God is involved with His people comes to the fore. In the present climate of violence sweeping through our land South Africa, there are songs composed and sung by our young generation. These are sung when engaging in acts of violence in order to heighten the emotions of their comrades to participate in these acts without alarm and trepidation. Songs charged with emotive words designed to arouse a typical African war cry. Here is one:

Noma siya fa, Siza kuthi ¹	-	Even though we die, We shall say,
A lukho uvalo, Siya phambili	-	There is no fear, we go forward.

The spirit of these songs translates into some daring violent actions that become very difficult to control, actions that beget violence upon violence. In fact such songs dull the conscience of people and open the floodgate of the most ruthless actions by humans meted out on fellow human beings. The songs are accompanied by brisk body movement tuned to the rhythm of the song, thus successfully raising fear and excitement to the extent that nothing is impossible at that stage.

The point being made here is that what we hear and witness in Black preaching is true African traditional cultural instinct coming to the fore in response to the context within which the preacher finds him/herself. The African will not be passive and let logic and philosophy take their course, rather the challenge of the spoken Word speaks to his/her whole being, body, mind and soul. The African will therefore act in this way in the bid to celebrate the victory that is his/hers in this helpless, agonising situation, celebrating it, as it were, by God's design. It is more like what Ross Snyder says:

¹ — This is a common pop street song, sung by young political activists in townships in South Africa

“Celebration is the sudden rush of meaning when things come together, jumble and chaos fall into pattern and we shout ‘Eureka!’ (Snyder, 1971:41)

For the Black preacher this element finds its roots in his/her culture, for by nature for him/her to live is to celebrate this gift of life. For the African to live is to burst into continuous songs of praise — *ba roka Mmopi* — praising the Creator. The note of celebration is an affirmation, an acceptance and rejoicing at the gift of life. A gift from the Supreme Being, Creator and Sustainer of all.

It is therefore very important to hear the Black preacher not only proclaiming the message but also in his/her offering prayers as well as in the use of hymns. All these components constitute the composition of *Imbongi* — *Moroki*. The common intermittent affirming acclamations by the Black audience in worship is essentially a rounding up and completion of this festive strain to the Creator. Ross Snyder emphasizes the communal nature of celebration in such a way that it strikes a harmonious note with the African traditional way of celebration:

“A celebration is not something which rightly one person can put together.”
(Snyder, 1971:8)

This is precisely why the African *Moroki*’s enthusiasm at praise oratory is facilitated by the simultaneous verbal response of the hearers. Celebration can be said to be a manifestation enshrined in communal interaction and participation in positive response to a great moment. The Black preacher is therefore at pains to engage the listener, for it is only when the whole congregation is witness to the Good News and response thus that the note of celebration is completed. In Black preaching therefore the enlistment in of the congregation to participate during delivery of the message becomes a chief objective.

We must make the point however that this interest in liturgical antiphonal engagement in the praising worship is also true of preaching in general. The corporate Word, as suggested by Colin Morris, makes for the fullest achievement of celebration. He says:

“John Wesley advised his followers to preach Christ in all his offices as Prophet, Priest and King. It is obvious that such an understanding is beyond the intellect, dedication and wit of any individual however gifted. The task belongs to the People of God, because they are able to do together what none of them including the man in the pulpit, could attempt in isolation. Wesley’s dictum has its twentieth century counterpart, a truism no doubt, but none the less true for that — only the whole church can preach the whole Gospel to the whole world”
(Morris, 1971:37)

Black preaching seems to reflect this communal nature of celebration so neatly expressed here by Morris. The response by the congregation with resounding ‘Amen’s’ highlights the spirit of celebration prompted through the proclaimed Word. Thus again we discern similarity with the African *moroki*’s spontaneous response to some occasion of great moment. The Black preacher seems to arouse in the audience acclamations, in African style of ‘Amen’s’

and 'Allelujas' which affirm the message preached. It is much like African women folk ululating in tumultuous frenzy of celebration and excitement at the truth proclaimed.

The preacher is the initiator and the inspirer of celebration. At the same time he/she also remains part of this emanating celebrating community. When the highest note and moment of celebration is reached the traditional African moroki will join the crowd and begin to dance and jump about with the rest of the people listening. For indeed the joyous moment is not his/hers, but ours. This has significance for the preached Word. It is the Good News of salvation for humankind. Consequently it must be received and appropriated by the preacher's audience and together they are to embark on a journey and seek out for their destiny. Snyder captures this well:

"Celebration is a people setting out through time towards a destiny. There's a journey to be made. A song to be sung. A narrow pass to be found toward a horizon; time and space to be made fit for human beings." (Snyder, 1971:42)

The Black preacher in his/her response to the Good News of God in Jesus Christ offers a dimension originating in the cultural milieu of the past. Therefore, the tradition is also a vehicle that carries the divine truths of the salvation of humankind. So that it is important to accept and not shun the approach and methodology of the Black preacher. God can and does use truths and ways that emanate and are part of the traditional cultural milieu of Africa. This well reminds us of the injunction of the risen Jesus to the disciple Ananias. When Saul had encountered Jesus dramatically on the Damascus road and had been instructed in a vision to go to Ananias. On getting the message from a vision, of the coming guest, Ananias was filled with fear for he knew what the name of Saul stood for. He feared the mere mention of the name. However this is what God said to Him :

"Go! this man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

What great witness to this fact have we not seen in the tremendous growth and impact of the indigenous Christian church movements of Africa. The African Moroki's style of oratory, the dance, vestments and drum beat have put colour in the Christian worship that can be rightly compared to one we find in the book of Revelation. This is Africa in celebration, celebrating the gospel of Jesus Christ in the full colour and dress of her peoples. This is clearly observed by Mercy Amba Oduyoye writing on African Christian worship:

"Drumming, dancing, extemporaneous prayer, dramatic methods of conveying the Word of God, and stunning cultic robes are being observed among African Christian congregations." (Kofi Appiah-Kubi & Sergio Torres, 1979:114)

The theme of celebration therefore is integral to a response of faith. It is also important to note that there are occasions, circumstances and conditions of human experience that combine to inspire the spirit of celebration. This is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

CELEBRATION OF LIFE INHERENT IN TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIOSITY

There are African traditional cultural concepts, beliefs and practices that enormously influence the life of the contemporary African man and woman. This influence is observable from the attitudes, practices and speech emanating from normal conversation. Consequently it is of utmost importance to keep a discerning eye and mind on these traditional concepts, beliefs and practices in order to understand the African mind at work.

This task is rendered all the more arduous by the fact that foreign language is used as a medium in the exercise, instead of using the vernacular of any one indigenous peoples involved. However in concentrating on celebration of life we confine ourselves to thematic observation. We can therefore draw comparisons between, for example, African traditional cultural values and Christian values.

John Mbiti has crystalized the problem of the study in African religions when he points out two pertinent realities in this regard. Firstly, that few scholarly champions exist in propagating the course of African religions. Secondly, that nevertheless, the nature of these African religions is spiritual thus permeating all spheres of human life. As such they have a consistency that cannot be abated by time or development of human life. These beliefs and practices of the African traditional religions will remain cherished and propagated by generation after generation of Black people. Mbiti thus declares:

“So long as people appreciate and even idealize the traditional present and past, this religiosity whether recognized as such or not will continue to enjoy a comfortable and privileged place in the emotions of African peoples.”
(Mbiti, 1969:268)

It is understandable therefore that the Black preacher's message will be infused with examples drawn from the African traditional cultural and religious truths and values. In their message there will be evident constant attempts to bridge the gap between the Christian faith and traditional African religiosity.

In this practice therefore a challenge posed by Bishop Tshibangu starts to take on real meaning. He asked the question: ‘In so far as the values received from Christianity are concerned, the question is whether African theologians should not link them with the data of traditional African religion in order to resolve any problems.’ (Parratt 1987:42)

In the following paragraphs we highlight some African concepts, beliefs and practices that reflect life as perceived and celebrated by the African. The exercise is undertaken in the belief that much of what we will discover will be seen to recur time and again in spoken African languages in ordinary conversation. It is hoped that figures of speech and linguistic clichés that will be common in a Black preacher's oratory will be apparent in the exercise. The Black preacher's personality and style will therefore be cast or observed in context.

In one of his books, *Introduction to African Religion*, (1975:19-30) Mbiti has a whole chapter on this subject. He maintains that due to lack of literature on the subject, these African traditional religious practices constitute the authentic resource for African religions. He appropriately entitles this chapter, 'Where African religion is found.' He then introduces the whole spectrum of beliefs and usages of traditional African religions. In this chapter however, we will confine ourselves to a few examples that will be enough to elucidate the point under consideration namely, the concept of life and its celebration by the African. This is undertaken also as a prelude to an investigation into the case studies on Black preaching that will follow in a later chapter.

1. WISDOM SAYINGS

These wisdom sayings include proverbs and idiomatic expressions, maele - diane, that belong to the same class as the Biblical Book of Proverbs. They represent age-old wisdom sayings meant to aid people in decision making in times of life's crises and joys. Some are drawn from the animal world and nature, others from the human's hard facts of life's experiences. Their free customary usage in communication not only adds beauty to the language but is an incentive to good moral conduct.

A few examples should demonstrate the truth of the wisdom sayings and why their use is unavoidable and popular. In his book, '*Letlhaku le legologolo*', (1977:125-142) Leseyane cites the following:

1.1 MOREMOGOLO GO BETLWA WA TAOLA MME WA MOTHO O A IPETLA. Translation: The character of the master-divining — bone is sculptured but the human character sculptures itself.

The word 'Moremogolo' comes from the vocabulary of the African traditional medicine - person. It refers to the most important of the divining-bones. Great effort is undertaken by the medicine person - ngaka - in its crafting until it is perfectly four-sided and duly decorated according to the taste of the ngaka. It is essential that the crafting of this divining bone is perfect because the entire divining process depends on this Moremogolo, who is the major actor of all the divining bones. Its landing position on the floor for both the ngaka and the

inquirer is the key to this stethoscopic process. The parallel contrast is, Moremogolo wa motho o a ipetla, namely, the character of a person to be choice and benign. This Moremogolo wa motho should be its own architect.

When a Black speaker or preacher refers to any personality as Moremogolo, he/she will be moving the audience into the category of thinking or feeling that pertains to the psychological being. He/she will be moving the listeners into the realm of the inner self with its struggles that are both mental and spiritual with the one desire: healing. The implications are therapeutic.

A Black preacher may be heard referring to Jesus as 'Moremogolo'. At that even the non-Christian African's attention will be attracted to this name of Jesus because of the connotations in the name. In fact we have Ntsikane's famous great hymn about God. (Methodist Xhosa Hymn 20) (de Gruchy 1986). In it he refers to God as ikhaka¹ le nyaniso². Truth here is qualified with 'ikhaka', a word that ranks within the area and vocabulary of dingaka medicine persons and their African medicine art.

1.2 MOTLHOPHA-NTSI KE YO O KGORANG. (Leseiyane 1977:104-125) Translation: Someone who is in the habit of picking out a fly that has fallen into his/her plate of food is someone who has plenty and is not hungry.

I believe the Xhosa equivalent is: Ewe ngo boya --- translated: It has fallen on the ground on its hairy cover. The meaning of this is that should you be eating and some food falls to the ground from your hand or plate, it is not spoiled or defiled — you pick it up and eat. The same implication holds for the former. A fly in your food should not spoil your meal. No doubt it will be abhorrent to the hygiene conscious person but a wise saying of import all the same. It is a wise saying applied to all sorts of situations in life, the implications are that inconveniences and slight failure in your engagement in a project should not deter your effort and determination. In your life's struggles do not be put off by insignificant hurdles.

What has just been described is how figurative language is used in Black oratory in order to clarify a point and heighten interest. It is important therefore to note carefully how Black preachers use these figures of speech in relation to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The implications of this use is that understood meanings will be drawn from the traditional and cultural milieu of the African worldview.

1.3 O SE BONE THOLA BORETHE, TENG GA YONA GO A BABA. (Leseiyane 1977:57-73) Translated: Do not judge a fruit from the shiny smooth appearance, inside it may be bitter. This is a warning against hasty and superficial assessment of human character, making

¹ — rock

² — truth

judgement from only what the eye can see. It is rather a matter of more than what the eye can see. This saying might be used by the Black preacher in describing such characters as Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Jesus, or Cain who murdered his brother Abel.

1.4 MOTHO GA A ITSWE E SE NAGA, (Lesebane 1977:73-79) is also similar in meaning to the latter. Translated: A human being cannot be understood in the same way as one would understand one's own homeland or country. This also refers to the complexity of human character and the caution one should exercise in making judgements and hastily adopting attitudes about persons.

In oratory the Black preacher cannot avoid the use of these proverbial expressions. Above all it is important to recognise implicit meanings and understandings representative of African thought forms, cultural and religious beliefs of the African worldview. The Christian message therefore will carry African interpretations in the same way as we inherit in the Christian Bible Hebraic interpretations.

2. RIDDLES - DILOTHO - BRAIN TEASERS

These are usually the subject of relaxation around the evening fire at supper time or before bed time. The Setswana term is 'tsa maitsiboya fha isong' (At eventide around the fire). It is here that the tradition of the people is passed on to the children by oral tradition. This is a most favourite time keenly anticipated by both children and adults. This represented a formal family fellowship. It is needless to mention that in our present urbanised societies this practice has almost gone out of practice. It may also be legitimately surmised that the wide spread vagrancy especially at night, of youth and the unrest and violence experienced in these areas can also be ascribed to this fact.

It was not only tradition that was passed on here it was also a forum for philosophic exercise. The young minds were trained to engage critically and constructively in life. The conversation around the evening fire would run like: Kea u lotha (Let me give you a riddle). A simultaneous response would echo around the fire: Ka eng? (What is it?) Here is a selotho: 'Molomo wa lesapo tedu tsa nama! (The mouth of bone, the beard of flesh). The group will then go for it and try to guess the meaning of it. The answer of course here is the cock.

Setiloane refers to these 'dilothon' as part of the sources of knowledge in African tradition. He then gives an example of the following selotho translated in English:

"A tall white man who goes out of his house for a walk in all kinds of weather, rain or snow, day or night?" The answer, smoke, reveals a wonderful imagery and a mind under training to observe natural phenomenon. (No matter how much it rains or snows, smoke braves the elements like a dignified gentleman out on a walk)". (Setiloane, 1986:1)

Our Black preacher is nurtured in this cultural milieu. Consequently and invariably this will be the vehicle through which he/she carries across the truths of the Christian message to the hearers. This is certainly also true of the Black audience. To them the message becomes clearer in these familiar terms and the response is bound to pour out in typical African style.

3. STORIES, FOLK-TALES, MYTHS AND LEGENDS

This is the area in the African worldview that unwraps the saga of human life in its truths and paradoxes.

3.1 Animal Stories: There are in this category animal stories such as those related by Professor G.P. Lestrade (1948). The hare is portrayed as a shrewd animal outwitting fellow creatures in the craftiest manner. There is a common wise saying derived from one of the stories about the Hare and the Red Hare. The two engaged in a joint venture to teach each other African medicine art.

They proceeded to craft for themselves musical instruments using horns to play the tunes of medicine persons - (dingaka). Those by the Red Hare outdid the Hare's in perfection and melody to the delight of the other animals. In his way as usual the Hare devised a treacherous plan. When they were asleep the Hare stopped up the Red Hare's anus with gum so that it was not able to relieve itself and as a result died. The use of plain explicit language in referring to the 'anus', 'mo sebonong', is cause for amusement resulting in chuckles and outburst of laughter around the evening fire, for it is rather rude and uncouth to speak thus of anyone's anus. The polite and respectable way is to say 'mo maraong' - the buttocks. While the other use implies the little hole behind and this is reason for mirth. The Red Hare is now dead, the Hare takes for himself the horns. (Lestrade, 1948:26)

In the other versions of the story the Hare then is seen by other animals trotting along playing the sweet notes of the well-known horns of the Red Hare. He goes from place to place playing: 'Pee ... Pee ... Ke phalana tsa bo tloho le mmutla, ha ba rutana bongaka.' ('It is the horns of Mister Red Hare and Mister Hare engaged in teaching each other the medicine art.')

The wise saying is used in warning of the ever potential treachery that may befall those engaged in joint business ventures when either of the two partners may dishonourably vanish into thin air, taking business dividends with them and leaving the other partner empty handed. It will then be said that: 'Ke phalana tsa bo tloho le mmutla ha ba rutana bongaka', implying the English saying, 'once bitten twice shy.' We are here brought face to

face with the hard facts of life in human relationships. This is a warning for all who engage in joint ventures to be careful. This indeed is celebration of life.

3.2 Stories about People: These are related around this evening fire, stories depicting the intricacies of human relationships. There is one about Masilo le Masilonyane the twin brothers. Fortune seems always to favour the younger brother while poverty and misfortune are the lot of the elder brother. Even when the elder brother has killed the younger while they are alone, away in the field, Masilonyane rises again from the dead. How reminiscent of the Bible stories of Cain and Abel, and Esau and Jacob!

The other story concerns the saviour-baby-boy. This is the story of moshanyana Sankatane and Kgodumodumo. (Sekeleko 1989:54-71). The boy called Sankatane and the man eater monster of the African mythical world. This baby boy was born when all people had been devoured by this monster, save for his mother. He grew up in a record time of days if not minutes, to a brave strong man. He then delivered all his people by cutting open the belly of the monster Kgodumodumo with his strong sharp spear and the monster died. He subsequently became king by popular acclamation from the people he had saved. Here again is a striking similarity between this story and the story of the advent of the Saviour of the world Jesus, who was also a Bethlehem manger-baby-boy, shrouded in mystery and awe. The angelic choirs were singing at midnight. The heavenly messengers spoke to the lowly shepherd boys away in the fields. The phenomenal star led the wise from the east. Setiloane describes the African experience depicted in these legends very aptly indeed when he says:

“These Ditshomo, Dinoolwane, lintsomi (folk-tales) invariably contained moral teaching purposed at character-building aimed at creating harmonious community life.”
(Setiloane, 1986:2)

These therefore represent an incredibly wealthy resource from which allegory is drawn by African people of all walks of life. And those who have an ear for African indigenous tongues are constantly treated to this mystery of the African world.

4. PRAISES, DITHOKO MABOKO, AMABONGO

This category finds comfortable affinity with the Biblical Books of Psalms and Songs. This represents praises offered to and by individuals, kings, rulers and clans. They also contain praises offered to animals and historical events.

One important element of these praises is that they are used as a means of giving vent to emotional tensions, joys and celebration. In this way they are intended to have a psychological effect of healing the mind, releasing tensions within moroki or the listeners. The common style of

hymn singing introduced intermittently during preaching by Black preachers has this intention and purpose. It is a practice inspired by the usage employed by the moroki.

The song to the African represents an appropriate expression of one's inner feelings. The occasion may be a sorrowful or joyful moment. It may be celebrating new birth to life or mourning a departed life. For the African these sentiments find their best expression in song.

To mark the climax of an occasion or celebration usually there is an outburst of praise by the moroki and ululation. Should it be a celebration in honour of an individual's success or demise the praise offered for the person will mark the climax of that moment. This holds the same for a king, clan or tribe, similarly the climax will be endorsed by the appropriate dithoko (praises).

5. IDIOMS AND IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS

Out of these Dilothe, stories and dithoko certain words and phrases are coined that carry some specific meanings. These will commonly be understood as to their meaning without reference to their origins. These are very significant as they are representative of many a figure of speech that we hear as we communicate with others. Sometimes a mere uttering of the word suffices to explain a person or circumstance. They have become acceptable figures of speech.

We will take a few examples to illucidate the point. In regard to the major intent of this work namely, an investigation into the significance of the element of celebration in African preaching, the Black preacher's vocabulary and his/her cultural inner instincts merge together in moulding their proclamation.

5.1 Names of Divinity: Setiloane gives us some of the commonly known and used names of Divine Being. Hlaa - Hlaa - Macholo, - (The best translation is the Ancient of Days). Modimo wa borra, - (God of our forefathers), 'Ya Qhoeng Tsa Dithaba' - (Whose abode is on the highest peaks of the mountains), 'Modimo Motlhodi' - (Source, Root). (Setiloane, 1976:80)

5.2 Words with Totemic Origins: Individuals are usually greeted or affirmed in action by their totem animal. Some of these are: Mvunhla - (Hare); Sebata, Namane e tshehla, Phoofolo ya sekgwa - (Wild beast, brown calf, animal of the forest) - All these phrases refer to the BaTaung Clan - The Lion Clan; Kwena, sebata sa madiba - (Crocodile, Beast of the deep waters); Monompe, Thubisi - (The Owl Clan); Tholo - (Antelope - The Barolong Clan of the Batswana nation); Motlhaping, Motho wa Mmankurwane - (The Fish Clan of the Batswana

nation whose original monarch was Mmankurwane); Khabo, Mokgatlha - (Ape Clan of the Bakgatlha of the Batswana nation); Motshweneng - (Baboon Clan both of the Batswana and Basotho nations).

Members of these clans show gratification and esteem when thus addressed.

5.3 General Expressions Concerning Life: These are sayings of a general nature denoting some aspects of life. They are in common use. Their significance lies in their origins, and the story of the origins is usually implied to illucidate whatever is under discussion.

= = **Ke Kgomo ya mafisa - Inkomo yemboleko, ayina tyala** A milk cow lent to a poor family to assist them. Such a cow may be repossessed by the owner at any time. Whenever that happens there should be no dispute.

= = **Ke semphete ke u fete** Do not pass me, let me pass you - This depicts a race or competition, a competing situation.

= = **Ke matswakabele - Matswedintsweke** Meanderings. Things are complicated as in a maze.

= = **Di marara** The situation is now difficult, tricky and dangerous.

= = **Kgodi-ya-mmakgokgo** Firm and solid.

= = **Ke kgomo ya moshate** It is the royal cow. It is a paradox, derived from a rural context. The practice is, when one encounters cattle that have strayed into the mealie field you are bound by custom to drive the strayed animal out. Should you be spotted just bypassing and ignoring the strayed beast you will be charged in the village court. However should the particular animal belong to the local king, you will be equally guilty should you either ignore it and leaving it in the field or driving it out. Meeting a royal cow in the fields therefore is a definite crisis. It is indeed Kgomo ya moshate.

= = **Ke diya banneng** Mens' affairs best left to them. There is no need for the matter in question to be followed. It is like a dispute amongst equals. It is wiser and better to give up.

= = **Mo-ja-monna ha a mo qete** Robbing a giant person will not finish or destroy him/her. Used when one discovers that there has been some pinching in his/her business. You take heart and go back to serious work, restoring the waste, as indeed you are used to work and achieve. So mo-ja-monna ha a mo qete.

= = **Nja-pedi** Two dogs are better than one. Two persons working together on a task perform better than one. Encourages co-operation.

= = **Ke maloma-a-fodisa** One who bites and soothes at the same time. This refers to someone who will do you down while at the same time pretends to be lending you a helping hand, or even pretends to be your friend. The saying is derived from an African belief that a rat after biting blows over the bitten area to soothe it so that you do not feel what it is busy doing.

= = **Ke phalana or nakana tsa bo Tiholo le Mmutla** ... It is the musical horns or instruments of Mister Red Hare and Mister Hare ¹.

= = **Ke sejo sennyne** A morsel. Do not despise or refuse the smallest of gifts. A small food parcel will afford some relief for your hunger.

= = **Ntwa ke ya madula-mmoho** Quarrel is for neighbours. Similar in meaning to: Agree to disagree or think and let think. The difference of opinion is no cause for friends to put up a fight.

= = **Ke malala-a-laotswe** The ever-ready - ready for action. Derived from the African tribal army practice of setting the plans for attack on the enemy the evening of the previous day.

= = **Ha e nye boloko kaofela** A cow does not excrete all faeces. This means that a speaker does not exhaust all the words or ideas in a speech. This saying is derived from the fact that when a cow excretes some of the faeces is held back.

= = **Ke koma** Top secret. Taken from the vocabulary of the circumcision institution. The tradition and practice is that no uncircumcised person may have access to information pertaining to the circumcision. It is a koma. So in life there are secrets that belong only to members. (Sekese 1983:27) (Hammond-Tooke 1981:35-82)

= = **Thari** Baby-carrying shawl made of gazelle skin particularly of springbok skin. The word is used to refer to procreation, child-bearing, and rearing. For westerners at the birth of the first baby a sleeping cot is acquired for the baby's use. In Africa a springbok is slaughtered for two purposes. Firstly for pitiki, that is the ceremony for the first appearance of baby and mother in public after birth. A meal is then served to all present. Secondly, the

¹ — See story on page 14

skin of the animal is used for carrying the baby on the back of the mother. This is meant to carry all children to be born to the couple. THARI, then implies all that.

= = **Ha le fete kgomo le je motho** It (death) never passes a cow to get at a human being. When an accident has struck and a person has had a miraculous escape from death. This is celebrated as God's doing and purpose, for in Africa God does not decree death to befall people, God only decrees life for persons. When death suddenly decides to strike, God will thwart its action and direct death to any non-personal object in the vicinity. Hence ha le fete khomo le je motho.

= = **Ke mpho ya Badimo** It is an Ancestor's Gift - In modern or current jargon, It's a jackpot win. Some gift or fortune that one receives undeservedly or is earned without personal effort. It is derived from the African concept that our forebearers, our ancestors are looking down on us keeping a close surveillance upon their children. In a time of need they will send the needed help all out of the blue as it were. So everything from bargain purchases to won prizes ke mpho ya Badimo.

5.4 All these phrases are derived from African idiomatic expressions, folk-tales, myths and legends. The African speaker need not quote the saying in full. A single word or short phrase as above suffices to open up the understanding of the Black audience.

The significance of these expressions or figures of speech lies in the fact that they have the effect of contextualising the thinking of the listener. The story or legend or idiom that lies behind the saying immediately fills the imagination of the African audience. The interpretation of what the speaker is saying will then be influenced by that background.

It is therefore worth noting that, if the African people utilize these expressions in the course of ordinary conversation, to those who are ignorant of them, the chances are that their import will more often than not be shrouded in obscurity. When one listens to an African preacher proclaiming the Christian gospel these linguistic clichés will be replete. Some of these phrases will be used purposely to create allegories to demonstrate the truths of the Christian faith. Indeed the truths and challenges of the Christian gospel are often heightened by deliberate introduction of phenomena from the African worldview. The African then, is at home.

6. INSTITUTIONS, RITUALS AND RITES

Life is participated in and affirmed through societal institutions, rituals and rites. The terminology drawn from these also influence the African's communication style. Symbols and meanings derived from these institutions, rituals and rites colour the ideas and concepts

in ordinary conversation among African peoples. In the following paragraphs we cite few of these. The vocabulary drawn from them greatly influences conversational speech.

6.1 Institutions: Among the institutions we have **Bongaka** - African medicine Arts. Much of the vocabulary of influence here is drawn from the praises of the medicine person's divining bones. When these bones in a divining session are thrown on the ground, the pattern or 'lewa' they form have specific praises. The bones are personified. They set out on a fact finding mission amongst men and women in the village. The ngaka then speaks to them. The inquirer listening may identify some of the code language used. They may also recognise some of the picture language used. (Motlamelle 1950:37-70) (Parrinder (1954, 1962) 1968:120-122) (Pauw 1960:204). The preacher may in fact be a practicing ngaka. (Pauw 1960:73). It is therefore very important to note the vocabulary he uses. The bongaka terms that may occur in his/her message may indicate the depth of his understanding and commitment to the Christian faith, as well as the perception he holds in the interpretation of scripture.

Bogwera - lebollo - circumcision is one institution with great influence in Africa. The secrecy around it has been captured in the idiomatic phrase explained above concerning 'koma', e.g. A person treated unfairly in a new job situation by his/her work mates, may be consoled by those who hear his/her story that 'ba ne ba u bolotsa. They were circumcising you into your new job situation. (Hammond-Tooke 1981:35-82) (Sekese 1983:20-27)

Marriage is an institution with diverse practice in Africa. Nevertheless one that has great bonding effects upon both parties, the couple and the extended family as well. The extended family of the African family is firmly grounded on this union. The wife is said to be 'wa dikgomo', namely one for whom lobola cattle had been given. The children of the marriage are called 'ba dikhomo', namely legitimate children. One wedding song goes like:

Se nkgatele mosadi	-	Don't tramp on my wife
Ke mosadi wa dikgomo	-	It's a wife cattle earned
Wa rekwa	-	She's purchased
Wa ithekelwa	-	You can buy for yourself
O rekwa ka dikgomo ¹	-	She's purchased with cattle

K.E. Ntsane's poem, 'Mmakgutsitse' expresses similar sentiments:

Re di ntshitse kgomo	-	We have given out cattle
Re di ntsheditse tshelana	-	We have given out heifers
-- ho tswile marole,	-	-- out went the bullocks,
Ho tswile kgomo --	-	Out went cattle --
Ho tswile dikgomo --	-	Out went cattle --

(Lenake 1984:39)

Any words drawn from this institution will therefore carry meanings that reflect African understanding and interpretations in connection with the scripture lesson read.

¹ — This is a popular wedding song

6.2 **Rituals:** We can mention, Mpha Badimo - Ancestral thanksgiving ceremony. Go tiisa motse - to strengthen the home. This is usually performed by the ngaka or today also by the prophet of the Apostolic churches. This is done to ward off evil spirits or for successful living in the homestead. The ngaka will always give and leave a lenaka - a horn with medicinal mixture to use during troublesome moments in the home. A Black preacher may be heard to refer to Jesus as lenaka la rona - Jesus is our medicinal horn. One Sotho hymn refers to Jesus' Cross as our totem - 'Jesu ke seboko sa rona'.

Sefapano ke seboko (totem) sa rona,	-	The Cross is our totem or surname
Re se jara ka thabo, O Krestel!	-	We carry it with gladness, O Christ
(Lifela tsa Sione 444)		

These terms have profound significance when they occur in the preacher's message.

Go ntshafatsa peo - ritual preparation of seed ready for the ploughing season. **Go ntsha motsetse** - pitiki - imbeleko Thanksgiving for child birth.

6.3 **Rites:** In considering rites we are looking at purification ceremonies such as performed by Malome - maternal uncle. In African society he is an important link between the two families joined by the marriage of their children. By virtue of his position he becomes the priest who brings back wholeness to the nephews. Such rites include end-of-mourning period after death and burial of next of kin. This rite is called 'ho tlosa sefifi' - to remove blackness or impurity, as death in a family is believed to leave members in a state of ceremonial impurity. Again the ceremony is referred to as 'ho kgaola kgutsana' - to remove orphanage. Again it is said to be, 'ho hlobola' - to remove the mourner's clothes.

The other rite is that of 'ho tlosa sesila' or 'senyama' - to remove dirt or remove a state of being in misfortune. This condition is believed to be brought about by sins of omission such as ceremonial rites and rituals one should have done and were not performed. This results in a person being in a state of misfortune. This condition can only be effectively removed by the Malome.

The terminology from all these rites is unique. Figures of speech as well as allegorical pictures drawn from these significantly represent African concepts of life. When they occur in ordinary conversation beauty and depth are added to the language and words used.

In this chapter we have seen how African cultural practices are reflected and influence language in ordinary conversation. We have observed how important it is to recognise both the terminology and the vocabulary drawn from the various wise sayings, praises, riddles and mythical stories of the African world. The fact that all these have to be communicated in translation form rather than in the vernacular of their origin creates an inhibition to the dramatic picture and reality they purport.

It is therefore, appropriate to end this section by quoting John Pobee when he writes about sources of African theology. He ends by saying:

“Ideally, African theologies should be in the vernacular. Language is more than syntax and morphology; it is a vehicle for assuming the weight of a culture.”
(Pobee, 1987:35)

In the next chapter therefore, an attempt is made to illustrate this anomaly by pointing out and citing some vernacular examples of popular hymns, choruses and folk songs often used in African worship. In the translation of these, some of the original African meanings are somehow lost. However the wisdom communicated through these African songs and sayings can often be explicitly perceived.

CHAPTER THREE

MANIFESTATION OF CELEBRATION IN WORSHIP

There is a perfect link between life, wisdom and celebration in worship and preaching. In African worship and preaching this link is demonstrated by African style dance as well as a message preached with emotional vigour and abundant use of body language. When all these happen then celebration in worship is in its fullness.

It is appropriate to preface this chapter with two passages from two different sources. The first is an excerpt from a report on the Eatwot Nairobi Assembly 1992:

“Faith must be lived but it must also be celebrated. No amount of talk about spirituality can replace the celebration of life in divine worship and prayer.”
(Challenge (3) 1992:7)

The second is of Xolile Keteyi writing on African spirituality:

“African spirituality begins with the joyful recognition that the values of our forebears still abide deep down inside us. We need to reflect upon this, become fully aware of it and own it.” (Challenge (12) 1991:25)

The Black preacher sounds the note of celebration in his/her message from the context of life lived in faith. Life therefore becomes the motivation for celebration. To the African in particular, life is seen as a communal participatory phenomenon. It is something that binds together God’s children as well as his creation. The mysterious force operating within life has been described by Vincent Mulago as ‘Vital participation’, a process that binds in unity the whole human race including the family unit, the clan, nation and all created order:

“This participation seems to fulfil the function of integrating particular beings, and placing them within the whole plan of the visible and invisible world, so that each reality finds its place and its truth in its connection and relationship with the whole.” (Dickson & Ellingworth, 1969:145)

Life in all its facets creates the chief object for celebration. This celebration of life comes out loud and clear in Black preaching. The Black preacher calls fellow creatures to affirm this God-given gift. As life is participatory so is celebration; ‘ke nakana tsa botholo le mmutla’. ¹ (It is the horns of Rock Rabbit and Hare).

The listeners are intentionally drawn into the celebration of life as lived and experienced under the assurance of God’s unfailing sustenance. The Black preacher seeks all the time to create this dialogue between him/herself, the congregation and God. The moments of joy as well as of suffering experienced in this engagement with life are all ingredients that arouse the spirit of celebration. On the route of life milestones of achievements, material,

¹ — The idiomatic expression has been explained in Chapter 2.
It is taken from Lestrade 1948:26

physical and spiritual, create appropriate moments in Black preaching to look back on the ground travelled and to celebrate. On occasions like these fervent singing of favourite hymns will take place. Sometimes only one or two words of a hymn are used and sometimes only one line in a stanza. This practice enables everybody to easily participate as the content is grasped with no difficulty and the spirit of celebration is highly enhanced. For instance choruses such as:

Ke letsoho le matla	-	It is the mighty arm
Ke letsoho la Jesu wa ka	-	It is the arm of my Jesus

turns the worship time into a real feast of celebration. Or if this should be a service wherein some donations for the work of God or any other need are called for the following may be sung:

Bala noBala	-	Write or record Scribe write
Imali ya Ngena	-	Money is coming in

It is customary to stop the singing in the middle and ask the scribe to report the takings. Should the total announced not be a round number say twenty Rand and seven cents, the seven cents may not be acceptable to the congregation, and therefore the singing will continue perhaps with:

Ba e sentse, ba e sentse	-	They've spoiled it, they've spoiled it
Ha e lokiswe	-	Let's rectify it
Ba emoshile, ba e moshile	-	They've spoiled it
Ma ilongiswe	-	Let's rectify it

These choruses may not appear to be of any significant spiritual edification and yet the enthusiasm, the generous pouring of coins on that table may well be a fitting replica of that unending song of the Seraphs and Cherubims on that Eternal Throne of God of Isaiah 6:1-4. Indeed the chorus may change to:

iKerubim ne Seraphim	-	Cherubims and Seraphims
Zimana zimemeza kuWe	-	continually call on You.

This is a typical style in Black worship - a movement from one piece of music to another heightens the mood of celebration in worship. At that moment both adults and children, male and female, in the congregation will move from their pews to join the dancing throng bound for the collection table. Whether one has a coin to donate or not everybody joins in for even if they do not have one, they have themselves to offer. They too are part of what the preacher has declared: fruits of God's mercy and grace over the days past. Herein lies the religious passion of the African, his participatory action - celebration.

The advent of life, the birth of a person, as well as the departure from this life also unwinds the mood and spirit of celebration. The Black preacher will let the Word speak on this gift and call for celebration. When gloom and sadness have befallen the people through death, the ancestral realm will be opened, the living dead are brought into the presence of the

congregation. Concurrently the glory of the empty tomb of Christ on the morning of the resurrection, spelling eternal victory over death and its fears, will be remembered by the congregation in no uncertain terms. This will be the moment of celebration. Closely related to moments of birth and death are rituals that accompany these occasions. Some of them may be of a purely African traditional nature although now having taken on a religious meaning and as such are duly celebrated in thanksgiving to God. Rituals such as 'Pitiki', 'Go ntsha- Motsetse', 'iMbeleko' ¹, 'lebollo' ², all rites of passage in different nations, harvest festivals, weddings, all create fitting moments for celebrating the eternal Word of God that speaks for all stations of life.

There is the special moment of divine worship by the people of God gathered on the day of the Lord. There is a great challenge and a burning fire in the spirit and soul of every preacher designated to conduct the service of the day. Indeed for all the people of God this day comes to revive the great hope promised in holy writ. The air of this day is well captured by the hymnwriter:

Letsatsi ja Sabbatha Tsatsi ja Modimo	-	Day of Sabbath, Day of God
Le re tlhabetse gape	-	Has dawned upon us again.
A re itumeleng, Le tsile jaaka pula	-	Let us be merry, it has come as rain.
Ye e nang sekakeng	-	Which falls upon the desert
Mme le jaaka moruti	-	It is also like a shade
O bonwang mogoteng	-	One finds on a hot day.
(Methodist Hymn Tswana 154)		

Certainly the worship of the Lord's Day stands out as a chief occasion that induces a spirit of great celebration. Particularly for the African it echoes a household - lesika - the gathered family. The day and service has the effect of strengthening the bond that exists in the African family. The worship of that day has become a cradle from which a gentle rocking of 'botho ba rona' - 'ubuntu bethu' ³, is effected.

On this day there is an experience of something that Ross Snyder writes about:

"Celebration is offering the agony and creation of this one day in the whole world to a transforming God. We are transformed by participating in the transforming." (Snyder 1971:41)

On this day of worship, as the hymn continues to affirm, we are within the warmth of the household where all needs are met:

"Ga go lenyora lepe	-	There is no thirst
Je le ka re tshwenyang	-	To cause us inconvenience
Re na le tebelelo	-	We have security and tender care
Mo kgosing fa kgotleng	-	with royalty at the royal kraal.
(Methodist Hymn 154)		

¹ — Pitiki -) Ceremonial party for first
Go-ntsha Motsetse-) introduction of baby to family
imbeleko -) and friends since birth.

² — Lebollo - circumcision

³ — botho ba rona or ubuntu bethu - personality humanness

The truth expressed by Xolile Keteyi in the second opening quotation at the beginning of this chapter finds affinity with the element of celebration in Black preaching. There is this note of 'joyful recognition that the values of our forebears still abide deep down in us'. Thus in Black preaching the preacher strikes the note of the Good News of Jesus Christ in such sweet chords that the Black congregation finds resonance with African spiritual roots and are consequently sparked into celebration. These values of our forebears which Keteyi speaks about may or may not be explicitly mentioned in the proclamation. Yet the style and interpretation of God's truths in Black preaching reaches that depth in us where we can feel with both the preacher and our forefathers. We can affirm that celebration with the doxology of the Motswana of old:

Modimo wa boikanyo	-	God of faithfulness
Re ikanya mo go Wena	-	In You we trust
O gogile be rraetsho	-	You led our forebears
Mo dinyageng tsa lenyora.	-	In parched lands of thirst.

(Methodist Hymn Tswana 13)

In many ways the Black preacher enables us to bring our Black experience along with our faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Herein lies the wealth of our African values namely in our birth and home experience, in our being nurtured within the context of Black family life, in our experience of those things that add up to the totality of our 'botho' (personality). Since our ancestors are the people who have attained the goal of peace and harmony, they become for us a transcendent reference point. Keteyi also stressed the importance of living in harmony with our ancestors (Challenge (12) 1991:25). Indeed Christianity will reach the depths of the African soul if these African values are upheld and affirmed in Christian faith.

THE NEED FOR INVESTIGATION INTO BLACK PREACHING

The concern of this thesis is not to investigate Black preaching in total. Rather the concern is with a specific theme namely, 'celebration'. This has been the concern from the beginning of this chapter. Circumstances that inspire this element have been highlighted. In this section the relevance of Black preaching in relation to traditional Christian kerygma is the focus. Can the message proclaimed in African terms stand the test of authentic Christian kerygma?

The New Testament kerygma as proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ by the early Church bears the stamp of Christianity's encounter with that early pagan world. The husks of these pagan communities as they came into contact with Christian preaching were

filled in turn with Christian thought, faith and practice. Some of these husks were not entirely empty so that the Christian faith and belief was infused with the remains of what was already there. In many ways therefore the kerygma that was heard from those early preachers in the various lands of that ancient world were invariably imbued with some flavour of the traditional beliefs. This factor is well captured by Wainwright when dealing with the influence of culture, especially religious practices of the pagan converts, on the early Church:

“It is significant that the major calendrical borrowings from paganism began to take place in the fourth century. With the ‘conversion of the empire’, pagan feasts were there for the taking, the spoils of victory, the abandoned husks could be filled with Christian meaning.” (Wainwright 1980:174)

Not only the Christian calendar was to benefit from this ‘spoil’. Can one say that pagan rites and rituals infested the liturgical practice of the church? Or permeated it? Or perhaps in fact enriched the process of building up the liturgical practice. This is said depending of course on which side one stands. The present day Black preacher is certainly one such husk picked up from the rabbles of African traditional religious culture in the aftermath of Christian missionary excursions. It remains imperative therefore that the Christian Church of today in Africa should seek to know and understand why this vessel, husk, is thus shaped.

Secondly, Black preaching is Christian proclamation and as such it has to bear the content of kerygma as received from the early Christian Church. It is C.H. Dodd who has pointed out that even most of Paul’s preaching recorded as the earliest writings of the Church do not constitute kerygma, rather they stand out as didache, paraklesis and homilia. They are more of discourses and discussions and teachings on the various aspects of Christian faith (Dodd 1936:1-3). However again a close study of Paul’s letters lead to the discovery of true kerygma, that Paul was using as a basis for his exhortations. The kerygma of the early church can be summed up as: God’s decisive action into human life by the acts of his Son Jesus Christ by His incarnation in accordance with prophetic foretelling; his life, death, resurrection and awaited parousia. Paul’s teaching had its foundation squarely on this revelation.

Black preaching like Paul’s includes teaching and exhortation. There is assurance of God’s unflinching care for us. We feel satisfaction at affirmations of some of our African traditional religious philosophies like the pre-ordination by the Supreme Being in some of our wars’ losses and victories. However the question for the church is: Is the kerygma or the proclamation of God’s decisive action of salvation the cornerstone of the Black preacher’s message? In this investigation of the significance of the element of celebration, does Black

Black preaching bear any reminiscence of celebration of this divine action, declared in the historical kerygma? The task of the Christian church remains that of ensuring and intentionally working for the firm entrenchment of Christian kerygma. The church is to ensure that the challenge and urgency of the Christian message is truly held and effectively proclaimed by the preacher whatever his/her status might be. This implies a concerted effort to educate the Christian preacher especially the lay preacher who in the Black church continues to be indispensable for pulpit ministry. As Dodd has stressed the core of the Christian message has to be declared in no uncertain terms:

“The main burden of the kerygma is that the unprecedented has happened: God has visited and redeemed His people.” (Dodd, 1936:33)

In the following chapter we make an observation on some examples in Black preaching. It is hoped the exercise will help to illustrate the point raised in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF SERMONS BY BLACK PREACHERS

"The African preacher shows a predilection for certain hermeneutical methods which we find already widely developed in the New Testament writings themselves."
(H. Bürkle, 1971:222)

Paul's methodology of drawing analogies, from the social scene of his day is something that has spoken to the heart of the African preacher. This method agrees with the African preacher's own traditional communication methods. As a result this method remains one of the characteristics of many a Black preacher's sermon. The use of figurative language and the drawing of allegory from concrete life situation is pertinent to African speech.

Black lay preachers are of particular interest in this regard. In most instances they may have received the denominational training for the task of preaching. These preachers stand out as important figures in the Black church because in most services the pulpit is occupied by them. The main reason being that there is a shortage of full-time clergy. This confines their service to celebration of the sacraments. The proclaimed Word therefore is mainly heard and celebrated within services led by lay preachers. They are in fact acceptable authentic ministers to the regular worshipper. It also goes without saying that many of these men and women are persons of outstanding gifts and in their sharing of God's Word the hearers are richly blessed. However the fact that they possess no formal theological training tends or in fact results in one of their basic resources being their cultural inheritance. Tradition therefore becomes an invaluable resource that supplements their biblical knowledge. In terms of our subject here the role of the Black lay preacher is of importance.

It is also necessary and important to examine the significance of the professional clergy in this regard. It is under their church administration and leadership that the lay preacher is trained, nurtured and given assignments. The quality of the professional clergy very often determines the standard of the lay preachers who work with them.

In addition the training given by their denomination needs to be supported by active supervision of full-time clergy. The lay preacher can therefore be said to have learned their trade from the clergy. This fact makes it necessary to extend our investigation to the full-time clergy. It is also important and essential for the clergy to study what the lay preacher does in his/her preaching as it will provide some indication of what is being

imparted and taught by the clergy. It is hoped therefore that this essay will contribute in a small way towards the attainment of that purpose.

It is the purpose of this study to try to trace the approach each preacher adopts in meeting the challenge of preaching, particularly how the aspect of celebration is emphasized in their preaching. A further aspect of our investigation is how much African traditional culture is present in the sermons of both clergy and lay preachers.

Finally this research is undertaken at a rather turbulent period in our land South Africa; a time of political change, a move to more democratic societal structures. The wave of unrest and violence has reached unprecedented proportions. Hundreds and thousands of lives are lost. How much of all this influences the Black preacher? What note of celebration is there? Is the word of Christian proclamation — God has visited his people, clear and loud? Does the message of the Black preacher carry hope for the future? Within all this turmoil, is there a reason for celebration, while proclaiming the Christian message?

CASE STUDY 1

TOMBSTONE UNVEILING - by a Methodist Lay Preacher at Kroonstad - 20 September 1992

1. Background¹:

This is an important case study in that we encounter in it some of the core traditional beliefs that are the lifeblood of many African Christians. The beliefs are the unity of the family, the life after death and especially the ancestral belief. It is against this background that the Christian ceremony takes place. The whole service takes place around the grave at the cemetery. It is in the early hours of the morning just after sunrise.

2. Description of Ritual:

2.1 The family members are asked to stand around the grave. The preacher asks for the one person who has been instrumental in the erection of the stone and has carried the cost, to come forward. He happened to be the grandson of the deceased. He comes forward. He is asked to relate his story, namely what motivated him to undertake the task, and whether there had been any objection or opposition to him by any of the family. The young man begins to relate how his deceased grandfather had several times appeared to him in a dream, requesting him to give him a pillow. This he claimed came persistently. He informed his family and was given leave to go ahead with the task. Over the past months he saved some money and paid the costs by monthly instalments until he completed the whole

1 — The analysis method used in case studies is 'Reflection on Pastoral event' in use at Rhodes, Divinity Pastoral Theology Department. Attached as appendix on the last page.

amount. The young man then goes on to thank God for having given him financial and physical strength for the task.

2.2 The service then begins with Hymn 202 Sesotho. Bible reading is taken from Joshua 24:19-28. The preacher thanks the young man for his witness and congratulates him and the family for accomplishing the task of providing this 'pillow' for their parent.

2.3 The sermon which follows, makes four points. Firstly we are told that on the occasion of the passage a new covenant was made with the nation of Israel. God's favour then was with the people.

2.4 Secondly, Joshua then lays a huge stone at this place. Great emphasis is laid on this huge stone, a stone that stands as witness to the occasion. A witness to the covenant and a commitment of the nation to it. God listens in this place, hears all our words of commitment, all our thoughts from the very beginnings of the idea of this stone. He therefore knows all.

2.5 Thirdly, the family is then asked to trust and work for God in total commitment, and to realise that God is the ever present help and our guard.

2.6 Finally the preacher declares: "Now I convert this stone. From now on it is no ordinary stone but rather it is a pillow of an angel of this family, this household. Every time you come here in need it will be met. This is now no ordinary stone it is a rendezvous for you, for everyone of you and your God."

2.7 After the concluding prayer the family is invited to each pick a small stone and place it on the grave in accordance with African custom.

3. Analysis of Dynamics:

The beginning of the ritual was a striking event, obviously aimed at putting the service in context, namely the family, ancestors and God. The Hymn 202 Sesotho is well-loved and used mainly for funerals and services of commitment to God. The first stanza runs as follows:

Lona ba ratang ho phela	-	You who desire to live
Mohlapeng wa Jesu	-	In Jesus flock
Hopolang tsietsi tsa tsela	-	Remember the trials and snares
E isang ha eso.	-	Of that road homebound.

An appropriate hymn for the occasion. A timely reminder of the transitoriness of life. The participation of family members in the ritual and the incorporation of African traditional rites and culture in the relating of the story of the stone, and the placing of the small stones by each of the family members, all affirmed the family in their present action. Moreover it was an affirmation of their faith in God. This faith equalled that of Joshua and Israel in the passage that was read.

This family here present are a people of God gathered in covenant. The stone just unveiled bears witness to the relationship between God and the family. And God loves it. The call to trust and live for God under the circumstances, is a logical response fit for God. Finally, because of all these things done here today by this family, God has approved and looks with favour upon the family. The proof of this is the converting of this place now to a rendezvous between God and the family. They can meet Him here and He will always favourably respond. Certainly this 'rendezvous' declaration was a very powerful affirmation of the family and also of the people gathered there. It was a fitting climax to the occasion.

4. Theological Reflection:

4.1 There is an unmistakable note of celebration here. Celebration of God and His unfailing care and mercy. Celebrating faith in Him is demonstrated by this our present action. Celebration of willing commitment to follow and trust Him.

4.2 The emphasis on the stone underlined the importance of a memorial. The fact that God is God of our history, active in events of life and present in our time.

4.3 The future activity of the family in relation to Christian living was explicitly enhanced. The being in covenant with God was particularly good for all present. People are to be in covenant with God.

4.4 No explicit reference was made to Jesus Christ and His salvation work, save for mentioning His name in the prayers. This then raises the questions of the kerygma. Was this a Christian message? Was it Good News? Was the decisive action of the God of salvation in Jesus Christ proclaimed and heard? This would have certainly strengthened the message. Nevertheless the preacher concentrated on the work of God with His covenanted people. He also brought out our own allegiance to God. Therefore the overall picture and tone of the service and the proclaimed message is theological.

5. Evaluation:

5.1 The whole service including the preaching portrays a genuine attempt to rally this family around God, and to celebrate God's presence and caring power for His people.

5.2 The preacher assured the family of God's never failing faithfulness to them, and encouraged the family to maintain a firm commitment to God. God's faithfulness and the commitment of the family were confirmed in celebration. This faith was celebrated by the gathered people in song. Hope for the future with God was firmly upheld.

5.3 The African traditional culture and Christian teaching were successfully blended together for the affirmation of the 'African-ness' of Christianity.

CASE STUDY 2

Early Sunday Morning Worship led by a Lay Preacher at Zamdela Society at Sasolburg Methodist Church, October 1992.

1. Background:

The service was conducted by a lay preacher on Sunday morning on October 1992. The liturgical part of the service was led by a fully accredited preacher as the actual preacher was On Trial. This was a bit of an hindrance to the preacher, although it is normal Methodist practice to do so.

2. Description:

2.1 Scripture lessons were taken from Luke 19:1-10 and Jeremiah 50:21-30 in that order. Hymns were Nos. 183 Sesotho - 'Joko ya hao e bobebe' - Your yoke is light; 239 Xhosa - 'Bawo! xa ndilahlekayo Kulo hambo lweli lizwe' - Father when I go astray in the journey of this world; Sesotho 166 - 'Na u kokomallang lefifing le letsho letsho, U ntso hanellang teronkong ya lefu?' - Why do you sojourn in this pitch black darkness, why do you so obstinately remain in the prison of death? and the last, 115 Xhosa - 'Vuthelani ixilongo, Nina bantu bakhe' - Sound the trumpet, you his people.

2.2 The texts were announced as Luke 19:5, When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and said to him "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." Jeremiah 50:21 "Nyolohela lefatsheng la baikgantshi, o futuhele lona, le baahi ba lona o ba kgalemele."¹ - Go forth to the land of the proud, attack it with its inhabitants and warn them. - "Attack the land of Merathaim and those who live in Pekod. Pursue, kill and completely destroy them", declares the Lord. "Do everything I have commanded you."

2.3 **Starting point :** The preacher starts by thanking God for the gift of this day. He reminds the congregation that there are many who have not seen its dawn. In his dreams last night he had been meditating on the hymn:

Leha lefu le bohale	-	Even though death be fierce,
Le kgaola tshiu tsa ka	-	Cutting and shortening my days,
Le teng ke tla leka hore:	-	Even then I'll try to say:
Ho lokile! Ho lokile!	-	It is well! It is well!
(Lifela tsa Sione)		

2.4 **Body of Sermon :** The central part of the sermon takes the story of Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus as the basis for the message. Special interest and emphasis was on Jesus' invitation 'Come down immediately, I must stay at your house today.' The congregation is called to heed this call to come to Jesus who wants to pray with them. The Evangelist

¹ — This is a difficult text. The preacher chose the old Sesotho version which translates the first verse as, 'Go forth to the land of the proud', which in fact is not the English translation.

Luke also invites you to come and pray with him. - This is an invitation to go down on our knees with Jesus. He bids us come. An appeal and a challenge is then directed to us:

“Should your name not be in church books? Recording your commitment to God. Come down that tree now. When you arrive at your home today after this service, invite your child, neighbour, friend, brother and sister, invite them all and pray with them.”

Jesus invites you, he is available to all. It does not matter what the state of your life is at the present, the invitation is to you.

2.5 This message was interspersed with various hymns suitably selected at appropriate points for emphasis. Negative human attitudes or shortcomings as impediments to communion with Christ were highlighted in the message. Works of the flesh mentioned by Paul in the letter of Galatians were cited in support, and were shown to be the opposite of the works and gifts of the spirit that are sought after by Christ in us.

2.6 An invitation to the congregation to offer prayer was taken up by a woman worshipper. This turned out to be a powerful response. Affirmations of ‘Amens’ rang throughout the sanctuary from worshippers on their knees. One felt a real enriching experience throughout. The concluding hymn was very appropriate, calling and challenging the congregation to go forth blowing the clarion call of the Good News - ‘Vuthelani ixilongo’.

3. Analysis of Dynamics:

3.1 The service was taken by a lay preacher who was on trial and as Methodist usage goes a fully accredited lay preacher had to lead all the liturgical worship. Only the message was delivered by the preacher. However all the readings of scripture and hymns were the preacher’s own choice. This was a bit of an inconvenience as the preacher only got his bearings, so to say, very late in the sermon. The message would have been much more powerful if the preacher would have had a chance to perform the other parts of the liturgy as well.

3.2 Nevertheless the invitation to Zacchaeus and us was made loud and clear. This was the strength of the message. It spoke directly to the needs of the congregation. There was celebration. The message was refreshing and a solace to a worshipping community. Hence a most profound and enthusiastic response in extempore prayer by the one person in the congregation.

4. Theological Reflection:

It was particularly the use of appropriate hymns that achieved a wonderful blending of all the ingredients of the message. The effect was an achievement of spiritual bliss in the worship.

A call for a life centred in God was firmly made. The encounter of Zacchaeus with Jesus and the resulting positive response in that encounter emphasized the importance of communion with God.

The invitation of Jesus to all in spite of whatever the condition of the person may be, was a clear note of celebration. Celebration of the fact that all are welcome.

The theological nature of the hymns was fully recognised in the delivery of the sermon. Also the style in which the sermon was delivered was in complete harmony with the style of an African Moroki.

5. Evaluation:

5.1 The sharing of the preacher of his own struggle with God in meditation certainly threw the message in to the arena of human experience. This type of sharing helps individuals to search and find points of contact with God in their own struggle. Moments of healing, trust and celebration are transported into reality for the people of God gathered and seeking for mercy.

5.2 Despite the inconvenience of having to share the whole service with a fully accredited person the preacher did inspire the congregation with his message and also managed to challenge it.

5.3 After the service a few worshippers were asked to respond to the following questions:

5.3.1 "How do you feel about the message this morning?" About twenty persons responded positively. Two were left untouched. Of these two, one was a fifteen year old lass and the other a twenty-nine year old young man. The rest felt happy and blessed by the message.

5.3.2 "What appeal came through to you personally?" Most of them felt that the tree from which Zacchaeus and they themselves were called from is real in many of their experiences.

5.3.3 "Did you feel there was something to celebrate about?" The invitation of Jesus was invariably hailed as cause for celebration.

5.3.4 "Are there any short term and long term decisions you have made for yourself?" Some did not think of any particular thing at the time, while others felt they wanted to change or work for change of some of the attitudes in their lives.

CASE STUDY 3

A Midday Sunday Worship Service held in Zamdela Society at Sasolburg on 4 October 1992.

1. Background:

The service was led by a lady lay preacher at Zamdela, Sasolburg Methodist Church on 4th October, 1992. There was a short fund raising report by the congregation which tended to dampen the spirit of the ensuing worship. However the preacher's effort was successful in building up the spirit of worship of the congregation.

2. Description:

2.1 The opening Hymn was Xhosa 201:

Hayi! umntu endinguye	-	Oh! person that I am
Naaku se nditjhabalala	-	I am now faced with destruction
Se kuvuke namaxhala	-	Even my evil past surfaces
Nkosi, Yesu ndiphuthume	-	Lord, Jeus succour me.

2.2 Scripture Lessons : 2 Kings 2:5-10 and Saint Mark 6:21-29

Texts: 2 Kings 2:9

"When they had crossed Elijah said to Elisha, Tell me what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit" Elisha replied.

St. Mark 6:22

"When the daughter of Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you."

2.3 **Starting Point** : The requests of Elisha to his master Elijah and that of daughter of Herodias to her father Herod were cited and suggested as types of our own requests constantly and invariably directed to God.

A rhetorical question, "What is your request, what do you ask of God, was posed and repeated several times to highlight the theme of the sermon. Worshippers were challenged to examine the type of requests we often direct to God. They were also challenged to reflect on the need to assess why some of these requests seemed not to be accepted by God.

God has given us commandments to keep and live by and we often err in these, we stray and go our own ways. The result is that God's blessings and favour are thus withheld from us.

2.4 **The Sermon body:**

2.4.1 A contrast is drawn between the request of Elisha and that of the daughter of Herodias. The one is a genuine benevolent request, namely two portions of Elijah's spirit,

while the other is a treacherous and malignant one, namely the head of John the Baptist upon a platter.

2.4.2 These contrasting requests are a type of choice we make in our human relationships. Hence the spiral of violence today, which results in killings and tragic loss of human life and spilling of innocent blood.

2.4.3 However God always responds and is on the side of the unjustly treated, the under privileged, the harassed and oppressed. Hence when John's head is brought in on that platter, his eyes are facing heaven, and are looking towards God, as if they were pleading for justice and mercy. And singing a song of confidence in God:

O sa tla mpaballa	-	He will yet keep me
Ka bophelong bona;	-	In this life;
Mme ke tla hlola kamehla	-	And I will daily dwell
Ka tlung ya Morena.	-	In the house of the Lord.

(Methodist Sotho Hymn No. 302)

Great fear fell upon Herod, his daughter and all his guests at the party. This gift is hastily handed over to Herodias who receives it. "Oh! did she ever know what to do with it?" We are not told. Yes evil requests end up in embarrassment and ultimately sound a death knell for the recipients.

2.4.4 What is our request here and now? There is no peace in our homes amongst ourselves and our spouses. There is no peace amongst us and our neighbours. There is no peace in our schools amongst our children. What is our request in this time and day? Is it peace we ask for or do we ask for the blood and heads of our fellow beings?

Let us ask God to give us His grace and peace. It may be that our world has come to an end. The happenings of our day seem to point to this fact. The fire is raging in our society, the fire of violence and death. After the flood in Genesis, God warned that the next destruction of mankind will be by fire. This indeed may be the time. Our children rise against each other throughout the length and breadth of our land.

What should be our request to God at this moment? I ask God to give me strength, to clothe me with His grace, that I may live for Him and be His worthy disciple. That I may help the helpless and poor. I ask God to give me His strength that I may do His will.

The sermon ended with a scripture quote, 1 John 1:8,9 -

"If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Without the preacher's invitation, two worshippers, one after the other, poured themselves out in powerful extempore prayer. The congregation expressed itself in loud affirmations in response.

3. Analysis of Dynamics:

3.1 The theme of the sermon although not announced was obvious: 'Making and addressing a choice request to God'. This was introduced by relating the requests of Elisha and that of daughter of Herodias as read from scripture lessons.

3.2 The theme was further developed along the same vein by contrasting the two possibilities in request making, namely opting for a good or an evil request and the unavoidable consequences.

3.3 The violence crisis in our country was a result of this dilemma of choice in the request. The absence of peace in our midst impels us to approach God with the request for peace - peace request for and across the whole spectrum of our life, personal, family, kinsfolk, friend and foe, hometown, country and the world.

3.4 The importance of bringing our human needs before God, and His readiness to heed our supplications, was a message that came across loud and clear to us. God in His mercy, was always waiting to be at our service especially in the advancement of good causes.

4. Theological Reflection:

4.1 The incessant singing of that last stanza of the Hymn 302 in Sesotho, 'O sa tla mpaballa ka bophelong bona', appropriately emphasized the note of celebration, expressing God's steadfastness in His dealings with us, God of love, God of grace.

4.2 Here again although the Name of Jesus Christ has not been explicitly mentioned in the discourse, which is a weakness, one can however say that kerygma, was achieved by the emphasis on what God can do in order to meet our appropriate requests.

5. Evaluation:

5.1 The sermon tended to be rather a lamentation on our societal problems. The note of despair, helplessness and despondency seemed almost to overshadow that of celebration and an assured trust and hope in God.

5.2 Notwithstanding that, the element of celebration was well expressed in the note of assurance of God's response to requests directed to Him in times of need. Hence He is the one who gives peace in our lives under all trying circumstances.

CASE STUDY 4

Memorial Service conducted by a theologically trained clergy at the Triennial Conference of the Young Men's Guild at Umtata in May, 1992.

1. Background:

This particular service was a memorial service wherein all members of the Young Men's Guild who died during the three year period were remembered. It was a very important occasion for expressing condolences and a word of comfort to the families of these folk as well as to the members of the movement.

2. Description of the Service:

2.1 The service began with a roll call ritual of the departed. Flowers were held by representatives from each district in the Methodist Connexion. These were placed in the flower pot as the roll was being called district by district.

2.2 The opening hymn was from the Xhosa hymnal of the Methodists No. 259:

Ndinik'amehlo ndikhangele	-	Give me the eyes to behold
Phezulu ezulwini	-	On high in heaven
Ndibone khona abangcwele	-	Let me see the holy ones
Bevuya enKosini.	-	Rejoicing at the King's place.

2.3 Scripture lesson : Hebrews 11:1-4

Text: verse 4

"By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead."

2.4 **Starting Point** : Death is better understood in the African term, 'ukutshona'¹ and 'ukusithela'². For by the word 'death', one understands it to mean, 'termination', 'something destroyed'. While in fact ukutshona implies a temporary state. A thing said to have 'tshona', may re-appear from where it has set. Those who have tshona will re-appear. For they have just been shadowed from our sight, in Zulu, 'ba sithela nje'. If they are therefore only temporarily hidden from our sight, there is hope that they will re-appear.

There is hope that they will come back from behind the 'shades' and be seen again. This is also true of those we remember today, 'ba sithela nje', they are merely concealed as in a shade. They will re-appear. On occasions like the burials of the dead we often hear ministers refer to them as asleep - 'ba lele'. Yes, 'umaba lele', 'basa kuvuka' - if they are asleep they will wake up and rise again.

2.5 The story of Cain and Abel : These are the children of Adam. Our encounter with them in the story is on the occasion of a special thanksgiving service they are rendering to God - 'bezenza inkonzo yo mbulelo'.

In the service God accepts Abel's sacrifice and rejects that of Cain. Abel's sacrifice is the first in the Bible to be confirmed by God. After the service Cain invites his brother to walk in the open field. When they were alone Cain killed him. Abel is the first person in the Bible

¹ — ukutshona - to set or go down as the setting sun. Or be submerged in water.

² — ukusithela - to be in shadow or behind something obstructing vision, hence cannot be clearly seen.

to be killed by a brother. In the Bible Abel is the first to be a martyr for faith in God. In the Bible Abel is the first to be killed by violent death.

God confronts Cain and asks, "Where is your brother? Cain replies "I am not my brother's keeper." God rebukes him, "I hear the blood of your brother crying from the ground where you spilled it."

Abel was killed by jealousy. Abel was killed by revolutionary action of a brother. Nevertheless he still speaks even though he is dead. With his blood sucked through the soil of the ground, he still speaks, although he is dead. He speaks to us in his faith. He is remembered.

2.6 In this memorial service, we remember those departed whose names were read out in our midst. We remember them in their faith. Amongst them are some of our past presidents. They have laboured for their church. All of them though dead they still speak. They have now joined the eternal heavenly throng. We do not labour to stay in the world. Hence the hymn writer aptly reminds us of our ultimate destiny:

"Ndinik'amehlo ndikhangele	-	Give me eyes to behold
Phezulu ezulwini	-	On high in the heavens
Ndibone khona abangcwele	-	Let me see the holy ones,
Bevuya enKosini.	-	Rejoicing at the King's place.

2.7 There is only one way of re-uniting with them, and this is through death. To you then I say, these are not dead but they are sleeping. It is true that they are sadly missed both by their families and us, we long for their presence and good deeds as well as their example. And yet it is true that they have entered home.

To you and me the question posed by the hymn writer remains a pertinent challenge:

"Nithi ni? Noya na? Noya na phezulu.
What do you say? Are you all going to go? Are you all going to go to heaven.
(Methodist Xhosa Hymnal No. 262)

3. Analysis of dynamics:

3.1 The ritual of the roll call of the deceased had a great impact on the congregation. It was obvious that memories of many of these folk were brought back to the minds of those present at that time. This further helped to establish the context of the service.

3.2 The mentioning of a few of the past presidents who had also died created its own effect. In many ways their contribution not only to the movement but also to the whole church in general, called up lovely memories.

3.3 The controlling biblical text had the effect of heightening the memory of these folk. 'And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead', verse 4. The constant repetition of this text certainly was the turning point in the sermon. One can conclude this from the fact that the text depicted the dead as being in the presence of God. Their state is understood

as resulting from God's guidance and will. The highly emotional response with the 'Amens', 'Ewes' and 'Allelujahs' is confirmation of this effect.

4. Theological Reflection:

4.1 This service was held in commemoration of the faithful departed. As in the case of Abel's death God affirms their faith. God takes them home to him. This indeed is cause for celebration. And there was much celebration in that service.

4.2 The victory over death is also effectively described in the use of pictures and symbols from the African worldview. For instance the use of the picture of the setting sun as well as the shaded presence.

4.3 Another important point raised is the faithful labour in God's vineyard. God approves of this and in the end he is the reward of those who serve him. This reward is only fully attained once the threshold of death is crossed.

5. Evaluation:

5.1 The service was an appropriate thanksgiving act offered to God in celebration of his assurance of life in the face of death. The congregation was enabled to reflect on their responsibility in God's work. They were enabled to look beyond this life and see God who exists beyond time.

5.2 There was a clear note of celebration in the message. The preacher succeeded in bringing the congregation to this state of celebration. An enthusiastic response of 'Amens', 'Ewe' and 'Allelujahs' in affirmation of the message was the distinguishing mark in the service. Both the text and the hymn seemed to have an electrifying effect upon the congregation.

5.3 However the use of exegetical data on this passage would have made this message even more effective. The preacher although theologically trained made little use of this expertise to his disadvantage. Some of the data include the fact that this story is a continuation of the plight of the fall in the garden of Eden. The persistent grace of God remains with his sin estranged creatures.¹

The fact that God will never let go of the sinner would increase our faith in God and hence will intensify this celebration.

5.4 In spite of this criticism the message of the preacher was a truly great celebration of victory of life over death. Celebration of a God who awaits us beyond what could be regarded as a moment of defeat, namely, death. Celebration of the reward that emanates from faithful persurance of the life of faith in God.

¹ — Note commentary of this passage in C.T. Fritsch's Genesis 1959:34-35

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS OF SOME THEORIES ON PREACHING

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly study theories that have been proposed and practiced by homileticians especially among Western theologians. It is hoped that this exercise will sharpen the focus on the case studies in Black preaching. The style of the Black preachers as well as the content of their message will be compared and contrasted with the theories analysed. It is however not the intention to go into great detail with these theories, as it is believed that a brief survey of each should be adequate for our purpose.

William D. Thompson : Professor of preaching at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. In his book, **Preaching Biblically** (1981), he develops a theory for biblical preaching based on exegesis and interpretation of the Bible. The model he proposes is called, 'dyadic'.

The theory is put to practice in the model by observing three levels of God's interaction with humankind. The three dyads then are: Human need, as it represents the context from which we respond. Secondly God's nature and activity. This is a focus on exposure of our human situation before God. His norms and will for his creation, and thirdly, is the dyad of our human response.

For the preacher's message to be biblical, the scripture text should depict human need as it arose in the time that the text was written. At the same time human need as experienced at the present should be addressed. Also to be revealed is the image of God in the circumstances of such a need. How and what is God's action and response in such a human predicament. What virtue characterizes God's action. And finally what was the human response then and what is it now.

This model can be applied to all scriptural texts, both the Old and New Testaments, in order to build up the preacher's message which will be fully Christian in its composition. This dyadic model presents a theory that has been typical of Christian proclamation. In his own words, Thompson states that the model speaks of people's needs, announces the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ. And calls on man to respond, to make a decision for God. (Thompson 1981:94).

W.E. Sangster : An ex President of the Methodist Conference in Britain and a celebrated preacher. He joined together in one volume two of his books into **The Craft of the Sermon** (Sangster 1954). The two separate books were, **The Craft of Sermon Construction**, and **The Craft of Sermon Illustration**. This book has enjoyed wide acclamation amongst denominations and clergy and has been frequently quoted in periodicals' reviews.

Dr. Sangster has made a passionate plea for preaching out of his conviction that,

"preaching does things: the most important things. And as such this high task demands therefore, the closest study." (Sangster 1954:xi)

He then proceeds to present a theory of preaching that requires classification of sermons according to subject matter. The classification he gives is, the structural type and psychological method.

In sermon presentation he deals with such matters as form and content. These include sermon preparation and format. The use and types of illustration material is also dealt with. Illustrations are also classified in accordance with type. There are 'figures of speech', analogies, allegories, fables and parables. There are also historical allusions, biographical incidents, personal experiences and anecdotes.

H. Grady Davis : His book is, **Design for Preaching** (1958). In a preview the Pulpit periodical says:

"The field of homeletics soars beyond its traditional stereotype in this unusual book, and we come to see a good sermon as something that grows rather than as something pounded together."

The author does not intend to produce another new theory in preaching. He states that his work in this book is the result of an analysis of sermons varied both in kind and by preacher. And yet his discourse clearly presents a fresh approach to preaching! 'The anatomy of an idea', is the basis of his theory. In a way this is not a completely new concept, for many homeleticians have insisted that a preacher should be able to sum up his message in one sentence. The difference with Davis however is that for him that sentence embodies an idea on which the whole fabric of the sermon depends and develops. His citing of John Henry Jowett sums it all up:

"No sermon is ready for preaching, nor ready for writing out, until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as a crystal."
(Davis 1958:37)

Richard A. Jensen : His book **Telling the Story, Variety and Imagination in Preaching** (1980). In this book Jensen expounds a theory that preaching falls into three categories

namely, didactic, proclamation and story telling. Each of these presenting the gospel message from a distinct perspective. Didactic preaching has as its aim the teaching of the message. Proclamatory preaching has as its aim the announcing of the Good News of Jesus Christ - Jesus loves you. Story telling attempts at getting the hearer involved all the time and giving them the opportunity to finish the story by themselves.

The thrust of his thinking is mainly influenced by Marshall McLuhan's work, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. McLuhan's basic thesis is about the culture media and changing modes of human sensory perception (Jensen 1980:12). He divides human history into several periods. The earliest human life was life in a world dominated by the sense of hearing. It was a world in which the ear was the paramount sense for accumulating the knowledge and wisdom necessary in order to function in life.

In contrast to this McLuhan argues that Western civilization has offered human beings an eye for an ear. This has emerged with the development of the Greek phonetic alphabet. Through this the word that was for the ear was then replaced by the word that is written, the word for the eye. This resulted in a shift from the auditory world to the linear world of the written word. Out of this reality then we derive didactic preaching. Jensen underlies this when he says:

"Gutenberg hermeneutics, therefore, understands the Bible to be the perfect deposit of all of God's truths. Gutenberg hermeneutics predisposes a didactic form of homeletics." (Jensen 1980:26)

Didactic preaching therefore aims at teaching the lessons of the text. The message is aimed at the listener's mind, it is therefore to be logical, sequential and linear in character.

Jensen does however raise a genuine criticism on didactic preaching. This stems from the fact that preaching is an oral exercise, meant to be heard rather than read. Didactic preaching as such presupposes a written presentation emphasizing cognition and as it is, turns out to be rather dull for the ear.

Second is the proclamatory preaching. Jensen in expounding this, draws ideas from many sources on the subject of preaching. From Bultman's *Myth and Kerygma in the New Testament* to Barth, Ebeling and Fuch's *New 'hermeneutic'*.

Ebeling's understanding of proclamation is the fundamental basis for Jensen's proclamatory sermon. He quotes Ebeling:

"The process from text to sermon can therefore be characterized by saying: proclamation that has taken place is to become proclamation that takes place ... letting the text become God's Word again." (Jensen 1980:65)

Proclamatory preaching is therefore the bringing alive to the present audience events that happened long ago.

“Preaching enables the text to become God’s Word again as a living, oral event in the life of twentieth century people.” (Jensen 1980:66)

The characteristics of proclamatory preaching can be summarized thus: Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ happens now in the life of the hearer. The old text containing this Good News comes alive now. Proclamation is aimed at sinful human beings. The faith engendered in the hearer is faith created by a living encounter with God’s Word. (Jensen 1980:77)

Third is the category Jensen calls story preaching:

“I make this choice because story captures the breath of what I wish to communicate and does so in simple terminology.” (Jensen 1980:114)

Jensen then points to the concern that our culture has become accustomed to a linear way of communicating, namely methods of direct confrontation and encounter. Both didactic and proclamatory methods of communication are a clear demonstration of the confrontational method.

The ‘story’ on the other hand is a simple ancient communication method that enables the listener to use his/her own judgement and arrive at his/her own conclusion. This happens without the hard mental and emotional effort and struggle that is often demanded by the confrontational method of communication. The simplicity and effectiveness is well emphasized by Jensen:

“... story preaching may be a metaphor of participation. The story is itself the preaching. At the end of the story the preacher is not required to come ‘on stage’ and tell the congregation, ‘Now the point of the story was ...’ ”
(Jensen 1980:132)

EVALUATION:

There are some outstanding features that can be accepted as characteristics of these theories of preaching. These can be stated under three categories namely, content, structure and method.

1. Content : That the content of the preacher’s message is to be biblical is unanimously agreed upon. Further that this biblical content has to reflect God’s nature and his dealings with humanity. It also has to reflect humankind’s state of need as well as its response to God. This biblical content should embrace both the past and present reality of God’s relationship with humankind and a promise of the future.

The ultimate result of this encounter is celebration of God and humanity on account of humanity’s positive response. This is good news.

2. Structure : The preacher's message has to have a structural form. This structure is determined both by the biblical text or lesson as well as the context within which the proclamation takes place. The structure takes a specific form such as dyadic, narrative, thematic or another form built around the biblical text.

This results in different types of sermons as well as different types of illustrations and allegory. Preparation and format are the essentials of sermon building. An appeal is made for structures that are geared to oral communication rather than linear forms. It is essential to build into the structure such details which would enable the whole fabric of the sermon to hold together. It is therefore important to clearly state the biblical text as well as illustrations and allegories.

3. Method : The methods used in preaching should employ communication techniques that will capture the attention and interest of the audience. The heightening of the theme or subject includes a sharp focus on the biblical text or lesson. The logical development of the sermon from the biblical text enables the audience to maintain interest and concentration. The method used aims at effective communication of the gospel. The imparting of knowledge of the Christian faith demands educative skills. The proclamation, the telling of this wonderful news that happened for human beings needs echoes such as belong to heralds. The recounting of the story, the making real of the past deeds of God in the present, calls for all the skills of story telling. The method therefore should be such as to captivate the audience because the content is Good News essential for our salvation.

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDIES AND WESTERN APPROACHES REVISITED : AN EVALUATION

In this section we attempt to evaluate celebration in Black preaching as observed in the case studies we have had. Also to aim at comparison with Western approaches, to note the complimentary nature of both approaches.

1. The theme of 'celebration' in Black preaching illucidates some distinct cultural characteristics of the African. These characteristics are particularly demonstrated in the wholistic response in celebration that involves mental, emotional and physical activity. There is nothing held back in the act of celebration, the whole person's being is engaged in the festive act. The individual in celebration is caught up and is engaged in full affirmation of life as it is lived. The desired response to the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ is for humans to commit themselves to the life of faith in Jesus. Consequently the joy derived from this decision is appropriately demonstrated in the element of celebration in preaching as well as in public worship. The African way or style of responding in extravagant celebration to a joyous occasion or gift stands out perfectly apposite to the demand of the Word of God. For the Western homeletician a call and challenge for response to God's act of salvation is a constant emphasis. Thompson's dyadic model appropriately depicts the human predicament and at the same time points to God's unshakable rule, authority and power over all creation - God's omnipotence. God's decisive action in the deliverance of humankind is therefore correct and has always to remain integral to the proclamation of the Scripture text. In this context humankind is called to respond to God's salvation. For indeed this saving act of God is Good News.

The emphasis that the element of celebration in Black preaching highlights and underlies succinctly the joy that humans should derive from this salvation action.

When one joins in an act of worship with Black worshippers one lands in the excitement and fulness of human response to God's grace. The dance and emotional engagement in the African ritual adds perfect supplement to an often somewhat cold western worship style. The renewal of sin-soiled human life can be fully experienced in the excitement that builds up in the preaching and worship of the Black worshippers.

2. The nature of celebration is that it does not end with the individual, it is rather an infectious experience. This resulting in like-minded persons developing into distinctive groups. This like-mindedness in group formation amongst African groups is facilitated by the audience's spontaneous excitement and verbalised symbolic acts of celebration. The

use of intermittent acclamations by the congregants in Black worship duly enhances the spirit of celebration. The warmth and solidarity in Black worship, especially experienced in the evangelical zeal of the various Manyano groups within the African congregations stand out as perfect demonstration of this unifying spirit in celebration. The fervent action packed singing of church groups like the Methodist Men's Guild called Amadodana is a good example of this spirit. The proclamation by the preacher in Black worship, finds regorous support and affirmation in the spontaneous responses from amongst the worshippers. The excitement and movement in the worship underlies the importance and prominence of the element of celebration that is typical African style. The worshipping congregation becomes the representative nucleus of the people of God. The response to the proclaimed Word of God begins even at that moment, to shape and challenge them to be God's own people. In such an air of worship for the Black worshipper the movement of God's Spirit is invariably felt and acknowledged. The worshipper is simply carried away on the wings of the Spirit. In discussing homeletical principles the western homeletician could find rich supplement through an appreciation of this African characteristic of celebration. The deeply emotional engagement from both the preacher and the worshipper is the key to facilitate such response to the Gospel as is required by the Word of God. The anticipation of this response to God's Word is very important. It is so because God's Word teaches us that His Word will not go out and return empty (Isaiah 55:11). In preaching and worship therefore God's Spirit is at work to effect the human response to the Creator. Both the preacher and the worshipping congregation in the response of the moment to the Word create this nucleus of the Laos, the people of God. For indeed the Good News of salvation is for the creation of a renewed people of God.

3. In Black preaching one experiences that traditional sermon structure and the theological content are blended together in both the scriptural texts and in the experienced hard realities of life. The tombstone service in case study 1 demonstrates this blending very well. The tombstone stands out as a memorial of what God has done, is doing and will continue to do in the family. It also affirms the family's faithful commitment to God. Hence at the end, the tombstone is said to be converted to a rendezvous of the people with their God. The family is thus urged to visit this place time and again, in order to gather up strength in the face of all sorts of life situations in their life's pilgrimage. The assurance is given them that they will find God's sustaining power never failing.

What is witnessed in this tombstone is further affirmed by Luke Pato in an article, 'The African Independent Churches: A Socio-Cultural Approach' - (Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 72, 24-35). About the small stones placed on the tombstone by family members he says, "The stones are understood to symbolize umnqophiso (a covenant)."

The covenant involves a mutual agreement between the participants and the deceased to visit each other. The participants in this kind of ceremony interpret the 'Covenant' not only in terms of renewal of personal relationships with the deceased but also in terms of the Christian tradition of commemoration of the life of the dead." (Journal of Theology of Southern Africa, 72, 34).

The sentiments expressed by Pato here closely resemble that which has been said by the preacher in Case Study 1 in line 2.6, namely,

"Now I convert this stone. It is now no ordinary stone but rather it is a pillow of an angel of this family, this household. Every time you come here in need, they will be met. This is now no ordinary stone it is a rendezvous for you, for everyone of you and your God." (Pg 31 2.6)

Pato sees in the tombstone ceremony an enactment of the traditional Xhosa 'ukubuyisa' or 'to return towards home' ritual. We encounter in this combination of African cultural ritual and the Christian commemoration ceremony a powerful witness to celebration of life beyond the sorrow of death and the grave. Here indeed the African belief and practice bears clear affinity with Christian teaching about life that is indestructible in Jesus Christ. Nouwen captures this truth well, about celebration of the present in and through death to beyond when he says:

"Celebration is only possible through the deep realization that life and death are never found completely separate." (Nouwen 1971:94-95)

The participation of the Black worshippers stand out clearly as affirmation of the relevancy to the truth of the Good News of Jesus Christ as experienced in Black preaching characterised particularly by its cultural richness.

African culture as a resource in Black preaching is no doubt an important ingredient. The lack or poor application of exegetical principles on the text of Scripture remains however a weakness. Therefore the use of dissective methods on the Scriptural text such as those we have seen promulgated in Chapter 5 by Thompson, Sangster and Davis could indeed highly enrich Black preaching. This is so especially when we realise that the major resource for the Black preacher appears to be African culture more so with the less theologically-trained lay preacher.

The textual difficulties such as those pointed out in case study 2 on page 33 on Jeremiah 50:21 could be recognised, resolved and the message of Scripture be proclaimed in perspective.

A close examination of this text shows how the preacher was dependent only on the particular Sesotho version he was reading. That Bible renders that text in its paraphrased and hermeneutical form. The English versions however tend to keep close to the original and more difficult rendering of the text. The New International Version and the Standard Revised Version render Jeremiah 50:21 thus:

“Attack the land of Merathaim and those who live in Pekod. Pursue, kill and completely destroy them.”

In the RSV margin, Merathaim is rendered “Double Rebellion” while Pekod is “Punishment”.

The Sesotho version rendering however is:

“Nyolohela lefatsheng la baikgantshi, o futuhele, lona, le baahi ba lona ba kgalemele. O ba phallele ka lerumo, o ba neele ho fediswa ...”

Here Merathaim is rendered ‘land of the proud’. This then reflects “double rebellion” given in the margin. Pekod is not apparently explicitly mentioned rather its meaning given in two phrases namely, “ba kgalemele. O ba phallele ka lerumo”. This also reflects the rendering in the margin namely “punishment”. In fact Merathaim and Pekod were physical locations or towns. John Paterson (Peake’s Commentary 1962:562 paragraph 489c) gives the following commentary on this text:

“There is here a play upon words. Merathaim is the southern point of Babylon’s border, while Pekod is to the east. Hebrew vocalised the first term to read “double defiance” and the second to read “punishment”. The one term denoting the character of Babylon and the other indicating its final fate.”

The recognition of the apparent evil character of these towns as depicted in the above exegetical piece would have greatly helped the preacher and congregation to understand God’s intended action on these towns. The wrath of God that would come upon these towns as mentioned further on in the text would make sense to the hearers of the preacher. The implications for present and future human generations would be crystal clear. The urgency for repentance would be clearly perceived.

The point being made here is that the knowledge and appropriate use of the exegetical methods on the Scriptural text as learned from western approaches would greatly enhance the proclamation of the Gospel by Black lay preachers. Indeed this fact becomes clear when one listens to a Black theologically-trained preacher as in case study 4. It is therefore important to note and acknowledge the gains that the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ would derive if exegetical methods from Western Approaches were fully utilized. On the same breath one needs to say what wealth would Western Approaches add to homeletical studies if only they could take seriously what African culture has to offer as a resource in proclaiming the Gospel amongst the indigenous peoples. There is a need to give equal treatment to Western Approaches and African culture in spelling out homeletical

principles. There is a need to explore indigenous methods and styles of communication. There is a need to harness concepts of the African world that constitutes figures of speech, legends and folktales of their life experience.

It has been the purpose of this essay to highlight and examine the element of celebration in Black preaching. In contrasting Black preaching with Western Approaches therefore one is not concerned with the whole subject of preaching one is rather confined to exploration of the element of celebration. It is therefore the contention and emphasis of this essay that in Black preaching the element of celebration is more explicit than it is in the preaching experienced through Western Approaches. Celebration in African style seems to sound a note expressive of the joy of salvation better than the Western Approaches do.

Further one may say that the element of celebration in Black preaching carries tremendous cultural undertones that tend to expose elements of African culture where life in all its facets is fundamental to celebration. The style of the Black preacher in sermon delivery, pulpit deportment, etc, has similarities with the mannerisms displayed by the African moroki at the act of praising. The same could be said of the Ngaka-African Medicine Person in the act of praising his/her divining bones. Indeed this characteristic is dominant in the often emotionally charged sermon and worship in the African Indigenous Churches. The change of voice, belching, shouting and those acclamations of 'Amens' and 'Allelujas'. This is celebration in typical African style.

4. The biblical preaching theories such as the one held by William Thompson, is attained ultimately through a different path in Black preaching. His proposed dyadic theory namely, the nature of God and context of his activity and on the other hand humanity's response to this God is reflected and more represented in the African's style of celebration of life. In the tombstone service God is depicted as one who journeys and is in pilgrimage with his people in all conditions of life. God is never failing them in whatever state. They may be languishing in sin, be hurting or be in a state of great joy in their lives, he remains faithful.

A people so bound together in a common cause are indeed heading for a destiny. A destiny that has united them with a sense of purpose. The Black preacher then like the African moroki has the task of proclaiming and celebrating the good news. Similarly the congregation also like moroki's audience with their traditional dancing and ululations has the task of affirming the preacher's message with acclamations of 'Amens' and 'Allelujahs' in celebration.



5. The significance of African traditional religiosity in Black preaching cannot be over-emphasized. In his/her oratory the Black preacher is steeped in the African cultural milieu, in language, symbols and allegory. These are essential ingredients to facilitate communication with his/her listeners. Legends and stories of the African cultures told around the evening fire created inroads into the minds and feelings of the Black audiences. The truths of the Christian gospel find new meaning and acceptance as values of life can find expression also through traditional African values. Christian proclamation reaches new depths as the Black preacher draws allegory for the salvific work of the Christian Christ from the salvific act of the "saviour" of the African legendary world like 'moshanyana sankatane!'

In reading the Bible story through the window of his/her African milieu the African reaches depth and clarity of understanding of the Good News of God in his dealings with human beings in a unique way. In idioms and figures of speech that are of African origin the Christian message and its truths are expressed through authentic African concepts. African values and Christian values in Black preaching therefore walk hand in hand, and give a deep expression of the omnipotent great God we worship.

In Case Study 4 we noted how the preacher ventured to re-translate the biblical text to capture African conception. The dead who still speak in witness, even though dead in Hebrews 11:4, are said to have set like the setting sun - 'ba tshonile'. They are also in the shade and not clearly visible, 'ba sithele'. And surely as the sun sets and rises again, our hope for the resurrection of the dead is affirmed. As sure as anything concealed in a shadow, they too will reappear when the shadow shifts. And so the preacher changes the text from, 'though they are dead', to 'though 'ba sithele, ba tshonile', they still speak.' This use of scripture has a tremendously powerful effect on the Black audience. That enthusiastic response marked with acclamations of 'Amen's' affirmed that effect. At the same time the defeat of death in the power of the risen Christ of the Christian faith finds solid base and acceptance. The fear of the finality of death outside the hope of the Christian faith is dealt a fatal blow in this African re-interpretation. They are not dead, 'ba sithele nje', yes, ba tshonile' — they will rise up again. The hope of the resurrection and the eternal glory in the hereafter of the Christian faith, is now told and affirmed in African terms.

6. In Case Study 2 the preacher makes a passionate plea to his audience to make a choice for life in contrast with death. This death he identifies as present in our present climate of violence. The preacher compares and contrasts the choices of Elisha to Elijah and that of Herodias' daughter to her father. The preacher then points out to the evils in our present society and how these are related to human sin and deliberate wrong requests in our lives.

She then compares this our world with the evil world that God has warned that he will destroy with fire and brimstone in the last days in judgement. She appeals to the congregation to seek out a spirit of brotherhood and goodwill amongst all men beginning within our homes, our neighbours and our society.

The preacher's sermon was legitimate biblical preaching. The style and format may not readily match that suggested by Thompson, namely a style rooted in the approaches of western homiletics and yet sound, as theological interpretation of the human situation. The preacher is seen here to be engaging in the subject from the core of African thinking, namely life. It is life that inspires and challenges the Black preacher. The Black preacher deliberates about life, its joys and pains. The Black preacher therefore from the context of life seeks to understand the nature of God. Within this tradition the Black preacher seeks to give direction to fellow beings how to respond to God.

The Black preacher therefore stands legitimately within the company of Christian heralds with the message he proclaims. Together they speak of God who is concerned about human beings and their life. A God concerned about human sinfulness and alienation from God. The human potential for harmony with God is the deep concern in the Black preacher's message, God's will for man is seen and expressed from the context of life.

CONCLUSION

1. The Black preacher is a child of African culture. To understand and be able to make a meaningful assessment of the Black preacher, one has to view and approach him/her from the African worldview.

This task is however not an easy one. It is rendered the more arduous by the fact that we have to be content with a second language as our tool in the investigation. In that process much of the original vernacular meaning and cultural significance of the utterances are very often softened if not lost altogether.

On the other hand by comparison the compatriot of the Black preacher is a child nurtured through the culture of the Western homeletician. His/her cultural milieu therefore is steeped in the Western tradition. The understanding of the Good News of salvation of the Christian faith will therefore be appropriated in the thought forms peculiar to each's cultural heritage. Equally the proclamation of this Good News of Jesus Christ will come from each camp in own peculiar dress. Nevertheless it is to be noted that God created them all. And that therefore the diversity of their response to him is and remains an acceptable service.

2. Celebration of life is a distinctive feature of African religiosity. The African's participation in life is one continuous act of celebration. Life is not only the African's deep and serious concern but it is also the base and motivation for celebration.

This is significantly represented when Africans meet and exchange salutary greetings. The gestures are poised on celebration of this gift - life.

The Black preacher like the African praise singer - moroki - uses figures of speech, legends and folk tales in communicating the truth of the Christian faith. These African linguistic cliché carry within themselves evidence of life lived in utter celebration. The style and method used by the Black preacher therefore calls for earnest study. For indeed his/her emphasis on life is in perfect resonance with the 'abundant life' promised and offered by Jesus Christ the Chief Shepherd of the Church.

The holistic nature of Christian faith, its service to the whole human being find perfect expression in African celebration. The African's use of emotions, and body movement is most suited to express holistic spirituality of the Christian faith. Hence in the hymns that are sung and sometimes repeated throughout the sermon, it is to be noted that some of the words find emphasis in the accompanying body movement that one would experience in

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Methodist Hymn Books:

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APPENDIX

REFLECTION ON A PASTORAL EVENT

N.B. TO BE SUBMITTED IN DUPLICATE.

The material for this reflection or case study may come from any current pastoral experience which focuses on a "growing edge" - where you meet the claims of the Church, become aware of your gifts and your limitations, and are seeking to develop yourself as a competent minister. Your reflection may come from any of the principal functions of ministry, for example: congregational worship, a pastoral meeting or an education event.

This exercise is not suitable for events that take place over a number of days, such as a youth camp. The reason is that there is just too much detail and with the limitation of space the reflection becomes superficial. In the case of a long event choose a part of it for this reflection.

This representation should be typed and concisely written, 2 - 3 pages. Wherever necessary protect confidentiality of persons by use of code letter, or some other arrangement. Please allow a 5 cm margin for our comments.

STEPS IN AN EVENT REFLECTIONA. BACKGROUND

Briefly provide any information leading up to the event that may be relevant.

B. DESCRIPTION

Describe your experience of the event as simply and briefly as possible. In your imagination place yourself back into the situation. Describe what happened. Heighten your reflection by including some of the actual words which were spoken. Also express how you were feeling or thinking at that particular moment. It is even more forceful if you write this in the present tense.

This way of describing will not only help you to re-live the event but also enable the reader to feel he too is present. During this step suspend all judgements or analysis, simply describe.

If you do this part well the next two steps become more meaningful and effective.

C. ANALYSIS OF DYNAMICS

Ask yourself such questions as: What was the real agenda? What was the interplay among those present? What were you doing? What roles were being played, decisions being made, power being exchanged? What were the turning points of the event? and other questions related to what was going on.

D. THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

What is your theological interpretation of this event? What direction does your theology give for ministry in this situation? In what ways has your theology been confirmed and/or questioned by the event and your participation in it?

E. THE EVALUATION

In the light of the above description and analysis, evaluate your behaviour in terms of your goals for ministry in this event. Where were you pleased with this act of ministry, and why? What dissatisfied you? Why? If you had it to do over again, what would you do that would be different? Why?

NOTE: This is not simply a reporting exercise. It is possible that while doing this reflection you will discover new learnings about yourself, your ministry and the meaning of your life.